

## The Untimely<sup>1</sup>

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I am infinitely grateful to the contributors to this volume for their critical attention to my work, but their generosity has become my nemesis. Having theorized at length the death of the unitary subject, I am now facing the challenge of having to write about myself as if I had already gone and to look back at my own intellectual itinerary as if it were finished, or belonged to someone else. The best I can do is to deploy my preferred methodology and offer a cartographic reading of what it will all have been about: this chapter is predicated in the future past.

My cartographies are theoretically based and politically informed readings of the present that aim at epistemic and ethical accountability for one's locations in terms of both space (geopolitical or ecosophical dimension) and time (historical, genealogical, and virtual dimensions). Four passions function as the main attractors for the concepts and affects that structure my intellectual itinerary: writing; philosophy; feminism; and the present. They are not distinct, of course, but mutually intertwined, so that the best way to approach them is in a zigzag style.

The flows and fluxes that frame nomadic subjectivity and constitute the metastability of a nomadic subject are relational in that they are not ego-indexed but affectively prone to multiple webs of interaction with human and nonhuman forces. The same goes for the patterns—however dissonant—of the different books that punctuate my career: they interact with a shifting context, both within the academic and the real world. My texts are Deleuzian in that they relate to the present in a nonlinear way, which means they are never too early and never too late, but are just out of joint with the times, while being passionately engaged with them. They are also untimely in a Foucauldian sense because they deal with history not as a monument of the past but as a counter-genealogy for the present. Thinking is for me an exercise in negotiating with and also exceeding the conditions of the present and not corresponding with dominant representations.

### Passion for writing

Even more than a political or intellectual engagement, writing is for me a visceral gesture, a variation on breathing, an end upon itself. If I had nothing left to say, I would

just copy down random lists of words, cafeteria menus, and even the old-fashioned phone book. Well before becoming a published writer, I was already a "grapho-maniac." I have kept a diary since the age of eleven and still write it regularly. Now, on my 60th birthday, I have developed a pained sort of love for the 163 booklets of this diary, which replicate my life with relentless dedication: some "virtual reality" that is! Writing for me is living intensively and inhabiting language as a site where multiple forms of belonging are being constantly negotiated.

Writing is also a sustained attempt at establishing ties and connections, that is to say, to build affective and discursive communities. Even my extensive use of footnotes in the scholarly texts is a way of reconnection with thinkers past and present and my peer group. Footnotes are for me democracy in textual practice and a way of acknowledging the presence of others, the collective assemblages that sustain my own writing. This relational mode also gives me the freedom to combine critique with creativity and to mix genres: the personal with the theoretical and theory with practice. In doing so, I try to resist the dogmatic self-assurance that is often required of a philosopher, trading the closed structures of argumentative reason for open spaces and shared workplaces.

An acute awareness of the forces and the power relations at work within language sustains my writing practice. It is the lesson I learned from my beloved post-1968 French teachers, whose legacy I continue to admire: Foucault, Irigaray and Deleuze, especially. They taught me to respect the complexity of language as a structure we inhabit but do not control, and based their critique of unitary identity upon this insight. We do not speak, but are spoken to by intersecting codes, including, but not only, the linguistic ones. This means that I was trained never to write carelessly or just functionally: style is of the essence. Style, however, is no mere rhetorical decoration, but rather the deployment of fundamental conceptual premises. It is the writer's responsibility to reveal, undo, and destabilize within her texts the gravitational force of the master signifier, to make it stutter, falter, and expose its despotic tendency.

By extension, I was trained never to cater to the *doxa*, or to flatter common sense, never to play into the set habits of predictable readers. Writing, even and especially academic writing, has to challenge and destabilize, intrigue, and empower. A text is expected to reconnect the readers to their own desire for freedom and resistance. As readers and writers in an intensive mode, we are transformers of intellectual energy, processors of the "insights" that we are exchanging, and co-creators of affective inter-linkages. These "in"-sights do not plunge us inward, toward a mythical reservoir of identity-bound truth but rather propel us outward to extratextual collective connections predicated on shared subjectivity.

Such subversive premises are hardly conducive to a smooth academic publishing career. I am, however, the product of specific historical circumstances and landed on my feet, though that safe landing was neither premeditated nor planned as such. For instance, the beginnings of my publishing career show unequivocally my roots in the women's movement and in feminist activism. I started by publishing in militant journals, also because women's studies did not exist yet as an institutional field. My generation had to invent it and, alongside the university curricula, we also created the journals in which we could publish our work. If I can name my favorite journals from those days, they would be the UK-based *M/F* (1978), *Feminist Studies* (1979),

*Women's Studies International Forum* (1978), and the newly founded *Signs* (1975) directed by my mentor Kate Stimpson.

It is striking to note that every feminist collective in those days basically ran its own publication and I was directly involved in a number of them. My very first academic publication was in *Hecate*, the Australian radical feminist journal (founded in 1976); the second was in *Penelope*, the feminist history journal founded in 1979 by Michelle Perrot. For years, my monthly column in the feminist magazines *Histoires d'Elles'* (1978) and the Italian *Noi Donne'* (founded in 1948) mattered far more than anything that may have helped me gain academic credibility. I worked for ten stimulating years on the editorial board of the Belgian-based *Cathiers du Griff*, founded in 1973 by Françoise Collin.<sup>5</sup> I liked the nonaligned groups such as *La femme d'en face* (founded in 1979), where Françoise Picq was very active. The more literary-minded produced the journal *Sorcières*, (founded in 1976) while the philosophers tended to be on their own, at least until the creation of the College International de Philosophie in 1983.<sup>6</sup>

One of the first interviews I ever conducted, with Hazel Rowley and Anna Gibbs, was published in another Australian radical feminist magazine: *Refractory Girl* (founded in 1972). I also translated French philosophical texts for the Sydney-based *Working Papers in General Philosophy* edited by Paul Patton and Meaghan Morris. Moreover, together with my friend Alice Jardine, we produced what would become a one-issue only hit journal: *Copyright* was the perfect manifestation of the interdisciplinary spirit of the time—smart, cutting-edge, highly theoretical, and totally broke, the journal did not make it past the first issue. Mindful of the fact that I have been teaching my graduate students for years to publish preferably in A-ranked journals, I can only say that I have my generational contradictions on this issue.

This activist mode continued when I moved to the Netherlands in 1988–89 and published in *Tijdschrift voor Vrouwenstudies*, *Vrouwengeschiedenis Krant*, *Katijf*, *LOVER*, and *De Groene Amsterdammer*. I also set up a Dutch book-series on new feminist theories<sup>7</sup> and continued to create the institutional venues for new work to be published. New publishing houses were also being created internationally those days, and I was fortunate enough to be spotted by Polity Press in their first year of operation and have been with them ever since.

## Feminism, philosophy, France

I moved to Paris from the Australian University in Canberra in 1978 and joined an "intermediate" feminist generation who studied with those scholars who were to become known as the poststructuralists, or the philosophers of difference. They were brilliant, but hardly feminist. The topic of my dissertation on feminist philosophy was too "new" for them: Luce Irigaray had defended her thesis only a few years before and had caused much controversy, mostly because of Jacques Lacan's vehement opposition. All feminist graduate students in those days were very much on their own and we had to self-organize to supervise collectively our respective dissertations. The bulk of our feminist education was extracurricular and it consisted of events, public lectures, and seminars in the autonomous spaces of the women's movement. For my generation,

women's groups were the substitute for a feminist graduate school, which did not exist in the institutions as yet. It would take years to become institutionalized, thanks also to the efforts of many of us who had been self-taught graduate students.

