

This lecture outlines the key concepts and founding principles of nomadic thought as a theoretical practice in the context of economic and cultural globalization. At the start of the third millennium, in an age of global and differentiated mobility, a diffuse sort of nomadism defines the location of many subjects. Mobility however does not resolve power differences and other forms of structural inequality and in some ways it even intensifies them. How to draw ethical and political cartographies of different modes of mobility is a key issue. Following post-structuralist, post-colonial, and feminist debates on the issue of the 'non-unitary' subject, issues of fragmentation, complexity, and multiplicity have become household names in critical theory. The ubiquitous nature of these notions, however does not make for consensus about the issues at stake, namely: what exactly are the political and ethical conditions that structure nomadic subjectivity and its multiple forms of mobility?

And what are their implications for critical theory, especially in view of the contradictions, the power relations, and the paradoxes of our historical condition? Braidotti argues that nomadic subject should never be taken as a new metaphor for the human condition, but rather as a cartographic tool that helps us compose materialistic mappings of situated, i.e. embedded and embodied, social positions in an age of global hybridity. A cartography is a theoretically-based and politically-informed reading of the present which fulfils the function of providing both analytic and exegetical tools for critical thought and also creative theoretical alternatives. This political passion sustains the process of nomadic writing as ethically accountable and empowering.

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The English verb 'to err' has largely lost its positive connotations. It no longer invokes wandering, rambling, or roaming, and is now understood negatively in relation to a prescribed path or goal. To be sure, errors are acknowledged to play an important role in the pursuit of knowledge and happiness, but usually only to the extent that their recognition allows for their elimination, correction, and avoidance. Recognizing that a critique of ideals of productivity, success, goal-orientation, and determination is necessarily paradoxical, the **ICI Lecture Series ERRANS** will take the shifting meanings of 'erring' – connoting the violation of norms as well as the activity of wandering – as a prompt to explore the critical potentials and risks of embracing error, randomness, failure, and non-teleological temporalities, and to do so across different disciplines and discourses.

Rosi Braidotti

Thinking as a
Nomadic Subject

