

## The Subject of Critique

Ricœur in Dialogue with Feminist Philosophers

Annemie Halsema

VU-University Amsterdam

### Abstract

This paper aims to show the relevance of Ricœur's notion of the self for postmodern feminist theory, but also to critically assess it. By bringing Ricœur's "self" into dialogue with Braidotti's, Irigaray's and Butler's conceptions of the subject, it shows that it is close to the feminist self in that it is articulated into language, is embodied and not fully conscious of itself. In the course of the argument, the major point of divergence also comes to light, namely, that the former considers discourse to be a laboratory for thought experiments, while the latter consider discourse to be normative, restrictive and exclusive. In the second part, the possibility of critique and change are further developed. Ricœur does not rule out critique, rather interpretation includes distancing and critique. Finally, his notion of productive imagination explains how new identifications become possible.

*Keywords: Self, Critique, Change, Irigaray, Butler*

### Résumé

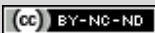
Cet article vise à démontrer, en l'évaluant de manière critique, l'importance de la notion de soi chez Ricœur pour la théorie féministe postmoderne. Mettant en dialogue sa pensée avec celle de Braidotti, d'Irigaray et de Butler, l'auteure montre que la notion ricoeurienne de soi est assez proche de la pensée féministe. Car le soi est articulé dans la langue, il est incarné et pas entièrement conscient de lui-même. Après avoir cherché à montrer la proximité des deux styles de pensée, l'auteure attarde sur le point crucial de leur divergence. Tandis que Ricœur tient à considérer le discours comme un laboratoire pour des expériences de pensée de soi, les penseurs féministes l'appréhendent comme quelque chose de normatif, de restrictif et d'excluant. Dans la seconde partie de l'article, la possibilité d'une critique et d'une transformation du soi est explorée. Ricœur soutient que l'interprétation implique aussi bien la distanciation que la critique. Ainsi sa notion d'imagination productive explique comment de nouvelles identifications deviennent possibles.

*Mot-clés: Le soi, Critique, Transformation, Irigaray, Butler*

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## Ricœur in Dialogue with Feminist Philosophers

Annemie Halsema

VU-University Amsterdam

Paul Ricœur is one of the most important philosophical anthropologists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He develops an extensive notion of the self from different sources: the analytical discussion about personal identity, contemporary theories of narrativity, classical philosophical sources, such as Aristotle, and contemporary phenomenology and hermeneutics. The notion of the self also is one of the central points of debate in feminist theory. "It is pivotal to questions about personhood, identity, the body, and agency that feminism must address," as Diana Meyers explains in introducing the feminist self.<sup>1</sup> In this paper, it is my aim to demonstrate that Ricœur's reflections on the self are of interest for feminist theory.

Ricœur is not among the continental thinkers in contemporary history, such as Merleau-Ponty, Derrida, Deleuze, who are much referred to in feminist theory.<sup>2</sup> One of the possible reasons is that feminist theory is normative, and criticizes the discrimination of women and other non-hegemonic groups within society. Hermeneutics, and specifically Gadamer's hermeneutics, as Lorraine Code signaled in *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer*,<sup>3</sup> shows a lack of awareness of the workings of power in processes of understanding. Although Ricœur cannot be accused of ignoring power, he also does not differ from mainstream hermeneutics in not considering the uneven distributions of power that are related to gender differences.<sup>4</sup>

Another reason for feminist thinkers not to work with Ricœur could be that he does not explicitly address themes that are of interest to them, such as embodiment, deconstruction, difference. Ricœur's philosophy for many feminists perhaps is too continuous with the philosophical tradition, that they criticize for its masculinity, and too uncritical of it to be of interest. As I will demonstrate in this paper, however, Ricœur's hermeneutical notion of the self is not so far apart from the one found in feminist theory. It is much more "postmodern" than one at first sight would assume. The main feminist theories of the self that I will bring his thought into dialogue with (in the first part of the paper), are the postmodern ones of Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler and Rosi Braidotti. I consider these the most influential and original ones in feminist theory. Apart from showing the convergences between Ricœur and these feminist philosophers, I also want to critically assess his "self" from a feminist perspective (in the second part), by asking how much room his notion of the self leaves for normative critique. I will not take one side or the other, but aim at a constructive dialogue between Ricœur and feminist theory.

### Ricœur and the Feminist Self

In order to relate Ricœur's hermeneutical self with feminist theory, the notion of the "feminist self" needs to be circumscribed first. The three feminist philosophers - Irigaray, Butler and Braidotti - do not share a similar notion of the self, instead they articulate different aspects and critiques of the self, as will become clear soon. A good starting point, though, can be found in Rosi Braidotti's *Nomadic Subjects*, in which she lists the characteristics of a feminist postmodern

notion of the self. These characteristics are general enough to be applicable to all three theoreticians. Braidotti writes that the feminist self is not one, in the sense that it is, “a multiplicity in herself” and consists of “a network of levels of experience,” it is “not one conscious subject, but also the subject of her unconscious” and it holds “an imaginary relationship to variables like class, race, age, sexual choices.”<sup>5</sup> The feminist self, in the words of Braidotti, forms itself by identifying with successive social-cultural representations, it is embodied, and its materiality is coded in language. Its body cannot be fully apprehended and represented. It cannot be captured by consciousness, but is conditioned by the unconscious. In what follows, I develop these characteristics under three headings: the self articulates itself into language, it is embodied, and it is not fully conscious of itself. I will show to what extent Ricœur’s notion of the self incorporates these traits of the feminist self.

*The self articulates itself in language.* The notion of the self that Paul Ricœur develops in *Oneself as Another* and later texts can be considered as the synthesis of, but also further elaboration on, the notion of the subject in his earlier works. He situates it in one of the texts in which he sketches his intellectual trajectory, “On Interpretation,”<sup>6</sup> as part of the tradition of reflexive philosophy,<sup>7</sup> which in Ricœur’s case forms a hermeneutical variation of Husserlian phenomenology. Reflexive philosophy is the mode of thought that takes its point of departure in Descartes’s *cogito*, and is further developed by Kant and French post-Kantians such as Jean Nabert. The notion of self-understanding is one of the central philosophical problems in this stream of thought. Reflection is circumscribed as “that act of turning back upon itself by which a subject grasps, in a moment of intellectual clarity and moral responsibility, the unifying principle of the operations among which it is dispersed and forgets itself as subject.”<sup>8</sup> The subject comes into existence “after the deed,” so to speak, in retrospect, and in turning back upon its actions comes to understand itself as an agent.

