

Movement, Embrace: Adriana Cavarero with Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger (and the Death Drive)

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Abstract

An experience of helplessness during the production of a collective autobiographical narrative offers an opportunity to explore points of convergence between Cavarero's postural philosophy and Ettinger's matrixial borderlinking. The narrative is treated as a live scene which enfold the movement of the drive conceptualized in such a way as to avoid the prioritization of death over life. Five successive moves, inspired by Ettinger's *rotation of the phallic prism*, illuminate affinities between the two thinkers. The first rotation explores the matrixial and relational qualities which com-pose the scene. The second rotation approaches death from a notional beginning, prioritising the presence of the mother and her dissymmetrical relationship to the infant. The third rotation emphasizes the transformational character of Ettinger's matrixial movement and border-crossing, especially when examined in conjunction with Cavarero's maternal inclination. In the fourth rotation we show how inclination (*clinamen*) in Lacanian psychoanalysis is linked to the disappearance of the mother from the scene. The (re)introduction of the mother disrupts the Lacanian logic with the possibility of a beginning just as immanent as desire and lack. Movement, qua embrace and unity-disunity (fifth rotation), becomes an indispensable component of feminist ontology which captures the immanence of sharing in the matrixial-maternal plane.

Key words: Cavarero, Ettinger, death drive, movement clinamen

Adriana Cavarero's *Relating Narratives* (2000) offers a solid starting point for appreciating the importance of witnessing the other's story and, in turn, having one's story witnessed. Cavarero argues that autobiographical memory "always recounts a story that is incomplete from the beginning" (2000, 39), since memory is often factually untrustworthy (2000, 40). A refabulation by the other, then, may lend unity to one's story. The desire for unity is an indirect plea to the other for recognition (2000, 42). To have one's story told is to be recognized. In fact, we are so invested in the process of narrating our lives that it becomes an unconscious activity (King 2008, 339). Yet, the desire to tell and receive the other's story is fraught, as desire is often expressed in conjunction with verbal demands and phantasmatic investments, when, for example, in exchanging life stories, one exclaims: "I know exactly what you mean!", only to find that this recognition was but a subjective projection onto the other's narration. All the same, sharing stories opens up a unique space. Bracha Ettinger conceptualizes such a space as one of witnessing and co-experiencing which accommodates not only desire(s) but various other psychic elements such as "jouissance, traumas, pictograms, phantasies, affects [...] and channels death-drive oscillations, libidinal-erotic flows, [and] imprints and affected traces, conjointly but differently" (2000, 195).

Ettinger's work arises out a consistent feminist critique of Lacanian psychoanalytic orthodoxy and dispenses with the concept of the phallus, creating room for thinking feminine subjectivity in terms of co-production (co-poiesis) and sharing. Ettinger questions the phallic economy as the only outcome of the infant's separation from the mother, as well as the Lacanian pronouncement that woman is 'not-all' and cannot be captured by the symbolic signifier. Even if we agree with Lacan, she notes, there is no reason to exclude the capacity to link with the Other from the

symbolic domain or from a theorisation of feminine subjectivity. The first Other in Ettinger's formulation is the mother. But even the most primordial experience of-with the mother is characterised by *togetherness in difference*. Even in the womb there is togetherness in separation.

Drawing on togetherness in difference, Ettinger proposes the concept of the Matrix as a symbol supplementary to the phallus (Pollock, 2004, 11). The Matrix is defined as

a sphere of a not-one-ness (more-than-one but not everything and/or less-than-one but not nothing), which includes a recognised unknown. [It] is composed of the known and the unknown; it is a meeting place for the co-emerging I and the not-I(s) which neither assimilated nor rejected (Ettinger, 2000, 197).

The act of connecting with the other is called matrixial borderlinking, an ability as universal as separation and castration (Pollock 2004, 11). Matrixial borderlinking takes place at the margins of language and Ettinger clearly envisages it as "a space beyond the cogito" (Neill 2008).

Matrixial borderlinking enables a process of *metramorphosis* <I>, a transformation taking place at borderlines and thresholds, between being and absence, memory and oblivion, I and not-I. (1992, 201). Significantly, consciousness is not excluded from this process. But metamorphic consciousness has no centre and does not attempt to hold a fixed gaze. It resides in or slides in and out of the realm of borderlines, margins and thresholds, transgressing the old and creating new ones (Ettinger, 1992, 201). It forms part of, or better *is*, co-poietic activity (Ettinger 2006, 144).

Dispensing with the phallus nods affirmatively in the direction of feminist theorists who do not subscribe to the psychoanalytic model. In the present case it provides common ground for a creative encounter between Cavarero and Ettinger as a way of opening Cavarero's narrative concept of *relating* to the multiplicity of psychic elements potentially activated in matrixial borderlinking. Yet, the phallus is not the only 'sticking' point. In *Inclinations* (2016) Cavarero critiques Western philosophy for making death and the end of life the starting point from which thought and action are being examined, proposing the concept of natality as a life-affirmative alternative. Natality draws on Arendt's concept of the beginning as 'completely human' (Martin, 2002, 33) and is transformed by Cavarero to provide a pivotal term for feminist analysis in an articulation that is 'unashamedly feminine' (Martin, 2002, 35). It is an attempt to reposition death in relation to the implications of birth and beginning. However,

Natality does not try to tame the prospect of death's negativity by balancing it against something sweet and positive in birth [...]. Rather, through its focus on birth, natality enables us to consider why death has been the issue, whether that is an issue that must be heroically overcome or endured, or inauthentically denied' (Martin, 2002, 34).

Using Leonardo da Vinci's *The Virgin and Child with St Anne* as her visual referent, Cavarero also puts forward the *inclining posture* of the mother over the infant and the departure of her body from the vertical axis as an emblematic visual alternative to the phallic 'uprightness' (*orthotes*, connoting correctness) that inhabits masculine thought. Death does not have a place in Cavarero's thought and that inevitably extends to the concept of the death drive in Freudian

psychoanalysis. This incompatibility gives rise to an interesting question which can be articulated as follows.

In *Relating Narratives* (2000) Cavarero argues that what we usually call the meaning of one's life can only be determined in retrospect. To illustrate the point Cavarero refers to Karen Blixen's story of the man who went out in his yard at night to investigate a noise. The man stumbles around in the dark, but the next morning sees that his footprints have traced the figure of a stork on the ground. For narrative scholars who draw on Cavarero "the shape of a life can only be a matter of interpretation, constructed in the very act of narrating or representing", and the discovery of a final shape of one's life is only possible from a position of hindsight (King 2008, 341). However, the desire for unity and meaning can inadvertently give rise to the opposite, an experience of utter disunity, confusion and aporia. What happens in such cases? How can we theorise instances in which both me and my interlocutor, my friend, my other, find ourselves in such a predicament, when disunity and an intimation of death seem to get the better of us?

