



Research Article

Alter-a Mater: The Evoking Figure of M-otherness: Feminine/Feminist Landscapes through Rosi Braidotti's Vision

Claudia Dell'Uomo d'Arme, Postdoc✉

Chercheuse associée - UMR Dicen IDF, Université Paris Nanterre

Abstract

This article offers an interdisciplinary cartography of contemporary feminist philosophy with Rosi Braidotti's thought as a central reference, while proposing an original figure—*Alter-a Mater*—to address a persistent gap: feminist theory still lacks a concept that holds together motherhood & maternal spheres, alterity and otherness, as well as a posthuman inter-connected *zoé* perspective. Building on Braidotti's bio-centred feminism and nomadic reasoning, I differentiate *Alter-a Mater* as a conceptual but mostly *agentive figure* that signifies the maternal as a threshold space. Through the critical device of *Alter-a*, multiple passages across identities, languages, species, and technologies become thinkable and practicable within arts and academic literature, emerging forms of reasoning, and socio-political design. My proposal converses with scholars such as Luisa Muraro, Adriana Cavarero, Julia Kristeva, Hannah Arendt, and Jacques Derrida. Methodologically, *Alter-a Mater* reframes the female-feminine corps made by multi-positional natures. In my paper, they structurally transform and translate loss and vulnerability (trauma, repression, instrumentalisation of the maternal) into affirmative politics, pursuing those settings in which alliance-building across human and more-than-human assemblages. Conceptually, *Alter-a Mater* is rich in plural life yet narrowed by the *maternal* approach as the primitive relational infrastructure. Politically, *Alter-a Mater* foregrounds *collective futurity* by conjugating the maternal into a situated praxis of thresholding. In this lively archive, the critical travelling encounters several *becoming-other* patterns: for the *nexus-infans*, *Alter-a* imagines co-creative languages, based on care, love, and bodily thinking.

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Ana Mendieta. *Birth (Gunpowder Works)*. 1981. Gelatin silver print.

In a new form of “corporeal materialism”, the body is seen as an interface, a threshold, a field of intersection of material and symbolic forces; it is a construction that transforms and capitalises on energies of a heterogeneous and discontinuous nature. The body is not an essence and therefore not an anatomical destiny: it is one’s primary location in the world; one’s primary situation in reality. [...] The embodied nature of subjectivity is *posited* to allow for the radical subversion of culture.¹

Starting from oneself is thus a renewal—within the biographical and historical context—of the movement of entering the world.

In this way, the practice of starting from oneself counters alienation. [...] to start from oneself and lose oneself in exteriority [...] such a practice thus restores to us the sense of birth [...]².

The woman’s body can change shape in pregnancy and childbearing; it is therefore capable of defeating the notion of fixed bodily form.³

¹ Braidotti, R., (1991). *Patterns of Dissonance. A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy*, 1991, Routledge, London, p. 219.

² Here, rephrasing is mine. See Muraro, L., (1996). “Partire da sé e non farsi trovare,” in Annarosa Buttarelli, Diotima autori, *La sapienza di partire da sé*, Liguori, Napoli, 1996, p. 14.

³ Braidotti, R. (1994). *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994; 2nd ed. 2011), p. 225.

1. Introduction

This article advances *Alter-a Mater* as a methodological post-feminist figure issued from a deep charting across several women thinkers' works, landscapes, and images. Distinguished from a full zoé-centered nomadism, *Alter-a Mater* theorizes *mothering* as a threshold praxis, aiming to transform the language-structuralist passages into a cross-crossing device which explores, valorizes and illuminates women's bodies, technologies and politics, birthing and writings. Dialoguing with Muraro, Cavarero, Kristeva, Arendt, Derrida, Butler, I here reframe female/feminine, extensively queer subjectivities, through a multi-positional and structurally transformative exchange among a theoretical and reflective pluriverse. My analysis also surrounds vulnerability, which reveals the starting point for empowering female contemporary subjectivities with conceptual, intimate, creative, and psychological tools. They can be practical and semiotic tools endorsing *affirmative* and *sustainable ethics* for nexus collectivities. By grounding a micro-epistemic action, I softly engineered a replicable method that skills a process of mapping the multiple textual constellations that feature our lived and situated ecosystems.

2. Who's, what is, why *Alter-a Mater*?

I am carried along by the intuition, mostly a working conviction, that creating critical characters who stand for allegorical devices and grafting textual geographies allows one to conjoin philosophical categories with interpretative experiences. In the present work, I will use the tool of the *figure*, understood in a Dantean key, to make my reflection function, which conveys literary, political, and ethical workflows. I aim to propose a methodological pathway that inscribes itself within both a discursive tradition and a hybridization of textuality. Meanwhile, I will highlight a more imaginative and evocative system of analyses in which the allegorical figure of *Alter-A Mater* processes and questions an interdisciplinary literature.

Alter-a character, a true avatar of the intellectual journey, embodies the exploration of the double-bind process of thinking and writing about, and from, the self. At the same time, it reaches an exterior dimension that becomes quickly dialectical, and therefore performative, by putting on stage a full agency of the writer. In fact, this kind of intellectual tracking requires a full activation of the body, of a living mind that both accompanies, in a more wondering way, the construction of new reasoning worlds. Within thoughtful architectures and habitats of relations, it will be thus possible to handle desiring textual bodies and put on stage their corpora for rescuing the physical thickness of writings, images, ideas, speeches, memories from a neutral analytical abstraction.