So far, Ricœur’s notion of the self is very much in line with the philosophical tradition: the coherence and transparency of the self, that is contested by many feminist theorists, is central to reflexive philosophy. Whereas the feminists understand the self to be multiple and not fully conscious of itself, the idea of reflection includes the desire of a perfect coincidence of the self with itself. In that respect the differences between Ricœur and feminist theory couldn’t be larger. But Ricœur does not leave it to that. Already in “On Interpretation,” he situates his philosophy as a hermeneutical version of phenomenology, implicating that the reflexive subject is neither immediately present to itself, nor transparent to itself. It rather participates in the world and belongs to it; it is thrown into the world and can only understand itself through the externalities that it creates, by means of a detour. Ricœur draws from hermeneutics the implication that self-understanding is mediated by signs, symbols and texts, and that it “coincides with the interpretation given to these mediating terms.”<sup>9</sup> Understanding oneself for him means comprehending oneself *as* one confronts a text. The implications of this notion of self-understanding are twofold. The subject is not immediately transparent to itself, nor capable of self-knowledge, but interprets itself.<sup>10</sup> And it has a double subjectivity as author and reader, neither one being more original than the other.

The notion of the self that Ricœur develops ten years later in *Oneself as Another* draws the consequences of the hermeneutical view of self-understanding. Now, he perceives personal identity as narrative. The capacity to narrate “occupies a pre-eminent place among the capacities, insofar as events of whatever origin become legible and intelligible only when recounted in stories.”<sup>11</sup> The idea that personal identity is narrative implies that the self understands itself through the stories of which it is the protagonist, and through the stories of others. Narrative

identity, in other words, does not pertain to the story of my life, but to the network of stories in which I figure. The narrativity of personal identity also implies that the self does not coincide with itself, as *idem* identity, but incorporates the possibility of change, namely “the identity of the narrative plot that remains unfinished and open to the possibility of being told differently or of letting itself be told by others.”<sup>12</sup> And, furthermore, narrative identity implies that the self is the narrator of its life, without, however, becoming its author.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, in Ricœur’s perspective, the self forms itself and understands itself by relating to the stories, signs and symbols of the culture in which it lives. This self is close to the feminist one that constitutes itself by relating to the representations in the symbolic order.<sup>14</sup> The feminist self articulates and understands itself in the available language as well. The psychoanalytical idea that subjectivity articulates itself in language, and that there is no subject if it is not articulated, is central. As Braidotti claims: “It is obviously the inscription into language that makes the embodied subject into a speaking ‘I’. In my understanding, there can be no subjectivity outside sexuality or language...”<sup>15</sup> The feminist and the Ricœurian self, thus, both articulate themselves into language. Yet, feminists do not refer to the self as “narrative,” as Ricœur does.

Like Ricœur, Judith Butler speaks of narrativity, but she emphasizes the limits of the possibility to give a narrative account of oneself, rather than addressing its opportunities. Typical for her work is the Foucaultian idea that subjects are produced in regulatory power processes. Narrativity for her is the form in which the subject can refer to its own genesis, but the constitution of the subject has already taken place. “The subject loses itself to tell the story of itself...”<sup>16</sup> In a later text, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, she holds the narrative to be “the prerequisite condition for any account of moral agency.”<sup>17</sup> Yet, here she again claims that the narrative does not originate from an independently willing and choosing subject, because the narrative is “disoriented by what is not mine, or not mine alone.” It is disoriented by the set of norms that challenge the originality and singularity of one’s story. By telling a narrative, I at once give an account of myself *and* make myself “substitutable.”<sup>18</sup>

Butler exemplifies the limits of the possibility to narrate, that in Ricœur’s account for a large part remain unarticulated. She expresses the necessary incoherence and incompleteness of the (narrative) self, and makes us aware of the implications connected with narrative identity being articulated in a language that, in a Lacanian phrase, belongs to “the other.” There is a non-narrativizable exposure to the other to which I address my account of myself; there is a bodily referent that forms a condition for my narrative and that I cannot narrate fully; the unconscious is perhaps implicitly but not explicitly part of my life story; there are primary relations that co-constitute me and of which I cannot tell everything; there is a history that establishes my partial opacity to myself; and there are norms that facilitate my telling a story about myself, but that I do not master and that make me, my story, substitutable.<sup>19</sup> Butler points out that every narrative about one’s life is disoriented by factors such as embodiment, the unconscious, language as discourse of the other, history and the normativity of discourse.

For Irigaray, likewise, discourse is exclusive. She does not speak of “narrative,” as Butler does, but she too suggests that there are limits to what can be expressed in language. Within a discourse that is exclusively masculine, it is the feminine that cannot be articulated. Being sexualized as feminine is a “senseless, inappropriate, indecent utterance,”<sup>20</sup> she writes. In *This Sex Which Is Not One* (1985), she calls this exclusion the motivation of her work: the fact that the articulation of the reality of her sex is impossible in discourse, for a structural, eidetic reason.

So, while Ricœur and the feminist notion of the self are close in presuming that the self articulates itself in language, the feminists in contrast to Ricœur lay claim on what *cannot* be

articulated into language. They aim at conveying the limits of discourse, that do not seem so central to Ricœur. I will first address Ricœur's ideas about embodiment and the unconscious and return to the question of exclusion of discourse and inclusion in the second part of the paper.

*The self is embodied.* For all feminist thinkers, subjects are embodied. Embodiment is a central issue in feminist theory, because it is on the basis of their bodily characteristics that women are discriminated. But their ways of relating to embodiment are different.

Irigaray is the feminist thinkers who, in the words of Tina Chanter, "brings the body back into play, not as 'the rock of feminism', but as a mobile set of differences."<sup>21</sup> Irigaray criticizes the symbolic division between the feminine, as the material, corporeal, sensible, and the masculine that represents the spiritual, ideal, intelligible and transcendental. She aims at a culture of sexual difference in which both are valued. Phallogocentric or patriarchal culture donates no place to the feminine, and therewith to the corporeal. It remains culture's underside, its unconscious. When sexual difference is recognized, instead, body and language would be joined, and every woman and every man would be able to develop an identity in relation to her or his body.

For Rosi Braidotti, inspired by Irigaray but also by other French thinkers such as Deleuze, embodiment includes a new form of materialism. In a Deleuzian fashion, she understands the body as layer of corporeal materiality, as pure flows of energy, capable of multiple variations. Its materiality is coded into language, and the self (as entity endowed with identity) is anchored in this living matter.<sup>22</sup>

Judith Butler discusses embodiment in *Bodies That Matter*, and develops a material notion of it as well. For her the body is matter, but not in the sense of a surface on which meaning is inscribed. Rather, she redefines the notion of matter to "materialization," which includes a process "that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter."<sup>23</sup> She, in other words, contends that sex is something that we do not "have," or become, but we assume a sex by reiterating regulatory norms that produce sex and sexuality. The performative process in which subjects become subject, also includes that the matter of sex comes into existence. We understand our bodies as sexually specific bodies because they become intelligible to us in a historical-cultural specific manner.

