Lost in Motion

Towards a Materialist Account of Anorexia

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This thesis owes its title to Ben Shirinian's film project *Lost in Motion* (2012 and 2013): a tribute to the magical art of dance and a reminder of the power in movement, requiring the agility and strength to make it through to the next step.

When you walk, each step is the body's movement against falling – each movement is felt in our potential for freedom as we move with the earth's gravitational pull.

-Brian Massumi

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Introduction

> Mr. Duke's Daughter in St. Mary Axe, in the Year 1684, and the Eighteenth Year of her Age, in the Month of July fell into a total suppression of her Monthly Courses from a multitude of Cares and Passions of her Mind …. From which time her Appetite began to abate, and her Digestion to be bad; her Flesh also began to be flaccid and loose, and her looks pale, with other Symptoms usual in an Universal Consumption of the Habit of the Body …. I do not remember that I did ever in all my Practice see one that was conversant with the Living so much wasted with the greatest degree of Consumption (like a Skeleton only clad with skin). (Morton 1720, 8)

While it was not until two centuries later that the condition was given its official name, the above observation by Richard Morton is argued to be one of the first descriptions of *anorexia nervosa* (Pearce 2004, 191). A condition in which, as Morton points out, the body is marked by an overall decay and severe malnutrition. A condition in which a substantial percentage of one's body weight is lost and, as Morton states, one appears to be more dead than alive. This thesis explores anorexia, with Morton's description in the background. Because how clear the starvation of these bodies may be, how difficult it seems to not lose them out of sight. Despite the paleness of their skin and the prominence of their bones, the shortage of their flesh and hollowness of their faces, what appears as a challenge is to see the these bodies for what they endure: the greatest degree of consumption, as Morton notes, and the conversion towards a skeleton-like state. I aim to write about anorexia in this thesis whilst considering the challenge in this endeavor; the challenge of approaching a matter that is "essentially beyond language" (Kolozova 2014, 141). A matter that cannot be captured by words and in regard to which any theorization necessarily falls short. Nevertheless, I am eager to explore the potential of materialist thought and to find a way to encounter this matter of anorexia.

Poststructuralism and the Linguistic Approach to Anorexia

My thesis is positioned in feminist poststructuralist theory: a line of thought that takes the relational nature of subjectivity as its starting point and that is interested in uncovering the socio-cultural dynamics through which subjects are produced (Weedon 1987, 3). Central to this theoretical framework is a departure from the Cartesian notion of human beings as essentially context-independent, autonomous entities (Almog 2002, 93) and an emphasis on subjects as always-already situated (St. Pierre 2000, 503). As such, a feminist poststructuralist endeavor explores particular manifestations of subjectivity not in terms of self-enclosed individuals but, rather, in terms of the broader socio-cultural framework in which one is necessarily immersed (McNay 1992, 2).

Within feminist poststructuralist thought from the 1980s and 1990s, much attention has been given to the phenomenon of anorexia. In consideration of the high incidence of the condition during the last decades, especially amongst women in post-industrialized, Western countries (Brumberg 1988, 3), feminist scholars have examined its cultural dynamics. Above all, they have been concerned with the high percentage of women amongst anorexics and, from a poststructuralist angle, with the social structures that affect women in particular ways (Fallon, Katzman, and Wooley 1996, ix). This thesis continues along the poststructuralist perspective on anorexia and aligns with a cultural approach to the condition. Arguing from within an anti-Cartesian understanding of subjects as entities always-already *embedded* in particular historical and cultural dynamics (Braidotti 2002, 62), I take to be pivotal a consideration of anorexia beyond the individual patient. At the same time, this thesis forms a critical response to the feminist discussion on anorexia that took place the 1980s and 1990s. While fully acknowledging that the condition demands a cultural analysis, I also question the way in which it has been framed within feminist scholarship from this particular period. My

main criticism that I will unfold in this thesis concerns the focus on language in this scholarship. A focus that has emphasized the condition of anorexia not only as culturally embedded but, more specifically, as a *linguistic* phenomenon, that 'symbolizes' women's socio-cultural situation (Fallon, Katzman, and Wooley 1996, xi).

This thesis consists of two parts. In the first, I engage in a critical analysis of the linguistic approach to anorexia. Here my focus is first on the theoretical underpinnings of this approach and, secondly, on the *implications* of this theoretical framework for an understanding of the condition. At the center of my analysis is the social-constructionist view on the subject –a subject produced through a particular "semiotic apparatus" (De Lauretis 1987, 5). Key to this branch in feminist scholarship is the idea that the social realm primarily consists in semiotic, linguistic structures – those of "statements, terms, categories and beliefs" (Scott 1988, 35) – and that women are produced within these structures according to certain notions of 'the feminine'(McNay 1992, 30). Femininity is thus, along a Beauvoirian angle, understood not as a natural and biologically determined essence but rather as a social category (Beauvoir [1949] 2011, 330) through which women come to manifest themselves in particular ways (Bartky 1997, 132).

Of interest in the first part of my thesis is the subsequent framing of anorexia within feminist scholarship from the 1980s and 1990s. With anorexia above all understood by feminist scholars as a gender-specific problem that mainly affects women, and with 'gender' as a linguistic system that is marked upon the body, anorexia has been presented as a problem of representation (Malson 1998, 6). It has been understood as a linguistic event, expressive of the "ideological construction of femininity" (Bordo 1997, 93) through which women come to represent themselves. In response to this linguistically-focused, social-constructionist approach to anorexia, I will raise two points. First, I address the ontological framework upon which feminist discussions of the condition have been based. Regarding the idea that the body

in anorexia 'illustrates' notions of femininity (Brumberg 1988, 7), I argue that an essentially dualist ontology is employed: an ontology based upon the distinction between mind and matter. Secondly, I problematize this ontology in regard to an account of anorexia. Building upon the work of Katerina Kolozova and Vicky Kirby, I suggest that the dualism in linguistic thought has produced a problematic gap between language on the one hand, and the material, experiential side to the condition on the other.

Towards a Materialist Framework

The second part of this thesis is concerned with the materiality of bodies in anorexia – bodies that are starving, that are 'wasted', as Richard Morton wrote, and that are slowly but surely turning into corpses. In this second part of the thesis, once more I take inspiration from Kolozova, who warns for the "complete silencing" of those who are erased from analysis and, thus, are left to be 'unreal' (2014, 72), meaning that whatever cannot be theorized from within a particular framework remains "unnoticed, unrecognized, and incomprehensible" (ibid.). In regard to the linguistic paradigm on anorexia, I am therefore concerned with the erasure of anorectic[1] bodies and, in this sense, their 'derealization' (ibid.). "And when their voices finally reach us they are noise to us, since their speech and what they are 'makes no sense to us'", Kolozova writes (ibid.). My overall aim in the second part of this thesis is to account for those bodies, to find a theoretical framework that welcomes them and that enables their recognition in terms of suffering and dying. Spurred by a "stubbornly realist attitude" (Latour 2004, 231), I therefore explore an approach to anorexia that highlights bodily pain and decay.

Consequently, the second part of this thesis follows a particularly *materialist* rather than linguistic branch in poststructuralist thought (Braidotti 2010, 238). This approach places

[1] In this thesis, 'anorectic' is used as an adjective (i.e. anorectic body) whereas '(the) anorexic' is used as a noun.

an emphasis on the subject as necessarily embedded, but moreover as fundamentally *embodied,* as an always-already corporeal being (Braidotti 2006, 153). With regard to the linguistic paradigm, this approach first of all concerns a shift in ontology. Rather than taking matter as the ontological other-than-mind/language, a materialist line of thought rests upon a metaphysics of *monism* – with mind and matter as necessarily intertwined (Grosz 1994, 11). Subsequently, I different role is given to the body – a body that exists not as the 'effect' of discourse (Colebrook 2000, 78) but that rather forms the very center of analysis (Grosz 1994, xi). Moreover, bodies are foregrounded not as passive, inert substances but as agential and productive (Gatens 1996, 57). Following Grosz' argument that "bodies have all the explanatory power of minds" (1994, vii) and that subjectivity can thus be explained in terms of embodiment, my central question in the second part of this thesis then concerns the body in anorexia, and asks what this body may communicate about the subject in anorexia.

On Space, Time, and Death: Situating the Body

My approach to this question in the second part of this thesis is structured by two notions: motion and duration. With the term 'motion', I refer to the Deleuzian and Spinozist understanding of the world in terms of fluxes and forces that incessantly morph into new bundles of being (Khalfa 2003, 29). It concerns a particular understanding of *space* made up of "infinitely small material elements" that continue to move into different formations (ibid.). Secondly, I focus on the concept of 'duration'. Duration marks the *continuity* of a particular "portion of forces" (Braidotti 2006, 157.) in such a way that they form an identifiable existent (Deleuze 2001, 29). Duration thus concerns the dimension of *time*, and forms the channel through which forces 'consolidate' into particular beings (Braidotti 2011b, 302).

In consideration of these two dimensions, I explore the bodies in anorexia: as bodies that exist as transformative bundles of elements, but that nevertheless form particular, identifiable selves. Thus, I approach them as bodies that are necessarily immersed in the dynamic and infinite realm of space, but also exist as particular concentrations of being throughout time. With this two-dimensional approach to bodily subjects as my theoretical framework, my aim is to foreground the anorectic body and to consider its 'explanatory power', as Grosz wrote. What is furthermore central in my account is the question of death. In my approach to anorectic embodiment, what structures my argument is the notion that the body, in anorexia, suffers and dies. The starvation in anorectic bodies thus forms an important element in my discussion , in which I focus on anorexia as a question of decay. I therefore understand the condition first and foremost as not only a material event but, in particular, as an event of material *collapse*. It is this collapse that I aim to bring to the fore, with the body approached in terms of suffering and death.

With the anorectic body as my starting point – a body that exists as a particular formation of space and time – I will consider one article that examines anorexia from a materialist angle: *The Haunted Flesh: Corporeal Feminism and The Politics of (Dis) Embodiment* (1998) by Abigail Bray and Claire Colebrook. This article moves beyond a linguistic understanding of anorexia and instead proposes a materialist account. Anorexia, the authors argue, is not simply a question of discursive signification but should rather be considered in terms of material force. This means to explore the region of forces through which anorexia unfolds; an always-already-embodied region of "metabolics, energy, and measurable force" (63).

On Power and Pain: An Anorectic Affair

The final part of my thesis forms a response to the article by Bray and Colebrook. Continuing on the two-dimensional understanding of embodiment and in consideration of anorexia as a matter of decay, I critically engage with this article's presentation of the condition. While aligning with an understanding of anorexia that moves beyond language, and that foregrounds a much wider, multidimensional network of 'anorectic forces', I also argue that an important element remains undiscussed. That is, *the body in pain* (Braidotti 2011b, 299)[2]: the body in anorexia that, indeed, is situated in a certain context, but that also suffers and dies. In my response to Bray and Colebrook's account of the condition, I particularly focus on their statement that anorexia concerns *only* certain forces – i.e. "activities of dietetics" – and that, as such, "there are no anorexics" (1998, 62).

I argue that although the authors present an important account of the spatial side to anorexia, with the condition understood in terms of a particular atmosphere of forces, the body in pain is lost in this account. My suggestion in the final part of this thesis is to shift the focus to the notion of time, and to therefore consider the *consolidation* of forces into a particular, identifiable being. I thus continue on the article by Bray and Colebrook, but specifically with the aim of bringing back the body in pain. As such, I emphasize the notion of duration: the process in time through which spatial elements form relatively stable collections of elements. From this angle, I propose a profoundly Spinozist approach to anorexia, with the body in anorexia understood as a *composite body*. As a body that exists only *as* a transformative collection of spatial elements, but nevertheless forms a recognizable unit throughout time (Deleuze 1990, 198).

[2] The notion of 'the body in pain' (Braidotti 2011b, 299) is central to my thesis and shall be referred to many times. In this thesis, it should per definition be understood in the context of Braidotti's corporeal materialist work, and thus in regard to the body as "an affective entity" (310): an entity that exists in/through its surroundings and, as such, necessarily deals with the often hurtful force of life (313).

It is this very unity of the body that I explore in the final part of this thesis. With the body in anorexia considered as a composite body, I inquire into the conditions of this body for it to sustain; for it to maintain its composition and to not fall apart. In consideration of the notion that "[t]he degree of power I have is my ability to persevere" (Garret, 1996, 207), I will explore the anorectic body in terms of power, and thus in terms of the extent to which this body maintains its composition. With the body in pain at the center of attention – a body that is per definition *collapsing* – I shall then propose a Spinozist approach to the condition. This means to consider anorexia as a matter of power and, in this sense, in terms of suffering and death.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of four chapters. The first two chapters can be considered as a *discourse analysis*, and are thus "concerned with analyzing patterns in language use in order to uncover the workings of ideology" (Griffin 2011, 98). Examining the 'patterns in language use' as employed in feminist poststructuralist scholarship on anorexia from the 1980s and 1990s, these two chapters aim to uncover the particular framework through which anorexia has been theorized. Seeing how feminist scholarship on anorexia can be characterized precisely as the critical analyzing of language, I consider these first two chapters as a discourse analysis of a discourse analysis.

In chapter one, I present feminist scholarship on anorexia from the 1980s and 1990s as a critical response to clinical explanations of the condition. Key to their response is first of all a postmodern critique on the objectivity in science and secondly a poststructuralist understanding of subjects as necessarily produced in language. Outlined in chapter one is the twofold argument in feminist linguistic thought on anorexia, concerning the discursive nature

of knowledge as well as subjectivity. Anorexia is thus underscored by feminist scholars as both discursively *known* as well as a discursive phenomenon *as it exists*.

In chapter two, I critically analyze the particular interpretation of the condition within feminist scholarship. In response to feminist discussions of anorexia in terms of language, I inquire into the limitations of a linguistic approach. Central to my argument in this chapter is the essentially dualist character of a linguistic ontology and the implicated 'cut' between language and matter, with anorexia presented as an essentially textual event.

Part two of this thesis is structured by a monist theoretical framework. In this part, I aim at forming an alternative to the linguistic paradigm on a cultural understanding of anorexia. This is a profoundly conceptual part of the thesis, that explores anorexia in a Deleuzian and Spinozist context. However, I consider my methodological approach in this part to also be an essentially materialist one, guided by precisely an agential understanding of matter (Barad 2007, 137). As such, I take the following statement by Kolozova as my methodological anchor point: that "[t]he lived escapes articulation through language" (2014, 70), and that the condition of anorexia thus necessarily overflows the borders of my writing. At the same time, I also happily build upon the notion of *intra-action* (Barad 2012, 77), with my theoretical drawing of anorexia not in abstraction from, but as inherently *entangled* with the world as it is lived (Thiele 2015, 104). This intra-action, the encounter between this matter and my mind, I consider to be a considerably intimate one in this thesis and my hope is that, together, we can allow for different voices to be heard.

In chapter three I will then engage in my materialist exploration of anorexia. Here, I first of all introduce a corporeal-materialist approach to the subject, building on the work of Grosz, Gatens, and Braidotti. With subjectivity understood in terms of embodiment, I suggest to bring the body in anorexia to the center of attention – as the explanatory agent of anorectic subjects. With the two-dimensional nature of bodies – in terms of space and time- as my point

of departure, I then turn to the article by Bray and Colebrook (1998): an article that presents a material account of the condition, in terms of the forces on the spatial field of anorexia. Considering the loss of the subject in this article, and in regard to the two-dimensions of embodiment, I argue in favor of an emphasis on time, in order to bring the focus back to the body in pain.

In my final chapter, chapter four, I conclude my argument for a materialist approach to anorexia. Central to my argument is a Spinozist understanding of the body: as a composite body, that needs to maintain the coherence amongst its component parts. From this angle, I consider anorexia as a question of decomposition, and thus as a situation in which one's coherence is lost. I will then propose a Spinozist account of suffering and death in anorexia, with the notion of bodily power at the center of my analysis. This thesis shall then conclude by returning once more to the article by Bray and Colebrook, to reinterpret their statement that "there are no anorexics".

Chapter One

From the Individual to the Social

Clinical Explanations of *Anorexia Nervosa* and the Feminist Discussion Since the 1980s

Introduction

Since the coining of the term *anorexia nervosa* (or 'want of appetite') by the English physician William Gull in 1873,[3] a widespread effort has been made to understand the origin of this condition: a condition characterized by starvation and the potential death of severely emaciated persons (APA 2013). This chapter focuses on the discussion that has taken place within feminist scholarship on anorexia during the 1980s and 1990s.[4] While feminist scholars have acknowledged that anorexia is a "multi-determined disorder" (Brumberg 1988, 24) that cannot be traced back to a single source, they have also critically responded to non-cultural, individual-oriented accounts of the condition.

Three perspectives can be distinguished when it comes to explaining anorexia: first, the psychological angle, according to which the condition relates to personality traits, family dynamics and childhood development; second, the biomedical perspective, which focuses on physiological determinants such as genes or neural functioning; and third, the feminist viewpoint, in which culture is taken as the primary determinant.

This chapter will analyze feminist scholarship on anorexia between the 1980s and 1990s and, in particular, in regard to the feminist response to theories that explain the condition in either psychological or physiological terms. Two key arguments dominate the feminist discussion on anorexia. First, feminist scholars argue that scientific knowledge about anorexia should by no means be taken as simply neutral or 'true'. It can offer only a limited understanding of a condition that, according to feminist theorists, is primarily culture- and

[3] See Gull's publication *V.-Anorexia Nervosa (Apepsia Hysterica, Anorexia Hysterica)* ([1873]1997).