Also, I would like to state clearly the exploratory criticism engaged by the *Alter-a Mater* figure, by tracing her origins, carved into lexicography and cultural meanings. While I was composing this paper, what takes shape in its becoming is the result of an endogenous translation, expressed through the formula *Alter-a Mater: the evoking figure of M-otherness*. Retracing the sources of Italian, my mother tongue, its reconstitution via some Latin traces led me to English, one of my formative languages. Being impelled by the fragmentation of languages, I considered how the plurisemiosis enclosed in the concept of alterity converts the translational moments into a true reflecting practice, rooted in Deconstructive theoretical issues (to which we shall return later).

Indeed, I developed my *survey* by closely grappling with selected sections of Braidotti's seminal work, during which the metaphorical expression of *Alter-a Mater* has coiled around the word *Mother*. It detached from its inner alterity to recompose its own lemma by conjoining and disjoining at once, from the semantic core of *otherness*. I propose, then, to dive into the *Alter-a Mater* formula to usher into the heart of Braidotti's inquiry into the maternal figure, thereby encapsulating a return to the Latin sources of Western significations that my paper intends to challenge. From here, the critical path engaged by the *Alter-a Mater* allegory woven through *verba* for endorsing a double movement of emptying, and possible re-signification, of the mother and maternity semantics.

Here is the starting point from which I will proceed, in embodying one of the earliest feminist lessons and bringing to the surface *how* and *whence* our hypothesis arose. I fitted the philosopher Luisa Muraro's method, which is both shareable and fruitful, because it implants the time of negotiation between writer(s) and reader(s) into an objectifying epistemology. It resets the act of laying oneself bare, blank and open—as a completely new page—to others' scripts and graving. This transitional flux between (at least) two components—whether in literature or in bodily exchanges—initiates a performative posture of embracing the notion of vulnerability, which I regard as inherent to the many evolutions that self-thought explores during a lifetime. To take on the speculative thought implies a critical risk because it draws upon a true praxis, enacted by those people who constantly think and live through a *self-changing* belief. To move, to mutate, and evolve agrees with venture-filled meanings, as well as foreign skills and trades, that do not engage subjectivity in the middle of relationships, but at their boundaries. I grasp, and following translate, a brilliant excerpt of Muraro's essay *Partire da sé e non farsi trovare*:

La pratica di partire da sé è una decostruzione dell'io e del mondo ed ogni movimento di decostruzione... mette a repentaglio il senso della realtà e la possibilità di un senso alternativo. Ma la pratica di partire da sé porta al disfarsi del soggetto senza disfarlo in una miriade di istanze scoordinate: mi disfa nelle relazioni che mi fanno essere quella che sono e diventare quella che desidero, senza che io possa mai accamparmi al centro di questo essere e diventare [...] La pratica di partire da sé [...] è molto ma molto [...] rischiosa. E più feconda, più felice, perché mi fa cadere nella necessità della riconoscenza e nel primato della relazione. [The practice of starting from oneself is a deconstruction of self and world, and every deconstructive movement jeopardizes the sense of reality and the very possibility of an alternative meaning. Yet starting from oneself undoes the subject without scattering it into a myriad of uncoordinated claims: it undoes me in the relations that make me who I am and enable me to become who I desire to be, without my ever installing myself at the center of that being and becoming [...] This practice is highly—indeed exceedingly—risky. And all the more generative, all the more joyful, because it casts me into the necessity of gratitude and the primacy of relation. (Translation is mine).⁴

In the milieu of contemporary philosophical criticism and literature, the habitus of *partire da sé* (starting from her/his self) matches with a textual and radical spoliation, to wit, a transformative shifting towards the outer space. In this way, among the multiplicity of subjects, throughout the

⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

flux of things and data, we can stipulate a more democratic and interactive dimension among uprisings of acknowledgment. In fact, we can be brought—as in my case—to the plurality of translational perspectives which lies in the way diverse components are captured and assembled within a system of interdependencies. Potentially, they may act as an integrated whole, with forces that, instead of neutralizing one another, flow in the same direction and mutually reinforce.⁵ I briefly evoke the theories on *l'acteur-réseau*⁶ while rediscovering in the knot of form and content (in reference to Umberto Eco) the funtative ontology as a technical loan of translation. From language to language, from *sema* to *sema*, the tyro figure of *Alter-a Mater* merges into Braidotti's intellectual flow and simultaneously touches upon the edges of Muraro's practical mindset to which I am scientifically grateful.

3. *Alter-a Mater* and Semiotics: From pre-verbal to mothering canvas. Being critical by texts.

Performer of critical thinking that intertwines the semiotic structures of language, *Alter-a Mater* functions in my reflection as a laboratory of consciousness. *Alter-a* critically operates within Braidotti's charting across all the corporealities of the feminine-s, as well as her engagement with those theoretical corpora (often prompting a feminine view) that query and queer otherness. Amid puzzling members, matters, and wording, *Alter-a* plans to bring into light uncharted consciousness of the maternal body. If this study traces the interplay between a fleshy experience, semantics, and textual pictures, *Alter-a Mater* is effectively a methodological proposal that incarnates a multifaceted filiation, exploiting the feminine organs of writing to reconvert historical suffering and unconsciousness into strength, and the extracted resources into renewed symbolic patterns and likely blank pages. *Alter-a* figure identifies Braidotti's theoretical and formal alternatives that counter the institution of the logos and its governance under the phallic law. Indeed, the hermeneutics of incorporating other texts, which display alongside estranging and "inspiring" one's own narrating identity, succeeds in merging alterity into the boundless network of the matrix-mother semiotics, namely cultural heritage, human yet dominantly Western.

