

Student name: Cindrea Limburg (0040592),
Student of Women's Studies in Culture and Politics
MA Thesis, British English
Supervisor: Dr. I. van der Tuin
Second Assessor: Dr. M. Zarzycka

**The Death or Future of Psychoanalysis?: Assessing the Position of Psychoanalysis within
Contemporary Feminist Philosophy**

Contents

Introduction	4-8
1. A Brief Historical View on Psychoanalysis & the Implementation of Psychoanalysis within Feminist Theory	8
1.1 How Feminism Touched Grounds with Psychoanalysis	10
1.2 Psychoanalytic Interpretation within Feminist Theory	13
1.3 Relating Identity with Family & Object Relations	15
2. Rosi Braidotti's Patterns with Psychoanalysis	19
2.1 The intersectional value of Psychoanalysis and (Feminist) Philosophy	23
3. Luce Irigaray's Difference in Relations and Representations	26
3.1 A Focus on Desire and Longing	27
3.2 The Relations between Psychoanalysis, Philosophy and Language	31
3.3 Irigaray's 'Way of Becoming' & Braidotti's 'Working Through'	34
Conclusion	35-39

Foreword

I hereby like to thank all theorists mentioned in this thesis for their work and shared knowledge. I would like to utter special thanks to Luce Irigaray and Rosi Braidotti, two theorists whose theories inspired, educated and formed me. I am grateful for all the female voices and victories throughout history. May the woman's speech and sound of body be as diverse as can be, and may feminist solidarity thrive again and again, with shared knowledges of all kinds of critical stanzas and theories. I state this with the hope that psychoanalytic theory will not disappear, revive even, for it has much to offer. Continuous awareness concerning important methodologies should be one of the goals within third wave feminism: advocating solidarity and constant reassessments of relations, theories and practices, never forgetting where we came from, especially in this age of huge economical and political insecurities. I thank my supervisor Dr. Iris van Tuin, for her time, suggestions and guidance. Last, but not least, I wish to thank my partner, for her lasting patience and encouragements. I am grateful towards my family, and my family of friends.

Introduction

The impact of psychoanalytic theory within the fields of women's studies and feminist theory has been extensive. Perhaps we can be so bold to claim that the volume of this impact is larger than most feminists and (feminist) scholars would assume. Psychoanalysis has gone through fields of controversy, experiencing forceful rejection as well as loving embraces. The volume of psychoanalytic interpretation within contemporary feminist writing is not as rich as, for example, the seventies and eighties of last century's theories. Psychoanalysis, however, is still used as an interpretive tool within feminist academic writing, especially in the field of feminist philosophy.

Women's studies and the theories concerning or dealing with the position of women have grown immensely since their inception in the 1970s.¹ During and after the decade of numerous feminist reassessments of (Freudian) psychoanalytic theory, namely the 1970's, feminist theory and approaches have been used by and implemented within the field of social work and therapy for women. Feminist approaches to health issues began to rise and take the form of political action, including various critical changes within the Dutch health care system resulting in female positive approaches.²

Women's studies and feminist theory is now an interdisciplinary field offering soil for new approaches and perspectives on female subjectivity. With the use of psychoanalysis many feminist authors have researched the female psychological experience of not only the body and the nature of subjectivity, but also (family) relationships that affect the female ego, the sense of self, as well as the representation of emotions and character development.

Current developments show a decline in appreciation for psychoanalytic theory and practice, including therapy work with feminist psychoanalytic approaches. This development is a big concern to those who have been active in this field and have worked as psychotherapist creative therapist or as (feminist) social workers since the eighties of last century. The integration of feminist approaches and women

¹ Whelehan, I. *Modern Feminist Thought: From Second Wave to 'Post-Feminism'*. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh. 1995. Introduction.

² A very important and interesting source for the development of Women's Health Care in The Netherlands 1975-2000, is the book *Vrouwenhulpverlening 1975-2000: Beweging in en Rond de Gezondheidszorg* edited by professor doctors Janneke van Mens-Verhulst and Berteke Waaldijk, with contributions of various students, including me, who wrote on the impact of the women's movement, including various historical studies of feminist projects dealing with women's bodily and mental health issues and access to women friendly therapies and institutions. There is a large knowledge gap within our knowledge about the history of women's health movements, organizations, and feminist approaches within the health care developments. The editors state in their foreword that this book provides a part of this still to explored historical field.

friendly therapeutic theories was already low, even in its flourishing years in the 80s.³ This integration of feminist approaches and development in diversity is now, unfortunately in danger. Some writers even claim that the end of psychotherapy is nearing, which means that feminist approaches to psychoanalytic practice and knowledge will also lose their ground.⁴ The Dutch media is currently reporting in plentiful on the 'death' of psychoanalysis. In some articles, like the articles published in *De Volkskrant*, a well known national newspaper in The Netherlands, journalists draw direct relations to the current sceptic trends toward psychiatry in relation to the waves of new mental diseases, for instance the increasing numbers of ADHD and autistic disorders, and the domination of pharmaceutical industries within our societies.⁵ A good example of this new wave of criticism can be read in a book titled *Het Einde van de Psychotherapie* (The End of Psychotherapy) by Belgium author and psychotherapist Paul Verhaeghe. New policies in insurances have led to a concentration on evidence based therapies. In effect this means that the main priorities within mental health therapies have come down to eliminating symptoms in a small time frame as possible, whereby mental illnesses are based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV). The DSM IV (like its predecessors) is a diagnostic schema criticised for its lack of resonating cultural and gender differences.⁶ Mental health workers are forced to label their patients, categorising their symptoms in accordance to the DSM IV, which leaves no space for other psychological or psychoanalytical approaches to symptoms, as well as for individual based treatments with possible longer term types of therapy and/or therapies with feminist approaches. Critical notes coming from the scientists within this field, the psychiatrists, are regularly published and offer insight to personal experiences and difficulties psychiatrists and psychotherapists experience within the Dutch political and bureaucratic system.⁷ A drastic decision taking by the Dutch board for health care insurances, the CVZ, taken on the 23th of

³ Mens, J. van in: Mens, J. van & Waaldijk, B. eds. *Vrouwenhulpverlening 1975-2000: Beweging in en Rond de Gezondheidszorg*. Bohn Stafleu van Loghum, Houten. 2008.27

⁴ <http://extra.volkskrant.nl/opinie/artikel/show/id/5506>, opinion article with the claim and working title that Psychoanalysis Matters (Psychoanalyse doet er toe), by Nausicaa Marbe originally published April 2nd 2010. Article last accessed: July 15th, 2010

⁵ *De Volkskrant*, essay door Damiaan Denys. "De Psychiatrie is in crisis omdat de mens het onmogelijke verlangt". 17 April 2010. p. 9.

⁶ Mezzich, J.E, and others. *Culture & Psychiatric Diagnosis: A DSM-IV Perspective*. American Psychiatric Press, Washington, DC, 2005. Foreword.

⁷ An interesting example in this case can be read through the following link: <http://www.nuhelder.nl/Zorgsector%20is%20ziek.pdf>, accessed online July 15th 2010. Critical notes about the obligatory use, and the DSM IV itself, can be found in a lot of places. A good critical description with a historical and feminist perspective on the DSM system within the Dutch health care system can be read on page 11 and more in: *Cultuur, Classificatie en Diagnose: Cultuursensitief Werken met de DSM IV*, edited by: R. Borra, R. van Dijk and H. Rohlof, also accessible online via: http://books.google.nl/books?id=IorhHccjEo8C&pg=PA11&lpg=PA11&dq=DSM+IV+vrouwenhulpverlening&source=bl&ots=YHAY9zZHvL&sig=Sg7SOF17tTuzxEdTxlrFS7w-gHw&hl=nl&ei=dAhATNfUNiaFOOaPtJgN&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2&ved=0CB8Q6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=DSM%20IV%20vrouwenhulpverlening&f=false

March 2010 means that psychotherapeutic therapy is no longer covered within the Dutch health care system.⁸ The result of this development is saddening and means that only those who can afford it will have the opportunity to undergo extensive longer term therapies. We have to stay aware of these dangers in downfalls. Second wave feminists, including Dutch feminists, have fought for new perspectives within the psychiatric field. Feminists (and others) of today have to stay focused and guard these passageways.⁹ On guarding these passageways, Dutch lecturer of Gender Studies at the University of Utrecht, dr. Iris van der Tuin, wrote in her "Jumping Generations" article: " I want to theorise the 'bridging' Grosz carries out with the help of jumping generations. Bridging what was conflictual for a previous generation is an instantiation of jumping generations", according to Van der Tuin shared intergenerational conversations will lead to new feminist materialism.

To my opinion we are about to lose a great methodological structure within feminist theory, psychoanalysis seems to be favoured-out as well as in theory, as in practice. My concern and perhaps a calling for awareness, comes down to the question: does psychoanalysis have a future within (post)modern feminist thought?¹⁰

To realise the impact of psychoanalysis within and outside of feminist theory, one must be aware of the volume and diversity of approaches within feminist theory/feminism. For this reason, as well as for the simple reason that I wish to write for those readers who have never read about feminism or psychoanalysis, I will start this thesis with introductory notes on feminism and psychoanalysis in this thesis' first chapter. I will give a brief historical view on psychoanalysis, and the implementation of psychoanalysis within feminist theory. My focus within this section will be on the theories of Juliet Mitchell, Nancy Chodorow and Jessica Benjamin, whose ideas were of great contribution during, and

⁸ Online articles are available via:

http://www.volkskrant.nl/binnenland/article1363096.ece/Freud_niet_meer_in_verzekeringsspakket and:
http://www.volkskrant.nl/binnenland/article1365940.ece/Rel_over_besluit_tot_schrappen_pschoanalyse

⁹ The third wave is a difficult area of research since many young feminist, with their various use of feminist approaches, are hard to categorise as one specific group. In an earlier research study I tried to define certain identification properties within the group of young and also older feminists, for I approached my study with an intergenerational perspective. Through an act of sending my research questionnaire via a feminist e-mail list, run by Aletta.nu (<http://www.aletta.nu/aletta/nl>) a journalist of a popular Dutch feminist magazine (Opzij) contacted me and held a series of interviews published in the fall of 2007, with young feminists showed their view on the Feminist identity and the third wave, this was one of the first national publications on new feminist-third wave thought. Within this 'new wave thinking', I relate my views with that of my peer and thesis mentor dr. Iris van der Tuin. Her article 'Jumping Generations: On Second and Third Wave Epistemology', is online available via:
http://www.genderstudies.nl/cms/uploads/jumping_generations.pdf, online publication date: March 1, 2009, Van der Tuin shares her academic thoughts on second and third wave epistemology and writes: 'In this article, I want to show that contemporary feminist epistemology has moved away from producing classifications and towards cartographical approaches. Raia Prokhovnik has argued that feminist reflection in the first decade of the twenty-first century is characterized by 'the move to a third wave of feminism based now on relational, non-dichotomous thinking and social practices' (Introduction). My essay on the character of third wave feminism in The Netherlands is available by e-mail (cindrea.limburg@gmail.com).