[4] My focus in this chapter is on the way in which feminist scholars have explained anorexia in terms of causality. While a feminist, and in particular a feminist-Foucauldian perspective –a perspective that shall be explored further in this chapter - also allows for a critical discussion of the *definition* of anorexia in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), this is not where my emphasis lies. This choice has been made in consideration of the fact that the majority of feminist accounts of anorexia, from the 1980s and 1990s, focus on the question of causality. For a critical feminist-Foucauldian analysis of the *definition* of anorexia, as a 'mental disorder' in the *DSM*, see *The DSM and its lure of legitimacy* (Lafrance and McKenzie-Mohr 2013), and *DSM-5 and beyond: A critical feminist engagement with psychodiagnosis* (Marecek and Gavey 2013). In these articles, the focus lies on what Foucault describes as the "disciplinary power" inherent to psychiatry ([1973] 2006, 22).

gender-related (Malson 1998, x). In this regard, feminist scholarship on anorexia emerges from a wider context of postmodernist thought. A line of thought that can be understood as the critical stance towards the belief that science guarantees unmediated access to the world, and that there is indeed a neutral 'truth' to be captured about an object of inquiry (Lyotard [1979] 1984, 3, Fraser and Nicholson 1990, 22). Taking a postmodern approach to knowledge production, in which science is understood not as a neutral apparatus but rather as necessarily directed by cultural dynamics, feminist scholars hold that only a particular image of anorexia is being brought forward by the physicians: one that reduces anorexia to the 'disordered individual'. This is argued to not only contribute to the pathologization of women, but to also impede an analysis of cultural factors in anorexia (Gremillion 1992, Bordo 1993, 49-50).

Secondly, feminist scholars on anorexia understand individual subjects as necessarily produced from within social structures, and hold that the phenomenon should primarily be approached from a cultural perspective. Rather than taking anorexia as an individual's disturbance, whether physiologically or psychologically determined, a proper understanding of the condition requires analyzing the cultural norms that induce it. Central to this argument is the poststructuralist notion that one is never simply a self-enclosed individual but rather always-already socially produced (Namaste 1994, 221); furthermore, as definitively social subjects, individuals should be understood in relation to time- and culture-bound dynamics of power and language (Howarth 1987, 21, 32, 107, St. Pierre 2000, 481, Foucault [1975] 1977, 27). That people diagnosed with anorexia are mainly female is pivotal to the feminist discussion, since anorexia is understood as a question of gender and, from a social constructionist angle, as a question of the linguistic apparatus through which women are produced according to notions of 'femininity' (De Lauretis 1987, 5).

In this double-edged cultural analysis in feminist scholarship, anorexia emerges as not only contextually *understood*, within a particular scientific regime, but moreover as a cultural

product in its very *existence*, generated by the linguistic framework that informs women as social subjects. Rather than understanding anorexia as evolving from the 'nature' of an individual's constitution – a nature that is never objectively known and that is necessarily marked by social norms and values – feminist scholars have rearticulated the condition as a cultural phenomenon.

After outlining these two arguments on knowledge and the prevalence of anorexia, this chapter presents an overview of the specific interpretations of the condition within feminist scholarship. Theories that, in their social-constructionist approach, understand the condition to be "saying something about what it means to be a woman in late 20th century Western culture (Malson 1998, 6) and that underscore the importance of analyzing the linguistic construction of femininity (Bordo 1997, 94). This chapter then ends on a critical note, in which I introduce my concern with feminist scholarship on anorexia. My question here is a question on language, and on the relevance of bodies in an account of the condition. Whilst aligning with a cultural approach to anorexia, I ask whether language has now replaced the body altogether and whether anorexia is not also a material affair.

1.1 The Condition of Anorexia: Criteria and Statistics

In May 2013, the *American Psychiatric Association* published its latest edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5). Serving as a guideline for psychiatrists, psychologists and other health professionals, the *DSM* provides a classification of disorders according to diagnostic criteria (APA 2013, preface).

The section *Feeding and Eating Disorders* presents an overview of various kinds of disorders that are "characterized by a persistent disturbance of eating or eating-related behavior that results in the altered consumption of food and that significantly impairs physical

health or psychosocial functioning" (APA 2013).[5] In this section, *anorexia nervosa* is characterized by the following diagnostic criteria:

A. Restriction of energy intake relative to requirements, leading to a significantly low body weight …
B. Intense fear of gaining weight or of becoming fat, or persistent behaviour that interferes with weight gain, even though at a significantly low weight.
C. Disturbance in the way in which one's body weight or shape is experienced ... (APA 2013)

Other 'associated features' of anorexia are subsequently mentioned, such as depression, irritability, social withdrawal, insomnia, diminished interest in sex, restrained emotional expression, and excessive levels of physical activity. Furthermore, the *DSM-5* describes anorexia as a condition that involves various physical problems, most of which are attributable to starvation. Emaciation of the body in anorexia is stated to commonly occur in combination with dehydration, an irregular heartbeat, the absence of a menstrual period in the case of women, brittle bones, low blood pressure and certain levels of white blood cells that could lead to infections (ibid.). Resulting from either medical complications or suicide, the mortality rate amongst anorexic patients is estimated in the *DSM-5* at 5% per decade, making anorexia one of the most lethal psychiatric illnesses (see Arcelus et al. 2011). With an overall female-to-male ratio of 10:1, it is considered to be far more common amongst women than men, with a particularly high prevalence amongst female adolescents (APA 2013). Across social and cultural populations, anorexia is said to occur mainly in post-industrialized, wealthy countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the United States, European countries and Japan (ibid.). After a significant rise of incidences in the decades following the 1930s, the prevalence of anorexia is considered to have stayed relatively stable since the 1970s

[5] For the specific source of this chapter in the *DSM-5*, see doi: abs/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596.dsm10 (APA 2013).

(Vandereycken and Noordenbos 2002, 33), remaining at an estimated 0.4% of all young women (APA 2013, Hoek 2006).

1.2 Personality, Genes and Hormones: Psychological and Biomedical Explanations

Since the term *anorexia nervosa* was officially introduced in 1873, a multitude of theories have been presented on the question of its causality. Anorexia's origins have been an interest of not only psychologists and psychiatrists,[6] but also of neuroscientists, geneticists and other biomedical scientists,[7] as well as of feminist scholars.[8] The field of research on anorexia is therefore threefold, and made up of feminist, biomedical and psychological studies.

Within psychological research, anorexia is understood as primarily resulting from the functioning of an individual's psyche. Personality traits, childhood development and family dynamics are taken into account here as chiefly responsible for the eating disorders. Hilde Bruch, a pioneer in the psychological approach to anorexia, is known for presenting the condition as closely entangled with inadequate 'relational skills' due to an overly protective family environment (Gremillion 1992, 63). Because of limitations on the subject's space for self-expression, the anorexic grows up being insufficiently equipped to make autonomous decisions, and expresses through anorexia an extreme attempt to please and conform (Bruch 1973, 78-86). More recent psychological research supports and extends the notion that there is a close relationship between anorexia and one's psyche and family situation. Steiger et al. (1996) report how personality traits such as "affective instability," "compulsivity," "narcissism" and "anxiousness" (148) are related to eating disorders, with the heritability of these traits supporting the idea of anorexia being strongly familial in nature (155). The notion

[6] See Bruch 1973; Steiger et al. 1996; Wonderlich et al. 2005; Ahrén et al. 2012 and Allen et al. 2014.
[7] See Toner et al. 1987; Houy et al. 2007; Kaye et al. 2008; Schur et al. 2009; Spanos et al. 2010; Keating 2010; Friederich et al. 2013 and Goddard et al. 2013.
[8] See Boskind-Lodahl 1976; Chernin 1981; Wolf 1990; Bordo 1993; Orbach 1986; Brumberg 1988; Fallon et al. 1994 and Malson 1998.

that personality traits are determining factors for anorexia is further underscored by Wonderlich et al. (2005), who underline "high degrees of obsessionality, restraint and perfectionism" (68) as risk factors in regard to the condition. Ahrén et al. (2012) also argue in favor of psychological factors, but differ by accounting for anorexia with psychosocial determinants such as social class and parents' level of education. High maternal education is associated here with an increased risk of anorexia amongst daughters, particularly in situations where mothers with a higher education are not working outside the home (367).

From a biomedical angle, anorexia is not related to the subject's personality and/or surrounding family dynamics but is instead explained by physiological features. Here, the main cause of anorexia is allegedly located within an individual's physical constitution. Neuroscientific research (Houy et al. 2007; Goddard et al. 2013) suggests that a lesion in the right frontal lobe of the brain may be a causal factor, as it can trigger a distorted body image resulting in anorexic symptoms such as dieting and a fear of increased body weight. Geneticists however, argue that anorexia might have a heritable component and that the condition should be studied with regards to a subject's genetic constitution. With reference to a quantitative exploration of the families of individuals affected by anorexia, they suggest that the condition is "highly familial" in nature (Kaye et al. 2008, 290) and that one's genetic disposition can influence their susceptibility to the condition (297). Aside from the genetic and neuroscientific understanding of anorexia, a third biomedical approach exists: namely, hormonal science (Keating 2010). Observing the "significantly greater prevalence of AN [*anorexia nervosa*] in females" (190) this analysis takes estrogen (also known as the female hormone) as its object of research. With self-starvation and excessive exercise understood as anorexia's defining features, the focus is here on the extent to which persons, in their hormonal make-up, are sensitive to feelings of accomplishment. In this regard, the studies

conclude that estrogen might play a mediating role, making women more susceptible to "the experience of stress and reward" and, consequently, to being affected by anorexia (198).

1.3: Disordered Women and The Clinical Gaze: Feminism, Knowledge, and the Question of Discourse

From a feminist angle,[9] much criticism has been directed towards both psychological and biomedical explanations of anorexia. It is commonly emphasized in feminist scholarship that the condition should be understood as a primarily social rather than individual phenomenon, and as a specifically female rather than sex-neutral problem that is thoroughly interwoven with the way in which society imposes certain norms and values upon women (Chernin 1981, 101, Brumberg 1988, 2, Wolf 1990, 189, Bordo 1993, 32) . In contrast to the belief that anorexia springs from an individual's psyche or physiology, feminist scholarship considers the condition to be inherently entangled with socio-cultural dynamics and particular notions of femininity. Helen Malson (1998) introduces the feminist critique on clinical, non-cultural interpretations of anorexia with the following:

> [M]edicine, psychiatry and psychology have presented us with particular ways of understanding eating disorders…which are by no means the only ones from which we can understand our experiences. (Malson 1998, x)

Before considering various feminist explanations of anorexia, what is first of all important here is the notion that physicians bring only certain *perspectives* forward rather than an all-

[9] In my use of the terms feminism here, I take into account that feminism is not an uncontested term. As pointed out by e.g. Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre (2000, 477), no single, unitary feminism exists and the feminist take on anorexia brought forward here thus represents only one branch in feminist thought. This concerns a poststructuralist line of thought in which patriarchal structures are analysed in terms of their "linguistic, social, material effects on women" (486).

encompassing ‘truth’ about the condition. Deeply embedded in the postmodern perception of science, this notion questions “the ability of rational scientific thought to discover truth” (McLaren 2002, 20), as well as its objectivity and neutrality within knowledge production (Fraser and Nicholson 1990, 26). From a postmodern perspective, scientific truth production is approached not as an autonomous, context-independent practice but rather as “a kind of discourse” (Lyotard [1979] 1984, 3) and, in this sense, as structured by the technologies through which observation takes place (Latour and Woolgar [1979] 1986, 36) and by the language employed in a particular period of time (Foucault [1969] 1974, 27). My reading of discourse follows Joan Scott’s articulation of the term. As she notes, it concerns the “historically, socially, [and] institutionally specific structure of statements, terms, categories and beliefs,” which are “contained or expressed in organizations and institutions as well as in words” (Scott 1988, 35). It is therefore the overall thought system, engrained in both nonverbal social dimensions as well as in particular forms of talking, that effects a certain way of understanding the world. Also, with regards to what Foucault describes as “a whole machinery for speechifying, analysing and investigating” ([1976] 1978, 32), one should understand ‘language’ in the broadest sense of the word, as the general communication apparatus through which the world is rendered intelligible.

What should also be taken into account when considering the feminist stance on anorexia is the Foucauldian understanding of knowledge as always-already intertwined with “relations of power” (1980, 93). Power is articulated here not as an autocratic, centralized institution, but as a circulating force; never “localised here or there” (98) in the hands of certain individuals but functioning instead as a “complex strategic situation” (Foucault [1976] 1978, 93). Power, in this sense, does not have a “headquarters” (95) but instead embeds the social subject in a network of relations; a network that compels one to speak in a particular way about things in the world. From a postmodern and Foucauldian perspective then, truth

production does not take place in an isolated, neutral realm of scientists but rather from within social dynamics that "demand" a certain approach to an object of research (93). In regard to scientific 'facts' on anorexia, what is central to the feminist critique then is the notion that research never takes place from a transcendent, 'God's eye view' (Haraway 1988, 587) and always from within a language that allows for only a particular kind of knowledge about a certain topic (see also Hall 2006, 165). Psychological and biomedical interpretations of anorexia are therefore not necessarily seen as 'false' but as definitively partial and incomplete (Brumberg 1988, 31).

The political nature of feminist criticisms on the biomedical and psychological approach is at the same time notable. Underscoring that the scientific gaze sheds only a particular light upon its object (Foucault [1963] 1973, xiii), and that a certain partiality is therefore unavoidable in research on anorexia, is not to argue that different explanations of the condition are all equal in their relative veracity and value (Bordo 1993, 52-53). Moreover, feminist scholars engage in a critical analysis of what Foucault describes as "the division between what is stated and what remains unsaid" ([1963] 1973, xi), and are therefore concerned with the phenomenon of anorexia as it is *not* represented in the clinical discourse. By considering the inherent perspectivism of scientific perception as well as its manifestation "against a background of objectivity" (xiv), feminist scholarship on anorexia has aimed to unfold those aspects that remain imperceptible from a scientific point of view (Brumberg 1988, 26-27, Bordo 1993, 47-49, Malson 1998, 188).

What is lost out of sight, according to feminist scholars, is the fundamentally historical and cultural nature of anorexia. What is rendered imperceptible and incomprehensible by focusing on the individual's psyche or biomedical constitution is the fact that anorexia is a phenomenon of culture – characterized by a particularly high incidence amongst women in post-industrialized, Western countries (Brumberg 1988, 31, Wolf 1990, 198, Bordo 1993, 50).

Why an estimated 90% of anorexics are female and why there has been a rise in incidences during the second half of the twentieth century have been pivotal questions in feminist scholarship (Chernin 1981, 96). From the starting point that an explanation of anorexia should first and foremost be sought in socio-cultural dynamics (Fallon et al. 1996, ix), any theory that examines anorexia separately from culture is critically questioned.[10] [11][12]

Along with the lack of attention given to culture, feminist criticisms focus on the consequent framing of the anorectic woman. In line with the analysis of Ehrenreich and English (1979) of the creation of 'the pathological woman' in medical discourse, feminist scholars have argued how a naturalistic, non-cultural approach to anorexia produces the anorectic as a deviant (Gremillion 1992, 59). Problematized here is the notion that one is, psychologically or physiologically, either 'healthy' or 'sick' and that anorexia is in this sense understood as an individual's abnormality (Malson 1998, x). [13] Together with the fact that it is mainly women who suffer from anorexia, it is argued that psychiatry and biomedicine's theories of anorexia reproduce old-fashioned stereotypes of 'womanhood as pathology' (Gremillion 1992, Bordo 1993, 49, Malson 1998, 47). Tying into this is the argument that an approach to anorexia 'as pathology' is based on restrictive assumptions of 'normal' or

[10] Susan Bordo is quite explicit in this regard in the following statement: "Looking to biology to explain the low prevalence of eating disorders among men is like looking to genetics to explain why nonsmokers do not get lung cancer as often as smokers" (1993, 53).

[11] In response to the psychological approach to anorexia, and its suggestion that the condition might evolve from family dynamics, Naomi Wolf (1990) points to the increasing number of anorexia cases since the 1960s as demonstrative of the shortcomings of this theory. Seeing the improbability of certain families being suddenly "dysfunctional in this particular way" (198), a suchlike account, she notes, cannot explain the rise of eating disorders amongst college women during the last decennia (ibid.).

[12] Regarding the biomedical approach taken to the anorectic body, Joan Jacobs Brumberg (1988) acknowledges both its validity and necessity, whilst also arguing that no biological theory has yet been able to explain the "anorexic population" in its entirety (26). Even though (as she writes) the physical disturbances in anorexia must be taken seriously, no biochemical substance, such as the brain, genes or hormones, has been able to account for the prevalence of anorexia in terms of time, space and gender (ibid).

[13] Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963) and *Madness and Civilization* (1961) deserve to be mentioned in this regard. In these works, Foucault outlines how the "medical gaze" (Foucault [1963] 1973, xii) imposes a certain meaning on its object of study, while he also analyses the institutionalization of madness (Foucault [1961] 2001). That said, (see also footnote 2) what is of primary interest to this chapter is not the psychopathological (DSM-) definition of anorexia. Rather, it is about the non-cultural ways in which anorexia is explained in terms of its *causality* and, only secondarily tying into this, about the resultant framing of the anorexic as a 'pathologogical woman'.

'healthy' experiences of young women (Malson 1998, x).[14] By considering anorexia as a deviance from the 'normal', as something that exists in an enclosed realm of sickness, the focus of psychiatric or biomedical theories is shifted away from the socio-cultural realm that, according to feminist scholars, forms the very root of the problem (Bordo 1993, 52).

