



THE DILEMMA OF THE ONE WHO WANTS BOTH AND NEITHER But Who Would Prefer To Get On With Her Work Instead Of Being Preoccupied With Whether Anyone Will Ever make love to her right



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Without reference to Literature or History, I want to tell some stories and give some historical background. In the beginning there is myself. And words, given to me by others. And bodies and minds of others which seem to fit my imagination. I consider whether I can name them lover. The desire for one—a woman—will make me burn in hell. The desire for the other—a man—is not desire. The one whom I desire does not desire me. The one whom I tell myself to desire desires me passionately. Neither pleases me. Both invade me with longing. Both are the only ones I would depend on, although both seem to guarantee disappointment. Do I relish suffering, or is this my determination to make of something what it isn't?

The one whom I desire to delight responds to being delighted: she is delighted. The one whom I can delight is responsive: he delights himself. I can move over and through her body with care and passion, and she agrees but cannot do the same. I lie in wait; my desire smolders; active reverts to passive; I can do but I am not done to. He can move through my body without touching me; I can be done to without having done anything. Still I lie in wait, having little desire to act upon him but despising my passiveness. My desire cools.

This clitoris cannot demand attention, it can only expect it. I want to direct my own pleasure. I have no patience left with lying back and receiving clumsy embraces. Depending on the other's understanding of my desires provokes rage, helplessness, and anxiety. His pleasure (of me, with me) would reach fruition without my ever having to do anything to him. I am not the active ingredient, though I could be if I cared to be. Her pleasure is in being done to by me as I know best—and I know how—and I know because I know what can reach the deepest part of me when I lie back and let myself be done to by one who knows.

I am not averse to being pleased by another, but it isn't enough to feel that the other might be convinced of the particularities of my desire. The rage and anxiety remain. I cannot always depend on the good intentions of the other. Too often they fall asleep, muttering reassurances to me. Next time. He convinces me to let him take. She convinces me to give to her. I have agreed to this collusion. I resist because I cannot dictate my own rhythms. I will not forcibly please myself at the other's expense. If they are lacking, I cannot take control unless I masturbate, leaving myself once again alone in the presence of the other.

There is the ideal: the balance of doing to (him, her) and being done to (by him, her). How often we refuse being done to: there is the radical danger of vulnerability and selfishness. How often we refuse doing to: we avoid the complexity of power and willfulness. How often he does and she is done to: a mute silence accompanies the act.

Two separate stories with the same ending: We fall into bed we fall onto the floor we hold onto we clamber over we grind into each other, hands mouth teeth tongue grope over each other, ass palate thighs throat nipples cunt cock clit. Being entered but I cannot enter. He has no orifice but the act is inside. I have an orifice but my depth is on the surface. He needs to be inside; I need him outside me. I am inside her when I am on her surface. Being on her outside is her inside pleasure, and is a vicarious pleasure for me. He finds a repository for himself in me but he does not find me. I surround him but I want him surrounding me. I grow tired of words, but can my body explain myself when at last, my surface on fire and my core white-hot, I cannot take my own pleasure but can only receive it?

My yearning for perfection endangers me. Now I can either acknowledge the limitations of the pleasures that I have received or remove myself firmly and quietly from the beds of my lovers. I must not be ungrateful. I must not be too grateful. There is a more profound pleasure. There is a limitless hunger. It has only been assuaged, but not satiated. When he, when she, when we recognize our limits, will we have the courage to surpass them?