¹⁰

after, the seventies and eighties of the last century in the US, UK and beyond. In the subsequent chapters I concentrate on two European feminist theorists who have implemented psychoanalysis within their theories. These theorists are: Rosi Braidotti and Luce Irigaray. Braidotti's work, which is heavily influenced by psychoanalysis, gives us a very comprehensive understanding of the application of psychoanalysis to philosophy and how psychoanalysis was institutionalised in Europe. Irigaray's ideas on psychoanalysis and language had a major influence of feminist theory in the eighties of last century, following Cixous' critical notes on phallogentric language. Her work on sexual difference was more prevalent in the nineties and onwards. Lacanian thought, which takes the Freudian psychoanalysis as its springboard for inspiration as well as critique, has had a major influence on feminist theory. Feminist theorists valued Lacanian theory in their own way, though the stream of appreciation was and is large. One voice of critique came early, the before mentioned Irigaray argued that Lacanian theory does not leave room for the historical and cultural determinations on the unconscious, imposing rigid strategies to analyse the unconscious. But even the voices of critique somehow also appreciated Lacanian theory. Through Irigaray we will see the relationship between (feminist) philosophy, psychoanalysis and language theory. I have chosen to first discuss Braidotti, followed by Irigaray. Both theorist I admired, and still admire, for their theories on sexual difference and philosophical thoughts on female identities. Due to Braidotti's physical, and material, presence within the University of Utrecht, I first read the theories of Braidotti. I soon started reading Irigaray, followed by direct contact during the 'Luce Irigaray and the Future of Sexual Difference' seminar in Paris, 2006. As a student I soon started to appreciate their philosophical thoughts and their use of psychoanalytic theory.

I would have preferred to use theoretical works of Dutch scientists, but sadly enough I have to mention that within the field of Dutch feminist writing, psychoanalysis is not a widely used theory. Some Dutch names do come to mind. Psychotherapist and author Iki Freud has written about the mother-daughter and mother-son dynamics in her books *Electra versus Oedipus: Psychoanalytische Visies op de Moeder-Dochter Relatie* (Electra versus Oedipus: Psychoanalytic Interpretations of the Mother-Daughter Relationship), first published in 1997, and *Mannen en Moeders: De Levenslange Worsteling van Zonen met hun Moeders* (Men and their Mothers: The Lifelong Struggle between Men and their Mothers), with 2002 as its first year in print. Dutch theorist and Professor Dr. Rosemarie Buikema has incorporated psychoanalysis within her introductions to women's studies and interpretations of literature.¹¹ Within this scope of Dutch based theoretical frameworks we also find

¹¹ Buikema's reference to psychoanalysis and her psychoanalytic interpretations of literature can be found within her books: *Het Heilige Huis: De Gotieke Vertelling in de Nederlandse Literatuur*, (2006), co-edited with Lies Wesseling, also online available through: http://books.google.nl/books?id=kqPzutW15_8C&pg=PA102&lpg=PA102&dq=rosemarie+buikema+psychoanalyse&source=bl&ots=XeWYcxBRPx&sig=ZTJviFVrgI4p4MpD-U56jEzR3f4&hl=nl&ei=-

beforementioned Italian-Australian feminist philosopher Braidotti at the department of Women's Studies at my own university which is the University of Utrecht. While being a student at the university I have had the pleasure of being a participant of several of Braidotti's lectures. Besides Braidotti's work I have also always enjoyed the writings and some classes with French philosopher, linguist and psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray. These two contemporary feminist theorists all incorporate psychoanalytic perspectives within their scientific work and research and these three theorists are the main sources for this thesis. I will use their work to analyse their focus within their use of psychoanalytic theory within feminist philosophy. Philosophy and psychoanalysis have always intersected and also within feminist theory. To my opinion this corner of feminist theory, feminist philosophy and especially European feminist philosophy, still extensively uses psychoanalytic interpretations in their discourses. It is therefore that I have chosen to concentrate my eye on this corner within feminist theory, for, to my opinion, this branch of theory has had an interesting development of describing the female subject, heavily relying on psychoanalytic theory.

1. A Brief Historical View on Psychoanalysis & the Implementation of Psychoanalysis within Feminist Theory

When psychoanalysis is mentioned a lot of people automatically use the name of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). Freud is probably the world's most well known scientist in the field of human behaviour. His psychodynamic theory, which prevailed in the early years of the twentieth century, led to the development of psychoanalysis. His thoughts and theories include well known concepts like the ego, superego, id (instinctual drive), as well as his free association techniques and the analysis of dreams. Freud himself phrased psychoanalysis as a "[p]rocedure for the investigation of mental processes inaccessible in any other way (in order words, unconscious ones), a method of treatment of neurotic disorders based on this, and a collection of psychological information obtained there from which is

[g1ATKehAYrvOere1N0M&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=6&ved=0CDIQ6AEwBQ#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.nl/books?id=ztJ0vUysZCOC&pg=PA74&lpg=PA74&dq=rosemarie+buikema+psychoanalyse&source=bl&ots=8PczB-HBEq&sig=sbVCO4qeE4jTycCfVTdI5POxTk8&hl=nl&ei=g1ATKehAYrvOere1N0M&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=6&ved=0CDIQ6AEwBQ#v=onepage&q&f=false)
Women's Studies and Culture: A Feminist Introduction, edited by Buikema and Anneke Smelik (1993) contains a lot of valuable references towards the relationship between feminism and psychoanalysis. This book is also online available: http://books.google.nl/books?id=ztJ0vUysZCOC&pg=PA74&lpg=PA74&dq=rosemarie+buikema+psychoanalyse&source=bl&ots=8PczB-HBEq&sig=sbVCO4qeE4jTycCfVTdI5POxTk8&hl=nl&ei=g1ATKehAYrvOere1N0M&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=8&ved=0CDgQ6AEwBw#v=onepage&q&f=false

gradually becoming a new science".¹² Even for those who use psychoanalysis, the critique that is often ventured in relation to psychoanalysis is often understandable. Where other types of analyses rely on verifiable data, psychoanalysis uses propositions based on the unconscious, which can never be subjected to meta-analysis.

There is no system to the analysis, valuable notions and the workings of our drives and urges form the basis of analysis. Freud did not intend to create a structure for meta-analysis was. Freud's idea was, as Mitchell writes, to link the individual's psychology to a collective and social situation and analyse the modes of interrelationships.¹³ The writings of Freud's colleague, and at one time rival, Carl Jung (1875-1961) was, and is also a great contribution to the field of analytical psychology. For a long time the line between psychology and psychoanalysis was blurred, and sometimes still is. Both fields were new, and in its infantile stages during the time Jung and Freud started writing down their scientific interpretation. Jung was influenced by Freud, but did not agree on all of Freud's scientific ideas. To give an example; Jung's theory does not include and stress the importance of the concept of instincts like Freud's does. Jung on the other hand, is probably most famous for the original terminology he used for indicating the female and the male side in all human beings, which he termed the anima and the animus, as well as his work on the unconscious collective which he categorised into archetypes (symbolic representations). Freud's theory, also termed psychodynamic theory, had great affect on the development of psychology and psychiatry.¹⁴

Psychodynamic theory quickly became a trend within psychology and still is learning material for psychology students. Within subfields of psychology the theorisation of personality, listing of mental disorders, types of treatment, the analysis of dreams and emotions often includes Freud's theories, this is also why Freud was, and still is so appealing to many feminist theorists.

A main divider between psychoanalysis and psychology was the birth of the school of structuralism. Structuralism dealt with the structure of mind, which was built from the elements of consciousness combined with ideas and sensations.¹⁵ Because of Freud, the ideas of the unconsciousness, repression of emotion and memories became the main ideas within this new field called psychoanalysis. Since then psychoanalysis has undergone major theoretical developments. Modern en post-modern approaches within the field have, alongside Freud's classical theory of psychodynamics, created new waves of thought. Besides Freudian theory, branches like Ego

¹² Mitchell, J. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. Basic Books, New York. 2000. 341

¹³ Mitchell, J. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. Basic Books, New York. 2000. 316.

¹⁴ Carlson, N. Eds. *Psychology, the Science of Behaviour*. Pearson Education, Harlow. 2000. 19.

¹⁵ Carlson, N. Eds. *Psychology, the Science of Behaviour*. Pearson Education, Harlow. 2000. 17.

psychology, favoured in the US, Object Relations theory, sometimes also termed Kleinian theory after theorist Melanie Klein, and postmodern Lacanian theory. The latter two are mainly found within a European context. Object Relations theory and Lacanian theory are often used within European feminist theory.

1.1 How Feminism Touched Grounds with Psychoanalysis

To fully understand the impact of psychoanalysis within feminist theory several aspects have to be kept in mind. First we have to realise the large number of psychoanalytic branches and related theorists within these branches. Theorists like: Melanie Klein, Donald Winnicott, Christopher Bollas, Karen Horney, Anna Freud, Wilfred Bion, Jacques Lacan, Hans Loewald, Erich Fromm, have grown the fields with their findings on the human unconscious and the workings of the mind. Second wave feminism proved to be an important wave for many, also for scientific fields such as psychoanalysis. The second wave, and the social revolution that took place in the decades of this wave, was firstly and foremostly based on and driven by one major layer within the formation of change of thought: the political layer. This layer influenced a huge social change, which still gives us feminists interesting food for thought. We need to remember this layer of social and political influences, because it was not only the drive that created more space for more theory, but is also the motor which will keep social changes going. It also shows us how much impact the political has on social relations and constitutions, but also how directly the political is related to movements, and how the political relates to our day to day lives. How we think in academia, or: how we NOT think, this all has an influence on that which surrounds us. The development of psychoanalytic theory is a wonderful example. Hopefully this thesis will show some of the effects psychoanalysis has had within the formation of feminist theory. I have chosen to focus on the effects –within- a theoretical field. There is much more going outside this field of theory as well, since theory becomes practice and since there is practice within theory. My main concern here is the relationship between insurance companies, the restrictions of DSM IV and the quality of (feminist) therapies for women (as well as men). Before I go forward in time, I first need to go back by discussing one of the major changes within modern Western history, the social revolution of the 1960s and 1970s.