1.4 Anorexia and the 'Language of Femininity': Gendered Bodies and Discursive Inscription

As has become clear, feminist scholars have objected to both psychological and biomedical theories of anorexia. Theories that approach anorexia in separation from culture and in which the focus lies with an individual's constitution. Feminist explanations, on the other hand, have been based on a twofold logic. First and foremost, anorexia is taken as a case in which "nearly all the sufferers are female" (Fallon et al. 1996, ix) and thus above all as a gender-specific issue. Secondly, understanding gender as an always-already *culturally informed* expression of masculinity or femininity (Conboy and Medina 1997, 6-7), feminists perceive anorexia as a "discursive event" (Malson 1998, 49) and therefore as embedded in a particular time and space. While this view does not dismiss other possible factors at play, such as biological or psychological aspects (Orbach 1988, 9, Brumberg 1988, 24), feminist scholarship is preoccupied by the way in which gender, as a cultural manifestation, "predisposes women to eating disorders" (Fallon et al. 1996, ix). Central here is a poststructuralist understanding of the subject: a subject that is always-already "embedded in a complex network of social relations" (Namaste 1994, 221) and formed by the language one is "born into" (Coward and

[14] Interesting in this regard is Canguilhem's *On the Normal and the Pathological* ([1966] 1978) where he argues how "the concept of disease" (67) always carries a certain judgment or normative value, with the 'normal' or 'non-pathological' generally understood in terms of a desirable, healthy life within the physiological discourse; a discourse that, according to him, has a principle interest in 'diagnosis and cure' and therefore requires the establishment of standards in order to measure its success (68, 137). Seeing how life, however, is often marked by a state of non-health, or even by a "morbid state" (137), Canguilhem argues that the pathological should, in fact, be taken as a normality rather than abnormality (ibid.) "since the pathological is one kind of normal" (115).

Ellis 1977, 108).[15] In this regard, what is key to the feminist argument on anorexia is not only the discursive nature of *knowledge* on the condition, but moreover that the very *prevalence* of anorexics is culture-bound (Orbach 1988, 93). What is important in this respect is that, contrary to the Cartesian notion of subjects as endowed with an autonomous, ahistoric intentionality that is only subsequently "expressed in language" (Butler 1995, 136), poststructuralist feminist theory perceives language as *preceding* intentionality and thereby as *constituting* the subject (St. Pierre 2000, 501). In line with Saussurean semiotics, social practices are analyzed by these scholars in terms of language, with language understood as the signifying force in the human social realm (Coward and Ellis 1977, 1-3). Rather than taking subjects as naturally unfolding independently of their context, subjectivity is seen as essentially molded by structures of social meaning: structures that shape the identity of one's being from the very start (Weedon 1987, 32-33, Howarth 2013, 27).[16]

From this perspective, an in-depth understanding of anorexia and the anorectic subject requires a critical analysis of the linguistic relations that underpin the condition (Bordo 1993, 26). Taking 'ideology' to mean the way in which subjects are produced in language (Coward & Ellis 1977, 2) this approach aims to clarify the ideological structure in which anorexia unfolds (Brumberg 1988,4, Malson 1998, 7). Of primary importance for feminist scholars is the fact that anorexia mainly affects women (Fallon, Katzman, and Wooley 1996, ix). Central, therefore, is not only a general awareness of the linguistic formation of subjects, but also the formation of subjects as men and women from within a certain cultural context. What is pivotal to the feminist view of anorexia is the social-constructionist idea that activities and behaviors are not 'naturally' masculine or feminine but, rather, *constructed* according to

[15] In this chapter, the term 'poststructuralism' refers to its *linguistic* branch, in differentiation from the *material* direction within poststructuralist thought (see Braidotti 2010, 238).

[16] See here Weedon (1987) who notes in respect to Saussure's structuralist linguistics "that language, far from reflecting an already given social reality, constitutes social reality for us. Neither social reality nor the 'natural' world has fixed intrinsic meanings which language reflects or expresses." (22) Language should therefore be understood not as neutrally mediating the relations amongst people, but as per definition *constructing* these relations. Nothing exists outside of the realm of language, and it is only through language that the world is to be understood (23).

either one of these two categories within historically contingent socio-cultural dynamics (Beauvoir 1949, West and Zimmerman 1987, 126-127). In distinction from sex, or the biological and anatomical predisposition of men and women, gender figures here as the system of *representation* in which individuals come to express themselves as male or female in discursively informed ways (De Lauretis 1987, 5).[17] Always-already situated within social arrangements, the subject is understood to be 'gendered' from the moment of birth and throughout the micro-practices of everyday life, mediated by "systems of meaning, symbolic representations and power relations" (Malson 1998, 6). The feminist approach to anorexia is therefore about the way in which the cultural dynamic produces the categories of 'masculine' and 'feminine' that govern the deep tissues of a subject's identity and about the "semiotic apparatus" (De Lauretis 1987, 5) in which subjects come to understand and represent themselves as men and women (see Bordo 1997, 99).[18]

For some feminist scholars, anorexia is then seen as a direct replication of (or surrender to) particular notions of femininity – and, in Foucauldian terms, as a pre-eminent example of subjects being turned into 'docile bodies'.[19] From this angle, anorexia is understood to concern a desire to be thin and meet a certain beauty standard (Seid 1994), whilst also being linked to the image of the "desirable woman": one who has no desires, needs or hungers (Tolman and Debold 1994). The anorectic woman, then, conforms to an ideal notion of femininity by constraining herself not only in regard to food but also to her overall passions and yearnings: gradually dissociating, through anorexia, from her body as a whole (312). In a less direct sense, anorexia is also interpreted as the docile conformation to

[17] See de Lauretis (1987) who argues that "[g]ender is not sex, a state of nature, but the representation of each individual in terms of a particular social relation which pre-exists the individual and that is predicated on the *conceptual* and rigid (structural) opposition of two biological sexes" (5).
[18] Central to de Lauretis' argument here is Althusser's notion of 'interpellation', regarding the way in which one is addressed, or called upon, by a certain social signification such that it is accepted or 'absorbed' to the extent that one understands and represents oneself entirely accordingly (De Lauretis 1987, 12).
[19] See Foucault's *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* ([1975] 1977) in which he argues how social subjects are 'disciplined' by social relations of power, and 'rearranged' into "subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies" (138) that are made to comply to the dominant discourse in society.

patriarchal structures by reaching certain ideals *via* the pursuit of thinness (Boskind-Lodahl 1976). Caught up in role patterns of motherhood and wifehood, the anorexic operates according to this theory as the ultimately obedient woman, and therefore as the woman who is disproportionately concerned with pleasing others (346). Joan Jacobs Brumberg (1988) argues along a somewhat similar line by stating that anorexia "constitutes a modern credo of self-denial (7). Directed by the high social status of thinness, the condition forms a secular striving towards personal salvation. For Brumberg, anorexia therefore "illustrates the predicament" of young women in a society where thinness is raised "to its highest moral plane" (ibid.).

Without disavowing the seriousness of the condition, other feminist authors have focused on anorexia as a form of resistance or rejection; for them, it becomes an ambiguous form of resistance to particular cultural structures, in which, ultimately, the anorexic defeats herself. For Kim Chernin (1981), anorexia is a symbolic illness that expresses or "speaks" (102) a social protest: a protest against not only cultural expectations imposed on women but also against the downgrading of all that is associated with physical plenitude (198).[20] This protest, according to Chernin, is at the same time filled with "passionate contradiction" (108), given that the anorectic, through her rejection of the female body, also conforms to a culture which dictates that the mind ought to govern the physical realm (53-59). Naomi Wolf (1990), another important feminist scholar on anorexia, also understands the condition as a form of rejection – and as a way to avoid all that is associated with womanhood (203). Wolf argues in this regard that the turning away from the female body is related to oppressive beauty standards and the "negative representation of female fat" (191).[21] For Susie Orbach (1988), anorexia both 'symbolizes' the desire as well as inability to meet certain ideals of femininity:

[20] This, according to Chernin, concerns a culture's disregard for not only the abundancy of the flesh with all its needs and desires (1981, 56) but also the undervaluation of ecstasy, passion, pleasures in the body and our "kinship with nature" (198), leading to the "impoverishment of the female soul" (195) in an era in which women are engaged in a "battle about the soul" (196).

[21] Naomi Wolf elaborates on the issue of beauty standards, which she understands to be closely related to a public social order that has a 'material interest' in keeping women preoccupied with their bodies (1990, 189); especially since women have become more powerful in the public realm during the second half of the twentieth century (186).

ideals such as self-sacrifice and obedience (10). Although anorexia, according to Orbach, is partly due to the incorporation of these norms, it is also through its extreme character that a certain protest is expressed: a protest against the inner conflict women experience between social expectations and their own desires (24).

The notion that anorexia should be seen as a self-destructive form of protest is, last but not least, also affirmed by Susan Bordo, who emphasizes the "tragically self-defeating nature" of the condition (1997, 99). For Bordo, there is a particularly strong sense of 'docility' in anorexia, as the body of the anorexic is "deeply inscribed with an ideological construction of femininity" (1993, 168). Bordo thereby further emphasizes the linguistic character of the condition: a condition that, in her words, marks the "painfully literal inscription" of cultural values upon the bodies of women (1997, 95), such as hyper-slenderness, and the requirement to feed others rather than oneself (95-96). It is in this regard that she urges us to understand the anorexic as deeply immersed in a "language of femininity" (99): a language of asceticism, hunger, self-sacrifice and slenderness (95-96, 98). As such, Bordo argues, anorexia cannot be understood without "[r]eading the slender body" (1993, 187) against this background of discursive values.

1.5 On Language and Matter: A Preliminary Note

Feminist scholarship from the 1980s and 1990s has thus approached anorexia in terms of a discursive network of social meaning in which women in contemporary Western culture are embedded. In response to psychological and biomedical explanations of the condition, which focus primarily on the individual anorexic, feminist scholars have argued in favor of cultural interpretations. Their accounts have been characteristic of a social constructionist perspective that takes anorexia to be primarily a question of gender and discourse. As such, anorexia is

understood in terms of the culture-bound thought system through which women come to represent themselves as 'feminine'.This perspective thus focuses not on an individual's psychological or physiological constitution, but, as Bordo writes, on the 'language of femininity' inscribed unto women's bodies.

In the next chapter, I argue that although feminist scholarship on anorexia has been indispensable in emphasizing the cultural rather than merely individual dimension of the condition, one can also problematize the way in which anorexia came to be presented in the social constructionist discourse. In my critical engagement with this discourse, my focus is on the notion of language and on the presentation of anorexia within feminist scholarship as an essentially linguistic event. In this regard, I will present a twofold argument in response to the social constructionist formulation of the condition. First, I argue that linguistic views on anorexia have been based on a dualist, and essentially Cartesian theoretical framework that entails the separation of matter and mind. In consideration of the fact that language has been understood in social constructionist thought as inscribing, and generating bodies, I note that the Cartesian dictum is reproduced according to which matter exists only as passive, inert substance. Secondly, I argue that this dualist formula has resulted in an ontological presentation of anorexia according to which it exists *only as language*. Building upon the work of Katerina Kolozova (2014) and Vicky Kirby (2002, 2011), I highlight how the binary of mind versus matter implies a binary of language versus life, with the material, experiential dimension of anorexia being neglected in feminist scholarship. Taking anorexia as not merely a linguistically embedded phenomenon but also as a profoundly bodily, material condition, my aim is then to explore a framework that brings the body back to the surface and that takes more seriously the question of matter.

Chapter Two

From Symbols and Signs to Bodies and Bones

Problematizing the Linguistic Paradigm

Introduction

Preoccupied by the question of "why so many anorectics right now" (Brumberg 1988, 27), particularly in respect to the high percentage of women amongst them, the feminist quest has been to lay bare the base upon which anorexia thrives and to emphasize the condition in its cultural dimension. In response to the naturalistic stance of physicians, who explain anorexia as either a medical or psychological complication of an individual, feminist scholarship has foregrounded a contextual and gender-specific approach to the phenomenon. Guided by a poststructuralist, Foucauldian understanding of the subject as produced within discourse, with gender as an essentially linguistic apparatus that constructs the subject as either masculine or feminine, feminist scholars have explained anorexia in light of both the discursive construction of womanhood and a particular "language of femininity" (Bordo 1997, 99).

The feminist response to psychological and medical interpretations of anorexia has been highly valuable. Along with the recognition of anorexia as a culture-bound rather than simply individual phenomenon, a critical stance has been developed toward the 'facts' on anorexia brought forward within science. This critical viewpoint has emphasized the postmodern notions that science does not simply effectuate an unmediated access to an outside world (Latour and Woolgar [1979] 1986, 36, Haraway 1988, 587), that the scientific gaze is always discursively directed (Lyotard [1979] 1984, 3), and that phenomena are thereby never directly knowable 'as they are' in the neutrality of their supposed nature (St. Pierre 2000, 496). Feminist scholars have thus been able to identify the clinical paradigm of anorexia not only as incomplete, considering its inability to account for the cultural dimension (Brumberg 1988, 31), but moreover as discursively motivated in its pathologization of the condition (Gremillion 1992).

However, questions can be raised regarding the way in which the feminist tradition has subsequently approached anorexia in terms of culture. Distancing themselves from naturalistic approaches and the "Cartesian dream of a unified system of absolute knowledge" (Bordo 1987, 4), feminist scholars have argued instead for a cultural, contextual approach to anorexia. This entails not only understanding scientific knowledge of anorexia as discursively informed but also considering the very existence of the phenomenon as effected by discourse. In response to this view on anorexia, my argument in this chapter is twofold. I aim to show first and foremost that a linguistic approach to anorexia has essentially been based on a Cartesian, dualist ontological framework that is structured by the separation of mind and matter, as well as by the predominance of the first category over the latter (Hatfield 2014, 123, Coole 2010, 94). Second, I also aim to demonstrate that a gap has subsequently arisen between discourse on the one hand and the experiential, embodied dimension of anorexia on the other. Central to my argument here is that the embodied experience of anorexia has remained out of sight in feminist scholarship, with bodies understood as only secondary to language.

This chapter therefore emphasizes the problems inherent to a linguistic approach to anorexia. While it also explores a more materialist approach to language, as outlined in the work of Judith Butler, it argues that a linguistic logic eventually prevents the acknowledgement of anorexia in its experiential and profoundly embodied dimension. Furthermore, it argues that this forms a problem of "political annihilation" (Kolozova 2014, 72) in the sense that the unintelligibility of bodily experience within the linguistic paradigm leaves anorexics in a realm of the "unreal" (ibid.); they become unknowable from within a framework that takes language as the primary ontological agent and are therefore lost from sight in the reality of their starvation.

I conclude by arguing for an "ontological reorientation" (Coole and Frost 2010, 6-7) and thus in favor of an alternative theoretical framework that, in a departure from dualist thought, allows for a different view of the phenomenon of anorexia. A shift to a monist ontology is instead proposed. This monist ontology is a conceptual framework that moves beyond the binaries of mind versus matter, language versus life, and culture versus nature (Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012, 85) and that 'rethinks matter' (107) in such a way that anorexics can be understood not only as embedded in "a network of social relations" (Namaste 1994, 221) but also as fundamentally *embodied* subjects (Braidotti 2002, 21). With bodies at the very center of analysis (Grosz 1994, xi) instead of on the sideline as only the "secondary accompaniment" of discourse (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 41), what could then be explored is an account of anorexia that addresses the questions of starvation and death.

2.1 Semiotic Structures and the Body in Pain: In Search of the Question of Starvation

Feminist discussions on anorexia have been directed away from theories that explain the condition in either psychological or physiological terms. From the starting point that anorexia is primarily a culture-bound phenomenon that affects women in particular (Orbach 1988, 93), an explanatory approach is adhered to that addresses gender-specific role patterns in society and emphasizes the social sphere as the primary constitutive realm of human beings. With 'discourse' concerning the social structure of "statements, terms, categories and beliefs" (Scott 1988, 35), subjects have been understood not as autonomous, ahistoric individuals (Butler 1995, 136) but as fundamentally discursive entities who come into being from within the socio-cultural, linguistic domain (St. Pierre 2000, 500). An understanding of gender as a "semiotic apparatus" has been pivotal (De Lauretis 1987, 5) – as a representational system that is marked upon the sexes, and within which women come to manifest themselves in

respect to a certain construction of the 'feminine' (ibid.). With the subject of anorexia as a linguistically embedded entity by definition, as a subject that is "constructed through language" (McNay 1992, 2), the project has been to make sense of the force of language as a force that, in Foucault's terms on power, "invests" individual bodies in society (Foucault [1975] 1977, 27).[22] According to Susan Bordo, women's bodies are invested with a certain "ideology of gender" (1993, 99), whereby the anorexic attempts to resist but simultaneously reproduces a "language of femininity" (1997, 99) of slenderness, voicelessness, passivity, and obedience (see also Boskind-Lodahl 1976, Chernin 1981, Wolf 1990). The understanding of gender as a semiotic apparatus is thus central here, along with the de Beauvoirian notion that 'one is not born but becomes a woman' (Beauvoir [1949] 2011, 330) within a social system of words and signs that represents the 'masculine' and 'feminine' in a particular way (De Lauretis 1987, 4).

When Kim Chernin argues that anorexia 'speaks' a certain protest (1981, 102) or Brumberg writes that it 'illustrates' the problematic situation of young women in Western society (1988, 7), it should however not go unnoticed that, along with the question of causality, assumptions are made about the ontological status of the condition. This is to say that, a presupposition as to what the condition essentially *entails* is deeply engrained in the idea of anorexia being discursively produced. When Susie Orbach argues that anorexia 'symbolizes' the values that are structuring women's lives (1986, 10) or when Bordo notes that it is question of 'textuality' (1997, 93), anorexia is presented as an event in which language is expressed, and thus as a fundamentally linguistic affair. An affair that is not only linguistically embedded, but that, in essence, exists as a particular verbalization of social

[22] Feminist readings of Foucault, in discussions on anorexia, have been predominantly linguistic – with the "relations of power" (Foucault 1980, 93) that are "exercised on the body" (Foucault [1975] 1977, 26) understood according to a linguistic, Saussurean interpretation of the subject. That Foucault's work also allows for a more materialist reading is pointed out by Susan Hekman (2008) who argues that one can interpret his thought as in fact challenging the dichotomy between language and matter, rather than as a presentation of the social world in purely discursive terms.

codes (see also Brumberg 1988, 2-4). Within a social constructionist framework, anorexia thus exists as the result of discourse but at the very same time as a semiotic apparatus *in itself*, symbolizing the 'language of femininity' that one is expected to take up.