Paris then offered an embarrassment of intellectual riches: the center stage was held by groups connected to Lacan's psychoanalytic movement, notably the "psychanalyse et politique" group of Antoinette Fouque (1982)—who set up the *Editions des femmes* and edited the magazine *des femmes hebdo*.<sup>8</sup> Luce Irigaray, being *persona non grata* to the Lacanians, ran her own independent seminars. Simone de Beauvoir was still very active and her group gathered round the journal *Les Temps Modernes*, which from 1973 devoted the special section—"Chroniques du sexisme ordinaire"—to feminist issues. Julia Kristeva, Michèle Montrelay, and Marcelle Marini were teaching amazing classes at Paris VII, as was historian Christine Delphy but they hardly taught any classes. They feminist sociologists around Christine Delphy but they hardly taught any classes. They founded in 1981 the interdisciplinary social sciences journal *Questions féministes* (later *Nouvelles questions féministes*), which included Monique Wittig for a while. The radical university of Vincennes hosted some of the best minds of the day: Hélène Cixous, Jean-François Lyotard, and Gilles Deleuze, to name but a few. The Collège de France starred Roland Barthes, Pierre Bourdieu, and Michel Foucault, so who missed a graduate school?

In Paris in 1981–82, I also crossed paths with great American academic feminists such as Kate Stimpson, Nancy Miller, Donna Stanton, Joan Scott, and Naomi Schor, who were carefully following the new developments in France during that period and translating them into English. They were part of a wave of American academics, who were especially taken with the psychoanalytic and semiotic aspects of the new groups and translated and exported them to the USA. This was to produce the "Franco-American disconnection" (Stanton 1980), which would make "New French Feminism" (Marks and de Courtivron 1981) into a global phenomenon.<sup>9</sup> It could not fail to affect the French women themselves. Some were turned into stars, notably Cixous, Kristeva, and Irigaray, who, incidentally, are not at all native French, Cixous being a Jewish Algerian; Kristeva, Bulgarian; and Irigaray, Belgian. Others, however, felt dispossessed and misrepresented; there was widespread concern about misleading interpretations of the concept and theories involved, and the risk of depoliticizing them.<sup>10</sup>

The orchestrated import of French ideas into the USA, which made "traveling theories" (Said 1978) into an established practice and turned the task of translation into a new discursive political economy, also opened a new academic market, mostly in literary theory, comparative literature, cultural and gender studies, and film theory. The impact of French thought on international feminist theory and practice was nothing short of an epistemological revolution.<sup>11</sup> In the mid-1980s, as American feminism plunged into the "sex-wars" that would divide its radical wing (Vance 1984), the notion and the politics of difference moved to center stage (Eisenstein and Jardine 1980; Frye 1996). Philosophy departments, however, kept a clear and explicit distance from these fashionable trends and closed ranks. Their hostility continued to grow throughout the 1980s as the "theory wars" (Sprinker 1995; Neilson 1995; Williams 1995; Butler and Scott 1992) raged through American universities under the combined effect of Reaganomics, neoconservatism, and the rise of the religious Christian right.

By 1995, the game was over and the counter-offensive against poststructuralism was well in place (Gallop 1997; Spivak 2003). Nonetheless, the inspirational power of French theories, feminist and others, remained high and affected the most critical and creative minds of that academic generation. Paradoxically enough, poststructuralism did not fare much better in its own home grounds, where a wave of "new philosophers" (Glucksmann 1975; Lévy 1977) turned their backs on the philosophical giants of the previous generation (Braidotti 2010e). The French academic establishment rejected the very radical thinkers that the American academics had embraced. During the Mitterand years, a wave of neo-nationalist Republic "pride" took over the Left Bank, causing a refusal of the cosmopolitan, nomadic, and transnational ideals that had inspired the poststructuralists. This tendency has been intensifying ever since, turning the French Left today into a confused mix of nationalism and sexual conservatism (Scott 2007).

The Trans-Atlantic dis-connection also shaped the academic careers of my generation. We—the graduate students of a field that formally did not yet exist—witnessed the genesis of a new system of import and export of ideas that gave us a foretaste of cultural globalization. We could also see glaring disparities not only in the selection of French thinkers for translation but also in the speed of publication of these translations.<sup>12</sup> We watched the meteoric rise of Derrida and Foucault and wondered why Deleuze had been left behind.<sup>13</sup> As a consequence, today we know that it is historically and also theoretically impossible to speak of French feminist theory without implying the Trans-Atlantic nexus and that these theories essentially belong to the English-speaking world (Oliver 2000; Cavallaro 2003).

My first book, *Patterns of Dissonance*, was born out of this intense, yet highly contradictory, context and provides a well-documented cartography of that particularly rich and complex political moment. First written as my PhD dissertation in French in 1981, it could not find a publisher in Paris because it focused on philosophers who opposed the dominant Lacanian heterodoxy: Irigaray, Foucault, and Deleuze. The overheated atmosphere of Parisian publishers came close to tribal in-fighting and I definitely belonged to the wrong camp. I actually did not publish a book in French until 2009.

Not being American, I could hardly fit into the academic market that was exploding around "French feminism" in the USA. That will happen later, when my next book gets published by Columbia University Press in Nancy Miller's series. But that was not the case in 1981, when I was looking around for a publisher for my first book and felt singularly alone. It took me 10 years to publish *Patterns of Dissonance*, so it became untimely by force of circumstance. It was eventually signed up by Polity Press and was translated—by someone else—into English. I updated and revised the translation myself and did the last draft directly in English. By the time it went to press, my first book was consequently a translation without the original. I always thought this was emblematic of my writing position as a nomadic subject.

*Patterns of Dissonance* accounts for the genesis of feminist poststructuralism and contains in a nutshell the program of the nomadic project in the years to come. For me, the book is also an act of resistance against the trends I saw developing around me at the time: the American invention of French feminism, the hegemony of Lacanian

psychoanalysis and Derridian deconstruction, and the fast-moving institutionalization of even the radical wing of the women's movement. I made a point of coining and preserving the term "feminist neo-materialism," in the midst of the great linguistic turn. I also foregrounded the work of as many feminist thinkers as possible, as a way of showing my determination to keep the feminist genealogies alive at a time when new institutional filters were enacting a disturbing selection. I kept thinking: "what will people want to know about them twenty years from now? What is their legacy? Why should we remember them?" I started writing for the future back then, assessing thinkers and ideas also for their virtual force, and not only for their actualized reception in the present. I made a virtue of the untimely.

Also being the product of British Commonwealth higher education in Australia, however, I kept an eye on the state of the debates on "women and philosophy," independently of the French scene. In the 1980s, very few collections on women and philosophy were available in the academic market.<sup>14</sup> They focused on the under-representation of women in philosophy departments and on the male domination of the actual curriculum of the history of philosophy. My own MA supervisor Genevieve Lloyd's *The Man of Reason*, published in 1984, is the seminal text in this tradition.