Europe's Change in Thought in the 1960's

Let us first go back to 1968. Europe's revolutionary generation allowed for many changes by introducing heavy critique and pulling away the barriers set up by generations before them. This generation, which politically came of age in the abovementioned year, broke down doors of, as Rosi Braidotti writes, "[u]ntouchable systems of thought which had founded and guided critical theory before, during (albeit in exile) and after European fascism – namely Marxism and psychoanalysis and their respective reliance on Hegel."¹⁶ The traditions and laws that thus far had reigned theoretical frameworks, were re-interpreted. The poststructuralists' call for reappraisal of canonical and/or orthodox texts on Marx and Freud, defended by European communist parties and the International Psychoanalytic Associations, changed the thoughts of new generations. Literary scholar Maria Serena Sapegno writes in her chapter 'Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A European Phenomenon and Its Specificities', from the book *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women's Studies* edited by Braidotti and Gabriele Griffin, "It was between France and Italy, around the fatal year of 1968, and of course within the political movements born at that moment, that psychoanalysis and feminism met officially for the first time, that is to say on a 'mass/political base.'¹⁷

New forms of philosophical radicalism emerged and developed in France and the rest of Europe of the late 1960s and 1970s, the new thoughts were vocalized in statements of theories of critique of the dogmatic structure within communist thought and practice.¹⁸ Braidotti explains that the generation of the post-structuralists directly appealed to the "[s]ubversive texts of Marxism and psychoanalysis, so as to recover their anti-institutional roots", the radicalism of this generation was expressed via their critique on the humanistic implications and the "[p]olitical conservatism of the institutions" embodied Marxist and psychoanalytic dogma.¹⁹ In the poststructuralist's view the problem was not the theory, but rather the theory of "[t]he subject which is implicit in these theories: under the cover of the unconscious, or the bulk of historical materialism, the subject of critical European theory preserved a unitary, hegemonic and royal place as the motor of human history."²⁰ The start of critical theory was born, resulting in all sorts of comparative methods in analytical thinking, making room for the 'other' within theory, making room for differential thinking. The founding texts on which theories were based exploded by the "[n]ew social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, especially the women's movement,

¹⁶ Braidotti, R. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 2006. 24.

¹⁷ Braidotti, R., Griffin, G. eds. *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women's Studies*. London, Zed Books. 2002. 110.

¹⁸ Braidotti, R. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 2006. 24.

¹⁹ Braidotti, R. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 2006. 25.

²⁰ Braidotti, R. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 2006. 25.

in a historical context of decolonization and progressive dislocation of Europe's hegemonic hold over world affairs. ²¹ Braidotti continues by saying:

The radical philosophies, which later will become labelled as 'post-structuralism', represent a moment of great theoretical creativity. They repossess the Marxist and psychoanalytic texts, promoting the importance of open-ended reinterpretation of the actual theories. Althusser and Lacan, the founding figures of this historical development, broke from existentialism by heralding a 'return' to the materialist roots of continental critical philosophy, via a radical reading of Marxism and psychoanalysis as critiques of the unitary subject of humanism.²²

Psychoanalysis worked as a great tool with which one could distinguish the relationship between self and other, even though the sixties and seventies were eras of the conscious. "Emergent feminists in the late '60s and '70s were inclined to be more reflective in their extensive analyses of 'what it means to be a woman', and ready to question the foundations of existing social/familial relations", writes author Imelda Whelehan in her book *Modern Feminist Thought: From Second Wave to 'Post-Feminism'*.²³

The post-structuralist atmosphere during the 1960s and 1970s was "[h]istorically embedded in the crisis of European humanism, the critique of phallogentrism and the dislocation of European hegemony" and contained an approach which was built on the psychoanalytic notion of: "[a]n open-ended or non-unitary subject activated by desire."²⁴ A day of age followed in which a philosophical generation proclaimed that "death of man" was simultaneously anti-fascist, post-communist and post-humanist" and which led to the "[r]ejection of the classical definition of European identity in terms of humanism, rationality and the universal."²⁵ Philosophical theories created new visions on sexual difference, written by Irigaray, Cixous and others, were injected with the perspective of the feminine. Braidotti writes: "[t]hrough the spectrum of the critique of dominant masculinity, also stress the ethnocentric nature of European identity and the need to open up to the 'others within' in a way that relocates concepts of diversity as opposed to the traditional view on European identity and as a component of European subjectivity."²⁶ This spectrum of the feminine and the development of this spectrum also relates with psychoanalysis. The development of the *L'écriture féminine* and the

²¹ Braidotti, R. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 2006. 25.

²² Braidotti, R. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 2006. 25.

²³ Whelehan, I. *Modern Feminist Thought: From Second Wave to 'Post-Feminism'*. Edinburgh University Press Ltd, Edinburgh. 1995. 8.

²⁴ Braidotti, R. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 2006. 27-28.

²⁵ Braidotti, R. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 2006. 27.

²⁶ Braidotti, R. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 2006. 27.

linguistic turn, has been displayed in feminist theories and connected to linguistic influence and the workings of language which Freud, in a rudimentary form, displayed by connecting the psychic mechanism of our sexuality to ideational representation and memory.²⁷ According to Juliet Mitchell this emphasis on structuring language facilitated a move “[i]nto using psychoanalysis”, “[t]o read sexual difference within cultural texts and that this move to texts and representations of sexual difference almost “[p]ulled the entire feminist use of Freud-Lacan orientation in tow.”²⁸ Braidotti underlines the importance of language and how it affects our desires. Braidotti also points out how our desires relate to our identity and our unconscious. Freud’s theory of the unconscious in relation to instinct is often lost in the feminist use of psychoanalysis and identity. During and after the second women’s movement psychoanalysis was mostly related to the social positions that were given to women and/or how family structures were related to a woman’s sense of identity. Authors with a sociological view like Juliet Mitchell and Nancy Chodorow, whom I will discuss later, are good examples. Many theorists wanted to map the area of ideas, the relation between the conscious and the unconscious, as well as theories of sexuality.

1.2 Psychoanalytic Interpretation within Feminist Theory

As mentioned before, the Freudian, Lacanian and the Object relations theories are most often used within the feminist framework. The reassessment of Freudian theory, occurring in the seventies of the last century, went hand in hand with the second wave of feminism. Many female theorists, writers and activists challenged Freud’s misogynist assumptions of the female character and denounced the stereotype of the hysterical woman. The history of feminist theory and women’s studies has gone through interesting waves of use of theory and theorising new perspectives. The debates within our field have not always been as intersectional and interdisciplinary as it is now. Looking back in history we find that feminist sub-cultures, also pre-dating the second wave, tried to develop a “[h]egemonic theoretical claim to explain oppression.”²⁹ The need to search for a coherent and unified subject of reason evaporated and feminist theory emerged, being part of the post-structural critique on western philosophy as well as the humanist legacy of the Enlightenment, starting the critique on these notions of the coherent and unified subject of reason as the object of philosophy in general and of knowledge in particular.³⁰ During the second wave we find a reassessment of psychoanalysis.

²⁷ Braidotti, R. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 2006. 243.

²⁸ Mitchell, J. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. Basic Books, New York. 2000. xvii.

²⁹ Chodorow, N. *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 1989. 1.

³⁰ Braidotti, R. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 2006. 76 & 97.

Psychoanalysis, especially Freudian psychoanalysis, had been under attack by many scholars and, in particular, feminists. British psychoanalyst and socialist feminist Juliet Mitchell was one of the theorists who appreciated Freudian theory. Her now famous book *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis* is still a vademecum for many feminists among us. Mitchell's book was written and published during the second wave of the feminist movement. According to Mitchell the 'search' within second wave feminism was the focus on the "[q]ualities women had in common across the many huge divides of class, race, ethnicity, family ties.... The question was: What differentiates women, not from each other, but from men?"³¹ The definition and experience of concepts like sexuality, narcissism, masculinity, femininity, bisexuality and penis envy, the oedipal phase went through stages of redefinitions. Before mentioned author Sapegno gives a nice overview of the relation between psychoanalysis within the European field of feminist theory. Sapegno explains that the interest in psychoanalysis arose from the need to deal with "[t]he main issue emerging from the new practice – that of sexuality, the female body, how to think it and give voice to it."³² Psychoanalysis was as repelling as attractive for feminists to use in their theoretical discourse because it offered a framework to work with the concept of sexuality. Sapegno, who writes about the feminist movements in France and Italy, the movements focus on psychoanalysis still marks our current modes of actions: "It was certainly within French and Italian feminism, or within certain currents thereof, that the use of psychoanalysis as the fundamental intellectual structure of a political practice took place, to leave persistent and significant traces in women's thoughts for years to come."³³ Another important marker, or drive, within the feminist use of psychoanalytic theory is that psychoanalysis also provided political insights into the power relations between men and women. The power relations and the authority of men upon women became 'the' research topic/subject of the seventies and eighties.

During these decades, second wave feminism, history and the female experience became a focus point. That which had been taken for granted of women or which had been termed as true/Truth now became a field of research for women themselves. Women stood up against the expectations, limitations and assumptions society had put on them. Women started to look closer at what it meant to live life as a woman and what it meant to have lived as a woman, throughout our history of woman. Self organised group therapy groups were formed and became part of the Dutch second wave

³¹ Mitchell, J. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. Basic Books, New York. 2000. XXII.

³² Mitchell, J. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. Basic Books, New York. 2000. 110.

³³ Braidotti, R., Griffin, G. eds. *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women's Studies*. London, Zed Books. 2002. 111.

feminism. According to Braidotti psychoanalysis brought insight to the construction of sexual identity and provided a discourse about ‘otherness’, of femininity, of the patriarchal culture, and Freudian theory/scheme was used as “[f]airly accurate description of the mechanisms of masculine authority—an analysis of the subjective grounding of patriarchal power.”³⁴ These new approaches feminists lay the grounds for modern Western thought by challenging the Western patriarchal *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi* bare and visualised. They verbalised and analysed the gender matrixes.

1.3 Relating Identity with Family & Object Relations

For Mitchell *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* was a project through which she wanted to create a “[d]imension of psychoanalytic theory to forward an understanding of how, beyond the biophysical-chemical-anatomical-constitutional factors and the social learning behaviours of sexual difference, we live ourselves as subjects which are sexually differentiated, or in today’s idiom (with which I have always disagreed), ‘gendered’³⁵. Mitchell, like others, started to analyse gender within social structures like the family structure. Mitchell stresses that her goal was to fill in what had been left out: the accounts of how such social structures live ‘[i]n the heart and in the head and transmitted over generations.’³⁶ Across the ocean another feminist sociologist and psychoanalyst was writing about family structures and the sociology of gender. Scholar Nancy Chodorow’s focus was on Object Relations theory. Chodorow’s reconceptualisation of ‘gender’ was crucial. In 1976 her book *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* came out and described the unconscious and the conscious interpretation of gender. Like Mitchell, Chodorow focused on female family relationships, with a special focus on mother-daughter relationships. The *Reproduction of Mothering* discusses women’s mothering, Chodorow argues the then current reproduction of mothering through “[s]ocial structurally induced psychological processes which, as she writes, is ‘[n]either a product of biology nor of intentional training.’³⁷ Chodorow was one of the first to demonstrate with psychoanalytic account of the male and female personality development that women’s mothering “[r]eproduces itself cyclically and that women’s role as mothers are crucial to the nurturing position

³⁴ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York.. 1994. 182-183.

³⁵ Mitchell, J. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. Basic Books, New York. 2000. xvii.

³⁶ Mitchell, J. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. Basic Books, New York. 2000. xviii.

³⁷ Chodorow, N. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles. 1978. 7.

and capacities of their children as well as their gender roles and consciousness, she continues by writing: "Women's maternal role has profound effects on women's lives, on ideology about women, on the reproduction of masculinity and sexual inequality, and on the reproduction of particular forms of labor power."³⁸ Family and reproduction became topics of research.