Braidotti reads a lot of Julia Kristeva, a literary theorist and psychoanalyst who has worked across femininity's boundaries as sources of (textual) new lymph. For instance, she fancies the *Sémiothique*, a time-space typically framed during the first steps of maternal interaction. It is an interplaying uniqueness that deploys semiotic interconnections among subjects who can generate behaviors, phrasing, refusals, distances, commitments, promises, reciprocities, and new understandings. By taking inspiration from Kristeva's sources, in this environment, the symbolic and the semiotic are two dialectical and inseparable modalities of every enunciation, a double register of meaning and utterance. It engages the subjective speaker in a symbolic cradle where he/she needs to identify and separate from his/her own images, textual objects, and linguistic frames for both joining and abjecting, finally crafting their own semantic outputs newly and

⁵ Comparing Boumhaouad, H. (2017). "Pratiques info-communicationnelles des usagers des dispositifs numériques: Théorie de l'acteur-réseau" *Les Cahiers du numérique*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2017, pp. 137-166.

⁶ The *acteur-réseau* theory has been developed during Eighties by a research group working at *Centre de sociologie de l'innovation de Mines ParisTech*. Among the researchers, we also count Bruno Latour.

combinatorily, to bring about new interactions with the other-and the other-than-me, the other-in-me. So, the balance between creation and expelling, othering and caring is marked by the process of *mise en abîme*, the estrangement of everything that hosts subjective members, fluids, wastes, the inherent monstrous and self-stranger. Especially during the primary processes towards sense and language acquisition, physiological and psychic energies, pulsions, already passions and desires, are released by the mother and the baby who articulate a non-expressive totality. In this peculiar interactive world, composed of drives and states, the threshold of language organizes the semiotic moments in relation to, but also in excess of, the symbolic, which can slip, at each instant, into unnameable occurrences and happenings. Then, between every subject and every text, the *Sémiothique* (The Semiotic) sets an irreducible alterity that *Alter-a Mater* marks as a critical strength, a means for re-activating the primary, visceral experience with the other-than-self, simply the outer. Because during echolalia communication the otherness expands through bodily energies, unconscious processes, and mothering rhythms, the symbolic order is permanently converted into genuine explorations of happenings, by undertaking relationality and innovating intersectional positions. Thus, for Kristeva, alterity is not external to the materials that subjects can signify, but the very condition of their possibility, ensuring that significance occupies heterogeneous, erratic, and broad lands for (not)human renewal. My critical avatar *Alter-a Mater* dives into this restructuring web and interprets a long take for playing semiotic endeavors (I have just mentioned). By acting-in-action, the hierarchical system of dependency between the newborns and all kinds of mothers, *Alter-a* processes the Semiotic script to withdraw the *genotext* (Kristeva, 1974) differently about motherhood/mothering from the bio-power invisibility undergone across History. Kristeva's *semanalysis* allows *Alter-a* to bring back the body into languages, and both inscribe and valorize the logic of significance in the mother's corps, matter, and senses, which go through and embrace the variety of languages.

If during the semiotic shooting *Alter-a* encounters and faces subjectivities in process, it is by refocusing on the value of vulnerable signs and highlighting them in the fields of political resilience as well as in the preverbal, *geno-textual* outer skeletons. My goal is to concretely address the tension that occurs between the self-body and reality while sampling how the performative maternal voices, and their ensuing critical releases, foster the gesture of survival initiated by those bodies who give life by sharing it. If "the mother" is the reset point, a kind of multilayered ground zero, all human interactions with(in) our nature-culture ecosystem can only be perceived, endorsed, and embodied as intertwined, multilingual, nude steps toward thresholds of common memories, arts and tales, political figurations, and intellectual archives.

Therefore, by listening to Braidotti's critical *playlist*, the current study has been developed properly as a feminist act of ticking off hierarchical and secularized layers of discourse in pursuit of exposing the dynamism that pushes alterity into performance. *Alter-a Mater* would represent a sign-system fruition, a nude chart, starting from the hyper-figuration of the *cut*, of separation between affective corps and nexus of philosophical readings, psychoanalytic perspectives, gender studies, and *feminist waves*. So, when we inquire into the alterity sphere, we observe how the binding of subject-identity to the mother (or better, to what/who generates and cares through cutting, expanding, dividing, creating fissures within its own body) is foundational to the appearing of corporeal entities as well as to their implicit human positional agency. From the womb that becomes a sounding board for external resonances, this organic instrument through which the

first contact with what is world—simply with what is other—takes place, the vital entity is immediately skillful. The first external competence of breathing stipulates a venue in the communicative and deciphering life system.⁷ Reaching the other(s) who are outside, the nascent presence becomes an *acting agent*, propulsive toward history, by reactivating his/her/its immanence into the widespread semiotic network.⁸ These *actors* (thus conceived) build networks that combine communicational technique and sociality, whose components take shape through and during the actors' logical processing and carnal e-motions. Many currents of cognitivism have introduced research on the self-narrative temporalization, which begins with the first elocutions of infants. These voicings are labeled *holophrases*, whereby monosyntagms associated with echolalia and labial sonorities are articulated into innate narrative structures. Babies formulate proper narratemes, as arising micro-stories that will be concealed inside single words and evolve in elocutionary performances. In this way, the *I-tongue* gains access to the signifying interludes and gaps that inter-occur among limbs, while shaping the spheres of *subjectivity* and *intersubjectivity* interaction.