Ricœur also considers the self as embodied. Already in his early *Freedom and Nature*, he situates his thinking within the phenomenological tradition and refers to Gabriël Marcel's notion of incarnation. The body for Ricœur is neither constituted objectively, nor constitutive as transcendental subject. It rather is the existing I.<sup>24</sup> While in his early work the body appears as our incarnation, mystery and spontaneity, in his study of the self it appears as the phenomenological "I can," but also as fundamental passivity, as I explained elsewhere.<sup>25</sup> I will not repeat the account given there of Ricœur's notion of embodiment, but only want to mention two points, namely the relation between the narrative self and its body, and Ricœur's careful reformulation of Husserl's primordially of *Leib* over *Körper*. The first point illustrates Ricœur's nuanced conception of the body, while the second shows the relevance of his account of the body for feminist theory.

For Ricœur, it is not the case that the body as some sort of constancy underlies the variability of the self. Our incarnation for him does not imply some sort of stable embeddedness that is not further reflected upon. Rather, the structure of embodiment resembles the structure of the self and is only to a certain extent narratable. In that sense, he comes close to what Butler called the bodily referent of the narrative that forms a condition for my narrative and that I cannot narrate fully, and what Braidotti called the body's not being fully apprehended and

represented. In discussing personal identity, Ricœur objects to identifications of the self with the psyche or mind, and the body with some sort of material constancy of the self. For him, the body cannot be associated with that which remains the same, in distinction to the self as psychological (mind) or spiritual (soul). He does not want to enter into discussions like those in the analytical tradition over the best criterion for identity: psychological or corporeal.<sup>26</sup> He also does not associate the psychological criterion with *ipse*, and the corporeal criterion with *idem*. The *idem-ipse* distinction, thus, does not pertain to the body-mind split, and the body does not form the permanent part of our being. It does not even resemble itself: "One only has to compare two self-portraits of Rembrandt."<sup>27</sup> But also, the body is not foreign to selfhood. For the self can claim: "this is my body." The mineness of the body that Ricœur assumes in following the phenomenologists even forms "the most overwhelming testimony in favor of the irreducibility of selfhood to sameness."<sup>28</sup>

The body, thus, is not to be understood as the constancy of the self, and is not simply the material side of the self. Rather, the body incorporates whatness and whoness in itself. The *idem-ipse* dialectics that characterizes narrative identity has a counterpart in the understanding of our body. The body, for Ricœur, belongs to two orders: the order of things (whatness) and the order of self experience (who-ness). In correspondence with Husserl, he distinguishes *Körper* and *Leib*.<sup>29</sup> The whatness of the body coincides with its being *Körper* and its whoness with being *Leib*. Both aspects of embodiment are narratable, and thus can be part of narrative identity. We can recall bodily experiences, explain what we feel and how it feels, which are *Leib*-aspects; and we can objectify our body, speak about its characteristics, what it shares with others, in short, exemplify its *Körper*-aspects. What is articulable about, and is articulated of, the body can be a component of narrative identity, which thus incorporates its body. But the self cannot express its body entirely; for it also articulates itself by means of this same body upon which it does not reflect, but that shows itself in hesitations, slips of the tongue and emotions. And, not everything of the body is narratable: it also is a mystery.<sup>30</sup> In his account of sexuality, in the short essay "Wonder, Eroticism, and Enigma" (1994), Ricœur speaks of the body as a mystery and as escaping linguistic articulation as well.<sup>31</sup> The body thus also *exceeds* narrative identity.

Similar to the feminist account of embodiment, Ricœur's implies that the body is not fully narratable. But in contrast to the feminist notion of the body, in which it is matter (Braidotti, Butler) as well as something that excludes from the symbolic and that culture should relate to (Irigaray), Ricœur seems to consider the body primarily as our habitat and situation. While in feminist theory, the body is not only lived subject or something that escapes us, but also a reality to which meanings are attached, Ricœur seems to stress mainly its non constancy and escaping linguistic articulation. As I will demonstrate, however, apart from that, he also reformulates Husserl's *Körper*-notion. It is precisely his hermeneutical account of the body as body among other bodies that brings him close to feminist theory, closer than a strictly phenomenological account of the body. In other words, I think that his hermeneutic notion of embodiment offers more openings for feminist theory than the phenomenological ones that are often referred to by feminist philosophers.<sup>32</sup>

Ricœur in the last chapter of *Oneself as Another* returns to the relationship between the body as flesh (*Leib*) and *Körper*.<sup>33</sup> *Körper* for him mainly implies being a body among other bodies, that is, one among many. It makes that the self understands itself as part of a community and is open to the world. In contrast to Husserl, Ricœur claims that the body's being *Körper* is equally original as its being *Leib*, flesh. While Husserl, who is concerned with the problem of constitution, understands the body as *Leib* to be primordial, Ricœur aims at thinking it as *Leib* and *Körper* at the

same time. Our experience of the body as one among many for him is as primordial as its being *Leib*. Because of our embodiment we perceive ourselves as open to the world, we find ourselves in the world, and we appear in the world.

It is precisely through his reformulation of the relation between *Leib* and *Körper* that Ricœur's perspective on embodiment comes closer to feminist theory than Husserl's or Merleau-Ponty's. Most feminist accounts of embodiment have in common that they perceive the body as an inalienable part of our identity that comes to be signified in the symbolic order in a way that is restrictive. The symbolic either does not enable feminine identities to come into existence *as* feminine (Irigaray), or prefers clearly masculine or feminine heterosexual identities (Butler). The body in feminist theory is not only the site of experience, our habitat and situation, but it places the self into the world. It is signified matter, the point of application for normative meanings. Thinking the body from a feminist perspective, thus, includes both: considering it as lived experience, and as a field of meanings through which normative processes signify our bodies. This implies that a phenomenological account of embodiment, in which its mineness is primordial, is limited from a feminist perspective. For a feminist account of embodiment should include a perspective on what it implies to be situated in the world as well. Ricœur develops such an account. His phenomenological-hermeneutical notion of embodiment makes that it is understood as lived experience, but also as body among other bodies. Precisely as situated in the world, among other bodies, the body receives social meanings and is understood as the point where normative social structures cross, which at once situate the individual socially, as influence its self-understanding.

*The self is not fully conscious of itself.* The psychoanalytical notion of the unconscious also plays an important role in feminist theory. Braidotti considers the feminist self to be subject of her unconscious, Butler understands the unconscious to be implicitly part of one's life-story, and Irigaray speaks of the feminine-maternal as unconscious within a patriarchal culture.<sup>34</sup> In feminist theory, the unconscious points to the repressed underside of patriarchal culture, as a potential site of resistance and as a limit to the self's possibilities for self-understanding. Ricœur in *Freud and Philosophy* and several articles also considers the unconscious as a force that radically puts into question consciousness and the possibilities of self-understanding.<sup>35</sup> So, how do both relate? I will concentrate upon the implications of the notion of the unconscious for the self here and will set aside the unconscious as a means of criticizing the symbolic, which also is an important interpretation given to it in feminist theory.<sup>36</sup>

What does it mean for a philosophy of the self to acknowledge the unconscious? Ricœur contends the challenge that Freudian psychoanalysis poses to philosophies of self-consciousness. The unconscious, first of all, puts into question the Cartesian suggestion that self-knowledge can be immediately certain. It suspends the properties of consciousness, and in that sense forms an "anti-phenomenology."<sup>37</sup> A philosophy of consciousness has become impossible, since consciousness cannot totalize itself. But that the unconscious is not conscious in Freudian psychoanalysis does not imply that it is also unknowable. It rather manifests itself in its representations, that can be known in so far as they appear in the field of consciousness (in dreams, free association, etc.). Also, in order to be analyzable, the unconscious needs to articulate itself.