For Ettinger sharing unpleasurable or painful experiences is directly linked to the fundamental human disposition of sharing traumas. Sharing traumas, she writes, includes, among other things, "overlapping circles of biographical fragments and chimes with the 'ordinary' transmission of cultural memories" (2004, 11). Moreover, and precisely because the resurfacing of a trauma entails a failure of meaning which often surprises and catches one unaware, sharing is directly linked to the *raison d'être* of matrixial co-poiesis, during which the other will do for me what I cannot do for myself:

Since I cannot fully handle events that profoundly concern me, they fade-in-transformation while my non-I becomes wit(h)ness to them... In the matrixial psychic sphere, my imprints will be transcribed in the other, and to begin with in the m/Other [...] Thus my others will process traumatic events for me, like my m/Other processed archaic events for my premature and fragile subjectivity (141).

As in the case of Cavarero, we ask: how does my other process traumatic events for me whilst lending herself, her own story and her very presence, to events that neither of us can fully handle?

The departure from phallic uprightness and the introduction of the non-phallic matrixial realm constitute plausible grounds for a convergence between Ettinger and Cavarero. More important, their respective theoretical formulations inhere a sense of movement (leaning, crossing thresholds, traversing) which adds vital dynamism to the spatial and already highly visual reconceptualization of the feminine. It is this dynamism, this very **movement** that we seek to further develop here, imagining the scene of the autobiographical encounter we will introduce in the next section as not just a site of narrative possibilities but as a **live scene** which reverberates with the physical proximity of bodies sitting close to one other, touching, interacting and co-producing *being* over time. Could such a scene enfold, contain and 'hold' the death drive in such a way as to enrich the theorization of feminine subjectivities whilst avoiding the pitfalls of certain psychoanalytic approaches and the prioritization of death over life?

Ettinger lists death drive oscillations among the components of the matrixial borderlinking (2000, 195) but does not dwell on the role of the drive in her theory. The uses of the death drive in Freudian and Lacanian theory are diverse, and a full account of these uses are beyond the remit of the present paper. Suffice it to say that feminist scholars have deployed the bifurcation of Eros and Thanatos and the subversive potential of the concepts of sadism and masochism to broaden the theorization of sexuality (Williams 1995, De Lauretis 2008). Others have tamed the death drive by focusing on the partial drive and its satisfaction via ordinary objects in everyday life (Copjec 2002).

Movement is vital to the drive <2>. Here we draw on the death drive in two ways. First, as a circular, curving motion, a force that “bends space” harking back to a mode of satisfaction which does not attain its object by going straight for it but by encircling it, “go round in circles.” (Kingsbury, 2010, 529). This operation can be exemplified by any ‘pointless’ activity, like taking a stroll to the shops and coming back empty handed but content for having taken a walk <3>. Seen as a curving motion, the drive bears little resemblance to the vertical lines of classic (upright phallic) geometry Cavarero critiques in *Inclinations*.

The second way in which we employ the drive draws on Jean Laplanche’s *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis* (1985). Laplanche offers a philosophical discussion of the drive, focusing on the derivation of the sexual drive from life sustaining operations, and of the death drive from the life drive as an exacerbation of the latter. Uncoupled from any reference to human subjects and honed to abstraction, the sexual drive (Eros) is said to arise through propping (*étayage*) onto life sustaining operations (1985, 15-16). The concept of propping pervades Laplanche’s monograph.

In the final chapter of the book, the cross-section of the death drive and Eros is visually represented as the resting point of a U-shaped graph: death leaning on life; life leaning on death (1985, 124). Proximity and propping, Laplanche notes, evade the rigidity of the theoretical binarism which later beset Freudian orthodoxy (1985, 122). In that sense, the death drive is understood as being emplaced *in motion*, in a scene of live forces, in which Eros is defined as *unity* and the death drive inheres as conflict (or, we might say, disunity), taking the form of aggressiveness when directed not against another individual but against the subject itself (Laplanche, 1985, 87).

It is such an experience of ‘deadly’ disunity, utter helplessness, vulnerability and self-aggressive conflict that we wish to capture in this paper, together with the spatial and verbal response to it by the other, linking both to matrixial sharing and maternal inclination. The narrative excerpt we discuss in the following section draws on a recorded session of a project on the dialogic co-construction of meaning. It is an artwork of sorts, a co-created representation of a lived experience based on transcripts and enriched with comments and thoughts, subsequently turned into an anonymized collective text despite the use of ‘I’. To paraphrase Cavarero, it is a tale (sjuzet) which is faithful to its story (fabula) (King 2008, 340). In the discussion that follows this tale is treated as a live scene, a tableau vivant composed of narrative and visual elements with duration and movement, a *moving*, unfolding scene the meaning of which resides in words as well as in gestures. On the theoretical level, it is a *moving scene* in the sense that our theoretical argument is borne out of successive displacements, each one taking theoretical reasoning to a slightly different direction.

In *Inclinations* (2016), Cavarero invites the reader to change our register or reposition our gaze, trying to imagine ontology as a geometry of variable postures inside of which inclination may assume a *modular* role (2016, 128). In a similar manner, Ettinger speaks of the challenges in her own effort to move beyond Lacanian psychoanalytic orthodoxy by rotating the phallic prim “so as to open and articulate a distance in the Real that can be articulated in the Symbolic as knowledge, a breach in which we can glimpse the matrixial sphere beyond the phallus” (2006, 139). One could extend this metaphor to say that the rotation of a prism always produces diffractions, iridescent lines of seeing differently, allowing something *other* than a masterful narrative to emerge: helplessness, vulnerability and the welcoming the traumas that inhere in trans-subjective communication, alongside the desire for unity.

By reading Cavarero together with Ettinger we do not aim to produce contrived comparisons. The five successive rotations we develop below illuminate parallels and affinities between the two thinkers but also show how the former’s thought might reinforce the latter’s contribution to feminist philosophy via carefully revisiting and further critiquing the psychoanalytic-philosophical premises from which she departs. Cavarero argues that postural philosophy does not deny the vertical model but exposes its limits (2016, 127). Once such limits have been exposed, we might add, we may meaningfully contemplate the reintegration of key concepts, like the death drive and its movement, into a maternally-matrixially oriented feminist philosophy.