Surrounding a set of pre-grammatical affective movements, as observed by Freud and Mélanie Klein, within the native promise for gist, the parent/nurturer and the newborn plasm, imagine, settle the neo-subject-language in the polis, by codifying the future world with formulas charged with *touches* and *morceaux organo-logiques*.⁹ From syntagmatic axes and preludes to syntax, the self-speaking arises, precisely thanks to the *transfer* of care, facilitating access to language and to the reciprocity of loving, which both are necessary for joining the social space, namely all performance, and keep on surviving. I propose that this specific act of performing mutual needs, desires, unknown paces, means to reconstitute the politics to the flux of relations, interactions, maieutic across concrete realms, matter interfaces, as well as textual dynamics through individuals' life-endurance cartographies. The mother figures indeed, such as plural perspective directions, as frontiers between the irreducible plenitude of each singular living being and the world from which this singularity emerges and takes shape: a world that is already there, that precedes it¹⁰ by performing the zoological experience of surviving together. By enacting a network that intertwines affects, significations, organoids, and *techné*, the mother-boundaries enable the polyphony of what exists. But the mother landscape is plotted fully by the newborn, and they both graph and signify, play simply, the given-ness of being multiple and bearers. From birth onward, by populating the *outside-of*, we all become distinct, unique, exceptional tongues that move (into) reality not as mere instruments, but as meaningful communicating organs, upon which depend

⁷ Comparing Negri, R., Dolto, C., Busnel, M.C., Daffos, F., Lecanuet, J.P., (1997). *Que savent les fœtus*, érès éditions, Toulouse, 1997, pp. 7-15. « La naissance n'est qu'un épiphénomène dans une existence déjà bien remplie, et elle ne marque pas (hormis pour la fonction respiratoire) un saut brutal d'acquisition et de compétences. ».

⁸ Comparing Boumhaouad, H. (2017).

⁹ See Kristeva, J. (2016). "La linguistique, l'universel, et le 'pauvre linguiste'," in Irène Fenoglio, I., Coquet, J.C., Kristeva, J., Malamoud, C., and Quignard, P. *Autour de Émile Benveniste: sur l'écriture*, Seuil, 2016, <http://www.kristeva.fr/autour-d-emile-benveniste.html>. By reading a famous Émile Benveniste's structural lesson on Aristotle, Kristeva explains that language has been considered a principle inherent to the subject-player of *organon*, a truly instrument as an *organism of signification*.

¹⁰ See Cavarero, A. (1990). *Nonostante Platone. Figure femminili nella filosofia antica*, Editori Riuniti, Roma, 1990, p. 120.

both the quality of life and the strictu sensu development of saying, then being part of civilization, cultural mapping.

Therefore, the *external* that inhabits bodies —the multiple space of living-speaking, and later of the dual legacy between narration and reading—found and sowed therein the human *bios* as a “natural” animality. At the beginning, there is a concrete relation of meanings in perpetual becoming. Between life entities and language ones, the birth of new organic matter takes place, and puts the nominating action on. A multiplicity of sounds, feelings, events, sensorial issues beat the spaces of difference and follow the intervals between signs. The splitting of bodies and signals reproduces an *unlimited semiosis* addressed to energetic interpreters who provoke (even passively) a change of habits and codes exactly because they *read* things. Transgressing significations from the mental to the practical context, communicative *agents* always determine a different behavior from the expected use. The human way to stay and act in the world matches the pragmatic aspect hosted through the responding movements to a given sign. It becomes itself a new sign, a *representamen* of the common law that *reads and sees* the preceding sign by initiating further processes of semiosis (Eco, 1979).¹¹

I need to underline how the semiotic parenthesis I engaged focuses on the more structuralist aspects that characterize Braidotti concerning the omni-query around language. Nevertheless, we do not encounter in her work an affiliation with purely structuralist doctrines. We certainly grasp Braidotti’s capacity to let the universe-language and the universe-life interpenetrate, anchoring in the statement that one can never set aside language, but opposing the epistemics in classical semiotics, for which signs define themselves *only* in relation to one another, in a self-referentiality that becomes stifling.¹²

4. Across language(s); Touching Braidotti’s and more: Reaching others’ lands

Similarly, *Alter-a Mater* finds a good path in following the borders that join and divide linguistics from performative presences. *Alter-a & I*(we) proceed by investigating this querying point and coupling it with feminist’s bulks and approaches which give legitimacy to typical feminine thematics, such as domestic tasks or affective and biological angles, by empowering them through philosophy, theoretical frames, and finally valuable policies. Through *Alter-a*’s perspective, the fragility, the permeability, the skinny echoing of bodies, for instance, the baby and the mother ones as primary prototypes in a vulnerable and sensitive constellation, encounter the supremacy of a logically organized *I* at a turning point, an epochal shift. The meeting between the dominant discourses and the feminine opening to history is definitively transmuted both into a revelation and a revolutionary road to cross. While the idea of a prevailing subject wishes to execute sovereignty upon all living beings and environments, all bodies reveal, on the contrary, unexpected comprehension of what can be valuable: they incorporate a contemporary enigma,

¹¹ Eco, U. (1979). *The Role of the Reader Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1979, pp. 194-198.