To Mitchell there was one question, still relevant to many women, which she phrases throughout *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*: "Why, despite massive social, economic and legal changes, is there still a kind of underwater tow that makes progress regress on matters of 'gender' equality?"³⁹ Because many of these 'underwater tows' arise from our unconsciousness', Mitchell used the theory of the unconscious in order to bring that which is under water to our consciousness. In her book, Mitchell reassesses Freud's theory and comes with two important thoughts that support her claim on the importance of Freudian theory: "the unconscious that Freud discovered is not a deep mysterious place, whose presence, in mystical fashion, accounts for all the *unknown; it is knowable and it is normal*. What it contains is normal thought, utterly transformed by its own laws (which Freud called the primary process), but nevertheless only transformed and hence still recognizable if one can deduce the manner of transformation, that is, decipher the laws of the primary processes to which the thought is subjected."⁴⁰ Mitchell related femininity with sexuality: "[t]he role of sexuality, what he is therefore saying, for instance, about the nature of femininity, relates to how femininity is lived in the mind."⁴¹ Mitchell writes that feminism and psychoanalysis are related in battling process of unconscious behaviour and transgenerational processes of genderisation:

Feminism is confronted with the task of pursuing emancipation in the heart of darkness. The conservatism enjoined on, and practised by, the family and the women therein is not simply a matter of rhetoric- though it certainly is that – it is also the result of generational transmission of a certain kind of thought about concepts like masculinity and femininity. This 'kind of thought' is, of course, partly conscious, deliberately chosen and enacted. However, it is primarily an unconscious process. Such an unconscious process is the

³⁸ Chodorow, N. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles. 1978. 11.

³⁹ Mitchell, J. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. Basic Books, New York. 2000. Xvii.

⁴⁰ Mitchell, J. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. Basic Books, New York. 2000.6.

⁴¹ Mitchell, J. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. Basic Books, New York. 2000. 7.

object of both psychoanalytic theory and its clinical practice.⁴²

Sapegno explains why theorist first focused on the relation between woman and family: “[c]ultural interest in psychoanalysis, shifting towards the political, acquired a special character through the ‘experimental’ use of its categories, the need to adapt them as specific tools to answer crucial questions about the nature of femininity and female sexuality; unconscious relations with the father and the mother; motherhood and womanhood. Consequently the political focus of these groups of feminists became more and more the question of what is involved in being born and brought up ‘as a woman by a woman’, in a literal as well as a deeply symbolic sense, where the stress was both on the new notion of a sexed subject and on the founding importance of the mother – daughter relationship. Somewhat less importance was given to ‘becoming woman’ as a social construct, a broader and sociological concept.”⁴³ Whitford writes that the early years of the women’s movement had been “[c]haracterized by demands of equality – which meant equality with men. It was not really until the end of the 1970s that Anglo-American feminism began to theorize women’s difference as a source of cultural possibility rather than simply a source of oppression.”⁴⁴ Mitchell mentions the development of Anglo-American psychoanalysis within feminist theory. “Nancy Chodorow, who first published with the feminist antropologists, used Object Relations theory to explain sex/gender division as arising from processes of differential identification. Likewise Dorothy Dinnerstein and Jessica Benjamin explored inter-relational processes, with the additional deployment of self-psychology.”⁴⁵ According to Mitchell we should see their contributions as “[c]omplementary to, rather than alternatives of the Lacanian interpretations of Freud’s theories. In Freud’s concept there is an economic dimension, the human drive wants satisfatction and the release of tension – it is indifferent as to the object through which it is attained. Object Relations proposes that there is an urge towards a particular human object, such as the mother, or part thereof, such as the breast (‘object’ so called because the mother is the object of the child’s drive).”⁴⁶

Chodorow notes that psychoanalysis provided an “[a]nalysis and critique of the reproduction of sex and gender.”⁴⁷ “Freud and his followers demonstrated how sexual repression in the family produces

⁴² Mitchell, J. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. Basic Books, New York. 2000. XIX

⁴³ Braidotti, R., Griffin, G. eds. *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women’s Studies*. London, Zed Books. 2002. 111.

⁴⁴ Irigaray, L. *The Irigaray Reader*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford. 1991. 26-27.

⁴⁵ Mitchell, J. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. Basic Books, New York. 2000. XXIII.

⁴⁶ Mitchell, J. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. Basic Books, New York. 2000. XXIII, XXIV.

⁴⁷ Chodorow, N. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. University of California

potential bisexual, polymorphous perverse infant as genitally heterosexual, monogamous adult, with boys appropriating their masculine prerogatives and girls acquiescing in their feminine subordination and passivity."⁴⁸ To Chodorow the use of psychoanalysis within feminist theory was important. Chodorow writes that the "[c]entrality of sex and gender in the categories of psychoanalysis, coupled with the tenacity, emotional centrality, and sweeping power in our lives of our sense of gendered self, made psychoanalysis a particularly apposite source of feminist theorizing."⁴⁹ Chodorow also mentions that psychoanalytic feminism has a rather unusual and complex prehistory. This prehistory was, as she writes, '[e]xcavated' by locating the theoretical origins of female psychoanalytic theorists. Chodorow's work showed, as she herself writes, "[t]hat the selves of women and men tend to be constructed differently – women's self more in relation and involved with boundary negotiations, separation and connection, men's self more distanced and based on defensively firm boundaries and denials of self-other connection."⁵⁰

Whelehan's book about modern feminist thought, mentioned earlier, is a wonderful introduction of the dominant trends mainly within, but also outside, Anglo-American feminist thought since 1968 until the 1990's. In the academic circles of the mid-eighties, writes Whelehan, a crisis in feminism was acknowledged, subjects within feminists approaches and opinions became apparent in this era of critical retrospectives and summaries.⁵¹ On the then current reflections of the nineties Whelehan mentions that there is a great difference between Anglo-American feminist thought and European feminist thought: "Anglo-American feminist explorations into the realms of female desire are still too dependent on patriarchal representations of sexuality". In *Thinking Differently* Braidotti sets out the current key issues within Women's Studies and feminist theory in Europe mainly, but also including the relation between European and Anglo-American feminist theory. The concept of desire is a major theme in the works of Braidotti and Irigaray, it is their approach to the (female) subject that has created my focus on French-European feminist philosophy.

Through the years psychoanalysis waved its pattern in feminist theory. There are voices, like Sapegno, who raise the issue that we could even go deeper: "The originality and creativity of the relation between psychoanalysis and feminism in Europe appear to have been strictly dependent of

Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles. 1978. 40.

⁴⁸ Chodorow, N. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles. 1978. 40.

⁴⁹ Chodorow, N. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles. 1978. 2.

⁵⁰ Chodorow, N. *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 1989. 2.

⁵¹ Whelehan, I. *Modern Feminist Thought: From Second Wave to 'Post-Feminism'*. Edinburgh University Press Ltd, Edinburgh. 1995. 195.

maintaining the original connection to the women's movement, never really becoming the enterprise of a single person."⁵²

In the next chapters the focus will be on two of the most famous European feminist philosophers Rosi Braidotti and Luce Irigaray and their use, meaning and critical voice on psychoanalysis.

2. Rosi Braidotti's Patterns with Psychoanalysis

Braidotti's approaches and calling for female refigurations captured my mind years ago, while I was entering pre-master courses within the Women's Studies department. My love for the theory of Luce Irigaray soon followed, as did my discovery of the relation between these two theorists. Both theorists practice what is called the stream of sexual difference within feminist philosophy, stressing differences, instead of focusing on levels of equality. Braidotti distinguishes two schools of thought in European Women's studies, and defines them as schools that deal either with sexual difference theories, mainly French orientated or also called the European continental traditions of difference, or gender theories, and the Anglo-American tradition of sex/gender.⁵³ Braidotti favours a fuller and more informed discussion between European traditions of difference and mainstream Anglo-American traditions: "Instead of polemic disagreements, what is needed is a detailed and careful mapping of the respective positions. The notion of dialectics, the Heglian legacy and the impact of both Marxism and psychoanalysis are, in my view, central to this discussion."⁵⁴ Theories of desire are lacking according to Braidotti. A creation of such theories will sooner come to life in the European fields than in the fields of the US: "Especially since the 'sex-wars' of the 1990s, the only public discourse about sexuality within US feminism concerns lesbian, gay or queer sexualities."⁵⁵ Within Braidotti's work one continuously finds 'other' models in relation to female subjectivity. Braidotti questions scientific and sociological models and stresses the limitations of a logocentric approach.

⁵² Sapegno in *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women's Studies*, eds Braidotti, R. Zed Books. London. 2002. 121.

⁵³ Braidotti in *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women's Studies*, eds Braidotti, R. Zed Books. London. 2002. 5 & 174.

⁵⁴ Braidotti in *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women's Studies*, eds Braidotti, R. Zed Books. London. 2002. 174.

⁵⁵ Braidotti in *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women's Studies*, eds Braidotti, R. Zed Books. London. 2002. 174.

Braidotti praises the creative approach and stands for alternative other modes and ways of representation.⁵⁶ One element keeps coming back within her writings; the element of desire. Braidotti's approach to the representation of the self is based on desire. Situating the view that desire has a direct relationship to our unconscious, Braidotti has created a constant calling as one may call it, for female configurations. Feminist redefinitions are of importance according to Braidotti: "The starting point for most feminist redefinitions of subjectivity is a new form of materialism by emphasizing the embodied and therefore sexually differentiated structure of the speaking subject".⁵⁷ How much of an influence psychoanalysis has had on several theoretical fields rings through when we read the following thought Braidotti wrote down: "Since Freud and Nietzsche, Western philosophy has argued that meaning does not coincide with consciousness, that there is a nonconscious foundation to most of our actions; *cogito ergo sum* is the obsession of the west, its downfall, its folly. No one is master in their house; *desidero ergo sum* is a more accurate depiction of the process of making meaning".⁵⁸ To Braidotti, desire is a key notion to understanding identity. This key notion of understanding multiple identity/identities comes from understanding the unconscious. How language is involved in this process becomes apparent immediately:

Psychoanalysis –as a philosophy of desire— is also a theory of cultural power. The truth of the subject is always in between self and society. The truth of the matter is that, from the moment you were born, you have lost your "origin." Given that language is the medium and the site of constitution of the subject, it follows that it is also the cumulated symbolic capital of our culture. If it was there before "I" came to be and will be there after "I" disappears, then the question of the constitution of the subject is not a matter of "internalization" of given codes but rather a process of negotiation between layers, sedimentations, registers of speech, frameworks of enunciation. Desire is productive because it flows on, it keeps on moving, but its productivity also entails power relations, transitions between contradictory registers, shifts of emphasis.⁵⁹

Desire is, according to Braidotti and Object-relation theorists, in continuous relation between self and

⁵⁶ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 3.

⁵⁷ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 3.

⁵⁸ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York.. 1994. 13.