My generation challenged the ideal of equality and highlighted the difference that feminist philosophers can make to the actual practice of the discipline. Most of us actually left philosophy as an institutional site and settled for new interdisciplinary fields.<sup>15</sup> Being pioneers in women's studies, we could develop institutional, pedagogical, and methodological structures that operationalized the full potential of difference. In doing so, we ended up altering the very theoretical premises from which we had started, innovating on content and concepts. We also established a firm corpus of feminist scholarship that institutionalized the idea of collective team work as a key feminist method. As Joan Kelly argued,<sup>16</sup> feminism carries a double-edged vision that combines oppositional consciousness with deep empowering creativity. The affirmative element within the feminist recomposition of knowledge is one of my generation's lasting theoretical legacies.

*Patterns of Dissonance* was completed in the ten years between 1981 and 1991, that is to say, at the tail-end of the Cold War era, leading up to the landmark date of 1989. It was a time of great turmoil, first because the previous generation of great thinkers had passed away: Herbert Marcuse in 1979, Jean-Paul Sartre in 1980, and Jacques Lacan in 1981. Other thinkers who were closer to us as teachers had also died prematurely: Nicos Poulantzas committed suicide in 1979; Roland Barthes died in an accident in 1980; and Louis Althusser, who had been mentally ill for a while, had strangled his wife and was locked away in a criminal asylum. While the death of General Tito, also in 1980, caused mixed feelings and the election of Ronald Reagan the same year great anxiety, my generation shed hot tears over the assassination of John Lennon in New York that year.

In her seminal text *The Summer of 1980*, the French writer Marguerite Duras, who had been a member of the communist anti-Nazi resistance in her youth, commented on the events taking place in the Gdansk shipyard in Poland where the Solidarity movement, under the leadership of Lech Wałęsa (future Nobel Peace Prize winner) was challenging Soviet hegemony. It was the beginning of the end for Soviet-style

communism. Paris had already provided a world forum for critics of the Soviet system, notably another future Nobel Peace Prize winner Alexandr Solzhenitsyn whose *Gulag Archipelago*, written in secrecy in the USSR, was published in three volumes in Paris between 1973 and 1978. Paris had also given shelter to Ayatollah Khomeini, the spiritual leader of the Iranian Islamist revolution of 1979, which excited Foucault's political imagination.

Then came the landmark year of 1989, which signaled the fall of the Berlin Wall, followed by the events of Tiananmen Square, the liberation of Nelson Mandela in 1990, and the opening of a new geopolitical era under the aegis of American domination. The philosophical implications of the historical defeat of communism are enormous: both theoretically and politically; the end of the Cold War marks the official rejection of Marxism as a platform for thinking and political organizing. A slightly euphoric sense of possibility marked this era, in a triumphalist mode for some (Fukuyama 1989) and in a more affirmative manner for others. The year also marked the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the build-up of Islamist opposition that consolidated Osama Bin Laden's power base in the region. An era of perpetual warfare seemed to open after 1989, in both the Balkans and the Gulf area, leading up to the dramatic events of 9/11.

How to steer a professional course in the midst of all this was a permanent challenge. While I was finishing revising the manuscript of *Patterns of Dissonance*, I was fortunate enough to be selected as the founding professor of women's studies at Utrecht University. The French had no real academic job openings for foreigners and after the election of François Mitterand in 1981, so many of my former radical friends had gotten government jobs that the political scene had changed completely. As I was not too keen to take the Trans-Atlantic leap, I saw the Utrecht professorship as a unique opportunity. The intellectual context had also changed dramatically by then: Michel Foucault had died in 1984 and Simone de Beauvoir in 1986; it really felt like the end of an era, so I left Paris for good in spring 1988.<sup>17</sup>

## The long march through the institutions

It is hard to describe the degree of excitement of the years that preceded and produced the first edition of *Nomadic Subjects* in 1994. The experience of setting up women's studies in Utrecht gave me and my generation a measure of the possible. We were young, bright, talented, and thoroughly impatient. To top it all off, in 1987 I met Anneke Smelik, my lifelong partner, when I first moved to Utrecht. This foundational relationship added an extra dimension of delight to the already exceptional institutional circumstances.

Columbia University Press was very welcoming and supportive and gave me the opportunity to publish a Deleuzian feminist book before anyone thought Deleuze should be regarded as a major thinker. We were swimming completely against the stream of the American reception of French feminist theories. But I was carried along by multiple passions and supported by many institutions, so it did not seem even remotely reckless. The vicissitudes of the reception of *Nomadic Subjects*, however, are

telling. The book received very little critical attention. Sales were slow at first, but the demand kept on coming and the book actually sold better and better as time passed till it became established. It was translated immediately into Italian, but by very minor publishers who got into the habit of going bankrupt on me: a first abridged edition came out in 1995 and then a different selection, with a different publisher, in 1999. The translations start to increase round the year 2000—Spanish, Korean, Russian, and Hungarian and currently, the second edition of the book is being translated into Chinese, French, and Greek.

A few years ago, Jennifer Crewe and Nancy Miller of Columbia University Press asked me to rewrite thoroughly *Nomadic Subjects*, 15 years after its original publication. The Deleuzian wave was by then unfurling with unexpected energy and the context was changing. Columbia University Press argued that the book had come out too early and had to be rewritten to address the new generations of Deleuzians who had seemed to burst into the scene as if by spontaneous combustion.

I worked with an advisory board of younger colleagues and former graduate students in order to draft this new version, which had to strike a precarious balance between respecting the original pioneering text and coping with an altogether different intellectual and global context. The American publisher assisted me in this rather complex task by publishing at the same time a collection of my recent essays, called *Nomadic Theory* (2011e). In spite of the intense sense of gratification, I felt caught between the “no longer” and the “not yet,” plunged into a continuous present that diffracted the concepts, multiplied the affects, and kept me in a state of suspended animation. I was adrift in the untimely.

The core of the philosophical project of nomadism deals with identity, subjectivity, and transformative politics, that is to say, issues of entitlement and empowerment. The red thread across my nomadic work is the formation and emergence of new and alternative social subjects as a collective enterprise, “external” to the individual self, which, however, also mobilizes the self’s in-depth and singular structures. The nomadic subject is a process, made up of constant shifts and negotiations between different levels of power and desire, that is to say, entrapment and empowerment. Whatever semblance of unity there may be is the dramatization of a multilayered relational entity within a monistic ontology. The implication is that what sustains the entire process of becoming-subject, is a founding, primary, vital, and original desire to become (*conatus*).

My project of feminist nomadism traces more than an intellectual itinerary; it also reflects the existential situation as a multicultural individual—or “di-vidual”—a migrant who turned nomad. The books on nomadism were first conceptualized and, in some cases, expressed in several different European languages at once. My work as a thinker has no mother tongue, only a succession of translations, displacements, and adaptations to changing conditions. Nomadism for me equals multilingualism. Although this entails large doses of lexical contamination and the occasional syntactical debacle, the real “creolisation” effects (Glissant 1997) have always been, for me, acoustic. Accents are the traces of my multiple linguistic homes. They spell my own ecology of belonging, my loyalty to parallel yet divergent lives.