Ricœur objects to naïve realism, that is, to seeing the unconscious as "some fanciful reality with the extraordinary ability of thinking in place of consciousness."<sup>38</sup> The unconscious does not think – and Freud never said so. It is relative to consciousness, instead, because it is constituted by the hermeneutic procedures by which it is deciphered. Ricœur does not oppose the

Freudian notion of the unconscious to a Cartesian immediately self-certain consciousness, but asks what happens to it when it is opposed to a Hegelian mediate notion of consciousness as limit-idea, that guarantees and understands itself only in every next step. In psychoanalysis he discovers another hermeneutics, that is regressive, beneath the progressive (Hegelian) hermeneutics that considers the development of consciousness. The meaning of the unconscious for him is that understanding always comes out of preceding figures, in a temporal or symbolic sense. "Man is the only being that is subject to his childhood."<sup>39</sup>

How is this unconscious related to consciousness? For Ricœur, both are not opposed, and man nor woman is a simple addition of the two orders, unconscious and consciousness, but both cover exactly the same field. "[A] phenomenology of spirit and an archaeology of the unconscious speak not of two halves of man, but each one of the whole of man."<sup>40</sup> The Freudian theory of the subject has displaced the subject, in the sense that neither consciousness nor the ego are in the position of principle or origin anymore. Instead of understanding the self as conscious of itself, Freud speaks of its gradual becoming-conscious. That implies that self-knowledge for Ricœur forms a "limit-idea," the terminal situation of consciousness.<sup>41</sup> Consciousness becomes a task or goal, and the Cartesian self has lost the assurance of its self. It does no longer know what it is. The cogito becomes a wounded cogito, that posits but does not possess itself, claims Ricœur.<sup>42</sup>

Even though the self articulates itself in language, and even though "language is the primary condition of all human experience,"<sup>43</sup> Ricœur's notion of the narrative self does not imply that he considers the self as purely conscious and that he forgets the unconscious. Rather, for Ricœur the self fundamentally does not own itself; it articulates itself and interprets itself, but does not completely know itself. Ricœur furthermore demonstrates that the unconscious can only be understood because it is articulated. As he claims, for Freud there is "no emotional experience so deeply buried, so concealed or so distorted that it cannot be brought up to the clarity of language and so revealed in its own proper sense, thanks to desire's access to language."<sup>44</sup> Psychoanalysis, as a talking-cure, is based on this very hypothesis of the primary proximity between desire and speech.

Ricœur perhaps is not a thinker of deconstruction, difference or multiplicity, and for that reason not popular among feminist theorists, but I hope to have shown that his notion of the self is not so far apart from the postmodern feminist self that Braidotti, Butler and Irigaray develop. There is a continuity in that the self articulates itself and becomes a self in language, is embodied, and is not fully conscious of itself. Rosi Braidotti writes that the feminist self is a multiplicity, that consists of a network of levels of experience. Ricœur's self similarly is not constant and singular, but understands itself in relation to the narratives of others, and is subject to change. What is more, Ricœur's self is split, for narrative identity does not coincide with the self - even though there is no other way of understanding it than by means of the narratives about itself. Ricœur's self is split precisely because the self is a reflexive subject, while narrative identity is the identity created in the life story. Narrative identity coincides with the protagonist of the life story, the self is the one that tells that life story. Both do not completely overlap - for one can tell different stories about one's life. The notion of the split self perhaps does not completely overlap with Braidotti's multiplicity of levels of experience, but it does allow for understanding the self by means of different accounts (narratives) of itself.

However, apart from the similarity between Ricœur and postmodern feminist philosophy, a major point of disagreement has started to emerge as well. The division does not so much lie in the conception of the self or subject, but rather in that of discourse. It can be



summarized as follows: while Ricœur considers discourse as constitutive for the self, feminist philosophers perceive it as restrictive (i.e., patriarchal, phallogentric, heteronormative). Patriarchal representations do not allow the development of other kinds of self than the hegemonic symbolic supports. Luce Irigaray, for example, claims that a woman “should not comply with a model of identity imposed on her by anyone, neither her parents, her lover, her children, the State, religion or culture in general.”<sup>45</sup> Whereas patriarchal culture does not acknowledge sexual difference, she aims at the creation of a culture that recognizes the radical embodied and symbolic difference between the sexes, a culture of sexual difference. Each woman, but also every man, should be able for her/himself to become her/his gender. For poststructuralist Judith Butler, also, the restrictions of the social order are central in her theorizing. She speaks of the subject’s “social existence,”<sup>46</sup> and through the notions of “performativity” and “abjection,” articulates how subjects constitute themselves by relating to the normative symbolic, excluding other possibilities.<sup>47</sup> She asks not only what it means for subjects to constitute themselves as such, but also reflects upon the remainder, the rest, the abject that might transform and oppose the social norms that produce subject constitution.

In relating Ricœur’s notion of the self to the one in feminist theory, one of the central questions is precisely to what extent this self can be critical of the stories and texts that it refers to in articulating itself. We have seen that Ricœur does not consider the self as fixed, but as changing, and that the self articulates itself by reference to the various texts in the cultural symbolic. But can it also be critical of these texts? And does Ricœur consider these texts to be normative, i.e., do they capture and limit the possibilities of becoming a self? In order to answer these questions, in the next section I outline Ricœur’s ideas about a critical hermeneutics, and bring them into dialogue with Butler’s notions of performativity and abjection and with Irigaray’s mimesis.<sup>48</sup>

### Critical Hermeneutics, Performativity and Mimesis

Irigaray suggests a strategy of mimesis – that is, of playful and productive repetition - in order to articulate the feminine that is excluded from discourse. In order to “reopen women’s path, in particular in and through language” - which she claims is not an easy task “for what path can one take to get back inside their ever so coherent systems?” - she proposes the productive play of mimesis.<sup>49</sup> Butler, in turn, claims that the subject is “produced in and as a gendered matrix of relations.” This does not imply doing away with the subject, but rather “to ask after the conditions of its emergence and operation.”<sup>50</sup> She points at the exclusionary means through which the construction takes place: the set of foreclosures, erasures that are refused the possibility of cultural articulation. The “inhuman,” the “humanly unthinkable” is produced at the same time as the subject, and forms its constitutive outside. Agency, for Butler, is not in the hands of a voluntarist subject who exists apart from the norms that it opposes, because the subject that resists the norms is itself “enabled, if not produced” by them. Agency, rather, is “a reiterative or rearticulatory practice, immanent to power, and not a relation of external opposition to power.”<sup>51</sup> Both Irigaray and Butler understand discourse as allowing the cultural articulation of some subjects, while excluding others. The excluded subjects are the ones that cannot be named “subject,” because they do not exist as subjects within the prevailing symbolic. Yet, both thinkers consider different non-subjects as non-existing: for Irigaray it is the feminine that cannot articulate itself *as* feminine within a phallogentric symbolic; for Butler the symbolic is gendered and heteronormative. It excludes all those that do not fall into the categories of heterosexual man

or woman. In later works she speaks of the exclusion of lives as inhuman.<sup>52</sup> For both Irigaray and Butler, discourse should be criticized for what it excludes, and opened up for novel ways of articulating subjectivity. Does Ricœur also consider the possibility of change and critique of discourse because of what it excludes? I will first discuss his account of the possibility of critique of discourse, and then his ideas about the role of the productive imagination.