The first rotation focuses on the feeling of utter helplessness arising with the thought of ‘my death’ occurring unexpectedly during a friendly conversation and inviting an immediate response from my interlocutor. Drawing on the affective intensity of the event and the initial response by

the other, we introduce the matrixial (for Ettinger) and relational (for Cavarero) elements which com-pose this exchange, as well as a clear distinction between the verbal demand for a response addressed to the other and the appeal for a matrixial inclination that goes well beyond the limits of language.

The second rotation approaches the experience of death by reverting to a notional beginning, prioritising birth and focusing on the presence of the mother and her dissymmetrical relationship to the infant. By rethinking the importance of the maternal presence, Cavarero and Ettinger honor and exceed the theoretical postulates that underpin their work. The presence of and dissymmetry between the mother and the child challenge and critique Freud, Lacan and Arendt for regularly imagining the human subject not relationally and with reference to another subject, but in total isolation. The resulting shift in perspective further allows us to reconsider the movement of the drive as an element compatible with the feminist argument.

The third rotation emphasizes the transformational and indeed inaugural nature of Ettinger's theoretical formulation as a process of movement, border-crossing and traversal, especially when examined in conjunction with Cavarero's concept of natality. We start the fourth rotation by seeking the place of inclination (*clinamen*) in Lacanian psychoanalysis, only to find that its rare use and eventual excision for the theoretical framework are linked to the disappearance of the mother from the scene. The (re)introduction of the mother disturbs and disrupts the Lacanian psychoanalytic logic with a gesture of curvature and the possibility of a beginning just as immanent as desire and lack. In that sense, we argue in the fifth rotation, movement, unity and disunity, is the live extension of inclination and co-poetic spatiality, an indispensable component

of feminist ontology which best captures the im-materiality of sharing in the martixial-maternal scene.

Sharing Stories: In the Hands of my Friends

The following incident is a collective autobiographical fiction. It belongs to all the participants and to no one in particular. It is based on an event we all found exceptionally powerful in one of the sessions whilst exploring the discursive co-construction of meaning (see Gonick and Gannon, 2014). Taking creative research methods to heart, we co-constructed this account from the raw materials of a recording on the themes of change, growing up in the 80s, memories of young sexuality and responsibility, relationship with our mothers, arriving in the UK and experiencing (non) Britishness. Picture the spatial setting of the recording: a small group of female academics in their forties and fifties, sitting in a circle in a university office. Narrative researchers draw attention to the rise of emotion during sharing narratives, adding that stories are most instructive when they are most personal or when the owners of the stories are most vulnerable (Watson 2008). The strength of such an approach lies ‘in the opening up of possibilities rather than in the coming up with resolutions—possibilities that may in fact be subject to stormy weather, unsmooth voyages, incompatible coordinates and flotation failure’ (ibid). Precise psychoanalytic interpretations of the piece below can be easily constructed but our aim is to abandon such a route in favor of proximities emerging with successive rotations.

I remember my amusement at realizing that others had similar experiences as me; the woes of growing up as a girl in different cultures. Good mood around the room, and laughter. All

mothers are the same when they say 'you have to do the right thing', whatever that 'right thing' might be. My friend says: "From the early age I knew I had a duty of responsibility of care. I knew what I was expected to do". For me responsibility and care could only mean one thing, staying always from boys and preserving one's 'good name'. I am sure my friend means the same thing and I pipe up: "From a very early age, I had the impression that my mother did not trust me. I used to think, "Why are you always telling me to be careful? Why are you always telling me to be mindful my behavior?" My friend disagrees: "This is not what I meant. I meant caring for others, like a younger sibling, for example".

I don't know why but I feel rebuffed, told off, chastised.

We drift into talking more about our mothers, trying to explain maternal influences in feminist terms. Are we not the living symptoms of those women who were caught, like Persephone, between worlds, between semi-obsolete notions of duty and their modern aspirations? Are we not caught in the paradoxes of their admonitions and conflicting messages: succeed, but not too much; be ambitious, but not too much? We laugh and shake our heads.

The discussion turns on loss. One of us says: "It's like losing a piece of myself every time someone I love passes away"; and another: "I am not there for them, never". This is when it hits me. I say this without thinking to: "Sometimes, in very dark moments, I think I am the dead one, for all the people we have left behind. I am the one who is missing". As soon as I utter these words I feel exhausted, overwhelmed and catatonic. My friend, who is sitting next to me, notices my distress. She leans towards me, her shoulder touching mine, her body propping mine, gently pushing against mine. Then, she puts her arm around my shoulder and says quietly:

"I know, I, too, feel guilty for missing from the lives of friends, my mum, and then, I adjust to the idea of missing. You know, I have to deal with it because if I start missing everything, then life is

going be unbearable, miserable. But there are days when I feel really melancholic and depressed, because, you know, one is a foreigner forever, and you are on your own all the time”.

After that, we remain silent for several seconds.

First Rotation: Neither Absence nor Meaning

Death excised from everyday life persists as the impossible thought of the outside <4> as my erasure from the scene. For Foucault the thought of the outside “becomes a material energy, the suffering of the flesh” (2003, 426). It takes the form of non-dialectical negation; “not mind in laborious conquest of its unity, but the endless erosion of the outside” (2003, 427). Foucault reconciles the thought of the outside with the realm of consciousness by resorting to the concepts of *attraction* and *negligence* with reference to two emblematic figures, Ulysses and Orpheus. Behind the former’s triumphant narrative lingers a regret for not having listened longer to the Sirens. Behind the latter’s lament for Eurydice shines the glory of having seen, even for a moment, the unattainable face at the very instant of its return to darkness, “a nameless, placeless hymn to light” (2003, 435).

This account compels us to consider how we might enfold our own experience of death into a non-masculine narrative characterised by the presence of the other. Narrative theorists who draw on Cavarero emphasise the folding and doubling nature of the narrative, in which story and repetition contains within itself the possibility of further repetitions (Watson 2008, 335). In that sense, the narrative is seen as inherently ambivalent, since the re-writing of the personal

experience “occurs within the context of a narrative matrix that is itself structured like a narrative” (Watson 2008, 336). This double folded-ness and repetition chime with the sharing of traumas in Ettinger’s matrixial borderlinking. Ettinger approaches trauma not so much as an event in the past but from the point of view of its effective processing in the present, emphasising co-poiesis and working with other(s) who will “process traumatic events for me, like my m/Other processed archaic events for my premature and fragile subjectivity” (2006, 141). Ettinger further comments that in the matrixial encounter “I give myself over to an encounter with the Other, no more a subject in search for an object [...] since what is opening from outside and unfolds my inside *vacates both*” (2006, 146, emphasis added). She also notes that trauma, not death, is the inherent co-efficient of subjectivity, a wounding of the matrixial web which “derives from the traumatic legacies of feminine sexual specificity inscribed in every born subject” (Pollock 2004, 52). Thus, the matrixial experience can generate dangerous encounters, and one may unexpectedly find oneself in proximity to an event, “as if you had always been potentially sliding on its margins” (Ettinger 2006, 148).