Over the years I seem to have developed a peculiar economy of writing as a way of negotiating with my many languages, acoustic resonances, and cultural affiliations. Some books now exist exclusively in Italian (*Madri, Mostri e Macchine*, 2005c, and the co-authored *Baby Boomers* (2003) or French (*La philosophic . . . là où on ne lattend pas*, 2009h) without an English counterpart. Meanwhile, my books have been translated into many languages I do not speak, creating a slight sense of estrangement from my own brain-children. I have accepted their resilient autonomy and have let them go: nomadic writing is an act of constant dispossession. The advantage is, however, that it keeps on growing and finding its way into the world at its own pace.

I was so intensely focused on the nomadism project that throughout the 1990s I produced few edited volumes and journal articles. But there was one other crucial project that both supported and amplified the nomadic and that was Europe. The changing historical context played its hand in rendering European feminist institutional work especially rewarding in that period. The twin phenomena of the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and the enlargement of the European Union, as well as the new wave of wars that emerged then, the first Gulf war, the Falklands war, and the Yugoslav and Balkans war, had a major impact on the development of continental and transnational feminism.

My work as director of women’s studies in Utrecht was trans-European from the word go. I set up the Erasmus teaching network NOISE in 1993—it ran successfully for over 20 years. In 1996, I became the founding director of the Socrates Thematic Network ATHENA. It was so successful that in 2010 it received the Erasmus Prize from the European Commission. My partners and I also set up the “Gender Graduates,” Marie Curie Early Stage Training consortium in 2005–06. There is no underestimating the quality and the quantity of the work my colleagues and I did to network feminist Europe.<sup>19</sup>

This intense institutional work had a clear impact on my publications. First of all, I did not produce a major monograph between 1994 (*Nomadic Subjects*) and 2002 (*Metamorphoses*). But the European work generated its own publications: between 2000 and 2005, I was the main editor of the yearly publication of the ATHENA Network: *The Making of European Women’s Studies: A Work in Progress Report on Curriculum Development and Related Issues*. The annual publication was and remains a goldmine of ideas, some of which resulted in a full volume, which I co-edited with Gabriele Griffin in 2002: *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women’s Studies*. Others will be developed later, by the European gender studies association AIGender, which grew out of ATHENA.<sup>20</sup>

My nomadic project is a critique of Eurocentrism from within and a way of activating the center away from inertia and self-replication. In a globalized world, margins and center shift and destabilize each other in parallel, albeit dissymmetrical, movements. A European nomadic subject moving across the striated landscape of whiteness and enacting a critique of methodological nationalism (Beck 2007) joins a planetary debate that black, antiracist, postcolonial, and other critical thinkers have put on the map.

Although nomadic thought became my overwhelming intellectual passion throughout the 1990s and beyond, two other significant projects emerged during the same period. Both sowed the seeds of the future and functioned almost as pace-holders for topics that would return to haunt me. They were both connected to technological issues.

The first is the volume *Women, The Environment and Sustainable Development*, which I co-authored in 1994 with Ewa Charkiewicz, Sabine Hausler, and Saskia Wieringa for the London-based publisher Zed Books. It was originally a report on this theme, commissioned by the United Nations agency INSTRAW. I see it very much as the genesis of my interest in eco-feminism and environmental issues. It took quite a bit of time—actually, till 2006 with *Transpositions*—for me to return to this ecosophical dimension, which had clearly been working on me all along.

The second is a volume I co-edited in 1996 with my good friend Nina Lykke *Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs: Feminist Confrontations with Science, Medicine and Cyberspace*, again for Zed Books in London. It is significant to stress the pioneering role of this publisher, originally an activist venture that took risks with topics that will not become fashionable in academia for another decade at least. This volume inaugurated my interest in science and technology studies, which was due to grow in the next decades.

## Feminist genealogies

The untimely does not work by only fast-forwarding to possible future mindscapes, but it also functions by rewinding toward forgotten or half-sustained past possibilities. A nomadic time-continuum, conceptualized by Deleuze and Bergson, makes sense only if it is multidirected. So alongside my cartographies of the present and the scenarios of becoming, I also have the archaic ones, which mostly have to do with the strategy of “think back through our mothers.” For Virginia Woolf (2001, p. 65), this tactic was also a style of writing and a practice of ventriloquist citation. Women-centered approaches and feminist genealogies are highly recommended to all women who aspire to have a mind of their own and to reconnect with the deeper sources of their creativity.

This method, innovative enough in itself, becomes even more striking when read in a historical perspective. The previous generation of feminists, who came of age in Europe in the 1950s and 1960s like Simone de Beauvoir, had settled into an ambiguous relationship with the actual practice of academic writing. That generation continued to dialogue more readily with the great male philosophers of the past than with any living women, let alone cross-referring to their own peer-group. We changed that. My generation of feminists was the first to enjoy the institutional presence of supportive and talented women teachers and supervisors, many of whom were feminists themselves.<sup>21</sup> The effects of the actual, physical presence of women lecturers in university departments, starting from the 1970s and 1980s, and their influence on the generation of younger philosophers radicalized by feminism were far-reaching. The philosophical underpinnings of feminist teaching became a matter of great concern for me as of the late 1980s, when I started using the scholarly apparatus as a genealogical

tool. Academic collections, anthologies, and, after a while, encyclopaedias, glossaries, and reference manuals in feminist theory started appearing at that time.

Teaching is the ideal way to transmit the feminist genealogical capital and to empower the critical independence of mind of younger generations. It became my preferred practice, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and a form of institutional activism closely connected to the theoretical projects. My position combined knowledge and intense criticism of the male lineage in the history of ideas with a passionate commitment to thinking through female feminist genealogies.

The institutional practice that supports the work of feminist genealogies is the advancement of women in higher education and in society as a whole. Although I adopt a poststructuralist approach to the definition of the feminist subject, the politics of this exercise is distinctly emancipatory. I call it my “Enlightenment moment,” marked by profound optimism about the historical progress of my gender. Does this contradict nomadic multiplicities? I do not think so. It rather actualizes them by looking to the past in order to construct sustainable futures by activating present practices. The quest for more transformative patterns of becoming can co-exist alongside the “repair” work of emancipation. They pertain to different timelines: the former to History (*Chronos*), the latter to the rhizomatics of becoming (*Aion*). Thinking back through the women in order to move forward to further sequences of becoming is the affirmative practice of the untimely.

Moreover, there is another, more radical disruption at work in the praxis of feminist genealogies, which connects it to the untimely. Feminist politics, framed by consciousness-raising and fueled by the politics of location (Rich 1986), entails the repositioning of the subject. The method or tactic is the dis-identification from socially enforced identities, familiar representations, and, often, unearned privileges (De Lauretis 1990; Spivak 1999; Braidotti 1994). Dis-identifications expose the power structures at work in the process of unitary identity formation and reveal the internal and external fractures that compose the subject. Interrupting the delusional unity of the self is not free of pain, but it opens up spaces where unexpected forces can emerge and sustain alternative experiments in becoming. Dis-identification actualizes virtual options by disconnecting the subject from what is already available in the present. It is one of the methodological engines of the untimely.