⁵⁹ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York.. 1994. 14.

other: “[s]omething in the ontological structure of the subject is related to the presence of the other.”⁶⁰ Redefinitions and active thinking create possibilities for recognition and ‘working through’, or as Braidotti writes: “[w]orking through the layers of complexity of the signifier I, woman, we end up opening a window onto a new genderized bond among different women.”⁶¹

The Impact of Psychoanalysis

In *Thinking Differently* Braidotti writes: The impact of psychoanalysis has been a radical deconstruction of the subject by splitting subjectivity from the supervision of rationality. The subject is no longer identified with consciousness: ‘desidero ergo sum’ replaces the old cogito. In other words, the activity of thinking is enlarged to encompass a number of faculties, of which affectivity, desire and the imagination are the prime movers. Psychoanalysis, and, with it, structural anthropology, emphasize the crucial importance of sexuality – of the subject’s ‘libidinal economy’- to an understanding of subjectivity”. On how this relates to feminism Braidotti continues: “What matters for feminism are the implications of this notion for political practice. Politics in this framework has as much to do with the constitution and organization of affectivity, memory and desire and pleasure as it has with consciousness and resistance. A political economy of desire and pleasure consequently becomes necessary.”⁶² Braidotti also explains why sexuality is so closely related to the theories of desire:

Sexuality as an institution, as a pillar of identity and as a vehicle of powers forms a multilayered structural apparatus of the utmost political significance. The embodiment of the subject is a form of bodily materiality, not only of the natural, biological kind. The body is the complex interplay of highly constructed social and symbolic forces: it is not an essence, let alone a biological substance, but a play of forces within a complex web of social and symbolic relations. The subject is a process, made of constant shifts and negotiations between different levels of power and desire, that is to say wilful choice and unconscious drives. Whatever semblance of unity there may be is embodied and performed as a choreography of many levels into one socially operational self. It implies that what sustains the entire process of becoming-subject is the will-

⁶⁰ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 202.

⁶¹ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 203-204.

⁶² Braidotti, R., Griffin, G. Eds (2002) *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women’s Studies* London, Zed Books. 160.

to-know. Desire is a founding, primary vital, necessary and therefore constitutive drive to that becoming subject.⁶³

In *Patterns of Dissonance: A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy* Braidotti explains how she relates psychoanalysis with philosophy. Braidotti states that psychoanalysis effects a critical reading of conceptual thought, as is manifest in the “[s]pecific mental operations of philosophy.”⁶⁴ “Its central challenge touches upon the relation between unconscious and conscious thought, which Freud formulated as follows: how are we to understand, and theorize, the form of thought which is at work in dreams? How are we to take the fact that clear, distinct and pertinent forms of thought can reproduce themselves without the intervention of consciousness.”⁶⁵ According to Braidotti :“psychoanalysis’s role in the decompartmentalization of the recognized conceptual categories has been to lead to the reintegration of the relational dimension, that is, the relation to the other. This interrogation finds a privileged place of investigation in the question of sexual difference and the feminine.”⁶⁶ “Unconscious processes, memories, identifications and untapped affectivity are the invisible glue that sticks together that bundle of contradictions that is the subject”, writes Braidotti. To Braidotti psychoanalysis “[p]ushes the critique of the subject to the extreme, bringing to the surface the set of rules, conflicts, and conditions of enunciation underlying the register of subjectivity.”⁶⁷ Braidotti claims here that the register of a subject is directly related to unconscious sets of rules, while philosophy has a long history of relying on our conscious capacities.

2.1 The intersectional value of Psychoanalysis and (Feminist) Philosophy

Braidotti claims that philosophy and psychoanalysis intersect at the concept of consciousness: “This suspicion as to the limits of consciousness – a space of questioning and crisis – is where

⁶³ Braidotti, R., Griffin, G. Eds (2002) *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women’s Studies* London, Zed Books. 160.

⁶⁴ Braidotti, R (1991) *Patterns of Dissonance* Oxford, Polity Press. 1991. 18.

⁶⁵ Braidotti, R (1991) *Patterns of Dissonance* Oxford, Polity Press. 1991. 8.

⁶⁶ Braidotti, R (1991) *Patterns of Dissonance* Oxford, Polity Press. 1991. 40.

⁶⁷ Braidotti, R., Griffin, G. Eds (2002) *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women’s Studies* London, Zed Books. 37.

philosophy and psychoanalysis meet face to face."⁶⁸ Braidotti writes that women (in contemporary philosophy) "[n]eed to speak about the bodily roots of the thinking process, of all human intellect, and to reconnect theoretical discourse to its libidinal and consequently unconscious foundation."⁶⁹ Her great appreciation and emphasis on the importance of psychoanalysis becomes apparent in *Patterns of Dissonance* while she points out that the "[c]risis within philosophical knowledge", the crisis of the death of rationality, opens up a new system of conjoining patterns of analysis (e.g psychoanalysis) to interpret such subjects as femininity, sexual difference and the female subject. "⁷⁰ How psychoanalysis can be interwoven into this crisis is: "Psychoanalysis is the discourse of this crisis par excellence: it has come gradually to be accepted as a radically new reading of the structures of human subjectivity"⁷¹. In *Nomadic Subjects* she writes: "A major role is played, within the landscape of modernity, by the discourse of psychoanalysis. Far from being a mere therapy, psychoanalysis has developed into a philosophy of desire and a theory of the body as libidinal surface, a site of multiple coding, of inscription—a living text."⁷²

As two separate disciplines the philosophical field and the psychoanalytical field have debated with each other for years on subjects like individual subjectivity and thought. The impact of these debates are, interestingly enough, rather intensive. Braidotti writes: "The conclusion as to the highly improbable nature of a dialogue between these two disciplines is rather paradoxical in so far as it actually dominated the intellectual debate for years, creating the very special context that is post-structural France".⁷³ She also refers to the return to the body: "[t]he urgency to return to the body and to the affective roots of all thought is also one of the most significant traces of the psychoanalytic revolution, the effects and implications of which are particularly crucial for feminism and philosophy alike."⁷⁴ Intellectual debates within the two fields seem to be dominated by a certain turn that is cultivated by a stream of thought.

Braidotti on feminism and psychoanalysis

Like many theorists, Braidotti uses psychoanalysis in her approaches to the female self, with a critical

⁶⁸ Braidotti, R (1991) *Patterns of Dissonance* Oxford, Polity Press. 19.

⁶⁹ Braidotti, R. *Patterns of Dissonance: A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 1991. 8.

⁷⁰ Braidotti, R. *Patterns of Dissonance: A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 1991. 9.

⁷¹ Braidotti, R. *Patterns of Dissonance: A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 1991. 17.

⁷² Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York.. 1994. 59.

⁷³ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York.. 1994. 24.

⁷⁴ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 8.

eye on the combining of theories. “It seems to me that feminism and psychoanalysis disagree, among other things, on the reading and evaluation of the effects that the transformations in the historical condition of women are likely to trigger off not only in the social and economical, but also in cultural terms. These changes are likely to alter not only the status of women, but also their relation to psychoanalytic practice and the ways in which psychoanalysis deals with the feminine.”⁷⁵ Braidotti, however, also sees the historical value of psychoanalysis within feminist theory: “As far as the intellectual genealogy of feminism is concerned, however, the oedipalization of women’s relations as a counterpart to the institutionalization of feminism offers another fruitful point of intersection between feminist theory and the post-structuralist and especially the psychoanalytic insight about the structure of symbolic and material institutions as sites of both rivalry and sublimation.”⁷⁶ To Braidotti feminist theory is not only a position of critical new theory, but also a positive affirmation of women’s desire to engage with and enact forms of (female) subjectivity.⁷⁷

One of the tasks feminists have, writes Braidotti, is to constantly stress the need for new figurations of subjectivity and, more importantly, to stress the need for a sex-specific vision of female subjectivity. Each real-life woman or female feminist subject is: a multiplicity in Herself: slit, fractured, a network of levels of experience, a living memory and embodied genealogy, not one conscious subject, but also the subject of her unconscious: identity and identifications in an imaginary relationship to variables like class, race, age, sexual choices.⁷⁸ Identity has, according to her line of thought, a multiple (fractured) layers of the self which requires a relation to the ‘other’. “[I]t is retrospective, in that it is fixed through memories and recollections, in a genealogical process. Last, but not least, identity is made of successive identifications, that is to say unconscious internalized images that escape rational control.”⁷⁹ Within feminist theory the concept of identity is often confused with political subjectivity. Braidotti’s stress on the difference between the two shows the difference between the conscious and the unconscious: “In my scheme of thought, identity bears a privileged bond to the unconscious processes, whereas political subjectivity is a conscious and wilful position. Unconscious desire and wilful choice do not always coincide.”⁸⁰ Within these lines of thought Braidotti stresses her appreciation for psychoanalytic theory: “The idea of ‘differences within’ each subject is tributary to

⁷⁵ Braidotti, R (1991) *Patterns of Dissonance* Oxford, Polity Press. 43.

⁷⁶ Braidotti, R (1991) *Patterns of Dissonance* Oxford, Polity Press. 167.

⁷⁷ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 158.

⁷⁸ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 165.

⁷⁹ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 166.

⁸⁰ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 165.

psychoanalytic theory and practice in that it envisages the subject as the crossroads of different registers of speech, calling upon different layers of lived experience.”⁸¹ The writings of Braidotti teach us that representations of female figurations, the senses of the female self, relate to language, unconscious processes, and our desires within our experiences.

Another corner of influence: Language

In her book *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* Braidotti displays her philosophical view on female subjectivity. To Braidotti language, and the awareness of the symbolic systems within languages, is very important. “Words have a way of not standing still, of following their own path.”⁸² “Lancanian psychoanalysis shows us that there is no such a thing as a mother tongue, that all tongues carry the name of the father and are stamped by its register. Psychoanalysis also teaches us the irreparable loss of a sense of steady origin that accompanies the acquisition of language, of any language.”⁸³ Braidotti writes that ‘a linguistic model of metaphorical displacement thus’ a basic model for the ‘[p]sychoanalytic idea of the Libido’.⁸⁴ Braidotti, like Irigaray, addresses female subjectivity through redefinitions of sexual difference. Braidotti states that female subjectivity and new forms of female subjectivity should, among other elements, best be understood through the expressions of women’s ontological desire. “Sexual difference opens out toward the definition of general structures of thought, not only female-specific ones.”⁸⁵ In Braidotti’s theory understanding subjectivity, sexuality, and language are, is a related pattern, intertwined: “The view I am putting forth is that the starting ground for feminist redefinitions of female subjectivity is a new form of materialism that places emphasis on the embodied and therefore sexually differentiated structure of the speaking subject.”⁸⁶ This critical post-structural deconstruction approach correlates with the psychoanalytic notion of ‘working through’: “Working through the networks of discursive definitions of ‘woman’ is useful not only in what it produces as a process of deconstruction of female subjectivity, but also as process, which allows for the constitution and the legitimation of a gendered female

⁸¹ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 165.

⁸² Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 9.

⁸³ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 9.

⁸⁴ Braidotti, R. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 2006. 243.

⁸⁵ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 198.