A deficit of maternal trust can be traumatic and its unexpected return may constitute a dangerous encounter. The feeling of being rebuffed and chastised in our story merits further consideration. In Ettinger sharing with the (m)Other does not concern the satisfaction of one’s demand defined in psychoanalytic terms either as being given the object of one’s desire (Lacan) or obtaining access to the good mother (Klein). In fact, what one is offered in the matrixial experience is the very opposite, a movement that vacates both, a glimpse of absence experienced in a caring-sharing context. In that sense, the Ettingerian (m)Other is neither just the Lacanian *object a* (we

shall return to this point in detail later) nor the Kleinian good/bad object but a pre-symbolic relation reactivated in the present.

In such an encounter the (m)Other is called to play a subtle role. Cavarero argues that *mother* is the name of an *inclination* towards the other (2016, 104), a unilateral response (2016, 106) and a predisposition to respond (2016, 105) to infantile vulnerability. The latter is understood as the originary paradigm of human vulnerability, arising again in any situation in which one may find oneself defenceless, in the position of the infant (2016, 104). This disposition, we argue, acquired in the pre-verbal presence of the mother and staying with us for life, entails that any appeal to the other in adult life may contain a plea to assuage a feeling of helplessness (*hilflösigkeit*) first experienced in relation to the mother. Thus, in sharing my story, I am neither Ulysses nor Orpheus, but a vulnerable child, appealing for her response and her inclination. My other is assigned a formidable task: to transform a deadly passion (the thought of my death,) arising from inside (psychic disposition) as well as outside, from the particulars of the narrative situation, which, unpredictable in its unfolding, gives rise to an anxiety I cannot anticipate or control.

It might be prudent at this point to introduce a clear distinction between the verbal demand for a response addressed to the other (along the lines of “what is the meaning of my life?”) and the appeal for her inclination, taking into consideration the fact that both Cavarero’s postural proposal and Ettinger’s spatial conceptualisation of the matrixial are not delimited to language. Consider again the feeling of being rebuffed and chastised: it causes me to miss the fact that my friend suggests a different kind of trust, beyond my chagrin at not being trusted. My friend points

at the dimension of care and responsibility (towards the *other*), taking my demand elsewhere. She does not “tell me off”. Instead of that, she takes up the thread of my aporia and splits it gently into two. While I appeal to her to satisfy my infantile demand for recognition and trust with the imaginary *sameness* of her own experience, she lets me down gently. In doing so, she tries to suture the gap of my aporia, speaking her own aporia, her own experience. Such moments of similarity-in-difference constitute occurrences of pure *aporetic* desire which invite both of us to witness each other’s inaccessible meaning. What is situated there is not just the memory of raising a daughter so as to be (sexually) prudent, but the range of the possible effects maternal care may have had on *my* entire life. This is the red (biographical) thread and the stork I cannot follow. Beyond the appeal to my friend to provide me with the details of her life, I think I seek something more visceral (and pre-verbal), something that requires a response beyond (phallic) interpretation. And it is in this context that it would make sense to clearly hold in mind the difference between the verbal demand for a response addressed to the other from the appeal for her inclination enfolded in the same gesture.

For Cavarero the design of our lives can only be seen when one looks back, with the figural unity of the design *resulting* and *not following* from a plan (2000, 1, emphasis added). This retrospective appearance, this end-beginning of meaning, carries the past in the present demanding (a) meaning. If we accept that a narrative always reads backwards (Watson 2008, 334), we must also accept that *backwards* admits a break in time and continuity. Looking back, I see myself as I once was, a vulnerable child. The act of looking back makes me both the spectator and the actor of my own scene. Thus, instead of saying “I remember the past”, it might be more accurate to say that ‘the past remembers me’ in the afterwardness (*nachträglichkeit*) of

the reactivated memory traces (Fletcher 2013, 69). Looking back, what the child did not once understand returns, decades later, as aporia and a lack of recognition. Naively, verbally, I am looking for an easy exchange of non-meaning (aporia) for meaning (a design for life). Any interpretation provided by the other could address this latter demand but would fall short of the true matrixial qualities which lie in the realm of inclination. If that is the case, we must ask: at which moment does a gesture of inclination or leaning towards the other make sense, and how does it support the desire for unity and recognition? How does the other help me at that very point, being in aporia as much as I am?

Second Rotation: Dissymmetry, Embrace

In order to answer these questions we start from Cavarero's concept of maternal inclination as a structurally asymmetrical relationship with the infant (2016, 106), and, more precisely, as a posture that is 'relational, originary, asymmetrical, and capable of evoking common vulnerability' (2016, 127). Cavarero's theorization reconfigures Arendt's <5> concept of natality in such a way as to address the 'inhuman loneliness' arising from the scene. A similar loneliness, we argue, permeates Freudian and Lacanian analysis. By rethinking the importance of the maternal presence, Cavarero and Ettinger honor and exceed the theoretical postulates that underpin their work whilst shifting the emphasis from death to life and from the end to the beginning. This shift is not at all incompatible with the drive as conceptualized by Laplanche in *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis* (1985).

In discussing the significance of birth as a philosophical principle, Cavarero acknowledges the importance of Arendt's concept of natality (2016, 113), before observing that the infant does not interest Arendt beyond the inaugural moment of birth. The Arendtian newborn, Cavarero remarks, evokes inhuman loneliness (2016, 120). Thus, the Italian philosopher makes it her task to introduce the mother into the scene of natality, predicting that such an insertion would *fracture* the scene's fundamental logical structure (2016, 120). Upon being inserted in the scene, she adds, the mother introduces an *asymmetrical* relationship to the infant's vulnerability (2016, 122).