The critique of discourse is discussed by Ricœur in reflecting upon the debate about hermeneutics and critique between Gadamer and Habermas. In "Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology" he asks whether a hermeneutic philosophy can account for the demands of a critique of ideology. His thesis is that Gadamer's hermeneutics does not recognize the critical instance, because the hermeneutical experience for Gadamer refutes *Verfremdung*, the alienating distanciation that is central for the possibility of objectivation in the human sciences – which is the issue debated by Gadamer and Habermas.<sup>53</sup> Ricœur takes a distance from Gadamer, without however contradicting him, by developing a dialectic between the experience of belonging and alienating distanciation.<sup>54</sup>

Ricœur, first of all, argues that distanciation belongs to interpretation, as its condition, instead of contradicting it, as Gadamer claims. Distanciation is implicated in the fixation that is implied in writing, in the material sense, but also because the text is autonomous from its author and the meaning that (s)he gives to the text. Furthermore it is autonomous with respect to the cultural situation and sociological conditions of the production of the text, and with respect to its original addressee. "The emancipation of the text constitutes the most fundamental condition for the recognition of a critical instance at the heart of interpretation: for distanciation now belongs to the mediation itself," claims Ricœur.<sup>55</sup> It is this idea, the possibility to distanciate oneself from the text, that is also important for Irigaray's notion of productive mimesis and Butler's performativity as variation on the norm, as we will soon see.

Ricœur, furthermore, contends that in hermeneutics the text is considered as opening up a world in itself, and that this includes the possibility of critique of the real. "[T]he power of the text to open a dimension of reality implies in principle a recourse against any given reality..."<sup>56</sup> Especially poetic discourse has this subversive power to suspend the reference to ordinary language and everyday reality, and to release a reference of a second order. He relates it to Aristotle's notion of *mimèsis*, creative imitation. Ricœur also explicitly works out the relation between subjectivity and interpretation. Understanding oneself does not imply projecting oneself into the text, but rather exposing oneself to it: "it is to receive a self enlarged by the appropriation of the proposed worlds that interpretation unfolds." For Ricœur "it is the matter of the text that gives the reader his or her dimension of subjectivity." The confrontation with texts introduces the self to imaginative variations of the ego. In reading "I unrealize myself,"<sup>57</sup> he writes – in words that are close to Butler's.<sup>58</sup>

With the dialectics between alienating distanciation and participatory belonging, Ricœur contends that the self does not coincide with the text that it refers to and uses for the articulation of who it is, but that it rather reads itself in the text, identifies with it, and finds alternative possibilities in it of who it is. In other words, the self can interpret itself differently in the light of different texts. For Ricœur discourse is the place of unending variations for the subject, it is the field of alterations and dreams. The distanciation between subject and discourse that he conceptualizes, indeed does leave openings for critique and include possibilities for change. His notion of distanciation helps to understand what is needed in order to create the necessary space for criticizing discourse, and as such can be of use for feminist theory. But at large his view of discourse is different from the one in feminist theory.

As Andreea Ritivoi claims, Ricœur's hermeneutical theory includes a notion of the text as "a place where different universes come together, and at the same time it is a space for trying on different self-identities as a way of continuously enriching the identity we have."<sup>59</sup> Ricœur indeed thinks the possibility of creating alternative identities as an enrichment of the self. He does not so much think about shifting the horizon of discourse in the way that both Irigaray and Butler deem necessary for the coming into existence of new identities. For Ricœur discourse does not so much *exclude* possibilities of becoming a self. In other words, the prevailing cultural order contains more opportunities than it does for the feminist thinkers. The latter are critical of a symbolic order that consists of representations that identify everyone in a similar way and that excludes other possibilities of becoming. The difference in the understanding of discourse of Ricœur and feminist thinkers such as Butler and Irigaray, is that the latter understand discourse to be restrictive and normative, while for Ricœur it forms a field of opportunities. Whereas the first two claim that discourse *should* be criticized for what it excludes, Ricœur understands it as enrichment, as laboratory for thought experiments. That does not imply, however, that he precludes the possibility of critique, or that he does not take into account the opportunities for change of discourse. Interpretation includes distancing, for him, and distancing implies the possibility of critique.

For both Irigaray and Butler discourse has an outside: it excludes possibilities of articulation of the self. They think that the change of discourse can only come about in a process of repetition, as the notions of mimesis and performativity exemplify. So far in this section, I have argued that Irigaray and Butler are opposed to Ricœur in that the first two consider discourse as something that should be criticized for what it excludes. In what follows, I will show another similarity between feminist postmodernism and Ricœur, *and* will make it productive for feminist theory. For Ricœur's notions of re- and productive imagination, on the one hand are close to Irigaray's reproductive and productive mimesis, and to Butler's performativity as affirmation and displacement of existing normative claims. But, on the other hand, the interrelation of the reproductive and productive imagination that Ricœur perceives will also point out the differences between Irigaray and Butler.

Irigaray describes the relationship between patriarchal discourse and the possibility of change through the notion of mimesis. She claims that Plato distinguishes two notions of mimesis: mimesis as production, and the mimesis "that is already caught up in a process of *imitation, specularization, adequation, and reproduction.*"<sup>60</sup> For Irigaray the philosophical tradition – as thinking of the Same – has privileged the second form, and repressed the first productive one. It is precisely on the basis of this first form that the articulation of the feminine and of sexual difference can come about.

Phallogentrism for Irigaray reduces otherness to the order of the Same. It deflects, diverts, and reduces the other. It forms a mirror economy that only reduplicates itself, reflects itself by itself. Woman supports this economy in her functioning as mirror for the man. She forms "the path, the method, the theory, the mirror, which leads back, by a process of repetition, to the recognition of (his) origin for the 'subject'."<sup>61</sup> Repetition of the same, or also *mimicry*,<sup>62</sup> thus forms woman's privilege. Yet, it includes the danger that woman remains unreflected herself. The masculine economy limits her possibilities of becoming: without a feminine horizon or model, she can only become man.<sup>63</sup> At the same time, while repetition of the same is what characterizes the phallogentric economy, there is no other way of opening it up than by repetition, but this time a repetition that starts from what woman holds in reserve, from her sex that is "heterogeneous to this whole economy of representation,"<sup>64</sup> precisely because it is not represented. For Irigaray,

change must come about from what so far has remained outside of representation. In a rather dualistic manner, she separates repetition of the same from productive repetition. Productive repetition demands another mirror than the flat one of phallogentrism. Instead, in order to become woman, “we need some shadowy perception of achievement; not a fixed objective, not a One postulated to be immutable.”<sup>65</sup> Woman needs her own ideal, her own horizon.