¹² See Braidotti, R. (2014). Interviste/4. *Oltre la nostalgia. Per un’etica postumana affermativa. Intervista a Rosi Braidotti di Libera Pisano* in Lo Sguardo - rivista di filosofia - N. 15, 2014 (II) - La “Differenza Italiana”. p. 46.

such as a philosophy of the body-clue, of the *lived and living body*. This thinking, wishing, perceiving the body's materiality and skills is, in *Alter-a's* surroundings, nothing but an incarnated query, which goes further than the strictly gendered idea of women. The female and feminine bodies of the now can and need to undergo their physical and intimate textures, their being always in situation, freeing the epistemic strength of each *female, and feminized, experiences of embodiment* (Camille Froidevaux-Metterie, 2013).¹³

Here, *Alter-a Mater* is an agentive allegory sketching a dashboard to analyze how the biopowers continue to eclipse the true and subjective conditions that women-ized entities (social, natural, political, affective) continue to experience throughout many forms of alienation and extraction. *Alter-a* explores manifold ways of being-in-the-world following the example of the female corporeality but refusing its confinement to maternity alone. *Alter-a's* gesture illustrates how it is critically fertile to think subjectivity from the lived intensity of the female and feminine galaxies, mostly by mirroring gendered hierarchies and productive frameworks. On the contrary, because the horizons of biology—maternal or otherwise— are actually mutating, hybridized passages, openings toward queerness, political fluidity, and new modes of togetherness arise in daily life as well as in textual production. Knotted into the prohibit *text-ure* of life, the inborn alterity of philosophy finds Braidotti's screenplay about the reciprocity that entangles subjects and objects one by one, each in turn: from the human to the stone, within the terrestrial through the creaturely forces¹⁴. Because all creatures, as non-natural devices, permanently modify crafting ecosystems in which they exist, the fragmentation of all sorts of matter, even semiotic ones, follows the molecular system of materials. Humans alike, perform specifically their implication into reality, whereby lasting interaction with texts, all sorts of textuality, possible sexuality, and gender identification.

All the more so, as described earlier, Braidotti conveys contemporary feminine practices which valorize and retain the un-reveled spaciousness of textual desiring bodies. Under Braidotti's lenses, the organic writings overlap with the existence of life-bodies as a moving narrativity; the body and biographical account emerge as the primary tools humans use for investigating both the relation to knowledge and the constitution of subjectivity. The latter, in discovering itself, conjugates the patterns and plots that are agreed upon in the communities' history, reframing in-progress cultural circles and staying with others by dialogues, dissonances and reciprocity, in a hoped-for learning & teaching reciprocal nurturing. To notice the interweaving of its own historical existence throughout a *telling anthropology*,¹⁵ every single life is a true narrator. His/her/its singular dialectics verify, set out, and assign the cosmos steady re-generating as a perennial experience, shared by the *vivant*, by every living (and non-living) being. In this landscape, which the feminist companion Adriana Cavarero describes as cosmological, narrative modes and motifs, especially when autobiographical,¹⁶ come over. As privileged tracks for accessing the multi-dimensional affects and sensations, they interweave with *cogito*, plots, and senses, true

¹³ See Froidevaux-Metterie, C. (2013). Réinvention du féminin. *Le Débat*, 174(2), 95-113. Also comparing Froidevaux-Metterie, C. (2021). *Un corps à soi*. Seuil, Paris.

¹⁴ See Luisetti, F. (2023). *Essere pietra: Ecologia di un mondo minerale*, Venezia, wetlands.

¹⁵ See Heintz, M., Rivoal, I. (2014). *Ethnographies à contre-temps*. *Ethnologie française*, 44(3), 389-397.

¹⁶ See Pecere, P. (2023) *Incontro a Roma Tre con Adriana Cavarero* (June 2023). Web Reference: <https://youtu.be/OaHo2OWryPE?si=ZS4xl7oMK77zIKzS>

imaginaries and utopias. I have long nourished myself with many of Cavarero's adventures across philosophical and literary texts, and I learnt a lot from her essay *Corpo in figure*. Here, she details how the metaphor of the woman-nurturer, a kind of mother-receptacle of all that comes into being, things that are visible and wholly perceptible to the senses (Cavarero, 1995, 2024),¹⁷ overlaps with the idea of *Chôra*, which tradition outlined as a space, a *locus*, as the *amplitude* of possible meanings and forms. As a blank board, the *Chôra* carries an implicit potential for subversion and, with its foundational ambiguity, grasps the space-time inside the matter that partakes in shaping. If the *Chôra* interprets a sort of uterus displacement at once, and inward, she deploys a kind of invisible and formless, which receives all things (Daoust, 2023).¹⁸ Haunted beyond the boundaries of both politics and self-narration, the *Chôra*¹⁹ transforms into organic and sensitive aporias by reworking the arbitrary character of the amorphous and giving light to the miraculous birthing. Cavarero writes:

Corporeality, as the amorphic site of the mother, is something irreducible that the logos excludes from its domain but whose existence is forced to postulate. At the same time, it is something In which the logos itself generates its copies and hence also those (ultimately) sexed bodies that inhabit the world [...] the logos seems to fight against a material body that simply "appears" before it. This is done through a game of forced exclusion and of spurious discursive reappropriation. In this metaphorical battle, however, it is the male who takes possession of generative power at every turn, from the first scene to the last.²⁰