The concept of asymmetry permeates the mother-child relationship in Freudian psychoanalysis. Freud does not dismiss the mother. On the contrary, he accentuates the dissymmetry between the mother and the infant, accepting that the former's omnipotence "has a decisive influence on the structuring of the psyche" (Laplanche and Pontalis 1988, 190). However, Freud assumes that such a state of dependence is frustrating for the infant, resulting in a feeling of helplessness (*hilflosigkeit*) and an increasing tension "which the psychic apparatus is as yet unable to control" (Laplanche and Pontalis 1988, 189).

In the natality scene, the advent of the infant makes its own unique contribution, interrupting the natural cycle's monotony, "a miracle that pertains to the dimension of immanence and contingency" (2016, 112). Natality, adds Cavarero, "not only supplants the inexorability of death with the unpredictability of beginning, it also breaks with every automatism, so that the individual life can no longer be thought as a straight line running to ruin" (2016, 112). The inaugural qualities of the asymmetry in the maternal scene challenge the infant's frustration as

envisaged by Freud, offering a blueprint of a relationship grounded in difference, not in narcissistic duality. At the same time, predictability, automatism and the straight line to ruin do not sound dissimilar to the psychoanalytic repetition compulsion qua inexorable move of the death drive. In that sense, mother and child help one another both out of narcissism and out of the death drive. But how does this inaugural relationship and the break of automatism translate into a caring practice between adults in a scene like the one discussed here? This is where we need to evoke another fundamental dissymmetry, namely, between life and death as discussed by Laplanche in *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*. In order to do so, we must take a brief detour through the concepts of the signifier and the Other.

In Lacanian terms, the appeal to the Other and the attack of ignorance about the meaning of one's life (lack of knowledge, bodily inertia) can be considered as a hysterical demand which reverberates with *nostos* (homesickness), the desire for a return to the same (Gerber, 2014) via an "accidental" repetition. Our own experience as immigrants and our *nostos* echoes with the enduring and complex effects migration has upon the human psyche often examined in terms of trauma or mourning <6>. An encounter with this doubly determined failed temporality disturbs and surprises (Guzman, 2014, 240). At this point Lacanian psychoanalysis proposes the following solution: Our socio-historical determination by the parameters of our own time entail that the speaking subject tells what has been decided by the structure (Pavon-Cuellar, 2014, 69) and does the work of the signifying social structure. In that sense, it can either try, once again, to credit the Other with a wealth of knowledge and explanatory power, or to "break ranks" with the Other establishing itself as an exception. In this process "the act fixes a point of reference for the subject" (Negro, 2014, 107), allowing her to go beyond the limits of her hysterical demand.

The above formulation is characterised by an inhuman loneliness similar to the one we find in Cavarero's commentary, the loneliness of the subject facing the void of its constitutive relation with the Other. Can we deviate from this formulation, opening up the space beyond seeking hysterical affirmation in the Other and beyond being immersed in psychoanalytically conceived inhuman loneliness? Both Cavarero and Ettinger seem to envisage an intersubjective relation that does not replicate the subject who ploughs their solitary way through the vagaries of lack. So here lies a basic philosophical dissymmetry between me and the (m)other': as I fail to see the design of my life, I swoon and die at the closure (looping around of the death drive) that forms the limit of my narrative memory, begging, body and soul, for the pattern of a stork (2000, 3). The other cannot offer me the answer I crave, as she is equally ignorant of it, but can 'hold' me, in her propping embrace, at the point the adult-me experiences death and helplessness (*hilflösigkeit*) as rigidity of form. My friend does not offer me the pattern of a stork but the curvature of space (embrace) and the repetition of a primary maternal gesture, not-death.

The Lacanian emphasis on lack and language (the signifier) often veils the power of gesture. At times, it also veils the irreducible difference of life and death and the fact that they cannot be exchanged like signifiers. The non-exchange of life and death inhabits Laplanche's work. The two are radically different but may co-exist as drives, propping or leaning onto one another as unity and disunity, Eros and conflict. Laplanche describes this leaning not as a *moment* or a fixed point of reference but as a *scene* which holds together, in formal *unity*, several ideas that are related but not identical, further calling it, after Lagache, a virtual monster, like a chimeras, or a dragon of body parts (Laplanche 1985, 108). <7>

Such a scene allows something important to emerge: not the death drive materializing in the field of sexuality as masochism and sadism <8>, but unity and the possibility for *an (inaugural) affirmation of being* that lies beyond the (impossible) knowledge of the Other. In that sense, my other offers me what Deleuze would call a disjunctive conjunction (of life and death), no concrete object and no interpretation, but an object-less interpretation, the only one she can credibly afford. Maternal inclination sends back to me, in fracturing dissymmetry, the death drive, not as a compulsion to repeat but as the pure curving movement of an embrace. Only the presence of another human being can do that. Might it be a step too far to propose that this conceptualization of the drive approximates the Cavarerian maternal inclination “understood as a posture that is relational, originary, asymmetrical, and capable of evoking common vulnerability” (2016, 127)? One could further argue that the (m)other in the relational scene addresses my aporia in a gestural/postural manner by transforming it into a diverting movement which un-freezes (self)aggressive immobilization (bodily inertia). This can be an inaugural moment only when it addresses a limit condition, such as a traumatic and dangerous encounter, not just any demand for a story or a tale.

We find a visual parallel in Fletcher’s (2013) discussion of da Vinci’s *The Virgin and Child with St Anne*, the same painting Cavarero places at the center of her postural ethics. Fletcher reads the painting as a scene of containment, drawing attention to Mary’s posture and extended arm towards the infant, as well as the child’s rough handling of a baby lamb at the corner of the painting. The author argues that containment is located in the outstretched gesture, which is not just an attempt to repossess the errant child but which intervenes in the child’s rather violent

stranglehold of the unfortunate animal (2013, 202). Fletcher adds that the eruption of violence and aggression at the corner of the picture “testifies to the continuing need for maternal holding and containment of the unruly impulses, a containment that is implemented through the seductive power of the smiling gaze of the mother that draws the child’s return gaze back to her even as he eludes her grasp” (2013, 202).

We do not concur with the argument about the seductive gaze. My friend, my other who processes *my anguish*, does not seduce me. As Ettinger would argue, she is co-affected. Inclination and the extended arm posit a primary gesture, enacting the circularity of the drive, the first and constant response of life and unity which reins in the conflict (disunity) of the death drive. The gesture of the embrace enfolds death (drive) into the matrixial space. It constitutes an inaugural moment which breaks the automatism of repetition qua return of the same (aporia, death). The one who enters the (inhuman) scene of loneliness, the (m)other, the friend who puts her hand around my shoulder, inaugurates a new beginning, a moment which cancels death and breaks the straight line of automatism, my headlong rush to the somatic and cultural intimation of death (rigidity of form, hysteria). Fletcher considers that to be a quality of the mother. Cavarero attributes it to the child. Ettinger affords us a glimpse of a spatiotemporal matrixial arrangement in which one can be both, a non-I, fading-in-transformation (2006, 141).