My question is whether such an ontological understanding of anorexia is sufficient. Sufficient in the sense that it acknowledges the condition's cultural dimension while also giving space to subjective experience and, more specifically, to subjective *embodied* experience. While the social constructionist discussion on anorexia has been indispensable in highlighting the structural character of the phenomenon, I argue that the realm of material experience became overshadowed: a realm filled by bodies that endure and enact more than language. What I see as problematic is the reduction of a situation of pain, starvation, and potential death to a question of language. Even though cultural dynamics need to be acknowledged in the context of anorexia, what cannot go unnoticed is the profoundly material hardship in this condition. A condition in which bodies display themselves as skeletons "only clad with skin" (Morton 1720, 8) and in which an overall organ failure marks a subject's decay (APA 2013).

An acknowledgement of anorexia in terms of starvation and death, and thus in terms of a *body in pain* (Braidotti 2011b, 299), is however not easily established within a social constructionist understanding of the subject. When the body is viewed as being 'inscribed' with certain codes (Bordo 1997, 90), the body of an anorexic can only be approached in terms of these codes and the 'language of femininity' that the subject is allegedly involved in. What remains undiscussed then from within a sex versus gender logic, is the material dimension of anorexia. A body that is categorized under the notion of sex; as the dimension one needs to stay away from considering the threat of reductionist, naturalistic tendencies.[23] This body,

[23] As argued by Samantha Coole and Diana Frost (2010), the constructivist, linguistic paradigm has been characteristic of an "allergy to 'the real'" (6); an allergy to the thought of a material reality, due to a concern of returning to the "insidious foundationalism" of more empirical kinds of research, such as biology. Along this

however, is not arbitrary in anorexia. While I underscore that anorexics are embedded in discourse, and thus in a particular "system of signs and symbols" (Brumberg 1988, 4), I also understand them to be fundamentally *embodied* (Braidotti 2002, 74)[24] and immersed in a process of starvation and collapse. Considering, therefore, that matter *matters* beyond the scope of representation (Barad 2007, 132) and that anorexia concerns a profoundly material experience, an alternative theoretical framework needs to be explored. One that goes beyond the sex versus gender logic and that brings the question of materiality in anorexia to the fore.

2.2 From Anorexia to 'Anorexia': Butler's Radical Potential and the Loss of the Material

As underscored by Helen Malson and Jane Ussher (1996) in response to social constructionist understandings of anorexia, there is a problem with a conception of the body as 'outside of culture', as a natural, neutral entity that exists over and against a discourse of 'femininity' (269). What these authors point to is that social constructionist accounts of the condition are based on a conceptual opposition of sex versus gender, or 'nature' versus 'culture', with the 'natural' female body as preceding the social realm (ibid.). In regard to this sex/gender distinction in social constructionist accounts of anorexia, I argue that an alternative framework needs to be examined. While analyses of the condition in terms of gender have highlighted its structural dimension, the bodies in anorexia have remained out of sight. From the viewpoint that anorexia is not only a discursive phenomenon but also a profoundly material experience, my exploration in this section concerns a more material approach to the subject. The aim here is to see whether bodies can be brought back into an account of anorexia, while not dismissing the cultural dynamics at play.

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line, Moira Gatens (1996) argues how gender has been favored over sex within constructivist feminism due to the "dangers of biological reductionism".

[24] Braidotti (2002) argues how subjects are always-already embedded as well as embodied entities, immersed in "a process of negotiation between material and semiotic conditions" (74) and thus necessarily entangled with linguistic structures but at the same time materially situated.

This aim is approached by departing from a social constructionist angle and instead turning to the work of Judith Butler. What is key here is that, while social constructionists have posited discourse as over and against the body or 'sex,' Butler pays much attention to the material side of discourse. She views discourse not in separation from the ostensibly natural, pre-social state of a subject (West and Zimmerman 1987, 127), but rather as essentially *inclusive* of its bodies (Butler 1997, 406). What I consider as an important point in Butler's work is that constructionist theorists' neglect of materiality is based on their particular understanding of language (Butler [1993] 2011, xiv).[25] A Saussurean understanding of language, that explains subjects in terms of the 'masculine' or 'feminine' values through which they come to represent themselves (Coward and Ellis 1977, 3, De Lauretis 1987, 5). Within social constructionism, subjects are thus understood to be 'marked' by meaning and by a certain gendered identity. Its body, or sex, is however seen as a natural state, as "the basis upon which cultural meanings are constructed" (Nicholson 1994, 81), and as an essentially context-independent biological entity (West and Zimmerman 1987, 127).

It is in regard to this notion of the body's biological, pre-given nature that Butler changes course. Directed by a Lacanian line of thought (see Kirby 2002, 273), Butler's work addresses the more "radical potentiality" (Coward and Ellis 1977, 5) of language to not only endow the subject with a social meaning, but to moreover involve the materiality of one's being (8).[26] Language is thus understood as enclosing matter from the very start; matter always-already comes to be 'materialized', or solidified, *within* the structures and regulatory norms of discourse (Butler [1993] 2011, xviii). There is no neutral body or 'sex' upon which

[25] Considering the scope of this thesis, I can only give one interpretation of Butler's work. In this section, I am following Vicky Kirby's reading of Butler, mainly drawing upon Kirby's article *When all that is solid melts into language* (2002), because it points both to the potential of as well as challenge in Butler's work.

[26] See also the article *Performance Pinned Down: Studying Subjectivity and the Language of Performance* (Hoedemaekers and Keegan 2010) in which Lacan's work is presented as a continuation of Saussure's take on language (1026). The more 'radical potential' of Lacan resides in the fact that he understands 'the signifier' – or structures of symbolic meaning—as 'taking precedence' over 'signifieds'—or social subjects endowed with meaning (ibid.). The force of the signifier is thus understood to be stronger, and, as argued by Coward and Ellis (1977) there is no 'signified', or subject, outside of this force (108).

meanings are 'imposed' (xii). Rather, the body is always-already *of* gender and comes to be crystallized throughout an active "process of materialization" (ibid.).[27]

Now, the question is how the body in anorexia could be understood from within this alternative approach to matter. Whereas the sex versus gender logic in social constructionism leaves the body on the outside of analysis, a Butlerian emphasis on matter seems to include this body from the very start. It enables a critical discursive analysis of embodiment with bodies existing necessarily *within* the dynamism of discourse. They are filled with a complex cultural dynamic in the very materiality of their being, and form active materializing processes rather than "a ready surface awaiting signification" (Butler 1990, 46). A discussion of anorexia, as a discursive phenomenon, then automatically concerns the question of the body. Not in terms of the values that are 'inscribed' on the body (Bordo 1997, 93) but in terms of the body's materialization; a materialization that in the case of anorexia is significant, considering a body's transformation into a different form and figure. This transformation could then be approached not "as that which is 'before' intelligibility" (Butler [1993] 2011, xiv) but rather as meaningful and intelligible in and of itself.

However, there is one major problem in this approach, namely that 'meaning' and 'intelligibility' should be read here in linguistic terms. When arguing from within a Butlerian approach to matter, as presented in this thesis, attending to the body in anorexia *as meaningful* can only imply an emphasis on symbolic signification. While Butler explicitly adopts matter as something that is not simply 'inscribed' by discourse but that *materializes* into "the appearance of substance" (Butler 1990, 45), it is a materialization that concerns a linguistic process. The body can then only be thought of as an effect of discourse and thus only as the by-product of a signifying system (Colebrook 2000, 78).

[27] In this sense, Butler 'activates' matter from within a linguistic understanding of the subject. Rather than taking matter as a passive "site or surface" ([1993] 2011, xviii) on which gender is imposed, it is understood to "invariably transfor[m]" over time (1997, 406).

Regarding the aim of this thesis to account for anorexia as more than language, there are thus limitations from within a "return to matter as a *sign*" (Butler [1993] 2011, 22 italics in original). The problem is that within a Lacanian approach, matter only exists as a 'signified', which means it exists only *in reference to* discursive meaning and as such is essentially absent outside the realm of language (Coward and Ellis 1977, 108). Rather than bringing us closer to the body in anorexia, a Butlerian angle might only be a step further away from it.[28] Arguing from the Lacanian position that the body is not merely 'impressed' with a certain meaning but, in a more radical sense, *constituted* by language in its very materiality, a bodily substance indeed exists only as an 'appearance' (Butler 1990, 45) and thus as something without any ontological reality outside of the linguistic (Kirby 2014, 107).

The problem of such an approach to anorexia comes to the surface in the article by Malson and Ussher (1996) that was mentioned at the beginning of this section. In this article, the authors critically analyze the social constructionist view on anorexia and argue how this reinstalls a dichotomy of culture versus embodiment (269). While I agree with them on this point, I problematize their subsequent statement that the body in anorexia is *fully constituted* in culture and "always-already an object of discourse" (270). Anorectic bodies thus have no existence outside the realm of language and can only be understood in regard to what Malson and Ussher describe as the "discursive resources in which 'anorexia nervosa' is constituted" (ibid.). The problem with their Lacanian approach becomes apparent in this formulation, in which anorexia has been placed in quotation marks. By taking matter as not having any reality outside of language, these scholars present the condition not simply as expressive of cultural meanings (as the social constructionists would argue), but in a more radical sense as being

[28] Claire Colebrook's article *From Radical Representations to Corporeal Becomings: The Feminist Philosophy of Lloyd, Grosz, and Gatens* (2000) has also influenced my reading of Butler's work here. As Colebrook argues, and this is something I problematize in regard to an account of anorexia, the "matter/representation dichotomy" (78) in fact becomes 'intensified' in Butler's work, despite her ostensible criticism of the sex/gender distinction (ibid.).

present only ‘as language.’ Anorexic bodies then exist merely within a certain relativity to discourse and are completely “evacuated” (Kirby 2014, 107) in their material reality.

2.3 On Language Versus Life and the Dualist Predicament

Considering feminist scholarship on anorexia produced from a linguistic poststructuralist angle, the ironic ‘texture’ of the story cannot go unnoticed. While feminist scholars, in response to a naturalistic approach to the condition, have searched for a more just way to account for women’s experiences (Malson 1998, x), one can ask whether this very experience has indeed been discussed. My argument is that although a great amount of work has been produced on the structural side of anorexia, what has remained unrecognized is the experience of the condition in the life of a subject. Life, here, in the sense of feelings, anxieties, struggles and torments.

According to a social constructionist take on anorexia, female subjects are endowed with a certain gender and thus come to identify themselves according to particular notions of ‘femininity’. Starting from the assumption that anorexia is a question of discourse and gender, any analysis of the condition is then limited to an analysis of language. Turning to the work of Butler does not seem to solve this problem, of being fixated on language and of overlooking the question of embodiment. While Butler underscores the importance of matter, it is the essentially linguistic nature of this matter that removes one even further from the lived body of an anorexic. With matter understood ‘as a sign’ (Butler [1993] 2011, 22), anorectic bodies are ontologically recognized only within language, and face the risk of being put in quotation marks.

As argued by Vicky Kirby, and what I underscore in regard to scholarship on anorexia, there has been an all too radical preference within poststructuralism for the realm of culture rather than nature (Kirby 2011, 13). In moving away from the modernist belief in a natural world that can be directly captured by rational thought (Lyotard [1979] 1984, 3, McLaren 2002, 20), poststructuralist scholars turned to culture to emphasize the discursive character of the social realm (Hekman 2008, 91). They have thus emphasized the always-already structural, linguistic nature of this 'reality' that is inherently shaped within discourse (Hekman and Alaimo 2008, 2). What I problematize in regard to accounts of anorexia is that this has meant the overall replacement of nature and reality by language, with 'nature' being put in quotation marks to signify that it only exists within the structures of culture (12). One is left to wonder then whether there is still any 'real reality' to envision when the only intelligible order is the realm of the linguistic (Kolozova 2014, 57).

Two points should be made in regard to the linguistic tradition in poststructuralism, and thus in regard to feminist scholarship on anorexia. The first concerns a theoretical issue and the second a more practical one.[29] First of all, what is problematic is the dualist nature of linguistic thought, in which the drawing of the world in terms of language is essentially predicated on a division between matter and mind (Kirby 2011, 14). As also argued by Colebrook, a theoretical division lies at the root of linguistic analysis with the symbolic order, or the order of thought, on one side and the world as it exists "beyond or outside of language" on the other (Colebrook 2000, 81). Grounded therefore in the distinction between two ontological realms of existence, a Cartesian framework is reproduced in which mind and matter not only concern two separate substances but are also hierarchically positioned in

[29] While the 'theoretical' and the 'practical' are distinguished in this section for the sake of a structured argument, I also align with a new materialist approach to these concepts as outlined by Kathrin Thiele (2015). An approach in which theory and praxis are understood to be always-already intertwined (101) and thought does not occur "in abstraction from the world" (ibid.) but is rather taken as an essentially 'material engagement' (ibid.). The idea that "*what* subject matters we engage with is (immanently) entangled with *how* we account for them" (106) is key to my argument, considering how the ontological manifestation of anorexia within feminist scholarship is fundamentally 'entangled' with the linguistic theoretical framework.

respect to each other (Hatfield 2014, 246, Coole 2010, 92, Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012, 85).[30] That is, while language not only appears as the ontological other-than-matter in poststructuralist thought, it is also presented as hovering over and above the material world: as an apparatus that signifies, or, in the more radical sense, even *constitutes* the world in its materiality (Hekman 2008, 92).

What makes the Cartesian heritage problematic in regard to the topic of my thesis, and this is where my second point comes in, is the distance created in poststructuralist feminist thought on anorexia between language and reality.[31] A 'cut' (Kolozova 2014), with discursive constructions of 'the feminine' on the one hand, and the living (or dying) anorexic on the other. It is a division that concerns the predominance of language over matter, whereby the anorectic body not only exists as the ontological 'other' to discourse but is essentially erased from analysis. In accordance with Kolozova, what I problematize is that whatever comes to be situated "outside of the humanely conceivable" (72) is withheld the possibility of being recognized (ibid.). Existing beyond or 'outside' the domain that is considered to be comprehensible (i.e. the linguistic social order), this 'thing' or person becomes silenced and thus unnoticed; it becomes erased from the order that we can possibly make sense of and is thereby left to be 'unreal' (ibid.).

What is at stake here is the phenomenon of anorexia not in its symbolic value but in regard to the dimension that "escapes articulation" (70) in its non-linguistic nature. The phenomenon of anorexia as it is *lived*, beneath or beyond the scope of language and in respect

[30] This concerns the Cartesian dictum according to which body and mind, or *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, are existentially independent from one another (Almog 2002, 67). According to a metaphysics of "mutual exclusion" (Hatfield 2014, 257), the realm of 'thought', as the defining nature of the mind, is understood to exist in separation from the realm of 'extension', as the defining nature of the body (ibid.). Within this ontological opposition, matter – or all that is bodily related such as "nourishment, motion of limbs, and sensory activity" (123) – exists as the inert counterpart of the actively thinking mind (Coole 2010, 93-94).

[31] As Susan Hekman and Stacy Alaimo point out (2008, 2), what is called 'the real' in linguistic thought "is a product of language and has its reality only in language" .

to the process of starvation of an "animate body" (Gatens 1996, 11).[32] A body that is necessarily embedded in discourse but that also endures and enacts more than language.

A question to be asked then is whether one should not also consider the very being that unfolds itself within language, or as Colebrook puts it: "[w]hat type of being is it that symbolizes itself *as being?*" (2000, 81). This is not to suggest that the anorexic as an autonomous, natural, and context-independent entity 'precedes' the signifying force of language and that one has to uncover this 'pre-linguistic being'. Rather, the aim is to explore a way to bring real life experience into the realm of the intelligible in a way that goes beyond the binaries of mind versus matter and nature versus culture. What is needed then is not a choice for either one of these terms as the explanatory agent of anorexia, but an overall "ontological reorientation" (Coole and Frost 2010, 6-7) that allows one to go beyond the limitations inherent to a Cartesian ontology. The goal is therefore to envision a framework that departs from dualist thought and to find a model according to which anorexia can be acknowledged as a question of discourse *as well as* reality. This would mean to open up the "text(ure)" (Kolozova 2014, 106) through which anorexia has been examined and to search for an account of the body as it suffers and dies.

2.4 Realizing the Matter of Anorexia: Towards a Monist, Materialist Framework

In accordance with what Kirby (2011, 13) calls the "reversal of constitutive ordering," my argument here is that a presumed 'nature' of anorexia has too hastily been replaced by culture within poststructuralist feminism, reinstating the condition as a purely linguistic event and thereby foreclosing the lived, experiential dimension. While a certain "allergy to "the Real"

[32] See here also the following description of the 'real' or the 'lived' by Kolozova (2014): "Everything of humanist provenance that can be experienced or of all that might take place in the world" (141) which, according to Kolozova, is "essentially beyond language" (ibid.).

(Coole and Frost 2010, 6) has proven necessary in challenging essentialistic accounts of anorexia, a problematic split has been produced between an accessible and knowable realm of language and an embodied, external and unintelligible reality (see Kolozova 2014, 1-2). The contextual embeddedness of the phenomenon of anorexia notwithstanding, it is the semiotic entry to the world, or what is also referred to as the "Saussurian/Lacanian linguistic heritage" (Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012, 94), that ultimately creates a distance with the condition as it is lived. Moment by moment and day by day, as a process that involves suffering and possibly even the subject's death. While the focus on discourse as rendering social meanings to subjects or even constituting their very being (Coward and Ellis 1977, 108) has paved the way for a non-naturalistic account of anorexia, it has also reduced the condition to a 'state of culture' in which nothing exists but language. That this re-establishes the Cartesian divide between a realm of mind/language and a realm of bodies/experience then creates a problem of recognition, considering the tacit negation of anorexia's "now inaccessible reality" (Kirby 2002, 275).

To shed a light on the condition as an animate, lived reality, the 'ontological reorientation' in this thesis entails shifting from a dualist to a monist thought system. In a departure from Cartesianism, this means to move toward a framework in which mind and matter are taken to be always-already intertwined (Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012, 85). Rather than seeing mind and matter as existentially independent substances (Almog 2002, 67), this approach considers their fundamental entanglement, with neither term taking primacy over the other (Coole and Frost 2010, 8). Furthermore, in going beyond a *res cogitans* versus *res extensa* distinction, matter is taken not as an inert substance but rather as an active force; a force that is "self-creative, productive, unpredictable" (Coole 2010, 9) and never exists in the passive tense of 'being' but always-already in the active tense of 'becoming' (Braidotti 2006, 151, Coole and Frost 2010, 10).