⁸⁶ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 199.

community."⁸⁷ The sense of self, or as Braidotti writes the 'she-self', relates best in a situation, or process, in which it is aware of the presence of the female embodied self and has access to a continuous of redefinitions of female subjectivity. Through this knowledge, and through acts of affirmation, woman, or 'she-self', will feel "[a]s a positive, self-affirming political force."⁸⁸ Acts of affirmations and theories on desire are to Braidotti two important sets of power in the 'working through' of a woman.

3. Luce Irigaray's Ethics on the Female Subject and Psychoanalysis

One of the European critics of Freudian and Lacanian theory during and after the 1970s is French linguist, philosopher and psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray. In 1974 Irigaray published a book that, at the time, sparked some controversy. The book that received these notes of criticism is *Speculum de l'autre femme*, in which Irigaray worked through her thoughts on the gendered assumption of psychoanalytic theory. According to author Margaret Whitford, Irigaray was in advance of the movement of Anglo-American thought, which, as Withford writes, "[i]s perhaps why *Speculum* does not seem to have been well understood on its first appearance in 1974."⁸⁹ Irigaray, whose theories have been predominant within feminist theory for several decades now, quickly showed a deconstructive approach, producing theories influenced by French philosophers Michel Foucault (1926-1984) and Jacques Lacan (1901-1981). Her academic position created the theory of sexual difference, combining gender politics with psychoanalysis. How Irigaray's stream of difference worked with the theories of psychoanalysis is interesting.

Where others did not appreciate psychoanalytic theory, Irigaray underlined the value of psychoanalysis. One of the most important French philosophers at that time, Simone de Beauvoir, was, for instance anti-psychoanalysis. Later, however, De Beauvoir, admitted in a interview in 1978, that the second wave feminists of her time made a mistake by denying the unconscious.⁹⁰ Second wave feminism mostly dealt with developing theories and/or practices in which the gender praxis was analysed with a view of 'sameness', whereby issues of gender (in)equality were raised and developed into deeper levels. Irigaray's suggested a theory of 'difference'.⁹¹ To Irigaray, de Beauvoir's 'other' is the 'other of the same', 'the necessary negative of the male subject' with all that has been repressed,

⁸⁷ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 200.

⁸⁸ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 200.

⁸⁹ Irigaray, L. *The Irigaray Reader*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford. 1991. 27.

⁹⁰ Irigaray, L. *The Irigaray Reader*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford. 1991. 24.

⁹¹ Irigaray, L. *The Irigaray Reader*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford. 1991. 24.

rejected and disavowed.

Irigaray created a vision in which she described the female subject as a split subject, thoughts on split subjects can also be found within Object-relations theory, dominated by the male object. A split subject originates from, and lives from the objects (persons) in direct relations to the subject and those relations that work on abstract levels, structures outside the social and personal realm following down to the political wings of our societies. The Western female originates from the perspective of the male, the male energies, the male language and power structures that have had and still have a history predominated by the male mind, and is therefore equal to the male, but not yet equal in voice and historical value. The theorist states that alongside the male gaze, there is an 'other' which is not by definition the same, but a "[s]elf defined woman who would not be satisfied with sameness, but whose otherness and difference would be given social and symbolic representation."⁹² For many theorists this creation of representation(s) was and is valued highly and philosophically. In her spectrum of representation Irigaray's first deconstructions of female representations examines, the "[m]other's function as the infrastructure of Western civilization, and the obliteration of women *as women*." In defining the female identity and imaginary Irigaray emphasises the unconscious.

3.1 A Focus on Desire and Longing

According to Irigaray, Lacan's theories have, and still have, a major impact within gender studies. To become human, the 'subject' as it is called within philosophy, has to move within the symbolical order; rules, symbols, and language.⁹³ Part of this formation of the subject within the symbolical order is the formation of the sexed identity, which Lacan like Freud, thinks is not only based on biological trades, but includes sociological influences. Like Lacan, Irigaray is of the opinion that language is one of the main characteristics of human beings. Due to language, human beings are able to portray a 'me' towards the world.⁹⁴ Irigaray moves away from Lacan in her view that there is a fundamental difference between 'male' language, and its relation to the world, and the 'female' language and its relation to the world.⁹⁵ Irigaray states that within every theory the human subject is described as, or is portrayed as, a male subject, and so also psychoanalysis.

⁹² Irigaray, L. *The Irigaray Reader*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford. 1991. 24-25

⁹³ Irigaray, L. *Tussen Oost en West: Van Singulariteit naar Gemeenschap (Entre Orient et Occident: De la Singularité à la Communauté)*. Ten Have, Kampen. 2009. 15.

⁹⁴ Irigaray, L. *Tussen Oost en West: Van Singulariteit naar Gemeenschap (Entre Orient et Occident: De la Singularité à la Communauté)*. Ten Have, Kampen. 2009. 16.

⁹⁵ Irigaray, L. *Tussen Oost en West: Van Singulariteit naar Gemeenschap (Entre Orient et Occident: De la Singularité à la Communauté)*. Ten Have, Kampen. 2009. 17.

In *Entre Orient et Occident: De la Singularité à la Communauté*, Irigaray stresses the power and the force of longing, of our desires. Her view on this power and force of longing, and the knowledge of our desires, is, to Irigaray, a fundamental notion of being ‘open’ to the world, to be able to feel our life forces.⁹⁶ Irigaray’s view on desire and longing is highly influenced by Lacan. In *Speculum de l’autre femme*, Irigaray points out the phallogentrism within the Freudian and Lacanian theory, upon which she was thrown out Lacan’s school of thought.⁹⁷ Within these theories, like in many other theories, as well as the whole of Western philosophy, the ‘woman’ equals “[n]ature, the dark side, and the radical ‘other.’”⁹⁸ Irigaray demonstrates the power of influence within being a woman, how women are affected by power.

Psychoanalysis relates Relations & Desire

“Psychoanalytic theory and therapy, the scenes where sexuality as such, are a long way from having effected their revolution”, wrote Irigaray in her 1993 collection of essays on sexual difference titled *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*.⁹⁹ She states: “We need to reinterpret everything concerning the relations between subject and the world, the subject and the cosmic, the microcosmic and the macrocosmic.”¹⁰⁰ How desires are approached within our contemporary Western society is described by Irigaray as:

Our age, which is often thought to be one in which the problematic of desire has been brought forward, frequently theorizes this desire on the basis of observations of a moment of tension, or a moment in history, whereas desire ought to be thought of as a changing dynamic whose outlines can be described in the past, sometimes in the present, but never definitely predicted. Our age will have failed to realize the full dynamic reserve signified by desire if it is referred back to the economy of the *interval*, if it is situated in the attractions, tensions, and actions occurring between *form* and *matter*, but also *remainder* that subsists after each creation or work, *between* what has already been identified, and so on.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Irigaray, L. *Tussen Oost en West: Van Singulariteit naar Gemeenschap (Entre Orient et Occident: De la Singularité à la Communauté)*. Ten Have, Kampen. 2009. 15.

⁹⁷ Irigaray, L. *Tussen Oost en West: Van Singulariteit naar Gemeenschap (Entre Orient et Occident: De la Singularité à la Communauté)*. Ten Have, Kampen. 2009. 7.

⁹⁸ Irigaray, L. *Tussen Oost en West: Van Singulariteit naar Gemeenschap (Entre Orient et Occident: De la Singularité à la Communauté)*. Ten Have, Kampen. 2009. 17.

⁹⁹ Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. The Athlone Press, London. 1993. 6

¹⁰⁰ Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. The Athlone Press, London. 1993. 6

¹⁰¹ Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. The Athlone Press, London. 1993. 8.

According to Irigaray psychoanalysis is a key:

In order to imagine such an economy of desire, one must reinterpret what Freud implies by sublimation and observe that he does not speak of the sublimation of geniality except in reproduction? But if this were a successful form of sublimation, Freud would not be so pessimistic about parental child-rearing practices) or of the sublimation of the *partial drives in relation to the feminine* but rather of their repression (little girls speak earlier and more skilfully than little boys; they have a better relationship to the social; and so on- qualities or aptitude that disappear without leaving any creative achievements that capitalize on their energy, except for the task of becoming a woman: an object of attraction?)¹⁰²

Irigaray's thoughts on the 'male analyst' in relation to Lacan is played out in *To Speak is Never Neutral*, first published in 1985 and translated into English in 2002. Addressing the male psychoanalyst, who only views the world from a man's perspective. To Irigaray no theorist should be made into the *One* that provides *the* discourse that embraces all interpretations (my emphasis). In her chapter "The Poverty of Psychoanalysis" Irigaray addresses the male psychoanalyst, but it is not always clear if this is the only audience she addresses. Irigaray warns the reader to constantly be aware what kind of discourses we create, from which we interpret and what kind of discourses we allow into our symbolic settings.¹⁰³ Still talking about Lacan she writes: "Since all these 'symbolic' or 'imaginary' components, all this weaving of knowledges and identifications, that constitute your Master's word are little known, or unknown, to you, his word can appear before you only as Truth".¹⁰⁴ In the search for knowledge and the creation of different kinds of discourses one has to be aware that introjections (the internalisation of aspects and/or thoughts one admires) always creates a path from which the analyst interprets the story of their patients.

Of course, Lacan desires knowledge. That, no doubt, is what commands your admiration, and even a certain kind of beatitude? He loves knowledge more than the unconscious. Or, he loves the unconscious for the knowledge it brings him. Is that what has left you all a bit stupid, like children of a father who knows too much, or a father 'presumed to know everything'?¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. The Athlone Press, London. 1993. 8-9.

¹⁰³ Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002. 210

¹⁰⁴ Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002. 210

¹⁰⁵ Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002. 211

Irigaray relates this inclination to worshipping one theorist and working from the standpoint of (mainly) one theorist to her observation that one cannot claim laws within psychoanalysis:

You would rather be the sons of God (Lacan) than deprived of your lack? So then, you have Lacan as God of your unconscious, of your School, of your world, of the world? Final avatar of a – psychoanalytic – incarnation of salvation. Do you not know that when science comes to power, God is dead? And your god is a spectre that haunts you because you cannot discover his nature. Or interpret, according to your science, his provenance, or his cause in relation to desire. Therefore perhaps...? His relation to sex? *Real sex* too.¹⁰⁶

To Irigaray these male dominated discourses cover up the space women need to unveil their own desires and to ‘become’. Desire is to Irigaray not the same for both sexes, by which she distances herself from Lacan and those who practice his codes of beliefs. In *Entre Orient et Occident: De la singularité à la communauté* Irigaray also writes about the power of desire and longing in relation to language. This notion of desire, an openness to the world, is one of the groundrules, the manifestation within the psychoanalytic view of the French philosopher and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan).¹⁰⁷ Lacan states that the human is a *parlêtre*; a by language formed creature, which explains why language, psycholinguistics and writing (*écriture féminine*) were major concepts within gender studies.¹⁰⁸ Lacan was of a major influence to theorists like Irigaray and Braidotti, an influence we still see within European Women’s and Gender Studies.