The attachment to feminist genealogies, my variation on the theme of strategic essentialism, also constitutes my bond to Luce Irigaray. I first met and befriended Luce in Paris in the late 1970s and followed her writings and teaching with passionate interest. Irigaray was then very much an activist and we worked together in several feminist collectives, especially to prepare the massive national pro-abortion demonstration of 6 October 1979, which in those pre-internet days entailed endless hours of telephone canvassing. Irigaray was clever, convinced, and convivial. Much maligned and hastily dismissed because of the alleged naturalism of her work and seldom read thoroughly, Irigaray remains for me a major thinker.

Irigaray's main insight is about the specificity of female embodiment and the “double dissymmetry,” which makes woman not only the second sex—negatively defined as the “other” of the Same—but also a positive and as yet undefined subject. The “new” feminine needs to emerge from the political praxis enacted by feminist women—that

sex which is not one—in relation to each other by thinking back through their mothers. This “virtual” feminine is the “other” of the Other. Irigaray’s position constitutes a left-wing feminist critique of Lacan’s psychic determinism, which centers on the primacy of the phallic master signifier and declares woman a nonbeing. For Lacan, the feminine and the masculine are imaginary and socio-material institutions that sustain, but are also upheld by, the social construction of dissymmetrical differences between the sexes, commonly known as the gender system.

I learned from Irigaray to turn female embodiment into a feminist strategy to redefine the feminine outside the socially discriminatory and symbolically disqualifying Lacanian frame of reference. Irigaray’s firm belief in the incommensurability of sexual difference allows for female specificity to be conceptualized not only in relation to, but also independently of the phallic “feminine.” Feminist politics is the project that undoes the current division of labor between the sexes and produces a socio-symbolic revolution.

I have argued (Braidotti 2011c) that the work of Irigaray falls into three phases. The first concerns the texts from the 1970s, which I consider her masterpieces: *Spectulum Of the Other Woman* and *This Sex which is not One*. They focus on the potential for feminist transformation of the “feminine,” defined not as an immutable socio-psychic essence, but as the complex and multilayered socio-symbolic location of pejorative otherness. The second phase, which starts in 1984 just after *The Ethics of Sexual Difference*, focuses on the productive subversion triggered by a radical version of heterosexual love based on respect for the culture of difference. The metaphysics of the sexualized two is a force capable of transforming not only the relationship between the sexes, but also the social field, the public sphere, the Law, ethics, and political life. The third and last phase is an attempt to open up sexual difference to other differences, notably ethnicity and diversity. It also crosses the secular barrier and addresses religious beliefs, especially Eastern ones. It entails a cosmological dimension, emphasis on spiritual love and on the importance of rituals and healing practices. Clearly, some elements of each phase overlap with those of the others and their interaction is not linear.

Throughout my work, I remained close to the first Irigaray, with her emphasis on multiplicity, female embodiment, and the pursuit of a nonunitary feminist subject of becoming. But I moved on, starting from women and then distributing difference further across the spectrum of the great diversity of race, ethnicity, class, age, degrees of ability, morphologies, sexual preferences, access to resources, and political affiliations. Over the years, as Irigaray took a more onto-theological turn, which for me overemphasized female transcendence and deviated from the original insight into sexual difference as the principle of not-one, I chose a different route. I switched to a monistic ontology, via Spinoza re-read with Deleuze, that allowed me to hold on to the bodily materialism, as intelligent, self-organizing matter, while not foreclosing the end result of processes of becoming. Sexual difference is not at all relinquished in this process, but it rather permeates the entire organism: matter is always already sexed, even before it is captured by the binary social code of the gender system. Sexuality beyond gender, as the perennial differing of matter from within, is the great insight of nomadic theory.

This implies an empirical sensible vision of the embodied and embedded, affective and affirmative self, which takes difference not as a problem to be solved or an obstacle to be overcome, but rather as the starting point for experiments with alternative ways of becoming-woman. Spinoza’s parallelism between mind and body means that differently constituted bodies co-produce differently constituted minds. Sexual difference is, indeed, constitutive but as a verb, not as a nominal essence. Moreover, the relational structure of the subject allows for these experiments to be enacted with webs of multiple human and nonhuman others, adding diversity to the equation. I maintain that the first Irigaray—the thinker of the virtual feminine, which is not one—is perfectly compatible with the nomadic approach. The crucial point is to keep this process flowing and multifocused, refusing to both monumentalize the past and fetishize the future.

## Becoming-nomadic

When I started the project of nomadic subjectivity almost 30 years ago, I had no idea that it would take over my life. In the course of time, I ended up producing a trilogy of inter-connected and yet self-contained books on the topic. *Metamorphoses* (2002j) explores the cultural politics of the nomadic condition and *Transpositions* (2006g), the ethical implications. With the privilege of hindsight, it is tempting to assert some power of synthesis over this vast project, but that is an a posteriori and retrospective view. The project of nomadic subjectivity is quite rhizomatic in itself and it grew organically from a cluster of central and inter-related ideas. It is as if there is no possible conclusion, but only more productive proliferations and successive unfolding.

*Metamorphoses* (2002j) was the first monograph since *Nomadic Subjects* and it was slow in coming, delayed by the intense institutional work of those years. It also marked the end of my being a “bright young hope,” as by now I had become an established author and a successful professor. Retrospectively, I tried to accomplish too much in this overambitious volume, but it is very spot-on about the impact of the new technologies upon both embodiment and sexual difference. Its cartography of the manic-depressive social imaginary of advanced capitalism and its techno-teratological substratum is quite exciting. The book was completed thanks to a very productive sabbatical year at the European University Institute in Fiesole, where I also advanced half-way toward completing the next volume.

*Transpositions* (2006g), however, took another few years to come out after I returned to my normal academic duties. It corresponds to my last stint as director of women’s studies and is already pointing in new directions for my research. I consider it my best and most complete book to date. By that time, I was fully aware that Deleuze was no longer a marginal figure, rather a hugely influential one, and that the third millennium might well become the time of dynamic monism and productive endurance. This volume was also shaped by intense dialogues with new generations of Deleuzian scholars, many of whom are present in this volume. I share with them not only the excitement for this major philosopher, but also a persisting concern that the reception

of Deleuze's thought is marked even today by a masculinist bias and that we need to work harder to sharpen the contours of a Deleuzian feminism.

In 2011, the twin volumes of *Nomadic Subjects* and *Nomadic Theory* came out. The thinking behind them is that both the nomadic predicament and its multiple contradictions have truly come of age. At the start of the third millennium, a diffuse sort of nomadism has become a relevant condition for a great number of world denizens. Furthermore, after 30 years of poststructuralist, postcolonial and feminist debates for, against, or undecided on the issue of the "non-unitary"—split, in-process, knotted, rhizomatic, transitional, nomadic—subject, and issues of fragmentation, complexity, and multiplicity have become household names in critical theory. The popularity and radical-chic appeal of these notions does not make for consensus on the issues at stake: we need to explore further their implications in ethical and political terms.

In these globalized times of accelerating technologically-mediated changes, many traditional points of reference and age-old habits of thought are being recomposed, albeit in contradictory ways. Paradoxically, old power relations are not only confirmed but in many ways exacerbated in the new geopolitical context. What preoccupied me at this stage was how to apply nomadic subjectivity and its related methodology to a cartography of the opportunistic form of mobility engendered in the fast-moving context of globalization. This task requires more historically grounded, socio-economic analyses, and subtler degrees of differentiation. Advanced capitalism functions by a commodified form of controlled mobility: goods, commodities, and data circulate much more freely than human subjects or, in some cases, the less-than-human subjects who constitute the bulk of asylum-seekers and illegal inhabitants of the world (Gilroy 2000; Braidotti 2002j, 2006g; Balibar 2004; Agamben 2005).