In particular, this thesis explores an understanding of the bodily subject from within this monist framework. In relation to what I consider to be the erasure of embodiment within linguistic accounts of anorexia, the aim is to see how the anorectic body can be brought back into the discussion within a monist, materialist understanding of subjectivity. This is not to depart from the poststructuralist notion of anorexics as culturally situated and to reduce them to a biologically determined state of being. Rather, the aim is to go *beyond* the binaries of nature versus culture and matter versus mind, and thereby create space for a new approach to anorectic embodiment.

In the next chapter, the body shall be explored as the very ground of subjectivity (Grosz 1994, vii, Gatens 1996, 57, Braidotti 1991, 219) instead of a "secondary accompaniment" (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 41). This new conceptualization means to consider the body not in the sense of a fixed, solidified unit of cells (Fox 2011, 361), but as "productive and creative" (Gatens 1996, 57) and as the active force through which subjects unfold in life (Braidotti 2002, 21). Moving the body therefore "from the periphery to the center of analysis" (Grosz 1994, xi), the subject is understood to be essentially 'bodily rooted' (Braidotti 2011a, 24), with 'embodiment' concerning not simply biology but a much wider field of energies—sociological, symbolic, as well as physical—through which one comes to exist in the world (25).

From this angle, anorectic embodiment demands an altogether different interpretation. It requires to view the body in anorexia not as an inert physiological substance, either in terms of biomedicine or as a blank page to be inscribed by discourse. Rather, it needs to be analyzed in regard to the energies it embodies and the transformations it undergoes, not simply in the sense of physiological transformation but in the broader sense of a material unfolding; as a "series of processes, organs [and] incorporeal events" (Grosz 1994, 164) through which subjects are moving. A materialist project would then be to bring our attention back to the

condition as it unfolds on the level of embodied existence, where the question is not what anorexia might 'mean' or what we believe it to 'express' in discursive terms, but rather what the anorectic body *does* as an actively unwinding force.

Chapter Three

Monism, Motion, and Material Force

Towards an Account of Life

Introduction

I take as my entry point the following: that by understanding anorexia from a socio-cultural perspective also known as the "linguistic turn" (Hekman 2008, 88), feminist scholarship created a distance with the condition as a lived, embodied reality. Even though critical analyses of language – or the semiotic apparatus that structures the social realm (Weedon 1987, 22) – have been indispensable in highlighting power dynamics and gendered role patterns (see also Coole and Frost 2010, 6), an over-emphasis on language has neglected an essential aspect of the phenomenon. In response to the feminist presentation of anorexia as a condition that primarily expresses the discursive situation of women (Malson 1998, 6) and thus as an essentially semiotic event, I argue that one should also consider it in terms of material exhaustion. In line with Kolozova's notion that "[t]he lived escapes articulation through language" (2014, 70), I argue that anorexia *as lived* should be understood beyond its "symbolism" (Chernin 1981, 101) or "textuality" (Bordo 1997, 93), as a situation so profoundly material that language may never be able to fully capture. That anorexia is *lived* means, here, that it is experienced and endured, suffered and coped-with, slept-through and exercised. It concerns what Miguel de Beistegui (2004) describes as "the flesh and blood of the world, the life that continues to live in and through being" (110) and the anorectic condition as it unfolds from day to day, moment by moment, in the painful reality of a person in starvation.

From within with an "ontological reorientation" (Coole and Frost 2010, 6-7), in which a dualist, Cartesian framework is replaced by a metaphysics of monism, this chapter explores a materialist understanding of anorexia. Arguing from the notion that linguistic scholarship on anorexia has essentially been predicated upon a dualist, Cartesian ontology (Grosz 1994, 9, Coole and Frost 2010, 7), in which a mind/matter binary left the matter of anorexia – or the

material, bodily subject – on the outside of analysis, my project in this chapter is to bring back this matter from within a monist ontological model. This means to first of all understand matter and mind – or the material and the linguistic – not as separate substances (Almog 2002, 67), but as necessarily entangled, with neither of the term taking primacy over the other (Grosz 1994, 10-11, Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012, 85). Furthermore, the central focus of this chapter is to reconsider the anorectic subject from within this monist framework. This exploration is structured according to two premises. One, that the subject is necessarily 'bodily rooted' (Braidotti 2011a, 24) and that subjectivity can thus be explained in terms of one's corporeal being (Grosz 1994, vii); and two, that 'the body' is to be understood beyond the borders of one's skin (Haraway 2004, 36, Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 257) and in this sense as an essentially open, transformative "field" of forces (Braidotti 1991, 219). The subject – or body – therefore concerns not simply a particular set of organs and limbs, but, as Braidotti describes (2011b):

> [A]n assemblage of forces or flows, intensities and passions that solidify in space and consolidate in time within the singular configuration commonly known as the 'individual' self. (Braidotti 2011b, 302)

This chapter explores this particular understanding of subjectivity (or embodiment) in the context of anorexia, with the aim of approaching the condition as a lived, embodied reality. Guided by the twofold notion that subjectivity can be analyzed in terms of embodiment and that subjects, as bodies, can be seen as essentially open, transformative 'assemblages' of forces that 'solidify in space and consolidate in time', I discuss one particular article that takes a materialist approach to anorexia. This is *The Haunted Flesh: Corporeal Feminism and The Politics of (Dis)Embodiment* (1998) by Abigail Bray and Claire Colebrook, which presents an insightful understanding of anorexia. This article is centered around the idea that the condition

cannot simply be reduced to a question of discursive signification and that the body in anorexia concerns "more than the limit, negation, or other of representation" (39). In response to linguistic accounts of anorexia, Bray and Colebrook argue for a reconsideration of the condition in terms of "bodily activity" (37), and, in this sense, in terms of the "practices and comportments" that anorexia expresses (62). Rather than taking anorectic bodies therefore as merely 'inscribed' with signification (Bordo 1997, 93) – and thus as inert, passive substances – these authors emphasize the *activities* through which they move and through which anorexia unfolds (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63).

I argue in this chapter that even though Bray and Colebrook initiate a pivotal approach to the condition of anorexia, namely in terms of bodily activity or, in their words, a "field" of anorectic practices (ibid.), an important element remains undiscussed: the body in pain. In regard to Braidotti's understanding of the body as 'an assemblage of forces or flows' that 'consolidate in time', I argue that although Bray and Colebrook present an understanding of anorexia in terms of these forces, the second element to embodiment is not sufficiently taken into account. That is, the *consolidation of forces in time,* through which subjects come to exist as particular entities, has not been given due regard. Considering the subsequent 'depersonalization' of anorexia in their article, according to which "there are no anorexics, only activities of dietetics, measuring, regulation and calculation" (62), my suggestion is to bring the focus back to the notion of time and thereby allow the subject to be properly recognized. This is argued from the perspective that there *are* anorexics, that they suffer and die, and that these deaths need to be rightfully accounted for.

3.1 Corporeal Subjects: A Two-Dimensional Affair

In alignment with a monist understanding of the world, in which "the mind is always already material" and "matter is necessarily something of the mind" (Dolphijn and van der Tuin 2012,

48),[33] I explore an account of anorexia as an always-already-material condition. By taking matter not as the result or "effect" of discourse (Colebrook 2000, 78) but as an active, agential force through which the world evolves and is lived (see Barad 2012, 77),[34] a framework is examined that approaches anorexia as an endured reality and in particular, as an endured *corpo-reality* (Grosz 1994, vii, Braidotti 2011a, 166). This approach suggests the always-already-material, corporeal character of the condition, considering subjects to be fundamentally bodily existents (Grosz 1994, xi). Such a material analysis of the condition, in which anorexia is understood as an inherently bodily event, does not dismiss cultural factors involved by returning to mere biology. Rather, it emphasizes a different starting point, allowing subjective experience to be understood beyond the binaries of mind versus matter, culture versus nature, and language versus life. From the perspective that anorexia concerns an embodied reality, the following statement from Elizabeth Grosz serves as my point of departure:

> [T]hat all the effects of subjectivity, all the significant facets and complexities of subjects, can be as adequately explained using the subject's corporeality as a framework as it would be using consciousness or the unconscious. All the effects of depth and interiority can be explained in terms of the inscriptions and transformations of the subject's corporeal surface. Bodies have all the explanatory power of minds. (Grosz 1994, vii)

[33] I reference here the cartography *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies* presented by Iris van der Tuin and Rick Dolphijn on a "new tradition in thought" (85) that has become labelled "new materialism." While van der Tuin and Dolphijn's clarification of a monist ontological framework in response to Cartesianism has been most helpful in my research, my particular line of thought in this thesis is perhaps better described by the term "corporeal materialism" (Braidotti 1991, 219) considering my focus on the work of Braidotti, Gatens and Grosz.
[34] Although it cannot be further discussed in this chapter, Karen Barad's "agential realist" (2012, 80) understanding of matter not as "mere stuff, an inanimate given-ness" (ibid.) but rather as "active, responsive, generative, and articulate" (ibid.) certainly deserves to be mentioned. I have chosen not to further integrate Barad's work in this chapter considering her focus on the more scientific workings of matter while my interest lies with the *body in pain* (Braidotti (2011b, 299) – a matter of subjects and emotions.

According to Grosz, subjectivity can thus be understood not only in terms of the mind but equally as a 'matter' of embodiment. How to understand anorectic subjectivity is then a question that, along with the belief-systems in which anorexics are embedded, taps into the corporeal side of their being. Of interest in this chapter are these "bodily roots of subjectivity" (Braidotti 2011a, 24), in which the aim is to see how the conception of anorexia might alter when one shifts from a focus on thoughts, norms, values, and language to a focus on bodies and corpses, the living and the dying. Notwithstanding the value of addressing discursive norms surrounding 'the feminine' (Bordo 1997, 95), my interest lies with how one can understand the *body* in anorexia, and what this body, endowed with an 'explanatory power', can say about a subject's experience.

Crucial in this regard is that the term 'body' is not read as the clear-cut physiological unit that is generally understood to confine and *de*fine the individual subject (Coole and Frost 2010, 15). It is not simply the "biological body of biomedicine" (Fox 2011, 361): the set of limbs, bones, blood cells and organs encapsulated by the skin, as the collection of organs that one is inclined to perceive as one's body (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 260.[35] Beyond the borders of the body of organs, the body should be understood as a "field" (Braidotti 1991, 219) that stretches beyond the boundaries of one's skin (Haraway 2004, 36); a field in which the social, biological and symbolical converge and through which one incessantly transforms over time (Braidotti 2011a, 25). Along with the physiological being of an organism, this concerns the wider space of sociological and symbolic dynamics, in which the body can be understood as a "point of overlapping" (Braidotti 2011a, 25) – a point where multiple forces, both material as well as cultural, intersect (Braidotti 1991, 219).

[35] I have chosen not to integrate the Deleuzian notion of the 'Body without Organs' (BwO) in my thesis in consideration of my particular interest in anorexia in terms of the *body in pain.* Deleuze and Guattari describe the BwO as a body that is completely open, in which there is "no longer an organism that functions…no longer a Self that feels, acts, recalls; there is a glowing fog" (1987, 162). While this notion of a 'limitless' body is in fact key to my approach to anorexia in this thesis, I am interested in precisely the *process* of goings towards a state of complete openness; an openness that I approach in terms of pain and collapse.

Two central points should be raised here. First a conception of embodiment is articulated that opens the borders of the anatomical and that sees the body as a much broader zone. This conception entails a reconfiguration of the body's spatial dimension, and views the body not as an intramural system but, rather, as "radically open to its surroundings" (Gatens 1996, 110). Consisting in a "series of processes, organs, flows [and] energies" (Grosz 1994, 164), this body exists not as a solid entity over-and-against an 'outside' world, but is rather constituted through ongoing encounters with this world. Openness is thus the very *condition* of a body's life (Gatens 1996, 110), as it exists precisely *as* a site of ongoing entanglements with outside forces. Secondly, what is important to this notion of embodiment – or subjectivity – is that the 'radical openness' of the body notwithstanding, there is a certain cohesion amongst the forces through which the body exists (Lloyd 1994, 11). While the body, as a field, is necessarily open and transformative, building upon a fluctuation of energies, it also relies upon a certain 'glue' amongst these energies; a 'consolidation' (Braidotti 2011b, 302) or 'synthesis' of energies in time (Deleuze 1991, 93). This view on embodiment fundamentally challenges the traditional notion of individuality by opening the subject's borders,[36] but a recognition of particular existence is thus central. No longer are subjects understood in terms of a "fixed state of being" (Grosz 1994, 12), but an emphasis on time underscores their 'singularization' (Deleuze 2001, 29) and 'individuation' (Deleuze 1990, 195) into identifiable portions of forces.[37] While bodies exist only in- and through a dynamics of spatial forces, it is time that "creates a continuity of disconnected fragments …[and] provides the grounds for a unity in an otherwise dispersed self" (Braidotti 2006, 151).

[36] That is, the Cartesian idea that subjects are endowed with an essentially fixed identity, guaranteed by the stability of the *cogito* that transcends time and space: the 'I' that exists as a "thinking thing" (Hatfield 2014, 108).

[37] The notions of 'singularity' and 'individuation' thus replace the Cartesian 'individual', in consideration that it is only as a *process* of consolidation that subjects come to exist as identifiable existents. With the subject, as Deleuze notes, as "a man who longer has a name, though he can be mistaken for no other" (2001, 29).

Of interest in my thesis is the potential of this approach to embodiment for an account of anorexia. An approach that emphasizes the body as "the very 'stuff' of subjectivity" (Grosz 1994, xi) without dismissing the force of culture and returning to the self-enclosed, individual subject. Precisely from an alternative conception of the body, it is an approach that reconfigures subjectivity *beyond* the binaries of culture/nature, self/world and mind/matter. As such, it rearranges the primary, ontological question of our being and allows for the exploration of a new perspective on anorexia.

With subjectivity in terms of the open, active body, understood as "an assemblage of forces or flows, intensities and passions" (Braidotti 2011b, 302), what first comes to be challenged is the notion that a single signifier (such as language) can determine the anorectic subject in its corporeal being (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 56). From the viewpoint that subjects, as bodies, form ongoing engagements with their surroundings and thereby transform through a multitude of forces (Grosz 1994, 173), not only can the anorectic body not be understood as an inert, passive entity that awaits representation (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 36) but moreover is the singular determinative force of language put under scrutiny (39). Precisely by being rooted in a body that is inherently transformative, multidimensional and "multi-layered" (Braidotti 2002, 11), one is never 'pinned down' by a singular force. From an emphasis on language as the determinant of anorexic subjects, the focus then shifts to the dynamic *field* of forces and energies in which anorexia occurs (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63). A central question on anorexia is then a question on the kinds of forces that structure this field and that provide a particular environment for anorexia to emerge.

Secondly, what needs to be asked is how the anorectic body can be understood in regard to the 'consolidation' of these forces in time: a consolidation that, in Braidotti's terms, marks "the singular configuration commonly known as the 'individual' self" (Braidotti 2011b, 302). This is a question that investigates the way in which anorectic subjects,, as radically

open yet singular selves (Deleuze 2001, 29), are processing the forces they encounter through time.[38] Therefore, an exploration of anorectic embodiment (or subjectivity) is in this sense an exploration of the movement of spatial energies and the way in which these are being 'synthesized' within the anorectic subject. My inquiry into anorexia, therefore, takes the condition as an always-already embodied, animate reality, and aims to show how the condition as a necessarily active and material process unfolds within the life of a subject.

3.2 Bodily Movement on the Field of Anorexia: A Choreography

This thesis' focus lies with the condition of anorexia as an experience. As an actual happening in the life of a subject, that is endured, survived, or surrendered to in death. As a situation of starvation, enervation and disruption, in which anorexics are immersed in a flow that engulfs their existence. However, a recognition of the condition as an embodied, *lived* reality has proven not to be so self-evident from within the acknowledgement of anorexia as a 'culture-bound phenomenon' (Orbach 1988, 93). While this thesis aligns with the notion that anorexia is culturally embedded, it also challenges the reduction of the phenomenon by feminist scholars to a "language of femininity" (Bordo 1997, 99). Heeding Kolozova's warning that an exclusively linguistic approach to the social realm creates a 'cut' between language and the non-reflected, experiential dimension of life (2014, 70), my approach treats the condition of anorexia as something that penetrates into every layer of life and through which one moves, suffers and, in some cases, dies. I consider anorexia to be a life experience and, essentially, an issue of *pain* – something that concerns material hardship and as such cannot be reduced to a relatively transparent "linguistically construed reality" (Kolozova 2014, 5).

[38] This notion of the 'synthesis of energies' draws upon the Spinozist interpretation of subjectivity according to which, as Deleuze and Guattari write (1987) a body should be considered in terms of its "affects" (257), its capacity to "enter into composition with other affects" (ibid.), and its capacity to encounter particular forces as it continues to move throughout the "endless vitality of life" (Braidotti 2006, 41).

Therefore, this thesis follows a corporeal materialist[39] understanding of subjectivity according to which subjects are fundamentally bodily rooted (Braidotti 2011a, 24) and subjectivity can be explained in terms of corporeality (Grosz 1994, vii). Following Grosz, my focus lies with the "explanatory power of the body" (ibid.) in anorexia, and what this body may communicate about the anorectic subject. Starting from the materialist notion that subjectivity can be approached in terms of embodiment, my question is how to understand anorectic embodiment. This, however, is not an easy task. Given that, according to a corporeal materialist framework, the body reaches beyond the skin (Haraway 2004, 36), the question cannot be answered simply in terms of an anorexic's physical situation. Continuing with the conception of bodies as ultimately open, multidimensional and transformative 'fields' of energies (Braidotti 1991, 219) – in which the organic evolves within a fusion of forces – the focus would have to shift from the purely physiological to the *process* taking place on the wider surface of the anorectic body. One would have to inquire into the "flows, energies, [and] movements" (Grosz 1994, 167) of the anorectic body, and into the way in which these energies are being 'synthesized' within a particular, singular body.