3.2 The Relations between Psychoanalysis, Philosophy and Language

Irigaray writes: “Because women have no language sexed as female, they are used in elaboration of a so-called neuter language where in fact they are deprived of speech. And this makes it hard for a woman to achieve a *for-itself*, and to construct a place between the *in-itself* and the *for-itself*.”¹⁰⁹ Irigaray’s answer to this is her following thought: “An ethical imperative would seem to require a practical and theoretical revision of the role historically allotted to woman. Whereas this role

¹⁰⁶ Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002. 211.

¹⁰⁷ Irigaray, L. *Tussen Oost en West: Van Singulariteit naar Gemeenschap (Entre Orient et Occident: De la Singularité à la Communauté)*. Ten Have, Kampen. 2009. 15

¹⁰⁸ Irigaray, L. *Tussen Oost en West: Van Singulariteit naar Gemeenschap (Entre Orient et Occident: De la Singularité à la Communauté)*. Ten Have, Kampen. 2009. 15

¹⁰⁹ Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. The Athlone Press, London. 1993. 107

was still interpreted by Freud as anatomic destiny, we need to understand that it has been determined by the necessities of a traditional sociocultural organization – one admittedly in the process of evolving today.”¹¹⁰ This process of evolvment, a process of becoming, is needed according to Irigaray: “Philosophy, thought, and discourse do not evolve swiftly enough to “popular” movements. One of the places in our time where we can locate a people is the “world of women.” Nonetheless, if there is to be neither repression of this “people” nor ethical error on its part, an access to sexual difference becomes essential, and society must abandon the murderous hierarchy as well as the division of labor which bars woman from accomplishing the task reserved for her by Hegel: the task of going from the deepest depths to the highest heavens.”¹¹¹ Within this thought one finds the source for Irigaray’s focus on desire, language and sexual difference.

In *To Speak is Never Neutral* Irigaray asks the question: “In changing, metamorphosing, and anamorphosing, does the subject not wonder about the resistance, or the insistence, of its own existence?”¹¹² This form of becoming within the scientific accounts has, according to Irigaray, always been directed by the male gaze: “Up until now the form-giving subject has always been male. And this structure has unbeknownst to itself, clearly given form to culture, and to the history of ideas. They are not neuter.”¹¹³ This is for Irigaray enough reason to question why, when science is telling us that the brain of men and women are different, we are supposed to speak the same language. Irigaray has worked through different perspectives on the relation between language and the construction of the subject. Within her explanations Irigaray takes human development into her account, as well as her psychoanalytical knowledge, and says: “It seems to me that the differentiation between mother’s self and the other of the child, and vice versa, is in place well before it’s given meaning in and by language, and the forms it takes don’t necessarily accord with those our cultural imagination relays...”¹¹⁴

Interesting is Irigaray’s link between language and psychoanalysis:

Discourse hardens up and closes off. In the subject itself. It loses its fluidity of communication, stiffens into pathological forms – pathogens that require the invention of strategies of observation, and of therapies for and through language. Psychoanalysis is perhaps the most astonishing of these: the most stratified experimental theatre for the enunciation and for the pragmatics of language, revealing their impasses, their illnesses, their economic crises, their

¹¹⁰ Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. The Athlone Press, London. 1993. 117-118.

¹¹¹ Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. The Athlone Press, London. 1993. 118.

¹¹² Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002. 3

¹¹³ Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002. 3

¹¹⁴ Irigaray, L. *Je, tu, nous: Towards a Culture of Difference*. Routledge, New York. 1993. 42

auto-logical circles etc. This setting for the interpretation of language is not widely recognized as such. It is, nevertheless, unique as a scientific possibility. However, it depends on the aptitude of the subject for self-criticism and self-analysis *vis-à-vis* its most subtle and resistant determinations¹¹⁵

Even clearer is Irigaray when she writes: “The tool is the speaking subject and his or her relation to the word”.¹¹⁶ Language contains more than just words to Irigaray, language also forms structures of stories. To Irigaray the entering and/or forming of meaning of stories while analysing, reading, producing, listening and or feeling anything that gives meaning, is a philosophical process. Irigaray uses the unconscious to unravel these processes and which makes her work, to me, so interesting. Irigaray formulates it as such: “We are dealing with two lost phenomena: the interpretation of a story that is being read after the fact; and a period of transition where new meaning has not yet been discovered”.¹¹⁷

In *This Sex Which is Not One*, she writes about the “powerlessness of logic” and language: “But what division is being perpetuated here between a language that is always subject to the postulates of ideality and an empirics that has forfeited all symbolization? And how can we fail to recognize that with respect to this caesura, to the schism that underwrites the purity of logic, language remains necessarily meta- “something”? Not simply in its articulation, in its utterance, here and now, by a subject, but because, owing to his own structure and unbeknownst to him, that “subject” is already repeating normative “judgments” on a nature that is resistant to such a transcription.”¹¹⁸ We have to look at how we perceive language because language “[f]ails to recognize the “subject” of the unconscious and precludes inquiry into the subjection, still in force, of that subject to a symbolization that grants *precedence to solids*.”¹¹⁹ According to Irigaray theorization neglects the ‘fluidity’ of our bodies, our human being: “A woman speaks a different language, psychoanalysis is, to Irigaray, a way which perpetuates dynamics within historical positioning of women.”¹²⁰ Irigaray mentions that the female has yet to create a language, “[h]er word, her style’. Irigaray’s main question is the ‘[q]uestioning of language of science, and an investigation into the sexualisation of language, and the relation between the two’.¹²¹ Language is to Irigaray a deconstructive tool for analysis.

¹¹⁵ Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002. 5

¹¹⁶ Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002.5

¹¹⁷ Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002.6

¹¹⁸ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which is not One*. Ithaca, New York. 1990. 107.

¹¹⁹ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which is not One*. Ithaca, New York. 1990. 110.

¹²⁰ Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which is not One*. Ithaca, New York. 1990. 114.

¹²¹ Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002.5.

The Language of Discourses

To Irigaray the subject is always determined by discourses, more than by others. In this, she steps away from the object-relations theory that is so dominant within feminist psychoanalysis. Irigaray places the construction of identity even before we create relations with others. The discourses that we find within our lives and the (literal and symbolic) languages that we speak are never neutral but always created and, still, often owned by the male perspective. What is left for women, writes Irigaray is: “And so all that is retained from the truth of men is what splits them their lot, puts them in their place? The effects of women of ambivalence, without the safety catch of a negation that founds truth? The effects on women of the underside of ‘male’ discourse? In order for them to be one(s), women must take care of the split”.¹²² The danger, even within psychoanalysis; with its creation of scientific laws, with the gaze and predominance of the male discourse, is that it makes women the “[b]earer of what you call the ‘splitting of the subject’, are you not reducing her to the effects of man’s relation with the unconscious? Because, if man is not divided in his knowledge, he has no unconscious”.¹²³ The key notion for Irigaray is her realisation that the female still behaves like the ‘other’, the one, the unique and the dominant voice within scientific fields and so also in reflective fields of life and our way of relating.¹²⁴ To create a new way of relating, Irigaray proposes the female voice, the female language.

Irigaray states that we need an “[e]thics for those who would build and inhabit their own territory, their own world, and who respects the other’s, particularly the other sex”.¹²⁵ Psychoanalysis is needed because: ‘The unconscious was discovered, and should be understood, spoken about, and interpreted within a tradition. It exists within, through, and for a culture’.¹²⁶

With this Irigaray, again, stresses the need and the value of the uncharted territory, favouring a science that opens up instead of closing down by emphasising boundaries and ‘neutralising’ the ‘voice’ of psychoanalysis. For Irigaray psychoanalysis can never bring forward any idea of a universal law. Her claim with which she breaks through these assumptions of law building science, is that psychoanalysis is based on individual desires which can never be related to any set of assumptions or arguments which lead to rhetorical finality and universal laws.¹²⁷ Here we can read Irigaray’s relation to desire.

¹²² Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002.213

¹²³ Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002.213

¹²⁴ Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002. 4.

¹²⁵ Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002. 7.

¹²⁶ Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002. 206

¹²⁷ Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002. 209

3.3 Irigaray's 'Way of Becoming' & Braidotti's 'Working Through'

Irigaray's thoughts on movement and becoming is answered by her theories and her stress on the concept of love. "But, contrary to the usual methods of dialectic, one should not have to give up love in order to become wise or learned. It is love that leads to knowledge, whether in art or more metaphysical learning. It is love that both leads the way and is the path. A mediator par excellence".¹²⁸ The theorist describes becoming as movement, and vice versa. "Everything is always in movement, in a state of becoming. And the mediator of all this is, among other things, or exemplarily, *love*. Never fulfilled, always becoming".¹²⁹ Irigaray writes: Living beings, insofar as they are alive, are becoming. They produce form. No becoming is morphologically undifferentiated, even if its source is chaotic. And the problem of sexual difference weighs in heavily, no doubt, on the side of the primary matter of nature, but also on the side of language. Do we still have something to say? Do we still have meaning to produce?"¹³⁰

How one should look at Braidotti's psychoanalytic notion of 'working through' layers of complexities reminds me of Irigaray's call for a new strategy, a new tactic and practice to gain vision, self-knowledge, self-possession in one's decenteredness. The stages of 'working through' complexities by de-centering could be seen as a way of 'becoming', a way in which 'becoming' does not necessarily have to configure into sameness. This working through is to Braidotti a philosophical test, an analytical stance of becoming aware which power relations center the self. Irigaray points out that psychoanalysis is a "[p]ossible enclave of philosophical debate". Irigaray, like Braidotti, thinks that imaginary, as well as rationality, are important to refigurations of subjectivity. Where Braidotti is not really clear in defining imaginary, Irigaray defines the imaginary as unconscious phantasy (reference). Braidotti as well as Irigaray are much appreciated by fellow theorists. In an interview with Judith Butler and Drucilla Cornell, both feminist professors, Cornell refers to Irigaray: "I saw here an analysis not of solidarity as a fact, but of solidarity as a longed-for ethical relationship which would demand that we would have to rethink the very basis of our psychoanalytic concepts, particularly the other-daughter relationship and intergenerational friendship."¹³¹ Both theorists seem to live by their writings, by underlining intergenerational friendship and mentorship between feminists and by their constant philosophical reappraisal of the female subject and her desires.

¹²⁸ Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. The Athlone Press, London. 1993. 21.

¹²⁹ Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. The Athlone Press, London. 1993. 21.

¹³⁰ Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002. 3-4.

¹³¹ Cheah, Pheng, Elizabeth Grosz, Judith Butler and Drucilla Cornell. "The Future of Sexual Difference: An Interview with Judith Butler and Drucilla Cornell." in: *Diacritics*. Irigaray and the Political Future of Sexual Difference, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 19-42, Spring 1998.

