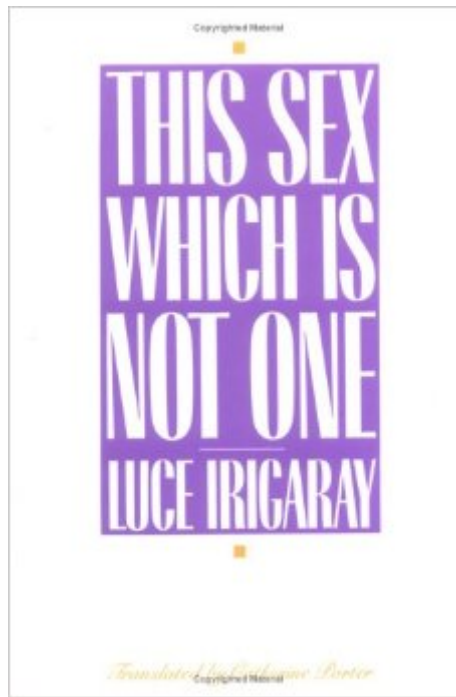


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# This Sex Which Is Not One



## Synopsis

In *This Sex Which Is Not One*, Luce Irigaray elaborates on some of the major themes of *Speculum of the Other Woman*, her landmark work on the status of woman in Western philosophical discourse and in psychoanalytic theory. In eleven acute and widely ranging essays, Irigaray reconsiders the question of female sexuality in a variety of contexts that are relevant to current discussion of feminist theory and practice. Among the topics she treats are the implications of the thought of Freud and Lacan for understanding womanhood and articulating a feminine discourse; classic views on the significance of the difference between male and female sex organs; and the experience of erotic pleasure in men and in women. She also takes up explicitly the question of economic exploitation of women; in an astute reading of Marx she shows that the subjection of woman has been institutionalized by her reduction to an object of economic exchange. Throughout Irigaray seeks to dispute and displace male-centered structures of language and thought through a challenging writing practice that takes a first step toward a woman's discourse, a discourse that would put an end to Western culture's enduring phallogentrism. Making more direct and accessible the subversive challenge of *Speculum of the Other Woman*, this volume—skillfully translated by Catherine Porter (with Carolyn Burke)—will be essential reading for anyone seriously concerned with contemporary feminist issues.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Lucy Irigaray published *This Sex Which is Not One* in 1977, first in French, then in 1985 in English. This book, along with her earlier *Speculum*, represents the foundation of her theories regarding the

valorization of woman. It is a collection of eleven essays on a wide range of topics, all of which share a common link: the recognition that women have throughout history been marginalized in politics, economics, literature, and even in medicine. It is no surprise, then, that Irigaray addresses these varying issues in essays that are marked by not only thematic differences but also by a protean richly textured prose style. The title gives the reader a clue that connects this book to the theme of *Speculum*, namely that over the centuries men have treated women as a gender-in-absence. Irigaray addresses first women to shake them out of a patriarchal blanket of a hegemonic denial of self to re-invigorate in them the long-buried notion that there are indeed two human genders, each of which must be equal to the other, but only one of them tries mightily to suppress the other. She obliquely addresses men as well, but only in the sense that since she knows that men will not read her books in any significant number, it is up to women to reconfigure the gender trajectory of men to bring them into alignment with women. This will be no easy task since the domination of women by men has built up over the eons a massive inertia that resists change, especially when one considers that this domination has thoroughly infested the totality of social intercourse between the genders.

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