Thus, from Plato's *Timaeus*—the book that questions the origin of the universe, the sensible nature and the formation of the soul in the world, while probing scientific and mathematical knowledge to weave an anthropological model grounded in the specularity between human morality and divine design—the violent patriarchal monopoly which has been characterizing the millenary history of humanity (Recchia Luciani, 2018)²¹ gravated within the *logos*, that has made itself the sole legitimate *demiurge*, a figuration of the feminine, and by extension of the maternal, marking it by contradictory and various valences. Restarting from the removal of a natural memory inscribed into the world acquiescence, feminist mappings move toward a hermeneutics of contrast that, in the plural of shapes and lives, plays affectivity of bodies for featuring how we all *become* creatures in relation. Through a countercurrent *passage* of the latent and the repressed, or rather, of a *discursivité autre*, Bradoitti, Cavarero, and *the others*, intend to re-signify literatures and languages. Cavarero's centers on semiotics that circles the maternal category of generating. It

¹⁷ See also Cavarero, A. (1995). *Corpo in figure. Filosofia e politica della corporeità*, Castelvechi-Lit edizioni, Roma 2024, pp. 95-100.

¹⁸ Comparing Daoust, V. (2023). *Femme-Chôra : exclue ou exclusive ? Limites de la critique butlérienne de Luce Irigaray* in *Recherches féministes*, volume 36, n° 2, 2023, pp. 149–164.

¹⁹ See also Crevier Goulet, S.A. (2024). « La chora sémiotique, un concept pour l'avenir ? ». Julia Kristeva, *Révolte et reliance*, Hermann, 2024. p.161-170.

²⁰ Cavarero, A., (2002). *Stately Bodies: Literature, Philosophy, and the Question of Gender* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), trans. De Lucca R., Shemek, D., p. 85.

²¹ Recchia Luciani, F. (2018). « Passato, presente e futuro del FESTIVAL DELLE DONNE E DEI SAPERI DI GENERE. Fenomenologia di un femminismo desiderante », in CATALOGO_Festival delle donne e saperi di genere, edizioni_2012-2018, Eliotecnica Meridionale, Bari, 2018, p. 12.

constitutes a crucial node also in Braidotti's navigations and in a beautiful 2014 interview, she states that we can react prolifically to the structural impasses of Western language by creating and sounding through our viscera, the uncharted melodies and zones of:

sistemi linguistici più espressivi e meno mediati dalla semiotica europea, anche codici primitivi, come i tatuaggi, i messaggi, i gesti, la bio-semiotica [...] Ci occorre una semiosi molto più radicale che tenga conto dei sistemi di significazione non umani: dagli animali alle tecnologie, sistemi che si autoriproducono e che producono senso e significato, ma assolutamente non in un sistema semiotico classico [...] Io sono con Glissant sulla creolizzazione dei linguaggi e quindi sulla grande libertà del rapporto con il significante maestro, tramite processi d'ibridazione che mettono in gioco attori non umani, siano essi animali, terrestri o tecnologici. Una politica del posizionamento non può prescindere quindi dal linguaggio, ma neanche dal corpo, inteso come un'intersezione tra biologico, simbolico e sociale. [more expressive language systems, less mediated by European semiotics—including so-called 'primitive' codes such as tattoos, messages/signs, gestures, and biosemiotics. [...]] We need a far more radical semiosis that takes account of nonhuman systems of signification, from animals to technologies—systems that self-reproduce and generate sense and meaning, though not within a classical semiotic system. [...] I side with Glissant on the creolization of languages and thus on a greater freedom in our relation to the master signifier, through hybridization processes that bring nonhuman actors into play, whether animal, terrestrial, or technological. A politics of location cannot, therefore, dispense with language—nor with the body, understood as an intersection of the biological, the symbolic, and the social].²²

The threads of the intersection proposed by Braidotti, by acts and forms that attack the motionless realm of the masculine mind, venture us into the concept of proximity announced by Cavarero in several of her works, including *In Spite of Plato. A Feminist Rewriting of Ancient Philosophy* (Polity Press, 1995) and *Surging Democracy: Notes on Hannah Arendt's Political Thought* (Stanford University Press, 2021). Being-in-proximity constitutes a political materialism experience, mostly when mediated by the voice, which generates a hyperbole of troubling-knowing oneself who needs to stay *au diapason* of the other's body, sounds, grammars. Vocality then assumes a tangible presence that is measurable during the symbiosis of listening and transmitting. Semantics, world-visions, varieties of timbre, intimate and distinctive, unfold in a resonance between vocal corps, body-matters, and migrate from me-to-you, from the others to one another. While connecting and separating subjects through orality, the *episteme of proximity* praises the phatic happening of bodies-birth. In this sense, vocality does not represent a medium for attaining, touching, brushing against, or contemplating (even with the awareness of a residual intelligibility) an ideal of *logos*, an origin of life. In the voices that circulate among human relations, proximity constitutes the brute experience of touching-close the body of the other. The metaphoric landscape pinned out by the category of proximity reveals the alterity of being polyphonic, and all-bound at the same time, reaches a political and valorizing returning to maternity, to birthing, and translates the ever-new relation of living in common by forecasting a society to constantly rebuild, re-compose. In this context, among overlays of musicality, of the

²² Braidotti, R. (2014), p. 47. (Translation is mine).