Third Rotation: Metramorphosis and a Random Event

In Lacanian terms an experience of helplessness like the one we are discussing here could be described as an event or an eruption of the Real, affording a glimpse of the *thing* (das Ding) that cannot be said but lies at the core of our experience (Frosh 2014, 21). Lacanian psychoanalysis values such disruptions as revealing the truth of the speaking subject and its constitutive lack, paying little attention to either the interlocutor, in whose presence the thing is intimated, or the interplay between disruption and movement. Moreover, unity and union have no place in Lacanian psychoanalysis, hailing, as they do, from the Imaginary which obscures the truth of the subject. A rotation of the prism in the direction of the Cavarerian inclination as part of an alternative geometry allows us to (further) problematize this view. This bears directly to Ettinger's conceptualization of the matrixial, some aspects of which already diverge from Lacanian psychoanalysis.

In his insightful discussion of Ettinger's work, Neill argues that she preserves the concept of lack in so far as desire cannot operate without it (2008, 333), adding that: "without dismissing this logic, Ettinger seeks to *supplement* it with another logic, *another type of phantasy*" (2008, 333, emphasis added), one that functions in parallel to the *object a* (the missing object of lack) without replacing or contesting it (ibid). Following this interpretation, we could surmise that my other offers me a phantasy<9>, one that can presumably pacify me but will ultimately fail to address my inherent lack. While we agree that lack is a fundamental concept, and union with the mother is imaginary and, as shown in the previous section, essentially untenable, taking phantasy as the sole outcome of the matrixial encounter jars with Ettinger's key concept of metamorphosis <10> as "an originary human potentiality for reciprocal yet *asymmetrical*

crossing of borderlines between I and the non-I” (2006b, 221, emphasis added). What is the value of metamorphosis if everything is ultimately subsumed by phantasy?

An event, argues Parker, cannot be neutralized or reduced to structure (2014, 8). More to the point, an event constitutes a special place of articulation between continuity and rupture, or history and novelty (119), a point of crossing (traversal) in which “something new and the unheard-of may eventually emerge” (Bosteels 2003, 123). According to Bosteels, when considering the emergence of an event, it is prudent to examine its environs, in order to appreciate its radical character and its haphazard nature without losing track of its structural overdetermination (Bosteels 2003, 120). In the clinical setting, the act of interpretation can be such an event, since it constitutes the junction between what already exists in language (symptom) and what is about to emerge, that is, the missing element (cause) which supports and structures the symptom. A similar principle applies to historical and spatially located events. Bosteels cites the example of the May ’68 protests in Paris as a radical event arising out of the horizon of political agitation. Here, the emphasis is not on verbal interpretation but on the break with the norm. In trying to conceptualize such a unique locus, Jacques Alain Miller calls for a change in our perspective, one that will allow us to see “space pivot on its axis and, by a complete rotation that accomplishes its division, discover the inner rule of its law and the order that secretly adjusts whatever is offered up to the gaze” (Bosteels 2003, 129). This *decisive rotation*, he adds, undoes the structure of the symptom, allowing for a traversal or a “diagonal reading” (Bosteels 2003, 129, emphasis added).

Miller's visual metaphor chimes with Cavarero's and Ettinger's, despite remaining squarely geometrical and ensconced in Lacanian psychoanalytic orthodoxy. Nevertheless, it marks the place at which symptom and, by extension, phantasy as an imaginary formation, come to pass as no longer tenable. A diagonal move, we could therefore argue, rotates both gaze and space towards the (curved) motion of the new and the unexpected and lends itself to the maternal and the matrixial. This rotation does not veil, placate or pacify like the phantasy. It grounds *me* in a trajectory that departs from me and comes back to me from the other, just as my bodily inertia, the acting out of helplessness, registers the tension between life and death, knowledge and non-knowledge, response and aporia. To privilege phantasy as the answer to such an experience falls short of Ettinger's key concept of metramorphosis as a special connection between analytical practice as an ethical working-through and artistic practice as an aesthetical working-through, especially since working-through encompasses "the psychical work which allows the subject to accept certain repressed elements and to free himself from the grip of mechanisms of repetition" (Laplanche and Pontalis 1988, 488). Of course an encounter with friends is not a clinical situation and does not culminate in formal interpretation. Ettinger, however, takes great pains to preserve something of the ethically important crossing which the term *working-through* inherently implies. It would seem plausible to propose, then, that metramorphosis chimes with Cavarero's concept on natality in its relational maternal qualities. It provides the space and relational perspective for something other than death to break into the scene.

Fourth Rotation: Maternal Clinamen

Inclination (clinamen) is a rather contested concept in Lacanian psychoanalysis. Lacan uses the term in the *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1973) but does not seem to come back to it in other writings. Mladen Dolar revisits the term in 2013 in an article entitled “Tyche, clinamen, den” (2013). Dolar argues that Lacanian psychoanalysis does not need the concept of clinamen. Dolar’s discussion draws on the philosophical definition of “one” and the indivisibility of the atom in pre-Socratic philosophy. Once again, the argument makes perfect sense within the remit of psychoanalysis but a more careful reading of the original Lacanian text reveals something else, namely, the elision of the mother from the scene, the one who must be excised in order for the logic of psychoanalysis to be configured. We trace the unfolding of the argument from Dolar to Lacan, holding in mind Cavarero’s proposition that the advent of the mother *fractures* the scene of inhuman loneliness.

Cavarero argues that inclination (clinamen) is chance which disrupts the automatism of repetition (2016, 96), throwing things off kilter, in a new direction. Lacan differentiates between the automatism of repetition (automaton) and tyche (chance) as inclination (clinamen). The former pertains to the symbolic and the tendency to repeat the pleasurable, the latter to the register of a chance encounter with the real. The two exist intertwined: “Tyche only dwells in the gaps of the automaton. In the tiny gap between one occurrence and the next one, something is produced that is irreducible to automaton” (Dolar 2013, 228). Dolar addresses the question of whether clinamen can be considered a properly Lacanian concept, starting his argument with the properties of the atom (literally ‘that which cannot be divided’) in pre-Socratic philosophy. Clinamen (qua unpredictable change of course), in this context, concerns

not merely the fate of the universe which is at stake, but the fate of our own will and passion, desire and enjoyment—actually not the fate, but quite the opposite, the very possibility of breaking the fate. Clinamen is at the point where cosmos and humanity overlap, the out-of-place and out-of-time point they share (229).