What I discern as the main difficulty here relates to the latter notion of synthesis or what Braidotti terms the consolidation of forces into "the singular configuration commonly known as the 'individual' self" (2011b, 307). If bodies can be understood in terms of energies and forces that never 'belong' to a fixed 'individual' but instead constitute the body's ongoing "fluxes of transformation" (Braidotti 2006, 157), the key question is: how can anorexia be understood in regard to such forces and fluctuations and, most importantly, where exactly does the anorectic subject reside in the midst of them?

[39] Braidotti (2002) describes "corporeal materialism" as a line of thought according to which the body is "one's primary location in the world: one's primary situation in reality" (219), and in which the body becomes the "inter-face" or "field of intersection of material and symbolic forces" (ibid.).

In *The Haunted Flesh: Corporeal Feminism and The Politics of (Dis)Embodiment* (1998), Bray and Colebrook present a materialist understanding of anorexia,[40] with bodies understood as active, productive agents. Arguing that bodies are not "prediscursive matter that is then organized by representation" (36) but, rather, active formations of "connections, events and activities" (ibid.), these authors suggest that anorexia should be explored in terms of these activities and the "series of practices" (37) through which the condition unfolds. Thereby, they propose a shift from a purely linguistic view on the condition towards a materialist approach, which understands bodies as inherently active and anorexia as a form of "bodily activity" (37). Taking bodies not simply as the "effect of image consumption" (52) but rather in terms of their "effects and forces" (ibid.), Bray and Colebrook argue that "the event of the anorexic" (62) should be seen as a multifaceted interplay of practices through which anorexia appears. An interplay of practices such as "analysis, regulation, and normalization" (63) that form a particular region of energies. While also recognizing the force of representations and significations as "aspects of ongoing practices" (38) they note that anorexia, as a bodily event, must be understood in broader terms: in terms of a "field" of various comportments such as "calorie counting, weighing [and] measuring" (63). A field that language "neither determines nor saturates" (43) and that should be seen as a much wider network of bodily forces. Accordingly, Bray and Colebrook suggest considering anorexia as a series of practices: "practices of metabolism, weighing, counting, and mathematization" that occur within "a discourse of metabolics, energy, and measurable force" (ibid.). Beyond language, it is

[40] My reading of Bray and Colebrook's article has been chiefly Spinozist. The authors elaborate on the question of bodily forces in anorexia, which my Spinozist reading builds upon; however, they also hint at a more specifically Deleuzian approach, understanding anorexia as "one form of self-formation among others" or "as the production of a 'being otherwise'" (1998, 58). In this sense, the authors understand the condition in terms of the notion of "becoming" or the "process of desire" through which Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 272) discuss subjectivity. I have chosen to focus on Bray and Colebrook's discussion of the energies at play in anorexia: energies that can be interpreted along the Spinozist notion of 'affects' as "intersecting forces" (Braidotti 2002, 21) that "impinge" upon bodies (Lloyd 1994, 17). I prefer this particular reading of Bray and Colebrook's work because it forms an entry point into a discussion on pain and death in anorexia.

therefore about the much broader, multidimensional atmosphere in which various kinds of elements contribute to the manifestation of anorexia.

However, something significant remains undiscussed in this article. Notwithstanding the great value of approaching anorexia in terms of activity and going beyond a purely linguistic notion of the condition, it is also important to ask where the individual anorexic is now located. While Bray and Colebrook bring forward an important focus by understanding anorexia as a practiced and exercised reality, they present an account in which the condition is *nothing but* a series of activities; it is understood as a field of practices that goes without the indication of a body in pain. A field in which, as they state, "there are no anorexics, only activities of dietetics, measuring, regulation and calculation" (62).

What I perceive as problematic is this theoretical evaporation of anorectic bodies: an evaporation into a field of forces (or "practices," as Bray and Colebrook write) that characterize the condition. Starting from the assumption that it is only these (depersonalized) practices that should be considered, what becomes difficult is accounting for subjective experience and for the body in pain. While supporting an approach to the condition in terms of the spatial field in which anorexia occurs, my argument is that anorexia is also a matter of pain: pain experienced by particular subjects whose bodies are dissolving. From the corporeal materialist perspective that subjects are not solid, self-enclosed entities but rather exist within a transformative flow of energies (Grosz 1994, 164), Bray and Colebrook however present an account of anorexia in which these energies ('practices') replace the anorectic subject altogether. They present a field, or what in Deleuzian terms could also be called a "plateau" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 22)[41] of anorexia, that consists in a collection of forces in which bodies are immersed.

[41] The notion of 'plateau' is described by Deleuze and Guattari as a "continuous self-vibrating region of intensities"; a manifold region in space in which "semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows" intersect. Together, they constitute a particular atmosphere; one that 'organizes' its elements/subjects according to a

While I consider an exploration of these forces to be pivotal in a materialist understanding of anorexia, I also argue that one has to address the subject that experiences them. The subject that is not only immersed in these forces but who also suffers, starves and, in some cases, dies. I therefore return to Braidotti's formulation of subjectivity as "an assemblage of forces or flows, intensities and passions that solidify in space and consolidate in time within the singular configuration commonly known as the 'individual' self" (2011b, 302). In regard to this statement, I suggest to bring the focus back to the notion of time in order to 'personalize' the anorectic field as described by Bray and Colebrook. In response to their notion that anorexia concerns "a series of practices and comportments" (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 62), I argue that these practices are endured by particular bodies: bodies that can be understood in terms of a 'singular configuration commonly known as the individual self'. Therefore, from the perspective that there *are* anorexics, and that practices as described by Bray and Colebrook are experienced by subjects in a painful and destructive way, I emphasize the notion of time. With a focus on time as that through which subjects 'consolidate', my aim is to retrieve the singular self and to explore anorexics in their painful, collapsing existence.

3.3 Retrieving The Anorexic: On Singular Lives and The Problem of Death

What is important at this stage is to briefly return to Richard Morton's description of his anorectic patient. Mr. Duke's Daughter, as he calls her, is characterized by the perishing of her flesh, which "began to be flaccid and loose,", while she also showed other signs "usual in an Universal Consumption of the Habit of the Body" (1720, 8). Like "a Skeleton only clad

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certain structure (see also Fancy 2010, 99). It is a region of forces in which, for Deleuze and Guattari, there are only "[f]lows of intensity" that have "replaced the world of the subject" (1987, 162).

with skin", "wasted with the greatest degree of Consumption", as Morton notes (ibid.). My decision to return to this quote springs from a concern with the bodies in anorexia, and with the tendency within theoretical accounts of the condition to lose sight of their decay. While I fully align with the notion that the condition of anorexia extends beyond the borders of one's individual being, I also hold that an emphasis on the anorectic subject is pivotal. Therefore, rather than disputing the idea that anorexia is fundamentally culture-bound (Orbach 1988, 93), my interest lies with the way in which one can understand the anorectic subject – in particular, the *collapse* of the subject – within this discursive phenomenon.

Following Grosz, Gatens, and Braidotti in their corporeal approach to subjectivity, my argument is that anorexics are fundamentally bodily rooted, with embodiment understood in terms of a radically open and transformative field of forces and intensities (Braidotti 2011b, 302) – a field through which energies pass and through which subjects are "propelled into life" (Massumi 2002, 210). Rather than contesting the contextual character of anorexia, this approach to embodiment thus fundamentally incorporates the always-already-embedded nature of anorectic subjects. At the same time, the notion that the bodily subject is essentially open does not undo the reality of its identifiable existence; the subject is radically open but "nevertheless singular and particular" (Deleuze 1990, 198). This is to say that, although the body should be considered beyond the borders of its skin and as a fundamentally transformative 'assemblage' of energies, there is still a subject to distinguish by which this assemblage can be identified (Deleuze 2001, 29).

This is a vital aspect of a corporeal approach to anorexia because an understanding of subjects in terms of "flows and energies" (Braidotti 2011a, 25) rather than solidly bound, "discrete entities" (Grosz 1994, 167) should, I argue, ultimately not overshadow the reality of individual anorectic lives – particular, identifiable lives in which there is suffering, pain, and a movement towards death. Therefore, in response to Bray and Colebrook's important article on

anorexia, I would like to underscore two key points. First, that the body in anorexia cannot be reduced to representation and that, as Bray and Colebrook point out, it is indeed essential to explore the multidimensional field of forces – or "region of intensities" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 22) – through which anorexia unfolds. Second, that it is however crucial to give space to individual experience by considering the way in which anorectic subjects, as radically open yet particular existents, show up *throughout* these forces. Although I maintain that anorexia should be explored in terms of "a series of intensities, flows, and speeds" (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63), I problematize the notion that "there are no anorexics, only activities of dietetics, measuring, regulation, and calculation" (62).

I aim to discuss further in the following chapter the idea that there *are* anorexics, that they suffer and die and that they should be recognized in the reality of their scanty flesh. It is an emphasis on the anorexic as "a Skeleton only clad with skin," as Morton wrote, and an emphasis on the subject in anorexia as it collapses *throughout* "a series of interconnected practices" (Bray and Colebrook, 58). In addition to a focus on the particularity of subjective existence within what Bray and Colebrook describe as the 'field' of anorexia, my inquiry therefore explores the notion of collapse (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 161), or what in Deleuzian terms is also known as "the crack" (Braidotti 2006, 208).[42] My examination of anorexia thereby continues along the same lines as Bray and Colebrook's, by understanding bodies in terms of "an assemblage of forces or flows" (Braidotti 2011b, 302) and approaching anorexia as "a series of intensities" (Bray and Colebrook, 63); however, it is also directed by a concern with the singular bodies "commonly known as individual selves" (Braidotti 2011b, 302). Selves that endure certain practices in a particular, painful and destructive manner, and are at risk of dying in the process. In my discussion of anorexia, I therefore aim to bring the

[42] "The crack" works as "an indicator of poor health" according to Braidotti (2006, 213); its presence indicates a situation in which a subject is unable to cope with "the overwhelming intensity of life" (ibid.) and thus unable to face certain energies or forces without being destroyed by them (217).

subjects to the fore, particularly in their collapsing and cracking. My central premise is that anorexics exist, and that their suffering and dying need to be accounted for.

In the upcoming chapter, this exploration is structured by three notions that are fundamentally entangled with the corporeal materialist understanding of time. Defining time as that through which subjects 'synthesize" or 'consolidate" into a singular configuration of forces, the final chapter centers around the concepts of *duration, bodily power,* and *decomposition.* Spinozist concepts, that per definition concern the body as a particular existent and that point not only to the constitutive nature of this existent but also to the possibility of its death. I take this approach in order to account for the subjects in anorexia, but also to enable proper recognition of their deaths. While, as Deleuze argues, one can no longer talk of 'individual' life, as a definite phenomenon existing within the borders of a fixed 'self' (2001, 28-29), one *can* talk about the process of individuation through which forces form into identifiable existents (Deleuze 1990, 196). What I aim to explore, then, is this notion of individuation in the context of anorexia. Taking the subject as bodily rooted, and the body as an assemblage of forces, my question is how to understand this body in anorexia. This body that is not 'individual' yet certainly singular, and concerns the unfolding of a particular life.

I will approach this question first of all through the notion of duration. Duration as the process of individuation through which forces form into a particular, identifiable body (Deleuze 1990, 196). A body that is not a self-enclosed, solid unit, but rather a *composite body* that exists only *as* a composition of elements; elements that maintain a particular cohesion throughout time. Second, I will emphasize the concept of bodily power. This concerns the power of a body to indeed maintain its cohesion; to maintain the stability amongst its elements throughout the transformations it undergoes (Garret 1996, 207). Third, I focus on the notion of decomposition. Decomposition as precisely marking the *collapse* of a

body; its collapse from a coherent composition into an infinity of disorganized elements (Deleuze 217-218).

My inquiry into anorexia thus takes the composite body as a starting point. A body that consolidates in time into a relatively stable "portion of forces" (Braidotti 2006, 157). At the same time, and this is my central argument on anorexia, it is precisely this very consolidation that seems to be *failing* in the condition. Given that bodies can be understood as a "series of processes, organs, flows, energies" (Grosz 1994,164) that synthesize into identifiable beings throughout a continuum in time (Deleuze 1990, 196), it would seem that the body in anorexia undergoes precisely the opposite development. Rather than synthesizing, the anorexic body falls apart – *decomposing* into a radical openness of energies that are no longer 'organized' within a strong subject.[43] Therefore, taking the subject as composed of "a very great number of extensive parts" (Deleuze 1990, 202) my approach to the anorectic body centers around the question of decomposition. This necessarily addresses the question of bodily power, considering that it is through a certain degree of power that bodies maintain (or fail to maintain) the cohesion amongst their parts (Deleuze 1990, 217-218). Understanding bodies as assemblages – as composite bodies made up of a great number of elements (Deleuze 1990, 202, Lloyd 1994, 17) – the focus in my final chapter is thus on the bodies in anorexia; the bodies as they unfold along "practices of metabolism, weighing, counting, and mathematization" (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63), and as they collapse throughout this process. In my account, the condition of anorexia then becomes a question of duration, of bodily power, and, ultimately, of decomposition.

[43] I once again borrow my terminology from Deleuze and Guattari (1987) here. In regard to a Body without Organs or "region of intensities" (22), these authors discuss a "non-stratified" flow of energies (153), whilst also noting that a singular subject should always retain a degree of organization (160). It is this question of organization, or relative stability of a subject, that I explore in my final chapter.

Chapter Four

Duration, Starvation, and Anorectic Collapse

Towards an Account of Death

Introduction

> What does it mean to disarticulate, to cease to be an organism? … And how necessary caution is, the art of dosages, since overdose is a danger … You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn … and you have to keep small rations of subjectivity in sufficient quantity to enable you to respond to the dominant reality. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 160)

"What does it mean to disarticulate, to cease to be an organism?" Deleuze and Guattari ask. It is a question that concerns the constitutive nature of subjects – the radical openness of one's being (Gatens 1996, 110) and the composite character of this being that inhabits a series of forces and flows (Braidotti 2011b, 302). The question addresses one's existence as a transformative assemblage of "flows, energies, movements" (Grosz 1994, 167); as an articulate, composite formation that synthesizes throughout the passing of time (Deleuze 1991, 93) and that requires a certain integrity in order to survive (Braidotti 2006, 162). My interest in the question of disarticulation springs from a concern with the bodies in anorexia: bodies that are starving, bodies whose organs are disintegrating, and whose emaciation can lead them towards death.[44] Bodies that, in their radical openness, necessarily form part of a discursive network (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63) but whose existence should no less be considered in terms of their "flesh and blood" (De Beistegui 2004, 110) and thus in terms of a material breakdown.

In the first part of this thesis, I have analyzed linguistic explanations of anorexia that were proposed by feminist scholars in the 1980s and 1990s. Examining both social constructivist formulations as well as a more radical, Butlerian approach, I have

[44] I have chosen the above quote by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) while taking into consideration that 'disarticulation', for them, is not necessarily a bad thing. To the contrary, they support a certain degree of disarticulation in the sense of 'opening yourself' to connections with others and with the world around you (160). At the same time, and this I find a most interesting point in regard to anorexia, they also note that one should always be careful when opening up. As they argue, if this is done "with too violent an action…you will be killed" (161).

problematized the linguistic view on anorexia in regard to two points. First, that an essentially dualist, Cartesian logic was employed, based upon the binary of matter versus mind; secondly, that a subsequent 'cut' (Kolozova 2014) was produced with language on the one hand, and anorectic embodiment on the other. While feminist scholarship has been pivotal in addressing the cultural character of anorexia, an underlying dualist metaphysics established a gap with the anorectic subject as a lived, animate body.

With the aim of foregrounding the material, corporeal side to anorexia and in consideration of the need for an "ontological reorientation" (Coole and Frost 2010, 6-7), I argue for a shift from a dualist to a monist account of the condition. Continuing along the monist premise that "the mind is always already material" and "matter is necessarily something of the mind" (Dolphijn and Van der Tuin 2012, 48), the second part of this thesis explores a materialist approach to anorexia. Such an approach starts from the body as "one's primary location in the world: one's primary situation in reality" (Braidotti 1991, 219) and takes the body in anorexia as its central agent. With subjectivity approached in terms of embodiment (Grosz 1994, vii, Gatens 1996, 57, Braidotti 2011a, 24), and with the body understood as an essentially open, multidimensional and transformative "field" of energies and forces (Braidotti 1991, 219), one article was analyzed in chapter three that addresses anorexia along these terms as a question of "bodily activity" (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 37). The authors write that anorexia entails "a series of practices" (62), and, as such, concerns the "activities of dietetics, measuring, regulation, and calculation" (ibid.).

Guided by Braidotti's formulation of the bodily subject as "an assemblage of forces or flows" that "consolidate in time within the singular configuration commonly known as the 'individual' self" (2011b, 302), my critical engagement with chapter three's article on anorexia is structured by the following argument: although Abigail Bray and Claire Colebrook initiate an important approach to the condition by sketching the spatial 'field' of

anorectic forces, they fail to address the *body in pain* by leaving out the notion of time. With time as the axis along which forces consolidate into identifiable, singular existents, I take an emphasis on time to be pivotal for the recognition of anorectic subjects. In response to the premise that anorexia concerns *only* a series of "intensities, flows, and speeds" (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63) and that, as such, "there are no anorexics" (ibid.), my focus is therefore on the process of consolidation in order to bring back the subject in anorexia. With time as the channel of individuation (Deleuze 1990, 196) – as the flow through which forces form particular concentrations – my interest lies with anorectic bodies as they unfold or, rather, *collapse* throughout this flow. Rather than starting from the radically open flux of energies on the anorectic field (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63), I emphasize the bodies *as they die* on this field, the bodies as they process certain forces in a painful, destructive way and as they subsequently collapse into death.