At such a time, more conceptual creativity is necessary, and more theoretical courage, in order to face the challenges and also the horrors of our times. It has become like a mantra to me: we need to learn to think differently about the kind of subjects we have already become and the processes of deep-seated transformation we are undergoing. The philosopher in me believes that a new alliance between philosophy, the arts, and science is a crucial building block for this qualitative shift of perspective. The writer in me continues to muse about the complex ways in which the imaginary both propels and resists in-depth transformations.

This line of enquiry is not to suggest that the nomadic subject should ever be taken as a new metaphor for the human condition. Following the method of the politics of location, throughout my work I have argued that what we need, instead, is higher degrees of accuracy in accounting for both the external factors and the internal complexity of nomadic subjectivity. My focus is on the "disposable" bodies of women, youth, and others who are racialized or marked off by age, gender, class, and income and, thus, reduced to marginality. The question is how they come to be inscribed with particular violence in this regime of power to experience dispossession of their embodied and embedded selves, in a political economy of structurally enforced eviction (Sassen 1995). The dense materiality of bodies caught in the massive concentration of infrastructures of sedentary global cities flatly contradicts advanced capitalism's claims to being "immaterial," "flowing," or "virtual." The global city and the refugee camps are not dialectical or moral opposites: they are two sides of the same global

coin, as Agamben (1998) reminds us. They express the schizoid political economy of our times.

In my reading of Deleuze, these differences between degrees of mobility are qualitative, not just quantitative. The global economy does not alter the reactive power of the majority as the sedentary sovereign subject, but rather allows it to proliferate while losing none of its entitlements. Continental political theorists of globalization have addressed this pseudo-nomadism as a feature of advanced capitalism, notably Hardt and Negri (2000), Virno (2004), and the French group gathered round the journal *Multitudes*, where I also published some of my work.

## Writing the prehistory of a future

The nomadic subject is not only my chosen figuration to produce a cartographic reading of the present, in terms of cultural, political, epistemological, and ethical concerns, but also my way of expressing an insatiable and loving curiosity for the world and for the present.

Between *Metamorphoses* and *Transpositions*—the second and third volume of the nomadism trilogy—I turned 50. This momentous milestone prompted a series of reflections about my generational role and my inter-generational responsibilities. They eventually resulted in my decision to step down as the director of women's studies in Utrecht, after 17 years of service. I also resigned from the direction of the Dutch National Graduate School and the European network ATHENA. It was time to let a different generation take over.

Personal factors did play a role. Anneke and I had got married on the 8th of March 1999, on the last International Women's day of the twentieth century, as soon as the Dutch gay marriage laws were passed. We were happily adjusted and stable members of the Dutch gay middle classes. Round 2001, however, the painful events surrounding the assassination of the openly gay politician Pim Fortuyn in The Netherlands prompted a serious national debate on what became known as "sexual nationalism" and our collective responsibilities. The old radicals had become established, what used to be blasphemy was now banality.<sup>23</sup> I felt I needed time to rethink my position.

The sharper sense of things passing and evolving in manners we had not expected resulted in a series of discussions with my best friends. These produced a fantastic small book, published only in Italian in 2004, which is to date the most candid personal statement I have made about my life, my sexuality, and my work: *Baby Boomers: Vite Parallele dagli Anni Cinquantenni ai Cinquantenni*, co-written with Roberta Mazzanti, Annamaria Tagliavini, and Serena Saepeno. Writing in what should be my mother tongue but is by now almost a foreign language allows for a more personal voice, also because of the collective nature of the exercise. It helped me realize the extent to which, at the age of 50, we had become the "older generation" in institutional feminism and critical theory. It was time to move on.

Although my move proved somewhat controversial, I am also proud of having practiced what I preached in my institutional career, though the decision to change jobs was neither easy nor free of pain. It gave me a double new chance: on the one



hand, it allowed me to address a range of broader issues and more diverse reading lists, and on the other hand, it freed me to radicalize my feminist politics, given that I no longer carried the main responsibility for the well-being of the women's studies programme at Utrecht university.

It also allowed me to settle scores with philosophy, my discipline. It is one thing, as a feminist philosopher, to critique and often dismiss the discipline because of its gender blindness and its worship of dead white males and to hold it accountable for its limitations. But these were never for me linear or self-evident positions. Mindful of the fact that I was myself very involved in preserving the legacy of dead white males—albeit of the French-speaking kind—I embarked on one of the most demanding intellectual projects of my recent years: a history of continental philosophy. Under the general editorship of Alan Schrift, the eight-volume project took years to complete. I was in charge of volume seven, which covers 1980–95, the fallout of poststructuralism.<sup>23</sup>

It was a confronting but rewarding experience. I wrote the introduction and the feminist philosophy chapter, of course, but my favorite section is the conclusion, which I co-wrote with my good friend Judy Butler. The piece has a clear personal tone and generational resonance and it describes our complex relationship with our discipline, the institutional friction between us and philosophy departments, and our painful separation from them. Even, or especially, for radical thinkers, the question of our relationship with the linear history of a patriarchal discipline such as philosophy is never resolved.

## Towards the posthumanities

But new work was also in the making. After stepping down as director of the women's studies program, in 2005–06, I spent a sabbatical year in London, where Patrick Hanafin had lined up a Leverhulme visiting professorship for me at Birkbeck College. It allowed me to draft the plans for the brand new Centre for the Humanities at Utrecht in the quiet of my Bloomsbury office. This visit proved inspirational and it reconciled me to London in unprecedented ways. I found it not only academically innovative and intellectually vibrant, but also far more appreciative of French philosophy than France itself: I fell in love with London in my early fifties just as I had with Paris in my late twenties.

Following a request from John Thompson of Polity Press, in 2013 I published *The Posthuman* with the explicit aim of making my work more accessible, while treading new grounds. I consider it the work of my mature years, when I have just been appointed distinguished university professor at Utrecht. It came out in the midst of a wave of co-edited volumes, mostly with younger colleagues, which is something I had not done much before (the few previous co-edited volumes were with feminist peers).<sup>24</sup>

*The Posthuman* (2013) is my most successful book to date and the one most tuned to the present. It was published in Italian 6 months after its original appearance, and eight other translations are currently in process, including one in Chinese and one in Turkish. The book seems to have struck a raw nerve in a lot of readers, judging from the positive reviews, blogs, and personal messages I have received. *The Posthuman*

accomplishes two inter-related goals. On the one hand, it marks the apotheosis of nomadic subjectivity by deploying it as the plane of realization of affirmative ethics. On the other hand, it unfolds this transversal and relational vision of the subject outward, to a cartography of the ongoing transformations of the human. They are due to two factors: the first is the technological structure of advanced, or "cognitive" capitalism, notably the four horsemen of the posthuman apocalypse—nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology, and cognitive science—and the second is the opportunistic postanthropocentrism of advanced capitalism that both invests and profits from the commodification of all that lives.