Dolar is concerned with a specific issue, namely, whether clinamen belongs to the immanent properties of the atom or not:

It [clinamen] can be either situated in the place of (constitutive) exception, something that must always already have happened in order for the universe to emerge, occurring out-of-space and out of-time with no place nor moment within space and time once they are constituted. Or else it can be an omnipresent ‘universal’ principle which immanently derails any given one at all places and all times (232-4).

Badiou opts for the first, while Deleuze, Derrida and Maillassoux accept it as an originary determinant of movement in the atom (2013, 233). Dolar asks if there is a third option, other than having to decide between an exception that never takes place although it underlies every taking place, and an out-of-worldly immanent transcendence 'quasi-universalizing the exception to make it immanent and thus turn it to ‘a universal swerviness of any universal, the out-of-oneness of any One (with the danger of providing a convenient and non-binding passe-partout)’ (2013, 233). Dolar also considers the Lacanian-ness of the concept of clinamen in terms of thinking together the One and the Other’ (2013, 233) via the determination of One in Aristotle. The third option is provided by the Ancient Greek negative grammatical particle *den* (non) which is “not something, not nothing, not being, not one, not positively existing, not absent, not countable”,

subsequently identified by Dolar as “not precisely the object”, in other words, the *object a* (2013, 235). Thus, by displacing the choice between exception and immanence onto the notion of the non-object, Dolar neatly solves the problem of the clinamen, rescuing Lacan from veering off to the margins of theoretical orthodoxy: “If atom is den, then for Democritus it can have no weight, and there can be neither parallel fall nor the problem of clinamen” (2013, 236).

This further allows Dolar to argue that we can now avoid positing clinamen as either a foundational exception (Badiou) or a universalized virtuality (Deleuze). At the same time, this alternative maintains both parts, *one* and *den*, as the very cleft of being, the place where both being and thought (e)merge. At best, then, clinamen can be thought as the locus of an either/or theoretical choice:

There seems to be like a parallax view when looking at the atom: either one sees the split, one/void etc., as Hegel did, or else one sees clinamen, the inner swerviness, torsion, declination, the immanent becoming not premised on the cut of negativity, relying on swerviness as the becoming without a void’ (238).

At worse, clinamen inhabits the Lacanian text almost as a theoretical weakness, which the superimposition of the den corrects in exemplary fashion.

What does this have to do with the (m)other? A more careful reading of Lacan’s text is quite revealing. Lacan discusses the concept of clinamen in the context of the repetition inherent in the fort/da game with which the child attempts to represent the presence/absence of the mother in Freud’s *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Lacan notes that the reel with which the child plays the game acts like an *object a* and part of himself with which the child identifies in the game of repetition and the splitting between *Vosterllung* and *Repräsentanz* (1991, 63). In the next

paragraph, Lacan offers a personal testimony of a child's effort to deal with maternal presence and absence and, by extension, the early intimations of death:

I, too, have seen with my own eyes, opened by maternal divination, the child, traumatized by the fact that I was going away despite the appeal, preciously adumbrated in his voice, and henceforth more renewed for months at a time – long after, having picked up this child – I have seen it let his head fall on my shoulder and drop off to sleep, sleep alone being capable of giving him access to the living signifier that I has become since the date of the trauma (63).

In this paragraph it is evident that Lacan fails to include himself as human presence in the scene, turning a blind eye to what he offers the child – a disposition, an inclination, an embrace – and the reciprocity between this inclination and the break of automatism which the child returns to him. Needless to add, in this very moment of blindness, he excises the (m)other from the scene. Dolar reinstalls this blind spot of psychoanalytic reasoning further shifting the emphasis from sleep (the inertia of the body) and lack to not-one, once again burying the (m)other under the debris of the object a.

The (re)introduction of the mother fractures the psychoanalytic scene with a gesture of curvature and the possibility of a beginning, just as the readmission of inclination as immanent property disturbs psychoanalytic logic. Both Ettinger and Cavarero use the term *disposition* in their writings. Can we accept *disposition* or *human propensity* without incurring the risk of naïve essentialism or biologism (see Cavarero 2016, 103)? A feminist rotation of the phallic prism allows us to re-emplace *disposition* in our vocabulary and further weaken the prevalence of lack. Taking this argument to its theoretical limit, we would further suggest that the Ettingerian theory of matrixial borderlinking must be further developed so as to move more decisively away from

the biding properties of lack. Lack is simply not all. By shifting our gaze away from the *object a* we return to the duality of Eros and Thanatos. When I have experienced conflict (non-unity in the sense of the death drive) in the presence of the other, a new beginning does not merely fall back on lack but constitutes a co-emergence, or an emergence of the union of Eros. Laplanche posit Eros as the primary moving force behind the scene of representation. Eros and the vital order, not Thanatos, as primary force seeks “to maintain, preserve and augment the cohesion and the synthetic tendency of the living beings and of psychic life” (Laplanche, 1985, 123). Lyotard privileges Eros as the moving force of libidinal economy employing (Bennington 1988, 24). Likewise, synthesis and co-poiesis cannot be excised from feminist psychoanalytic philosophy without arbitrarily privileging Thanatos.

Towards Movement

Cavarero notes that postural philosophy can exist alongside existing masculine philosophical formulations not in order to deny the vertical model but to expose its limits (2016, 127). If that is the case, could we further elaborate on their possible relation, especially if we wish to argue that maternal inclination and matrixial borderlinking as human dispositions should be accepted as equal to the fundamental concepts of masculine philosophy and psychoanalysis?

Cavarero argues that postural geometry “far from limiting itself to the axis of uprightness, arranges the human along multiple coexisting lines, which may be contingent and intermittent, and at times even random” (2016, 129). Let us be reminded of Etinger’s comparable matrixial topology of jouissance, traumas, pictograms, phantasies, affects, death-drive oscillations,

libidinal-erotic flows, imprints and affected traces (2000, 195). When we explore the response to an experience of death, dis-unity and helplessness, successive rotations reveal that this occurs along *multiple lines*. This allows us to propose *movement* as a live extension of inclination and co-poetic spatiality, and as an indispensable component of feminist ontology. To quip in analytic language, woman's counterpart is neither the phallus nor object a, but sharing and movement. This, we argue best captures the im-materiality of sharing in the matrixial scene which, once again, exceeds the limitations of the missing object:

If it is not possible to distinguish between the Thing in and for myself and the Thing in and for the other, then what we are left with are traces of links which can only be witnessed in a togetherness that is not reducible to union, insofar as a union, a unity, would suggest a comprehension, a totality and closure (Neil 2008, 337).