Arguing, therefore, with a focus on time and consolidation, the three central notions in this final chapter are *duration*, *bodily power*, and *decomposition.* Taking the subject as a 'composite body' (Adkins 2009, 56), as a coherent "portion of forces" (Braidotti 2006, 157), this chapter first of all addresses duration as the preservation of this coherence in time (Deleuze 1990, 195). Secondly, this chapter examines the capacity of a body to encounter forces whilst maintaining its cohesion, and in this sense is concerned with the notion of bodily power (Deleuze 1990, 241). Tying into this is the notion of decomposition: the process of subjective collapse in which the weakening of a subject's bodily power leads to the dispersion of its elements and, thus, to its death (217-218).

From this angle, I argue that the primary question regarding anorexia is not of the "series of practices" expressed in the condition (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 62) but, rather, of the *way in which* these practices are practiced – by subjects who fail to preserve their coherence and, as such, are destroyed in the process. This thesis thus ends on a Spinozist note,

with the primary question on anorexia as a question of endurance and bodily power and, thus, as a question that examines *what a body can do* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 257). Such an angle means to explore the degree of power in anorectic bodies and the extent to which they are able to process certain forces without having their integrity destroyed (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 260, Gatens 2000, 64). I therefore suggest shifting the focus to the degree of bodily power *within* particular "practices and comportments" (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 62), with the crucial point being that anorexics suffer and die throughout these forces. Building furthermore upon a Spinozist formulation of death as the radical disarticulation of a composite body, this thesis concludes with two main points. One, that anorexia can be considered in terms of low degrees of power and, in this sense, as a question of suffering, and two, that it concerns a body's dispersion and death. From this angle, I turn once more to the article by Bray and Colebrook in order to reconsider their statement that "there are no anorexics".

4.1 On Composite Selves and the Question of Power: A Spinozist Orientation

There may be "a steppe of the anorexic body", as Deleuze writes (1987, 112) – a steppe of particular energies and activities, practices and habits, forces and fibres through which anorexia occurs. A broad, multi-dimensional "milieu" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 50) or "regime" (Dolphijn 2004, 22)[45] of anorexia, as a structure of elements and influences that make up for the climate of the condition and through which anorexics manifest themselves. There may be a stage on which particular kinds of movements appear and as such form a choreography of anorexia – a choreography of certain "flows of intensity" (Deleuze and

[45] Rick Dolphijn (2004) argues in line with Deleuze for a consideration of anorexia in terms of a society-wide atmosphere of elements. He formulates this as follows: "[a]norexia nervosa is not a logic that rules from above … It is a finely meshed structure that comes into being in a multitude of events during our lives: in playing with a Barbiedoll, in the experience of sexuality … Each time the elements are made part of a little machine … Whenever people are captured by this sexual regime … they enter a becoming-anorexic. They become part of the anorexia machine as they accept its logic and spread it." (22).

Guattari 1987, 162) that make up for the anorectic event and form the habitat of anorectic bodies.[46] I take a consideration of these flows as essential in an account of anorexia, with the contextual embeddedness of the phenomenon demanding an analysis beyond the individual patient. At the same time, attending to these flows should ultimately not imply the neglect of anorectic bodies. Bodies that are losing their flesh and turning into skeletons: a material scene so stirring that cannot remain "unnoticed, unrecognized, and incomprehensible" (Kolozova 2014, 73) from within a theoretical account of the condition. While I fully support an exploration of the 'steppe of anorexia' and thus a consideration of anorexia in terms of "a discourse of metabolics, energy, and measurable force" (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63), my approach also emphasizes the bodies on this steppe. Bodies that, as the *DSM* states, are characteristic of extremely low weights, irregular heart rhythms, and fragile bones (APA 2013). Bodies whose organs are perishing, whose digestive systems are shutting down, and whose blood pressures are dangerously low (ibid). Bodies that are coping with abdominal pains, with the loss of menstruation and with the growth of soft, protective hair on the skin (ibid.). Bodies that form part of a network "concerned with analysis, regulation, and normalization" (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63) but who are no less dying in the process. Thus, precisely from within the recognition of a society-wide 'milieu', or 'assemblage' of anorexia (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63) as the spatial field of energies through which anorexia occurs, my focus lies with the *bodies in pain* – with the reality of their deaths, and with the process of dying through which they move.

In aiming to account for this dying, my focus is first of all on the subject as it lives – synthesizing into an ensemble of forces (Braidotti 2011b, 302) – and, subsequently, on the subject as it dies – falling apart into an open field of energies (Deleuze and Guattari 1987,

[46] Anorexia is then interpreted according to the Deleuzian notion of a "plateau" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 22) and thus in terms of a 'territory' of energies. In such a Deleuzian approach, I understand anorexics to exist as passing beings that are being 'territorialized' by this region and thus caught by a particular system of "organization and arrangement" (Fancy 2010, 99).

161). My inquiry thus starts with the existence of individual anorexics and addresses these bodies in their pain and collapse. Structured by Spinozist thought, it is an inquiry that takes the notion of duration as a starting point and that considers the subject as a *composite body* (Adkins 2009, 56).[47] A body that is "constituted by the union of bodies composing it" (Lloyd 1994, 11) and whose existence depends on a relative coherence amongst these constantly changing building blocks (ibid.). A temporary, transitory formation of elements, or what in Spinozist terms is also known a 'mode' (Della Rocca 2008, 58),[48] that can be defined by a particular relation amongst these elements (Deleuze 1990, 208, Lloyd 1994, 11). What is pivotal in regard to this composite subject – and what I take to be key in an account of anorexia – is the notion of duration. Duration, here, refers to the continuation of a composite body throughout the passing of time (Deleuze 1988, 62). The importance of duration lies in the fact that it is only *as* a continuity throughout time that an individual, identifiable being unfolds (1990, 196). Amongst the infinite entirety of forces and energies (Khalfa 2003, 29),[49] it is by preserving the relation amongst a particular body's elements that it continues to exist (Khalfa 2003, 29, Lloyd 1994, 17).[50]

I would like to return here for a moment to the warning given by Deleuze and Guattari: "to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn" (1987, 160) and thus to ensure one's ongoing existence throughout the passage of time. It is a warning that concerns

[47] Integrated into this understanding of subjects in terms of bodies is Spinoza's monism: mind and body – under the attributes of thought and extension (Della Rocca 2008, 36) – are not two separate substances (as the Cartesians would have it). Rather, within what Spinoza terms the one Substance (or God/Nature), they are two ways in which one and the same instance, event, or reality appears (Jonas 1965, 46; Lloyd 1996, 6). No primacy of the mind over the body exists, nor vice versa; in a sense, they are identical (Jonas 1965, 46).

[48] As a "mode" (Deleuze 1988, 76), the Spinozist body is understood as a unit "composed of an infinity of extensive parts" (77). It is a body that is only distinguished from other bodies by a certain "ratio of motion and rest" (Lloyd 1994, 11) among its constituent parts and that, for the endurance of its existence, depends on the maintenance of this ratio throughout the changes it undergoes (15).

[49] With 'the infinite entirety' referring to the Spinozist notion of Substance as the whole of the universe (Gatens and Lloyd 1999, 2, Adkins 2009, 32) – the entire bundle of 'infinitely small' elements of which the world is made up (Khalfa 2003, 29): elements that do not exist as separate 'individualities' but that, instead, always-already act in concert and within ongoing, eternal transformations.

[50] The notion of 'preservation' here refers to the Spinozist concept of *conatus* as "the striving or endeavour to persist in being" (Lloyd 1996, 74), and thus to the tendency in every particular existent to maintain a certain equilibrium amongst its constitutive parts (Della Rocca 2008, 148-149).

the composite nature of our being, where it is crucial to always "keep small rations of subjectivity" (ibid.) in order to avoid falling apart. In regard to anorexia, my interest lies with this question of duration, with the need of maintaining a certain relation amongst one's body parts (Lloyd 1994, 15), and with the risk of losing this integrity (Della Rocca 2008, 142-143).[51]

My suggestion in this thesis is to approach anorexia from within this Spinozist conception of the subject. This means to first of all consider anorexics as "individual existents" (Jonas 1965, 45) and thus as radically open, yet particular, compositions of elements (Deleuze 1990, 198). Secondly, this means to explore the way in which they are (not) forming enduring, coherent bodies. Along with the question of duration, this is an inquiry that foregrounds the notion of bodily power. As explained by Don Garret, "[t]he degree of power I have is my ability to persevere" (1996, 207) and it is therefore this power, this *capacity* to endure, that is central to the question of a body's existence. It concerns the strength of a body, as a composite being, to process certain forces while maintaining the relation amongst its elements, and thus without having one's coherence destroyed (Deleuze 1990, 217-218, Lloyd 1994, 15).[52] This degree of power, as Deleuze notes, can even be considered as the very *essence* of a particular being (1988, 98), meaning that an exploration of a body requires an exploration of its capacity to endure various forces and thus, to endure in life (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 257). As Deleuze and Guattari argue in this regard, "[w]e know nothing about a body until we know what it can do" (ibid.). An account of the bodily subject then necessitates an account of the way in which one copes with life – the extent to

[51] This concerns the risk of encountering "an external destroyer" (Della Rocca 2008, 141) and thus of being overwhelmed by a force that dismantles the union amongst body parts.
[52] The very existence of a singular being thus lies in the *maintenance* of the relation or "ratio of motion and rest" amongst its parts (Lloyd 1994, 15); this ratio must be upheld in regard to the "impinging of external forces" (17).

which one is able to sustain and to process certain forces without collapsing under their pressure (Lloyd 1994, 24, Braidotti 2006, 216).[53]

It is from this angle that I approach anorexia, to indeed ask 'what a body can do', and to explore the degree of power in anorectic bodies. This means to examine their "power of acting" (Deleuze 1990, 224), and thus the extent to which they can act in life while maintaining the cohesion amongst their component parts.[54] Key in this regard is the suffering and dying of anorectic bodies: bodies that are losing their flesh and turning into skeletons, and that it is precisely the question of life that is at stake in this condition. Taking as a starting point the life of anorexics, the singular lives of composite bodies, the following section explores the question of bodily power in regard to the dying in anorexia. Arguing from the viewpoint that it is precisely one's power of acting that is affected in the condition, I consider anorexia as a form of decomposition and, in this sense, as a question of suffering and death.

4.2 Free Falling Into Infinity: A Spinozist Approach to Suffering and Death in Anorexia

My argument in this chapter is threefold. First, I take as a premise that there are particular bodies in starvation. It is a premise that is grounded upon the Spinozist notion of singular existents, or 'modes', that can be distinguished from one another due to their differing constitutions (Adkins 2009, 56, Della Rocca 2008, 58). Singular beings that exist as particular compositions, defined by the relation amongst their component elements, that individuate by *maintaining this relation* throughout time (Deleuze 1990, 201, 196). From this angle, I

[53] See also this wonderful formulation by Braidotti (2006) in regard to the notion of bodily power: that it is key to be able "to catch the wave of life's intensities and ride it on" (216).

[54] In this chapter, I distinguish two interpretations of the notion of 'bodily power' although I also understand them as necessarily intertwined and I use them interchangeably. First, bodily power as the extent to which one maintains the coherence amongst one's body parts throughout the encounter with outside forces: one's "ability to persevere" (Garret 1996, 207). Secondly, bodily power as *agential capacity*: the capacity to *act* as a strong, active agent, and thus the extent to which "we can determine our actions from ourselves" (Garret 1996, 181).

underscore the existence of singular, identifiable bodies and I take the individual anorexic as my starting point.

Secondly, and in response to the article by Bray and Colebrook (1998), I argue that anorexia should indeed be considered in terms of bodily activity (37) and thus in terms of certain practices and comportments (62), but that the most interesting question concerns the *way in which* these practices are practiced, by particular bodies that are dying in the process. With an emphasis on the singular anorexic, I am therefore interested in the question of power: the bodily power present in anorexics and the strength with which they enact certain movements. Following Deleuze (1988, 98), I take one's degree of power as the very essence of a body and I explore the capacity of anorexics to endure *throughout* certain "practices of metabolism" (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63). Considering that bodies can be understood in terms of their ability to act and inter-act without losing their coherence (Lloyd 1994, 24, Adkins 2009, 58), my inquiry asks *what a body can do* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 257). What anorectic bodies can do, and to what extent they are enduring in life. It is an alignment with the notion of a spatial field of anorexia, as a network of "analysis, regulation, and normalization" (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63), but it highlights the anorexic as it starves on this field.

The focus on bodily power ties into the third aspect of my argument – namely, that it is key to consider anorexics *as they die*. Along with a recognition of their being, their *singular* being, and in respect to the question of power, I emphasize anorexics in terms of their collapse. This is to underscore these bodies as *bodies in pain* and to address both their suffering and their corrosion towards death. Here I turn once more to the Spinozist body: a body made up of a number of parts that, in its radical openness, constantly transforms by encountering forces and other kinds of bodies (Lloyd 1994, 17-18, Adkins 2009, 56). It is a body defined by a particular relation amongst its elements and that therefore depends on the

maintenance of this relation throughout time (Deleuze 1990, 208). Furthermore – and what should be emphasized in regard to anorexia – it is a body that, as a composite existent, necessarily faces the risk of falling apart (Giancotti 1999, 134). Fundamentally entangled therefore with the composite nature of a particular body is the threat of decomposition; of being overcome by powerful forces and facing the destruction of one's integrity (Della Rocca 2008, 142-143).[55] That bodies necessarily exist within the interaction with their surroundings thus also implies that they can be *decomposed* (Gatens 2000, 61), and that they can lose the coherence that marks them as singular beings (Deleuze 1990, 217). I take this notion of decomposition as pivotal in an account of anorexia, considering that anorexics are not only caught up in particular practices, such as measuring and weighing (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63) but, most importantly, that they are shrinking and dissolving throughout these kinds of actions. Central to my approach are therefore the perishing bodies; the bodies that are losing their flesh, and that are moving towards a skeleton-like state. What I take as the central question then is in what way these bodies, as composite beings, are coping (or unable to cope) with the forces they are facing. What should be asked is according to what strength and capacity they are getting through their day[56] such that, at the end of the day, they have lost another part of themselves.

My exploration of this question, of this Spinozist question of *what a body can do,* consists of two points: the first concerns the notion of power and the second addresses a body's decomposition. First of all, I suggest a consideration of anorexics in terms of low degrees of bodily power. With bodily power understood as the capacity to endure (Garret 1996, 207) and as the ability to form 'sustainable', non-destructive relations with the outside world (Braidotti 2006, 162), I consider the bodies in anorexia as less able to withstand

[55] Important here is the Spinozist premise that "[t]here is no singular thing in nature than which there is not another more powerful and stronger", and that there is always "another more powerful by which the first can be destroyed" (Spinoza's axiom part IV as cited in Della Rocca 2008, 141).
[56] In my choice of words here I am very much influenced (and inspired) by Braidotti (2006) who explores various habits and addictions as strategies to deal with life, as ways of 'getting through the day' (218-219).

particular forces in life. In regard to the destruction that takes place in anorexia, I approach the condition in terms of one's capacity to act – or one's ability to live in a self-determined, agential mode (Garrett 1996, 181)[57]– and in which this capacity is dramatically decreased. As such, I approach the composite body in anorexia, "constituted by the union of bodies composing it" (Lloyd 1994, 11), as a body whose cohesion is weakened.

From this angle, I view the primary question of anorexia not to regard "a series of practices" (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 62) but, rather, the *power* that is present in these practices. Pivotal in my exploration of anorexia are not the "activities of dietetics, measuring, regulation and calculation" (ibid.) but, rather, the *destruction* that is taking place in these acts; acts that, in and of themselves, are not necessarily detrimental but that form the forces of collapse in the case of anorexia. It is precisely this collapse that seems to mark the condition, in which particular activities are enacted not in a sustainable[58]way, but are rather *suffered* throughout a motion of decay. Beyond any diet, anorexics are starving, and beyond any measurement, anorexics are dissolving. A condition that can be approached in terms of suffering not only because it involves pain but also precisely because it concerns bodies that appear to *undergo* certain acts rather than practice them in a strong and healthy mode.[59] The verb suffering here thus suggests the *passive* rather than *active* character of the practices in anorexia,[60] with anorexics primarily understood not as strong, powerful agents but rather as

[57] Don Garret (1996) interprets the notion of 'action' in Spinoza as a situation in which "we can determine our actions from ourselves" (181). Action, or the power to act, thus concerns the ability to cast your own intentionality into the world (I am taking a somewhat phenomenological approach here) rather than being 'acted upon' by outer forces.

[58] With the notion of 'sustainability' in Braidotti's work as precisely referring to the endeavour to sustain under the pressure of life's forces: "how much of it a subject can take" (2006, 156).

[59] Important here is the notion that "the lowest degree of our power of acting" necessarily equals "our power of suffering" (Deleuze 1990, 224). The word 'suffering', in the Spinozist sense, thus refers to a state of less-powerful being; a state in which one is less capable of (inter-)acting in life. At the same time, this interpretation of 'suffering' does not disavow the question of pain. To the contrary, a low degree of bodily power fundamentally concerns the emotion of sadness (Della Rocca 2008, 156), with a lesser or greater power of acting retrospectively understood in terms of sadness and joy (ibid.).

[60] I refer here to the Spinozist distinction between 'action' and 'passion. I understand these concepts as follows: with the body as a necessarily *transformative* composition as a starting point, what can be called an 'action' is any transformation to this body that springs from its very own power (or: of which one is an 'adequate cause' Garret 1996, 192). A passion, on the other hand, is a transformation of the body caused by an external force (or:

bodies that are overwhelmed by the action. Overwhelmed by the force of "analysis, regulation, and normalization" (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63) through which they collapse rather than endure. Whilst therefore highlighting the question of pain, with anorectic bodies foregrounded as *bodies in pain*, I take the suffering of these bodies – in the sense of a passive rather than powerful mode of operating – also as a marker of their collapse. It is an approach to anorectic bodies that emphasizes their degree of power, their ability to act and interact with outside forces, in regard to which I argue that it is per definition this power that is affected in the condition.