In Irigaray’s work, the “bad” normativity of the phallogentric symbolic order is sharply contrasted with the “good” normativity of a culture of sexual difference in which the feminine is capable of articulating itself. In contrast to Butler, she remains closer to the Marxist distinction between critique and utopia. Whereas Irigaray understands the feminine as not represented in discourse, and aims at finding ways to articulate what so far has not been articulated in its own terms, Butler contends that discourse forms “the cultural matrix,” that defines what is intelligible and not. She understands the relation between in- and exclusion as constituting each other.

Butler’s notion of performativity indicates the reiteration of a norm or set of norms that is cited by a subject, that on its turn only becomes a subject in the process of repetition of these norms. In this process of repetition also the hegemony of the norms is produced. Norms are not stable, Butler rather thinks in terms of a mutual constitution of norms and subject. The norms are installed precisely because of being cited: “the norm of sex takes hold to the extent that it is ‘cited’ as such a norm, but it also derives its power through the citations that it compels.”<sup>66</sup> The process by which the subject becomes a socially recognizable subject implies that it cites norms, and at the same time contributes to the dominance of those norms. Escape from the normativity of these claims in itself is not possible – because becoming a socially existing subject entails citing normative claims -, but variations are possible because of the openings that the process of repetition leaves. The performative process, according to Butler, in which subjects come into existence, has a rest or remainder that is produced at the same time as the subject. Inclusion creates its own outside. She names this outside with different names, such as “the abject” or “the inhuman.”<sup>67</sup> In- and outside for her are constituted at the same time and co-constitute each other. Instead of opposing bad normativity to a utopian future, Butler holds that every discourse contains hegemonic possibilities of articulation while excluding others. It is on the basis of repetitious citing that leaves openings for other citations and on the basis that there remains something unarticulated in the process of articulation, that change of normative claims is possible.

So far, I have shown the similarities between Irigaray and Butler, in opposing them to Ricœur. In contrast to Ricœur they consider discourse as something that should be criticized for what it excludes. Ricœur does not deny the possibility of change, but he also does not seem to consider critique of discourse vital for the creation of novel possibilities for identification. That said, I also consider Ricœur’s thinking to have relevance for feminist theory. In particular, his notion of productive imagination as differentiated from reproductive imagination clarifies the possibility of the articulation of new possibilities for identification. In turning to Ricœur’s understanding of imagination, I will lay out the differences between Butler’s and Irigaray’s account of the relation between repetition of the old and the possibility of new identities.

As George Taylor specifies, Ricœur in his unpublished “Lectures on Imagination,”<sup>68</sup> distinguishes between reproductive and productive imagination. Reproductive imagination for him is central in the history of Western Thought. For this notion, Ricœur among other philosophers refers to Plato, for whom the image preferably is a perfect copy of the true concept in the Ideas. This notion is close to Irigaray’s reproductive mimesis, repetition of the same, that

she also derives from Plato. For the image, reproductive imagination implies that it is a derivative from the original. It includes having an image of reality.<sup>69</sup> In productive imagination, by contrast, what is imagined is not duplicative, nor determined by an original. Instead it leads to new possibilities. This notion is close to Irigaray's mimesis as production, and further explains what Irigaray intends.

Ricœur refers to social utopia to explain productive imagination. Social utopias point to a new kind of reality, they expand our sense of reality. Feminist thinking also includes utopianism, in the form of hope of another future. As Seyla Benhabib writes, utopianism characterizes feminist thinking: "without a regulative principle of hope, not only morality but also radical transformation is unthinkable."<sup>70</sup> Yet, she also claims that postmodern feminism has produced a "retreat from utopia." Benhabib clarifies the difference between modernist utopias, and the ones that feminism need. Utopism for her does not imply the modernist idea of restructuring of our social and political universe according to a rationally worked out plan. But feminism should include a longing for "the wholly other," for that which is not yet. Irigaray's works do display such a non-modernist notion of utopia.<sup>71</sup> While Irigaray resists being called a utopian, she does aim at what is not yet: "I am, therefore, a political militant for the impossible, which is not to say an utopian. Rather, I want what is yet to be as the only possibility of a future."<sup>72</sup> For her, critique cannot be thought without the horizon of the new. We need a horizon, a perspective in order to be able to criticize. Critique without an affirmative place for Irigaray is nihilism without a future. In the case of Butler, the terms "utopianism" and aiming at what is "not yet" both are too strong. Critique for her is central, she aims at showing that the subject is "the permanent possibility of a certain resignifying process," and that this process as well as producing the subject, also at the same time produces exclusion.<sup>73</sup> But rather than claiming that Butler's postmodernism implies a "retreat from utopia," as Benhabib writes, I contend that it includes holding the possibilities for articulation as arising from the exclusion produced by discourse itself.

Irigaray separates reproduction of the same from productive mimesis. She distinguishes the first as patriarchal and masculine, from the second as way to change; Butler, in contrast, diagnoses discourse as including as well as excluding at the same time. Precisely for what it excludes, it should be put under critique. Ricœur's relating of re- and productive imagination is helpful to explain the differences between Irigaray and Butler. Productive imagination is not entirely distinct from, but continuous with, reproductive imagination for him. As Taylor specifies: "any transformative fiction – any utopia, any scientific model, any poem – must have elements of reproductive imagination, must draw from existing reality sufficiently so that its productive distance is not too great."<sup>74</sup> If we relate that to Irigaray's distinction between phallogentrism or patriarchy and the culture of sexual difference, it can be asked whether they can be separated as clearly as she claims. Is her utopian culture of sexual difference entirely free of exclusion and power differences?