The capitalization of living matter expands the logic of profit into the most intimate fibers of life itself. It also subsumes both human and nonhuman species and the planet as a whole into its political economy of relentless consumption and bio-technological remake. The capital it goes after is the informational codes of living matter itself, in all its forms. Life, as *bios* as well as *zoe*, is turned into commodities for trade and profit. This context produces a paradoxical and rather perverse form of postanthropocentrism. Market forces happily trade in Life itself, unifying all species under the imperative of the profit motive, whose excesses threaten the sustainability of our planet as a whole. A negative sort of cosmopolitan interconnection is established through a panhuman bond of vulnerability and posthuman interconnections with other species.

Against the prophets of doom, I wanted to stress the affirmative side of this situation. Being profoundly in love with the world and with the present, I did my best to rethink subjectivity as such a changing condition. We alternate between exhilaration and anxiety in confronting the magnitude of the changes in our technologically mediated world. Will our self-perception and self-representation be able to catch up with our posthuman selves, or shall we continue to linger in a theoretical and imaginative state of jet-lag in relation to our lived environment? What happens to subjectivity in this complex field of forces and dataflows?

My argument is that a posthuman theory of the subject can emerge as an empirical project that aims at experimenting with what bio-technologically mediated bodies are capable of doing. These nonprofit experiments with contemporary subjectivity actualize the virtual possibilities of an expanded, relational self, caught in a nature-culture continuum, that labors against the spirit of contemporary capitalism. The nomadic subject is a branch of complexity theory and it promotes a transformative ethics based on ontological relationality. At this particular point in our collective history, we simply do not know what our enfolded selves, minds, and bodies, as one, can actually do. We need to find out by embracing an ethics of experiment with intensities. We are becoming posthuman ethical subjects in our multiple capacities for affirmative relations and modes of communications by codes that exceed the linguistic sign. Posthuman ethics rests on an enlarged sense of inter-connection between self and others, including the nonhuman or "earth" others, by removing the obstacle of self-centered individualism on the one hand, and the barriers of negativity on the other.

Furthermore, reflecting my new institutional position, *The Posthuman* applies this vision of embedded and embodied, affective and affirmative subjectivity to an analysis of the state of the Humanities—the "human" sciences—today. "What is human about the Humanities?" had been the research platform of the Utrecht Centre for the

Humanities since 2006. I wanted to pursue a double aim: first, to honor the criticism of the humanist ideal of "Man" as the measure of all things in the light of feminist and postcolonial theories. Negative and exclusionary processes of sexualization, racialization, and naturalization are co-extensive with the formation of the human as coinciding with this humanist vision of "Man." This vision of the human defines him as much by what it excludes as by what it includes in his self-representation.

Second, I wanted to explore the repercussions of this critique of the humanist ideal of the human for the field of the Humanities itself. Feminist and postcolonial perspectives zoom in on the masculinism and nationalism of this field, which over-represents the interests and preferences of "Man." Far from being an abstract universalist ideal, this human coincides with masculine, white, Eurocentric, dominant languages, normative ideals. The Humanities consequently neglect the viewpoints and knowledge practices of those sexualized, racialized, and naturalized "others" whose exclusion is necessary to the self-assertion of the dominant subject. This transformative agenda resulted in a series of projects I set up at the Centre for the Humanities on alternative forms of cosmopolitanism, cultural citizenship, and the postsecular predicament.

The issue of naturalized others, however, deserves special attention in that it challenges the anthropocentric bias of the Humanities. This calls into question a far more pervasive bias—anthropocentrism or species supremacy which is at work as much in mainstream ideas about "Man" and his Humanities, as in radical epistemologies. In so far as these rest on a social constructivist method, they are unable to take on the nature-culture continuum in their redefinition of the political subject and thus remain anthropocentric in spite of their anti-humanism. This led to a pilot project on the environmental humanities and on how the specter of species extinction is transforming the basic unit of reference for our shared humanity. It also led to projects on the digital or computational humanities and the new interfaces between the human and neural sciences.

Ultimately, the critical note was enlisted to the task of renewed advocacy for the "new" Humanities. These posthuman humanities are for me a way of exploring the social relevance of this field in the globalized world and of advancing the dialogue on the changing relations between the academic and the civic with a variety of new colleagues from China, Korea, and India, as well as the old friends from Australia and the USA. My general hypothesis is simple: the Humanities can and will survive their present predicament and contradictions to the extent that they will show the ability and willingness to undergo a major process of transformation in response to both technological advances and geopolitical developments. The Humanities have to reflect the times and the society they serve: we already live in permanent states of transition, hybridization, and nomadic mobility, in emancipated (postfeminist), multiethnic societies with high degrees of technological mediation. These are neither simple, nor linear events, but rather multilayered and internally contradictory phenomena. They combine elements of ultra-modernity with splinters of neo-archaism: dealing with these untimely elements, which defy the logic of the excluded middle, is the challenge for the contemporary humanities. I have complete confidence in their posthuman potential.

## Being worthy of the times

That I am fascinated by the present does not necessarily mean that I am actually synchronized with it. On the contrary, as a critical thinker I am always trying to be worthy of the times, to interact with them, in order to resist them, that is to say, differ from them. Oppositional consciousness is askew and structurally unhinged, half of it not *there*, the other half not *thrat*. Striking a sustainable balance between the negative urge to refuse and the politics of affirmation emerges as a main concern at this stage of my work.

I have criticized the Hegelian-Marxist dialectics of consciousness because it requires negativity as the factor that triggers a qualitative change. Dialectics assumes that the present conditions of oppression, marginalization, and injustice are also the pre-conditions for their overthrowing in the future. The temporal unity of the dialectical process is that of an oppositional consciousness that triggers the synthetic moment of resistance. This provides the source of counter-truths, -values, and antagonistic representations, which aim at overcoming the negative instances of the present. Thus, oppositional consciousness is precariously poised between a negative present and a hopefully more productive future, which will follow from overthrowing the present conditions. It is structurally out of joint or untimely in a negative sense.

If instead of working with this Hegelian equation of political subjectivity with negativity, however, we switch to a Spinozist monistic paradigm, everything changes, including the time sequence. This shift of perspective assumes philosophical monism as vital materialism and as an ethical and affective component at the core of subjectivity. A subject's ethical core is not his/her moral intentionality, as much as the effects of power (as repressive—*potestas*—and positive—*potentia*) his/her actions are likely to have upon the world (Deleuze 1968). Given that the ethical good is equated with relationality aiming at affirmative empowerment, the ethical ideal is to increase one's ability to enter into modes of relation with multiple others (Foucault 1991). Politics is the pragmatic practice of actualizing affirmative becomings. Oppositional consciousness and the dialectics of political subjectivity are replaced by processes or assemblages that actualize this ethical urge through the cultivation of an ethics of joy or affirmation. The continuous present takes over.

Vital materialism synchronizes the subject with the present to the extent that it stresses an affective sense of intimacy with the world and a sense of entanglement in a web of ever-shifting relations and perpetual becoming (Bataille 1988). Relationality consists of a deep sense of belonging to the multiple ecologies—social, environmental, and psychic (Guattari 1995; 2000), and the nature-culture continuum that constitute us.