The second point in my Spinozist exploration of the condition is as follows: anorexia, precisely because it concerns profoundly low degrees of power, can be considered as the dispersion and dying of a subject. Key here is the notion that a body is made up of a number of parts and that its very existence consists in the *maintenance* of this composition; in the maintenance of the glue that keeps the component energies together and prevents them from wandering off into different directions.[61] A certain solidarity amongst its members is thus essential for the composition to sustain. What could be asked then in regard to the condition of anorexia, is what happens when this solidarity (or power) is weakened and a body's parts go their own separate ways. When the glue is not strong enough to keep the composition in place, and an overall dispersion of the body occurs. Considering that a body exists only *as a composition* (Lloyd 1994, 11), consisting in a degree of bodily power (Deleuze 1988, 98), one can ask how much is left of a body whose power is hardly present. How much is left of the relation amongst its parts, and whether the body as such be said to still exist. Whether it still acts as a composite formation, or whether it has entirely dissolved. It is in regard to these questions that I turn to the following Spinozist formulation of death:

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of which one's is an 'inadequate cause' (Deleuze 1990, 221)); a situation in which one is not 'doing' something but, rather, is being 'done' to.

[61] Or, in Deleuze's words, that prevents them from "enter[ing] into another relation, corresponding to another essence" (1990, 210): a situation in which component parts leave a composite body and join forces with another composite body.

> A mode ceases to exist when it can no longer maintain between its parts the relation that characterizes it; and it ceases to exist when 'it is rendered completely incapable of being affected in many ways'. (Deleuze 1990, 217-218)[62]

Death in terms of disarticulation – a disarticulation of body parts to such an extent that the composition is lost and one ceases to exist altogether. Death, here, entails the dispersion of a composite body: its overall *decomposition* into an infinity of disorganized pieces. A situation in which the particular relation amongst body parts, the relation that defined the body (Lloyd 1994, 11), is destroyed and in which this body – or 'mode' in Spinozist terms- no longer forms a singular, identifiable unity. I consider two readings of this notion of death. First, one could read it according to the common understanding of death and thus in terms of a body's transition into a corpse. This means to consider the body's physical, organic collapse; the body as it is destroyed in its cellular nature. Secondly, this notion of death allows for a reading that suspends the question of organic decay. It is a perspective on death in terms of bodily power; in terms of the extent to which a body maintains the relation amongst its parts[63] and acts as a strong, self-determined agent.[64] Such a notion of death is formulated in terms of a body that does not necessarily stop breathing, [65] but whose 'affective capacity'– its capacity to endure forces and to inter-act with the world (Deleuze 1990, 225, Braidotti 2006, 162) – is

[62] See also E4p39s in Spinoza's *Ethics*, where he understands "the body to have died when its parts are so disposed that they maintain a different ratio of motion and rest to one another… For no reason compels me to assert that the body does not die unless it is turned into a corpse" (Spinoza [1678] 2000).
[63] I also build upon Mitchell Gabhart's reading of 'Spinozist death': "When the ratio of internal motion of the parts of the body is altered beyond a relatively fixed proportion, the body's nature changes … This change we call death."(Gabhart 1999, 625). Thus, death refers to the too-radical change in relation amongst one's body parts, such that the body has lost its defining constitution.
[64] With bodily power understood in terms of the extent to which "we can determine our actions from ourselves" (Garret 1996, 181).
[65] This is not to draw a rigid distinction between these 'two forms of dying'- I also understand them to be entangled, with the body in anorexia considered as precisely collapsing in terms of organs as well as overall composition.

lost altogether. This is a body that no longer acts as a self-directed entity and that is rather *acted upon* by outer forces – forces that have dismantled this body's composition.

From this angle, I suggest the following in regard to anorexia: that this condition can be approached not only in terms of suffering and thus in terms of pain as well as low degrees of power but, moreover, as a particular form of death. Death in the sense of disarticulation, in which one's power is weakened to the extent that very little might be left of the singular self. A body "conversant with the Living so much wasted with the greatest degree of Consumption" (Morton 1720, 8),[66] that is at such a low degree of power that it can be considered to be lost altogether. Thus, I approach the body in anorexia as a body that might still be moving and breathing, but whose ability to act, as a coherent, agential entity, has faded. In consideration of the ongoing movement of this body – that has not (yet) turned into a corpse – I therefore suggest to understand it as not actively partaking in this movement: rather, the body is *being moved*, by forces that have destroyed its cohesion.

4.3 When Only Movement Is Left: Anorectic Action and the Loss of Anorexics

I conclude this chapter by returning to the starting point of my thesis: that the condition of anorexia concerns bodies in pain. Bodies who suffer and die, and who need to be acknowledged within a theoretical account of the condition. Bodies that are necessarily situated in particular socio-cultural dynamics, but who are at the same time enduring a profound material breakdown. It is this breakdown, this collapse of a subject, that I have aimed to bring to the fore. Central in my account is the dimension of time, particularly with time as the subject's companion in space. It is time that "creates a continuity of disconnected

[66] In regard to the notion of 'consumption', an interesting article is *Nature's Metabolism: On Eating in Derrida, Agamben and Spinoza* by Julie R. Klein (2003), in which she characterizes the world/nature in terms of consumption. She argues, "[e]verything has to eat. The question is how to eat in ways that sustain rather than destroy one's ratio of motion and rest" (203). In this sense, I suggest to consider anorectic bodies as bodies that are, indeed, no longer consuming; rather, they are *being consumed* by outside forces.

fragments …[and] provides the grounds for a unity in an otherwise dispersed self" (Braidotti 2006, 151). Time thus allows the subject to form a collective, to 'synthesize' as Deleuze writes (1991, 93), and to bring spatial elements into a coherent formation. It is along this notion of time that I have approached the body in anorexia. A body that is composite and thus made up of a number of spatial parts, whose cohesion throughout time ensure the body's individuation. A body that can furthermore be characterized by a degree of power, in terms of its "ability to persevere" (Garret 1996, 207), and thus by the extent to which it can (inter)act in the world as a strong, coherent self. Lastly, it is a body whose cohesion can always come to an end, in the event of a dispersion of its component parts.

With the composite body as my starting point regarding anorexia, I have made two closely intertwined suggestions. One, that the condition entails low degrees of power, and two, that it concerns the dying of a body. In my account of anorexia, the condition thus first of all concerns a body that is *weakened* in its power, less able to act in a self-determined mode as a coherent, agential self (Garret 1996, 181). This is a body that is less capable of processing life's forces in an active, sustainable way; in a way that is non-destructive and that contributes to one's stability in life (Braidotti 2006, 157). This hindered capability to process certain forces relates to the notion of suffering, with anorexics understood not as active but passive beings, and thus as bodies who *undergo* (or suffer) rather than *practice* certain practices. Recognizing that particular activities (or forces) in anorexia are dealt with not in a neutral, but *painful* way is key here, in consideration of the composite body of an anorexic as per definition collapsing under the pressure of these forces.

My second suggestion ties into the first and takes the issue of bodily power one step further. Here, I consider the body in anorexia to not only be weakened, but to have lost its power altogether. Such a loss concerns the overall dispersion of a composite body, to such extent that it "ceases to exist" (Deleuze 1990, 217). In the sense of bodily power, it is a body

that might still be breathing but has entirely lost its agential ability – its ability to operate in life as a coherent, self-directed being. As such, there is no longer a singular self; only body parts that go their own separate ways.

Concerning this overall dispersion of the body, I return once more to the article by Bray and Colebrook on anorexia (1998), which presents an insightful understanding of the condition in terms of a spatial field. The authors emphasize the discursive nature of anorexia whilst moving beyond the question of representation. Anorexia, they argue, stretches beyond the inscription of significations onto bodies (38-39) and should be considered in terms of bodily *activity* (37). Rather than taking bodies as merely "the limit, negation, or other of representation"(39), Bray and Colebrook consider bodies' "practices and comportments" (62) and thus the activities in which they are immersed. The field these authors present concerns an always-already-embodied network of forces that make up the event of anorexia: a network "concerned with analysis [and] regulation", characterized by particular practices "such as calorie counting, weighing and measuring" (63). It is these kinds of practices, in the sense of "metabolism [and] mathematization" that constitute a field of interconnected forces on which anorexia unfolds (ibid.).

What I consider to be significant about this article is its presentation of anorexia in terms of space, a wide "region of intensities" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 22) on which the condition occurs. Bray and Colebrook provide an outline of the multidimensional network of forces in which bodies are embedded, not simply as blank pages to be inscribed by language, but actively caught up in certain movements. Anorexia is then foregrounded not simply as a textual event (Bordo 1997, 94) but as a question of bodily energies that constitute a 'territory' of anorexia – one not only of language but also of "metabolics [and] measurable force" (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63). What I problematize, however, is the erasure of anorectic bodies in this article. Arguing from within a focus on the field of anorexia, a field of "interconnected

practices"(58), the authors conclude that "there are no anorexics, only activities of dietetics, measuring, regulation, and calculation" (62).

It is this specific quote that I highlight once more for two reasons. First of all, I consider a theoretical recognition of anorexics as pivotal for them to not be 'derealized' (Kolozova 2014, 72). Anorexics exist, and the pain of their bodies should not remain unnoticed within a conceptual framework. Whilst the article by Bray and Colebrook is important for a consideration of anorexia in terms of its spatial dimension, I argue that one should also consider the bodies in pain. Bodies that are immersed in a particular field, but that are also starving on this field. At the same time, and this is where my second point comes in, one could also reinterpret this quote in full recognition of the body in pain. This alternative reading first of all requires the notion of time as a starting point – time as the generator of a composite body, and thus as the channel through which body parts form an ongoing unity. It is from within an emphasis on time that one can turn to the composite body: to its endeavor to maintain its coherence such that it can "reform each dawn" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 160). Now, as Deleuze and Guattari underscore, the key question in regard to this composite body concerns *what it can do* (257). How much of life's forces the body can take (Braidotti 2006, 156), and to what extent it is facing these forces in a self-determined, agential mode (Garret 1996, 181). With these questions in mind, I approach anorexia: a condition that, as Bray and Colebrook describe, unfolds on a particular field of forces. In full recognition of what could indeed be called a "steppe of the anorexic body" (Deleuze 1987, 112), I suggest to shift the focus however to the power of this body. I ask what the anorectic body can do, and to what extent it is acting in life. In regard to the practices in anorexia as described by Bray and Colebrook, my question is then *in what way* these are practiced by particular bodies that are starving in the process.

First, what should be considered is that the practices such as metabolism and weighing (Bray and Colebrook 1998, 63) are enacted not in a neutral way, but per definition in a way that is painful. From this angle, I consider the body in anorexia as a body characterized by suffering. It is a body that is immersed in certain activities not in a sustainable way, but that is rather weakened in the action. As such, the suffering in this body concerns its pain but also its low degree of acting, by which I would argue that anorexics can be seen as fundamentally *passive* bodies that are drowning in action. Secondly, and here I return to the quote by Bray and Colebrook, what could be asked is how much is left of a body that has drowned. A body that is not only weakened, but whose power might be lost altogether. A body that, in the words of Deleuze, "no longer maintain[s] between its parts the relation that characterizes it" (1990, 217) and that is therefore fully decomposed. Following Deleuze's argument, I understand this body to have ceased to exist. A body whose parts were blown apart in anorectic action, such that the singular self is entirely lost. In this regard, all there is left is movement: the movement of particular practices on the field of anorexia. A field populated only by forces, through which the body of an anorexic was made to disperse. In consideration of anorexia as a question of dispersion, I therefore suggest the following in response to Bray and Colebrook's statement: that one can indeed argue that 'there are no anorexics, only activities of dietetics, measuring, regulation, and calculation'. Not because there were no anorexics in the first place though, but because they have died along the way.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to talk about anorexia. In particular, the aim has been to talk about the body in anorexia. The body that is thinning and that is turning into a corpse. Following Grosz in her corporeal formulation of subjectivity, this thesis has been interested in the explanatory power of anorectic bodies. What these bodies can tell about lived experience; the experience of anorexia in terms of "the flesh and blood of the world, the life that continues to live in and through being", as formulated by de Beistegui (2004, 110). The concern has therefore not been the question of causality, nor the question of gender. It has not been an attempt to reveal yet another clue as to 'why so many anorectics right now', as Brumberg wondered (1988, 27), nor an effort to understand the high percentage of women amongst them. Rather, it has been an attempt to inquire into the condition *as lived*, in the sense of a reality in which bodies are starving, shrinking, passing out and passing away. From within an "unlimited confidence in lived experience" (Braidotti 2011a, 75), I have therefore aimed to address the condition, as something that extends beyond the boundary of words and the borders of these pages.

The first part of this thesis has been an analysis of the linguistic approach to anorexia within feminist scholarship from the 1980s and 1990s. An approach that has emphasized the condition as a cultural and gendered phenomenon, and in this sense as produced within semiotic structures that affect women in particular ways. From the viewpoint that anorexia is an essentially gendered condition, and with gender understood as a semiotic rather than natural category, feminist scholars have presented the condition as a question of 'femininity'. In this sense, they have addressed anorexia as a linguistic phenomenon that is inscribed onto women's bodies

I have problematized this approach in chapter two of this thesis. Whilst also considering the materialist view on language in the work of Judith Butler, I have argued that a linguistic framework is based upon a dualist understanding of mind and matter. A Cartesian metaphysics is thus reproduced, with matter and mind existing as ontologically distinct substances. Furthermore, I have emphasized the subsequent 'cut' produced in feminist scholarship on anorexia, with language on the one hand, and the material, experiential dimension of the condition on the other. In response to the linguistic notion that bodies exist only as an effect of discourse, produced within particular norms and values, I have underscored the subsequent erasure of anorexia as a material, embodied condition.

The second part of this thesis has explored a materialist approach to anorexia from within a metaphysics of monism. With matter and mind understood as necessarily intertwined, an approach to subjectivity was examined that takes corporeality as a starting point. Chapter three has first of all presented this corporeal-materialist view on the subject. A subject that is fundamentally bodily rooted, and who's body extends beyond the borders of the organs. Key in this chapter was this particular understanding of the body, as an essentially transformative bundle of forces that 'consolidate' in time into a singular, identifiable existent. In regard to this approach to the bodily subject, I have turned to the article by Bray and Colebrook to consider their account of anorexia. An account that understands the condition first and foremost as a bodily event, and thus as something that extends beyond the question of representation. Whilst aligning with their corporeal approach, I have also problematized their particular formulation of anorexia. My argument has been that although Bray and present an important view on anorexia, in terms of a spatial field of particular energies, they fail to acknowledge the body in pain. Central to my criticism is their statement that anorexia concerns a series of practices – or 'activities of dietetics, measuring, regulation, and calculation' – and that, as such, 'there are no anorexics'.

Chapter four of this thesis has emphasized the notion of time. In consideration of the subject as a consolidation in time – a consolidation of spatial elements – I have examined anorexia as a question of duration. Albeit in alignment with Bray and Colebrook's presentation of a field of anorexia; a region of anorectic movements and forces, I have aimed to address the body on this field. The singular anorectic body, whose starvation and death I explored in terms of the question of duration. Structured by Spinozist thought, and following the corporeal-materialist approach to subjectivity, I have considered the body in anorexia as a composite body. As a body that is made up of a number of parts, and whose cohesion needs to be maintained in order to avoid falling apart. From this perspective on the composite body, I have formed a twofold argument on the body in anorexia. First, that this body can be considered as a low degree of bodily power and, second, that it can be understood in terms of decomposition. Central to my argument here was that anorexia indeed consists in certain 'activities of dietetics', as Bray and Colebrook write, but that it is precisely the *destruction* in these practices that mark the condition. Thus, I have argued that the main question concerns *the way in which* they are practiced, by subjects who are collapsing. That certain activities are *suffered* is key to my argument here, by which I point to the passive rather than active nature of the action: rather than enacting the action in a sustainable way, I argue, anorexics are overwhelmed by it. Secondly, I have suggested to take the question of power one step further and to consider the body as it is fully decomposed. This has meant to understand the anorexic as not only weakened in its coherence, but as fully disintegrated – in alignment with a Spinozist formulation of death. As such, I have proposed an understanding of the anorexic as a subject that is lost. As a subject that might still be breathing, but who no longer acts in a self-determined mode. In response to Bray and Colebrook's article, I have then argued that the key issue is precisely the destruction that takes place in the activities in anorexia. Thus, I have stressed the point that particular practices, such as dietetics and calculation, are in a

sense not enacted – by a strong, coherent self – but are rather *acting upon* a body. A body that is dispersed, to the extent that the singular self is lost. From this perspective, I have presented a reinterpretation of the statement by Bray and Colebrook. That, indeed, one can argue that there no subject in anorexia, and that there is only a field of activities. However, and this I consider to be crucial, it is precisely the loss of the subject that is significant in this regard. In regard to the notion that anorexia consists only of a "series of practices" as Bray and Colebrook write (1998, 62), I therefore affirm the absence of an agent in this action; an absence that, however, is meaningful. From a Spinozist angle, I suggest to understand this absence in terms of suffering and death. This means to start from the anorexic as a composite body, and to then explore this body as it is weakened in its power. The fruitful side to this approach concerns the fact that one can now address the pain in anorexia; the body in pain, that is not only immersed in a particular discursive network but that moreover starves in this network. It is therefore an approach that underscores anorexia as a cultural phenomenon, but that also highlights the bodies in their material collapse. What I therefore hope forms a worthy contribution to existing feminist scholarship on anorexia, is this particular monist, materialist account of the condition. One that not only moves beyond matter versus mind and nature versus culture – by understanding anorexia as a corporeal (and thus necessarily discursive) event – but that also stresses the pain in this event; pain experienced by particular bodies, whose lives and deaths need to be accounted for. This thesis has thus been an attempt to enable the recognition of these bodies, to undo their 'derealization', to speak in Kolozova's terms (2014, 72), and to find a theoretical framework that lets them in. My hope is therefore to contribute to the realization of the bodies in anorexia, so "when their voices finally reach us" (ibid.), they might be given a platform to speak from.

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