Butler's poststructuralist attempt to find the possibility of change and agency within discourse seems a more viable alternative. For her, the issue is "to call into question and, perhaps most importantly, to open up a term [...] to a reusage or redeployment that previously has not been authorized."<sup>75</sup> Rather than aiming at a radical inversion of the symbolic,<sup>76</sup> for Butler it is within the present symbolic that we should aim at rearticulation and redefinition. She aims at resignification of terms, such as "woman," "subject," "human." Agency, for her, implies releasing terms of their fixed referents, opening them up and making them the site of resignification. It implies releasing terms into a future of multiple significations.<sup>77</sup> In contrast to

Irigaray's mimesis as repetition and production, her notions of performativity and abjection do not separate critique and utopia, but find openings for renewal within discourse. Therewith Butler avoids the danger of utopias that Ricœur identifies, namely, that they tend to refuse and escape reality. As he writes in his "Lectures on Critique and Utopia," utopia displays alternative horizons, but yet includes disquieting traits and a tendency of escapism, namely, submitting reality to dreams and implying a logic of all or nothing.<sup>78</sup>

In this section, my aim was to reflect upon the critique of the subject that Ricœur and the feminists share. Whereas the feminist philosophers aim at critique of discourse, Ricœur considers discourse a field of opportunities for the articulation of new identities. But in analyzing Ricœur's ideas about the relation between critique and hermeneutics, it became apparent that for him the self's distancing of discourse implies the possibility of critique. Distancing leaves openings for critique and includes possibilities for change. It is precisely because self and discourse do not completely coincide or overlap that the self can be critical. We have seen that Irigaray presumes a similar non-coincidence between the feminine self and discourse, which for her explains the possibility of critique. But Butler starts precisely from the Foucauldian paradox that the subject that is produced by discourse, also is the critical subject. Criticizing the normative claims in discourse for this subject implies putting itself in danger, because it is constituted by these claims.

In trying to find out how change can come about for Ricœur and the feminist philosophers, the differences between Irigaray and Butler came into a brighter light. Ricœur's relation between re- and productive imagination proved to be helpful to differentiate between Irigaray's radical distinction between phallogentrism and the utopian future of sexual difference and Butler's shifting of the horizon of articulation on the basis of what discourse in- and excludes. At this point, we joined Ricœur's interrelation between re- and productive imagination and Butler, in order to show that articulation and what is excluded from articulation should be thought of not as different realms of reality, but as taking place at the same time.

## Conclusion

The title of this paper – "The Subject of Critique" – refers to the notion of the self that is shared by Ricœur and postmodern feminist theory, as well as to the theme of critique. Ricœur's works are not often considered in feminist theory, but in the light of the similarities between their notions of the self – namely the views that the self articulates itself in language, is embodied and is not fully conscious of itself – that is peculiar. Also the possibility of critique and the need for change of discourse, that on first thoughts seemed the main point of divergence between both streams of thought, in a closer look, do not separate them.

For feminists, the existing discourse should be put under critique for what it excludes. They aim at change of the prevailing symbolic order. Their "self," consequently, is a critical one that does not repeat "the same," but that opens new possibilities of articulation. Although critique is perhaps not central for Ricœur, his notion of hermeneutics includes its possibility: his notion of the text intrinsically incorporates distancing and critique of the real. His "self" is capable of distancing itself from the texts that it articulates itself in, and finds new opportunities for understanding itself in them.

Apart from these similarities, Ricœur's conceptualizations are fertile for postmodern feminist thinking. His dialectics between alienating distancing and participatory belonging answers Butler's claim that the subject that is produced by discourse also puts it under critique,

thereby questioning its own conditions for existence. For Ricœur it is not a problem, precisely because the self does not coincide with the text that it refers to and uses for the articulation of who it is. Also, Irigaray's notion of mimesis as production can profit from Ricœur's conception of "productive imagination." Instead of strictly separating reproductive from productive mimesis, and identifying them as patriarchal repetition of the same versus creation of the utopian culture of sexual difference, Irigaray could also consider both as related. Then, in Ricœur's words, Irigaray would no longer think in terms of a logic of all or nothing, and exclude power differences from her culture of sexual difference. So, except from being close to feminist ideas about the self, I hope to have shown that Ricœur's phenomenological hermeneutics is also fertile for feminist theory, in particular when it comes to creating new opportunities for identification of selves.

- <sup>1</sup> Diana Meyers, "Feminist Perspectives on the Self," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-self/>, 2010
- <sup>2</sup> Exceptions are Morny Joy, *Paul Ricœur and Narrative: Context and Contestation* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1997); Nel van den Haak, *Metafoor en filosofie, Studie naar de metaforische werking in de filosofie aan de hand van Julia Kristeva en Paul Ricœur* (Best: Damon, 2001); Pamela Sue Anderson, "Ricœur and Women's Studies: On the Affirmation of Life and a Confidence in the Power to Act," in *Ricœur Across the Disciplines*, ed. Scott Davidson, (New York and London: Continuum, 2009), 142-164; Louise Derksen and Annemie Halsema, "Understanding the Body: The Relevance of Gadamer's and Ricœur's View of the Body for Feminist Theory," in *Gadamer and Ricœur: Critical Horizons for Contemporary Hermeneutics*, eds. Francis J. Mootz III and George H. Taylor (London and New York: Continuum, 2011), 203-225.
- <sup>3</sup> Lorraine Code, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).
- <sup>4</sup> See Derksen and Halsema, "Understanding the Body."
- <sup>5</sup> Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 165.
- <sup>6</sup> Paul Ricœur, "On Interpretation," in *Philosophy in France Today*, ed. Alan Montefiore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 175-197.
- <sup>7</sup> Note that the French "reflexive" can be translated into English as "reflexive" and "reflective." The translator of the text, Kathleen McLaughlin, writes to have chosen for "reflexive" on the advice of Ricœur because it articulates the subject-oriented character of this philosophy: "it is reflexive in the subject's act of turning back upon itself" (Translator's note, Ricœur, "On Interpretation," 188).
- <sup>8</sup> Ricœur, "On Interpretation," 188.
- <sup>9</sup> Ricœur, "On Interpretation," 191.
- <sup>10</sup> Paul Ricœur, "Narrative Identity," in *On Paul Ricœur. Narrative and Interpretation*, ed. David Wood (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 198.
- <sup>11</sup> Paul Ricœur, "Becoming Capable, Being Recognized," Lecture Library of Congress, Washington USA, 2005. See: <http://www.filosofiayliteratura.org/lengua/segundo/06-07/volversecapazingles.pdf>
- <sup>12</sup> Ricœur, "Becoming Capable, Being Recognized."
- <sup>13</sup> Paul Ricœur, "Life in Quest of Narrative," in *On Paul Ricœur: Narrative and Interpretation*, ed. David Wood (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 32.
- <sup>14</sup> In feminist theory, "the symbolic" refers to the Lacanian notion of a language-mediated order of culture, that is distinguished from "the imaginary" and "the real."
- <sup>15</sup> Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 199.
- <sup>16</sup> Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 11.
- <sup>17</sup> Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 12.