Belonging is not the attachment to static identity lines but the dynamic and transversal moves across ecologically interconnected categories. A sense of familiarity with the world flows from the simple fact that we are the products of such ecological interconnections. It speaks of our ability to recollect, and reconnect to the world, and, hence, of our capacity to negotiate our "homes" within it, in the pursuit of sustainable relations (Braidotti 2006) and transversal connections. Haraway (2003) speaks of "becoming-with"—multiple human and nonhuman others (Deleuze and Guattari 1994).

At the same time, the synchronizations emerging from such entanglements with embodied and embedded relations in the real world are, at best, temporary. The key ethical practice, the pursuit of conditions conducive to increasing our affirmative ability to relate, calls for the actualization of virtual intensities as events and resonances that disrupt the task of synchronization. What this means practically is that the conditions for political and ethical agency are not dependent on the current state of the terrain. They are not tied to the present by opposition; instead, they are affirmative and geared to creating possible futures. Ethical relations create possible worlds by mobilizing resources that have been left untapped, including our desires and imagination. A schizoid or multidirectional time sequence is the ontological condition of nomadic subjects. Creativity as a "matter-realist" process entails the active displacement of dominant formations of identity, memory, and identification so as to open them up to virtual forces. The untimely is here to stay.

So where to next? I am the quintessential baby boomer, having witnessed momentous transformations in my life. Anneke and I can barely suppress a giggle of embarrassment when we remember our pre-television childhood, our pre-sex-revolution adolescence and our mobile-free early career years. We met and clicked just as the internet was taking off, but still remain quite attached to our Gutenberg Galaxy culture. We seem to have settled into the untimely.

A few years ago, as many of our friends started falling ill, and several died prematurely, Anneke and I decided to deal with our estate. We made a testament that bequeaths the majority of our resources to a new foundation that will be run by Utrecht University. It aims to support women researchers from disadvantaged backgrounds and countries. Even prior to this move, I had already decided to donate all my professional papers to the Dutch Women's Archives (IAV) and to divide my personal ones between them and the Italian Women's Library in Bologna. My most valuable possession—the hundreds of booklets that constitute my diary—will be archived with restricted access only. The literary executors and gatekeepers of this archive are Iris van der Tuin and Bolette Blaagaard.

Making peace with death has empowered me to contemplate anew the objects that constitute the material and also affective backbone of my existence and will be there long after I have gone. At the level of consciousness, death as the event that defines the specific temporality of a life that will have been mine has already taken place (Blanchot 2000). At the level of experience, of course, it is not over yet and there is lots of hope and vitality left, but a fundamental threshold has been crossed. The overwhelming generosity of the friends who have contributed to this book gives me the unique opportunity to hold the time-frame, for one brief second, and wonder. At the still heart of the turning wheel, all things said and done, what remains is a deep sense of gratitude. Mine will have been a blessed existence. In so far as it took all the time I was given, all the love and hard work that could be mobilized and so many relations to sustain it, this will have been the best of all possible lives.

So, on my 60th birthday, am I reconciled at last with the present? Not completely, I hope, though this might have been my desire. If coinciding completely with the here and now is one of the possible definitions of becoming-imperceptible and being fully synchronized with my body actually marks the instance of my death, I would, quite frankly, prefer not to.

## Notes

- 1 With thanks to Aggeliki Sifaki, Bolette Blaagaard, and Iris van der Tuin for their incisive and helpful comments.
- 2 Neologism of my invention to describe people, mostly women for whom writing is a life-giving mediating factor.
- 3 Leila Sebbar and Nancy Huston were for me the leading intellectual figures in this highly gifted collective.
- 4 My good friend the journalist Annamaria Crispino introduced me to this memorable magazine.
- 5 For an account of this particular journal see: Braidotti 2014.
- 6 I actually ran a seminar at the College in its first year of operation with Marie-Jo Dhavernas.
- 7 With the support of Edo Klement of Kok Agora Publishers.
- 8 I was moved to note that Antoinette Fouque passed away as I was writing this Afterword.
- 9 Jane Weinstock and I published a critical review of this phenomenon in 1980.
- 10 This concern was also expressed by Braidotti (1994j and 2011c), West (1994) and Chanter (1995).
- 11 See the Milan Women's Bookstore Collective (1990), Adriana Cavarero (1990); Herta Nagl-Docekal and Herlinda Pauer-Studer (1990) and Andrea Mathofer (1995); Celia Amorós (1985); Maria Isabel Santa Cruz et al. (1994) and Henrietta Moore (1994).
- 12 For instance, Julia Kristeva's work appears fast in English: *About Chinese Women* (originally published in 1974) comes out in 1977, *Desire in Language* (originally published in 1969) in 1980, *The Kristeva Reader* in 1986. Hélène Cixous is slightly behind with the 1976 translation of "The Laugh of the Medusa" (originally published in 1975) and the 1986 translation of *The Newly-Born Woman* (co-written with Catherine Clément and originally published in 1975). *The Book of Promethéa* (originally published in 1983) in 1991 and the *The Hélène Cixous Reader* in 1994. Luce Irigaray, however, lags behind with the double translation of both *Speculum of the Other Woman* (originally published in 1974) and *This Sex Which is Not One* (originally published in 1977) in 1985, *The Ethics of Sexual Difference* (originally published in 1984) in 1993, after which the speed picks up somewhat.
- 13 The linguistically oriented movement, inspired by Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes, was centered in the Yale school of literary theory; see Barbara Johnson (1980, 1998), Shoshana Felman (1993) and Marjorie Garber (1997). The pioneers of French feminist theory in the United States were Donna Stanton (1987), Nancy Miller (1986), Alice Jardine (1985), Naomi Schar (1987), Catharine Stimpson (1989) and Joan Scott (1999). Gayatri Spivak expanded it to postcolonial theory. Interest in Deleuze did not take off until the early 2000s.
- 14 Gould and Wartofsky's *Women and Philosophy: Toward a Theory of Liberation* (published in 1976) and Vatterling-Bragging, Elliston and English's *Feminism and Philosophy* (from 1977) are among the first, followed closely by Marilyn Frye's *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* in 1983.
- 15 See Braidotti and Butler 2010.
- 16 See Kelly 1979.
- 17 Once my first book came out, it was translated immediately into Dutch and is to date the only monograph I have in this language, though a collection of essays was published in 2004 (Braidotti 2004g).

- 18 In nomadic thought: a singularity hounded by its own powers to endure intensities and relations to others.
- 19 This was the main motivation that was cited for the award of my knighthood by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands in 2005.
- 20 Thanks to the capable leadership of Bertheke Waaldijk.
- 21 I want to acknowledge in this respect my B.A. philosophy tutor Maurita Harney, who became a life-long friend.
- 22 See the interview Anneke and I did together in that period with Elise Valmorbidia (see Valmorbidia 2007).
- 23 See *The History of Continental Philosophy, 7: After Poststructuralism – Transitions and Transformations* (Braidotti [ed.], 2010).
- 24 See *Deleuze and Law: Forensic Futures* (Braidotti et al. [eds], 2009), *Revisiting Normativity with Deleuze* (Braidotti and Pisters 2012), *After Cosmopolitanism* (Braidotti et al. [eds], 2013), *Transformations of Religion and the Public Sphere: Postsecular Publics* (Braidotti et al. forthcoming 2014), and *Deleuze and the Political* (Braidotti and Dolphijn, forthcoming 2014).

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