Conclusion

The refigurations of the self, of the 'woman', the female body and female subjectivity are to Braidotti as well as to Irigaray's important statements within their theories. Their theoretical work addresses female identity, in which they constantly readdress the concept of identity in relation to the social and symbolic order, as well as the power relations within every layer of our lives. Their theoretical views is based by affirmative modes of being, or becoming, 'Woman'. For Women's Studies these theories based on deconstructive methods, by constantly analysing different levels of scientific and non-scientific theories and practices concerning the representations of the female subject, feel like a guidebook, enhancing our rational abilities. Even with the continuous new trends and differences within feminism, the death of feminist postmodernism and the rise of new waves of feminism in which new Master theories are more related to technological and (neuro) biological elements within research, or the so called 'science studies'¹³², we learn to research methodologies in historical perspective, by which we make sure all kinds of academic and non-academic interpretations are constantly related to the awareness that theory is directly related to movements (or non-movements) within and outside politics. We see new feminist branches rise, appreciating perhaps older branches of theory for even the newer branches are always related to existing approaches of theory. Not all eyes can remain a panoramic vision on the multiplicity of knowledges, and not all eyes are linked to and with new voices of feminist thought. This awareness trains us to constant (re)location(s) of thought with an inclusive approach to every layer, from the unconscious to the conscious and from the personal to the political.

The latter 'seem' to be the interesting points of our times and at the same time can mean a downfall for other sciences, such as women's studies. It is a mystery to me why psychoanalysis is slowly disappearing within our fields of feminist thinking. A mystery, as well as an anti-climax, especially in the ages in which we learned about the 'located subject' for, psychoanalysis does exactly that: locate the subject; what situations have influenced the unconscious structures within us, and how can we look upon power structures?¹³³ At the core of the feminist view we always ask ourselves: what does this mean for women among us, our mothers, our sisters, our neighbours and friends held close or far? From this view I have looked at this place within the spiral that psychoanalysis is now in, and I am

¹³² Van der Tuin, I. "Grenzenwerk" in: *Lover: Krachtvoer voor Vrouwen m/v*. Jaargang 37, Maart 2010. 48-49.

¹³³ Haraway's theory of situated knowledges concentrated on the locality of the subject. See also page 20: van der Tuin, I. "Jumping Generations" in: *Australian Feminist Studies*, 24:59, 17 — 31, 2009.

sad to see that psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic therapy is slowly more and more disappearing. It is disappearing...within theory, within every day life, in levels of appreciation. As a student, and as a human being born as female, interested in language, philosophy and psychoanalysis, theorist Luce Irigaray has, and still is, of great inspiration to me. For students within my field of studies the challenge within our studies is to analyse and compare approaches, extract essential ideas and to find a wave through all the new and old methodologies within feminist theory. Our methodological and analytical awareness means that there is a fertile ground for those who want to share what their young feminist eyes see, a constant calling for new approaches should be valued. A new generation has learned, and will continue to be able to learn, hopefully we will use our intergenerational powers and focus.

Having been educated, by myself, but also through the literature which was 'given' to us students at the department of Women's Studies in Utrecht, in feminist theory, I hold the view that the personal is the political, every rung on our social ladders has a relationship between the personal and the political, within Comparative Women's Studies you are educated to look closely at each of these rungs within every layer of our society. From this point I wish to write down my personal feeling for psychoanalytic theory as a student, as a woman going through history studying power relations within social structures, authority relations, family relations, friendship relations, love relationships and, most importantly, with my relations towards myself. Psychoanalysis as a theory with my feminist view has given me a method to deconstruct and (re)construct, to enhance my knowledge of patterns within the things that I experience in daily life, as well as in my academic and creative thinking.

This thesis has brought me to many realisations, even though, or perhaps very much 'due to' the very fact that the finalisation of this writing consumed, to my feeling, a long period of time, which is the notion that my personal sense of self is always a combination of truly felt desires. The relationship between thought and feeling, the mind and the body, which is also a relationship often discussed by feminist theorists who believe in object relations theory. In its essence the theories I have discussed were a way of 'becoming', of learning and relating theories, a way I would wish upon every young human being, be it woman or man.

I agree with Braidotti's view on the feminist position, as positioned in *Nomadic Subjects*. To Braidotti feminist theory is not only a position of critical new theory, but also a positive affirmation of women's desire to engage with and enact forms of (female) subjectivity.¹³⁴ Her acts of affirmations and theories on desire, seem to be two important sets of power in the 'working through' Braidotti advocates. To remain access to these acts of power Braidotti favours psychoanalytic theory.

¹³⁴ Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994. 158.

"Psychoanalysis is the discourse of this crisis par excellence: it has come gradually to be accepted as a radically new reading of the structures of human subjectivity"¹³⁵. In *Nomadic Subjects* she writes the words in which she phrases the utter importance of psychoanalysis. "A major role is played, within the landscape of modernity, by the discourse of psychoanalysis. Far from being a mere therapy, psychoanalysis has developed into a philosophy of desire and a theory of the body as libidinal surface, a site of multiple coding, of inscription—a living text. "

In both Braidotti's and Irigaray's theories, sexual dualism is not something that has to be overcome, Braidotti's philosophical approach echoes a constant calling for new female (feminist) refigurations within asymmetry. In her nomadic project she portrays the epistemological advantages and political relevance of such an approach of sexual difference. To Braidotti new figurations can carry the possibility of inter-connections, and perhaps levels of transcendence.

I think we should take Irigaray's analysis of Lacan serious, as well as her reference to the major impact of Lacan within gender studies, whereby we may always re-direct these foci and to not forget that Lacan is not the only Grand Master theory. By which I further want to indicate that also –because- Grand Master theories come alive within feminist theory, there should always be a field in which the 'other' perspective is allowed. Through this writing I have the hope I am, so to say, putting my value into the corner of what may be on a verge of 'vanishing', namely the psychoanalytic perspective. A further analysis of the development within Women's Studies/Gender Studies, and Western Scholarship as a whole, to go through 'waves' of criticism by the use of generalized or universalized theory, instead of focusing on the individual, or the group. 'Keeping' theories like the psychoanalytic theory, allows us, within our Western Feminist knowledge, to include the theories that are also valuable within the deconstructive field of what being or 'becoming' a 'woman' may mean, analysed through multiple methodologies and sub-methodologies, including development within these methodologies. As a self-acclaimed third wave feminist I would opt for a continuation and further development of existing methodologies and to be aware of the relations within academic developments of these methodologies as well as the effects and affects of political decisions in contemporary societies. My today's concern regarding the impact of the political 'value' of psychoanalytic therapy, and so also theory show a dependency between the 'day to day' field of the practice of our methodologies, in this case psychoanalytic therapy, with its subfield of feminist orientated therapy, and the academic development of theory. The development of theory being depends on contemporary political questions/issues, the direct financial relation between the government and the universities, bring forward the fragilities

¹³⁵ Braidotti, R. *Patterns of Dissonance: A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 1991. 17.

within these relationships. When psychoanalytic therapy becomes restricted in its access, this restriction will affect groups of people and also groups of women. Existing feminist approaches within psychoanalytic theory and therapy are therefore in danger, the pain is already felt within the daily practice of Dutch psychoanalysts due to recent political decisions. As an intern, writing about the history of the only feminist psychoanalytic center for women in The Netherlands: The Henny Verhagen Centrum, located in Haarlem from 1992- 2008 and later incorporated within the Zorggroep GGZ De Geestgronden, also in Haarlem.¹³⁶ I have become aware of the fact that many feminist therapists are afraid their type of therapies will loose funding, and in even worse case scenario; will lose their function.

With my academic view I wish to say that I would consider it a great loss if psychoanalytic theory lost its place within feminist studies. Psychoanalysis could offer a contribution within any feminist wave. It is an analytical method to deconstruct relations, which creates ‘situated’ areas of being. It is also a method which has not even been fully researched. I bear big concerns for the power and the relationship between current health care market and (feminist orientated) psychoanalytical therapy, which is also of great concern to all believers and practitioners of this method. Through the second wave, the formation of all sorts of political agenda’s, among which health care agenda’s, by feminist political groups here in The Netherlands, we saw a rise in the use and practice of feminist theory within social and psychological therapies. Special therapy groups were formed, knowledge about gender specific (psychological) problems has increased enormously. The focus on this development needed the eyes and motivation of political movements. The nineties and the years of first decade in 2000 has seen a decline of feminist attention within politics. To my opinion this has a direct, but certainly not ‘only’, relation to the loss of the feminist perspective within the practices we encounter in our daily life; one can see how the appreciation for psychoanalysis is dying by reading our news. Lastly, I desire to remark my final argument for the value of psychoanalysis within the discourses of feminist theory, which coincides with my belief that all knowledge leads to diversity in thought, giving right to any birth or rebirth of theory, but mainly psychoanalysis.

¹³⁶ More info about the history of this center can be found in: Mens-Verhulst, van J., Waaldijk, B. eds. *Vrouwenhulpverlening 1975-2000*. Bohn Stafleu van Loghem, Houten. 2008. 158-161.

Works Cited

Braidotti, R. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1994.

Braidotti, R. *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 2006.

Braidotti, R. *Theories of Gender, or: Language is a Virus*. Universiteit Utrecht, Utrecht. 1991.

Braidotti, R. *Patterns of Dissonance* . Polity Press, Oxford. 1991.

Carlson, N. eds. *Psychology, the Science of Behaviour*. Pearson Education, Harlow. 2000.

Chodorow, N. *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*. Polity Press, Cambridge. 1989.

Chodorow, N. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. University of California Press, Los Angeles. 1978.

Cheah, Pheng, Elizabeth Grosz, Judith Butler and Drucilla Cornell. "The Future of Sexual Difference: An Interview with Judith Butler and Drucilla Cornell." in: *Diacritics*. Irigaray and the Political Future of Sexual Difference, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 19-42, Spring 1998.

Irigaray, L. *to speak is never neutral*. Continuum, New York. 2002.

Irigaray, L. *The Irigaray Reader*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford. 1991.

Irigaray, L. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. The Athlone Press, London. 1993.

Irigaray, L. *This Sex Which is not One*. Ithaca, New York. 1990.

Irigaray, L. *Je, tu, nous: Towards a Culture of Difference*. Routledge, New York. 1993

Irigaray, L. *Tussen Oost en West: Van Singulariteit naar Gemeenschap (Entre Orient et Occident: De la Singularité à la Communauté)*. Ten Have, Kampen. 2009

Mitchell, J. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. Basic Books, New York. 2000.

Mezzich, J.E, and others. *Culture & Psychiatric Diagnosis: A DSM-IV Perspective*. American Psychiatric Press, Washington, DC, 2005.

van der Tuin, I. "Jumping Generations" in: *Australian Feminist Studies*,24:59,17 — 31, 2009.

Van der Tuin, I. "Grenzenwerk" in: *Lover: Krachtvoer voor Vrouwen m/v*. Jaargang 37, Maart 2010. 48-49.

De Volkskrant, essay door Damiaan Denys. "De Psychiatrie is in crisis omdat de mens het onmogelijke verlangt". 17 April 2010. p. 9.

<http://extra.volkskrant.nl/opinie/artikel/show/id/5506> , opinion article with the claim and working title that Psychoanalysis Matters (Psychoanalyse doet er toe), by Nausicaa Marbe originally published April 2nd 2010. Article last accessed: July 15th, 2010