- <sup>18</sup> Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, 37.
- <sup>19</sup> Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, 38-39.
- <sup>20</sup> Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (New York : Cornell University Press, 1985), 148-149.
- <sup>21</sup> Tina Chanter, *Ethics of Eros: Irigaray's Rewriting of the Philosophers* (New York & London: Routledge, 1995), 46.
- <sup>22</sup> Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 165.
- <sup>23</sup> Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 9.
- <sup>24</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, trans. E.V. Kohak (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 16
- <sup>25</sup> Derksen and Halsema, "Understanding the Body" , 209-217.
- <sup>26</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1992), 128. Ricœur mainly mentions works from the seventies by Amelie Rorty, John Perry, Sidney Shoemaker and Bernard Williams (see note 19 on the same page).
- <sup>27</sup> Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 129.
- <sup>28</sup> Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 128.
- <sup>29</sup> Ricœur translates the German *Leib* and *Körper* into French as respectively *chair* and *corps*. In the English translation, Blamey speaks of "flesh" and "body." Even though the German *Leib* is commonly translated into English as "lived body" I will hold on to the terminology used in the English translation.
- <sup>30</sup> See Derksen and Halsema, "Understanding the Body," 212 and 217.
- <sup>31</sup> When expressed in language, sexuality remains, as Ricœur writes: "an infra-, para, or superlinguistic expression. It mobilizes language, true, but crosses it, jostles it, sublimates it, stupefies it, pulverizes it into a murmur, an invocation." Paul Ricœur, "Wonder, Eroticism, and Enigma," in *Sexuality and the Sacred: Sources for Theological Reflection*, eds. J. B. Nelson and S. P. Longfellow (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1994), 80-84. Originally published in *Cross Currents* 14, no. 2 (1964).
- <sup>32</sup> See for instance Sara Heinämaa, *Toward a Phenomenology of Sexual Difference: Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Beauvoir* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); Silvia Stoller, *Existenz – Differenz – Konstruktion. Phänomenologie der Geschlechtlichkeit bei Beauvoir, Irigaray und Butler* (Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2010). See also for this argument, ch. 4. "Ricœur and Irigaray on Embodied Identity: My Body as Another," in Annemie Halsema, *Luce Irigaray and Horizontal Transcendence* (Amsterdam: SWP/Humanistiek 2010).
- <sup>33</sup> Ricœur, *Oneself as Another* , 322-328.

- <sup>34</sup> See in particular Luce Irigaray, "Body Against Body: In Relation to the Mother," in Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 7-21.
- <sup>35</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970); several essays in the section 'Hermeneutics and Psychoanalysis' (trans. Willis Domingo) in Paul Ricœur, *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, ed. Don Ihde (London and New York: Continuum, 2000).
- <sup>36</sup> See for instance Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 122-127; Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 83-105.
- <sup>37</sup> Ricœur, *The Conflict of Interpretations*, 233.
- <sup>38</sup> Ricœur, *The Conflict of Interpretations*, 104.
- <sup>39</sup> Ricœur, *The Conflict of Interpretations*, 110.
- <sup>40</sup> Ricœur, *The Conflict of Interpretations*, 117.
- <sup>41</sup> Ricœur, *The Conflict of Interpretations*, 99.
- <sup>42</sup> Ricœur, *The Conflict of Interpretations*, 238.
- <sup>43</sup> Ricœur, "On Interpretation," 191.
- <sup>44</sup> Ricœur, "On Interpretation," 192.
- <sup>45</sup> Luce Irigaray, *I Love To You: Sketch of a Possible Felicity in History*, trans. Alison Martin (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), 27.
- <sup>46</sup> Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 28.
- <sup>47</sup> Butler, *Bodies That Matter*.
- <sup>48</sup> See also "Reflexionen über Identität in einer multikulturellen Gesellschaft - Ein Dialog zwischen Ricœur, Irigaray und Butler" in *Feministische Phänomenologie und Hermeneutik*, eds. Sylvia Stoller, Veronica Vasterling and Linda Fischer (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005), 208-234, in which I relate Ricœur's ideas about sedimentation and innovation to Irigaray's mimesis and Butler's performativity, in the context of identity in a multicultural society.
- <sup>49</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 150-151.
- <sup>50</sup> Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 7.
- <sup>51</sup> Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 15.
- <sup>52</sup> In works such as *Precarious Life. The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London and New York: Verso, 2004) and *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London and New York: Verso, 2010) Butler is not so much concerned with questions around gender and sexuality, but, in the context of global violence, asks "Who counts as human? Whose lives count as lives? [...] What makes a life grievable?" (Butler, *Precarious Life*, 20).

- <sup>53</sup> See Paul Ricœur, "Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology," in *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics II*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson (London and New York: Continuum, 2008), 263-299. See for the notion of "distanciation" also his "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation" in the same volume, 72-85.
- <sup>54</sup> Ricœur, *From Text to Action*, 290.
- <sup>55</sup> Ricœur, *From Text to Action*, 291.
- <sup>56</sup> Ricœur, *From Text to Action*, 291.
- <sup>57</sup> The above quotes are all from Ricœur, *From Text to Action*, 292-293.
- <sup>58</sup> Judith Butler writes: "We're undone by each other" in *Prekarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London and New York: Verso, 2004), 23. The idea that in discourse we unrealize or undo each other is similar; but the differences between Butler and Ricœur are also considerable, as is worked out in this section.
- <sup>59</sup> Andreea Deciu Ritivoi, "Hermeneutics as Project of Liberation: The Concept of Tradition in Paul Ricœur and Hans-Georg Gadamer," in *Gadamer and Ricœur: Critical Horizons for Contemporary Hermeneutics*, eds. Francis J. Mootz III and George H. Taylor (London and New York: Continuum, 2011), 82.
- <sup>60</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 131.
- <sup>61</sup> Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the other woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 239.
- <sup>62</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 151.
- <sup>63</sup> See Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 64.
- <sup>64</sup> Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 152.
- <sup>65</sup> Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, 67.
- <sup>66</sup> Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 13.
- <sup>67</sup> See for instance Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 16. In Butler, *Prekarious Life*, 24 she claims that we are not only constituted by our relations, but also dispossessed by them.
- <sup>68</sup> The "Lectures on Imagination" are delivered by Ricœur at the University of Chicago in 1975 and are taped, but not published yet. George Taylor reports on the notions of reproductive and productive imagination in these lectures. See "Ricœur's Philosophy of Imagination," *Journal of French Philosophy* 16, no. 1-2 (2006): 93-103.
- <sup>69</sup> Taylor, "Ricœur's Philosophy of Imagination," 95.
- <sup>70</sup> Seyla Benhabib in *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange*, eds. Seyla Benhabib, Judith Butler, Drucilla Cornell and Nancy Fraser (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 30.

- <sup>71</sup> In Benhabib's definition, Irigaray is not a postmodernist. See for a discussion of utopia in Irigaray's works: Margaret Whitford, "Irigaray, Utopia, and the Death Drive," in *Engaging With Irigaray*, eds. Carolyn Burke, Naomi Schor, Margaret Whitford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 379-400.
- <sup>72</sup> Irigaray, *I Love to You*, 10.
- <sup>73</sup> Butler, *Feminist Contentions*, 47.
- <sup>74</sup> Taylor, "Ricoeur's Philosophy of Imagination," 98.
- <sup>75</sup> Butler, *Feminist Contentions*, 49.
- <sup>76</sup> Irigaray uses the term "inversion" (in French: renversement) in *I Love to You*, 63 to clarify her method.
- <sup>77</sup> Butler, *Feminist Contentions*, 50.
- <sup>78</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, ed. George Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 310.