resounding, shattering, and colliding of anatomies and organisms, the force of the *returning and reminding narration* calls for a different, fairer interpretation of the Penelope character. That Western woman who makes of the *gymnastics of narrative weaving* the original device for practicing a female philosophy that can offer itself as an analytical tool for opening up the whole human species' capabilities. Whereby the intellectual and material appropriation of things becomes a concrete epistemic event, a revelation of the world, according to Cavarero and Braidotti, we need personal plots and stories to provide relational and affective bodies of a tangible knowledge which at once proliferate and graph the reality around. From vital necessities and desires to intellectual and pragmatic ones, the deep identitarian meaning and purpose are reconducted to the unity and the unicity of incarnated histories, telling. The narrative tool is crucial for self-understanding, because identity, as

self comes to desire the tale of his or her own life-story from the mouth (or pen) of another. The Narration of a life-story, therefore, offers an alternative sense to politics, not only because it deals with unique persons, but because it illustrates the *interaction* of unique people.²³

5. Musas of *birthing*. Mothers of *happening* through history

By reflecting upon the *narrative self* means to think, feel, and perform autobiography, Alter-a and I have needed to keep in mind (as Ulysses did, re-animating the Odyssey play again) that we exist amid the *re-fabulating* developed by others both about the world and our own story. Within the heart of desirous intertwining among living beings, hyperbolically, the cosmos is because of the words, embodied and enchanted by a Muse telling others' lives.²⁴ Muse is a stranger voice, a device of alterity, a figure of estrangement that reminds to the self-speaking how each voice, each memory is made up of plural identities at the same time. Similarly, *Alter-a Mater* breathes critical understandings, and integrates the allegorical power of the muse for inspiring (as in ancient tradition) new words, discourses, and directions for plots and destinies, forecasting history whereby the intrigue of human travelling, which, from body to politics, looks for the profound sense, the last limit of being-in-life, for it, inside it.

By accompanying the awareness that we all embody the unicity of a subject that embraces history and stories, the *narrative identity* (*identité narrative*, such as the philosopher Paul Ricoeur's concept indicating a true category of practice, which we borrow here) acts organically and projects itself along a path constellated by its own duration. In search of the integrity of one's origin, narrative identities move within a temporal structure fitting with a dynamic identity model, issued from the poetic shaping, rooted in a narrative spread.²⁵ The other who generates us, both displays and tells us the *ipseity* of our body. At once, in this affabulatory optic, the symbolic mothers, who

²³ Cavarero, A. (2000). *Relating Narratives : Storytelling and Selfhood*, trans. Kottman P. A., (Routledge, 2000) p. X.

²⁴ See Cassin, B. (2024). *L'Odysée au Louvre, Un roman graphique*, Flammarion, Paris, 2024.

²⁵ Comparing Bragantini, A. (2013). *Identité personnelle et narration chez Paul Ricoeur et Hannah Arendt*, LO SGUARDO, Rivista di Filosofia, N.12, 2013 (II) - *Paul Ricoeur: Intersezioni*, p. 135.

are at least more than one for each individual,²⁶ gather the singular nativity within the collective network. Aggregating us around the event of one's own and others' birth, re-composing the structures of storytelling through practices of listening and caring, we are intrinsically inclined, exposed to the quest for our self-identity. The dichotomy *Même-Autre* (the Same-the Other) is indeed displaced by tale reconfigurations of the newly occurred self who speaks and listens, turns and integrates the corporeal, telling presence of the mother, along a self's and other's memorising hybridisation.

Such metamorphosis occurs both during the generative time and the storytelling workshop, inaugurating communication as a survival settlement for the species. In the meantime, the *utterance*, that *tiers-temps* (third temporal dimension) inhabited by transmissive vocality raises the question for a common responsibility and asks for the *who* capable to do/not to do, to perform, to assume his/her/its agency, authorship and take the courage to transmit the others' story (as Hannah Arendt emphatically stated, mostly in her work *Between past and future*, edited in 1961). A profound observer of this German-Jewish philosopher, it is Kristeva herself who develops a passionate volume on three genius women—among them Arendt, together with Melanie Klein and Colette. Kristeva selected these women precisely for having interrogated the tradition of philosophy very freshly. So as to say, towards Arendt's perspective, the *event of living* engraves the miracle of birthing and synchronically highlights the fragility of human affairs by rediscovering therein political spaces, as surprising as ancestral. We follow Kristeva's passage about Arendt's pioneering look at the *mutualism* between natality and politics.

A total experience of the fact of birth necessarily includes being born, giving life, acquiescing to the uniqueness of each birth, being reborn continually into the life of the mind, a mind that is because it begins anew in the plurality of others and in that condition alone can act as a living thought that surpasses all other activity [...] As for a political action that would be the equivalent of a birth and would offer shelter for our strangeness, Hannah Arendt... invites us to think about and live it in the present... but always but always with forgiveness and promise [...]²⁷

According to Kristeva, Arendt's critical force, applied to the contemporary scene, consists in a thoroughly modern revoking of the Judeo-Christian cultural bond to the love of life. With her original reading and view of the Western capital plot in which birthing, mothering and humanity are just "one thing", she liberates the life-happening from the religious *passion*. Christ's embodiment, consubstantial and specular to the loving and suffering that Madonna experiences

²⁶ It is worth stressing that the political figure of the *embodied mother* mirrors and ultimately goes past that of the symbolic mother, in the sense described by journalist Ida Dominijanni. She affirms that the symbolic imaginary raises an allegorical level and finally found a new feminine. This notion implies that differences and mediations among women allow to extract all the feminine bodies from the universal category of an ideal woman. Then, if we place in all women's authority, as also in each singularity of them, the care for a plural wishes society, it is because those women-figures incarnate dynamic sets for exchanges and losses, unspeakable territories and closeness, compromises and brave deeds. Dominijanni keeps on saying that symbolical mother's authority is truly a common (wel)fare to which all we can draw on for achieving a free social (self)condition and freeing it through a mobile structure of the standardized gender roles. See Dominijanni, I. (1995). *Il desiderio di politica* in Lia Cigarini, *La politica del desiderio*, Pratiche editrice, Parma, 1995, pp. 16-17.