But what happens when we place the *movement* of unity and disunity at the heart of our perspective? Cavarero notes that the *movement* of relationality underpins the primary scene of birth (2016, 99), and Ettinger understands matrixial borderlinking as “an astatic process [...] governed less by mastery, accumulation and the gaze than is by touching, hearing and movement” (Neill 2008, 332). Movement can be the curvature of space, as opposed to linearity or even afterwardness (*nachträglichkeit*), an inclination which inscribes the leaning of death onto life into a trajectory of dissymmetries in the maternal/matrixial scene. As Cavarero proposes: “Inclination can become the module that composes the picture's design – its leitmotif or prevailing posture” (2016, 128).

In a Deleuzian reading of Ettinger's work, Barrett, approaches the matrixial as a locus which com-poses intensities, flows and linkages that can accommodate chance and unpredictability in creative processes which do not always originate in decision or will <11> (Barrett 2000, 254, 257). Barrett considers Ettinger's work as providing an anoedipal non-phallic organisation, "an alternative dimension of subjectivization, inhabited by affects, intensities and moments of transgression, which 'indicate the essentially nomadic, excessive and a-signifying dimensions of textual practices'" (2000, 256). Developing her argument in the realm of the visual arts, Barrett suggest that the Ettingerian matrixial "permits us to identify the articulatory affects which shift the system towards the drive-governed basis of visual production. [...] There moments mark nomadic movements away from the signifying structure of the text and relate to traces of beyond-the-phallus part of object a/s caught up in the artwork" (2000, 258).

Drawing on this formulation, and deliberately turning a blind eye to the forced choice between Lacanian psychoanalysis and Deleuze often put forward in similar cases, we propose that the organisation of desire after the model of lack (and Thing, *object a*) and its alternative inscription in a matrixial/inclinal register might relate to one another as plane of organization to plane of consistency in Deleuzian philosophy (see Barrett 2000, 258). The two planes do not compete with or cancel each other out but constitute alternative geometries. Deleuze and Guattari describe the plane of organisation (or development) as structural or genetic; a hidden structure necessary for forms, a teleological plan(e), a design and mental principle (2008, 293). The plane of consistency (or composition), on the other hand, is permeated by 'relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness between unformed elements, or at lease elements that are relatively unformed, molecules and particles of all kinds. [...] Nothing subjectifies, but haecceities form

according to compositions of nonsubjectified powers or affects' (294). This geometrical plane is not tied to a mental design but to an abstract design, in which 'form is constantly being dissolved, freeing time and space' (294).

Adding maternal inclination qua sharing and embrace to the scene of verbal exchange, marks a departure from and a disruption of the plane of organisation; it causes the drive qua movement and impossible exchange between life and death to veer off, to lean on, to take a different direction, to cease to disrupt when contained in the looping motion of an embrace. Movement, then, becomes the material wedge between Eros and Thanatos as condition of appearance in the anti-vertical, matrixial assemblage. The latter arises when life problematizes itself, as Foucault would put it (Rajchman, 1991), giving rise to the new and the unexpected. Maternal inclination as a *module* of a disruptive and revolutionary geometry (Cavarero 2016, 131) allows one to start in the beginning, where there was vulnerability *and* embrace.

Notes

1. Metra-morphosis is a neologism comprising of 'metamorphosis' and 'metra' (Greek for uterus). It signifies transformation-in-difference and harks back to unity-in-difference between the mother and the foetus as a relationship of difference anterior to the (narcissistic) mother-child pair in Freudian psychoanalysis.
2. Laplanche and Pontalis define the Freudian drive (or instinct) in terms of its *source* in a bodily stimulus; its *aim*, which is to eliminate the state of tension at the source; and its *object* thanks to which the instinct may achieve its aim (1988, 214). Lacan emphasises the trajectory of the drive. Hailing from the erogenous zones of the body (eyes, mouth, the anus, the drive follows a circular outwards and backwards trajectory, the aim of which is to gain satisfaction by reaching out to an object (*object a*) which remains unattainable. Thus, the drive is a loop around an elusive object

which repeats itself. As a constant force it appears meaningless from the point of view of organised social life (Lacan, 1991, 163).

3. Kingsbury writes: ‘The important point to make here is that any activity has the potential to turn into the gyre of the drives, insofar as the activity brings to the fore the extent to which people can achieve satisfaction by not achieving their aims: by not finding an empty chair, by waiting and waiting and waiting for that final magic number to be called out’ (2010, 529).

4. Foucault’s “The thought of the outside” (2003) focuses on the negotiation of meaning at the margins of language and experience.

5. In Arendt natality is ‘the second birth’ through which we appear in the world as political subjects:

This insertion is not forced upon us by necessity, like labor, and it is not prompted by utility like work. It may be stimulated by the presence of others whose company we may wish to join, but it is never conditioned by them; its impulse springs from the beginning which came into the world when we were born and to which we respond by beginning something new on our own initiative. (Arendt 1998, 176-77).

6. See, for example, Hollander, 2006; Honig, 1997; Tummala-Narra 2014; Beltsiou. The experience of race could also be relevant to our discussion but beyond the remit of the present paper. which focuses on the maternal-matrixial rethinking the masculine psychoanalytic model. As a way of problematizing the masculine model, as well as reflecting upon one’s elision from the present, our paper would chime with Moten’s *Stolen Life* (2018) but seen as a private, not a public way of rethinking visibility/invisibility.

7. Ettinger does not make any direct reference to Laplanche’s work but echoes this scattering/unifying scene when referring to the internal excitation and the ‘fantasmatic arrangement – *of several representative elements linked together in a short scene*, an extremely rudimentary scene, ultimately composed of partial objects [...] is immediately relived as real’ (2006: 61, emphasis added).

8. See, for example, Williams, 1985; de Lauretis, 2008.

9. We are not referring to the intra-uterine phantasy that Ettinger enfolds into the process of becoming-mother (see Smith 2013) but phantasy as the only outcome of a process of traversal.

10. Metra-morphosis refers to the uterus (metra) and the unity-in-difference between the mother and the foetus qua relationship of difference anterior to the mother-child duality and narcissism of Freudian psychoanalysis.

11. For the more recent attempt at finding common ground between Deleuze and Lacan see Nedoh and Zevnik 2018.

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