²⁷ Kristeva, J. (2001). *Hannah Arendt: Life is a Narrative* (F. Collins, Trans.). University of Toronto Press., pp. 88-89.

through her body & mind *haecceity*, reawakens properly over history because it returns to the original union between the newborn and the generative mother-icon. Arendt conjoins the natural contingency of “the beginning” with the desiring freedom of individuals to love, to think, to exercise judgment upon events, to build political consortium and forgiveness. As suggested by Kristeva, Arendt’s way of observing the realm of intellectual and emotional things, words, and social upbringings is a legacy to be shared among all kinds of feminine expressions and extensively among humans. From philosophers to workers, from artists to politicians, all women become actresses who may redesign the common perspectives that can arise from rethinking maternity. Arendt’s outlook is illuminating because she succeeds in bringing the classical tradition into dialogue with the technological condition as experienced by individuals during late modernity, while offering a zooming vision of motherhood, both generative and symbolic, and so truly revolutionary. She associated it with the primordial act of coming-to-life, which finds scope and form in the original *narratio* of each *new event*.

If Rosi Braidotti does not develop a precise study on Arendt’s work, she nevertheless gathers some of its “pearls” within other feminine writings, notably those of Cavarero and Kristeva, whom I referred to across the current study. Besides, it is fruitful to trace here some of Arendt’s concepts, as we bear witness to a void, a tangible absence of them in feminist theories. At the core of this lack, I place *Alter-a* figure which aims to cover this hiatus by stating how critical and keen can be a *divergences, departures, offsets, gaps* system of thinking. Through it, unveiled and unsaid topics share with alterity the virtues of a seminal principle that lets bias and discarding themes surface and re-play, re-puzzle taxonomy while re-classifying hierarchies of knowledge and urgent present-day aspects.

Actually, Arendt’s distancing from feminist movements since the 1960s is a paradigmatic case deserving of further investigation.²⁸ That I tried to develop by using Braidotti’s lenses. Working with her framework, I surface Arendtian insights and advance fresh interpretations of her thought, aligning them with the feminist theoretical and practical horizons she delineated, always by connecting with others’ texts and political stances. Specifically, the narrative activities overlap with the spaces of political performances and the positional status of people who (can) become true transformers of the present, of society. The comparison between the two philosophers offers fertile ground for my journey, during which I trace how it can be textually forceful and experimental, and how it prompts reflection by surfacing a *beginning-the-new* source. Arendt qualifies the intrinsic signification of agency as the process of starting and welcoming the fresh action, choice, and behaviour. They (may) happen by crossing both a kinetic matrix and a processual ecology filled with plural subjects who ground connective, storying dimensionality and enact the powers that sustain and animate a *cosmological agency*.

According to the woman thinker, the plurality of the human condition arises *in progress*. Hence, through a permanent reframing of discourses, the agents’ issues become fulfilled ones. Arendt describes the active space-time continuum by employing the image of the network. The web diagrams underscore the complex weave that belongs to human relations, which map out the

²⁸ Comparing Nicolini, O. (2009). *Per una lettura femminista di Hannah Arendt. Ventaglio delle donne*, in *Incontro con la filosofia africana*, Rivista semestrale di Filosofia, N. 6, 2009, B@belonline/print, Mimesis, Roma, pp. 197-210.

symbiosis between *entities* and *existents*. Even unconsciously, in these symbiotic intertwinings, men and women create a foundational ecosystem by regenerating the sense of matter and power.

6. Towards a pluri-connected *Zoé*

Similarly, Braidotti dynamises the concept of *zoé* through the allegory of a reticular monism, treading upon a Spinozist ontology that imagines living energies and their relations within a superstructure that animates living matter by organising interlinked systems. The philosopher's critique is omniscopic: human and nonhuman, vegetal and bacterial entities displace boundaries while fragmenting and connecting species, aside from traditional temporal schemas in the light of a zoetic cogito.²⁹

In Braidotti's perspective, the primordial attribute and function of *zoé* is to redistribute the hierarchy between the categories of *bios* and of death. Within both the material events of beginning and the organic natality of both hard and soft sensible & visible. *Zoé* synthesizes the living privilege of human and non-human matter; it unsettles not only the limits between humans and animals, plants and vegetal life, physical and environmental elements, but also dislocates temporal frameworks. The universes that *travel* inside and across our perceptions and communication with life-filled contexts represent for Braidotti a wandering materialist vitalism that is relational, affective, embodied, and situated. This movement organises a multi-code system among a variety of energies, forces, vectors of all matter: from the high-tech and virtual ones to the rough needs of cities, workers, and youth's communicative media. Energetic, acting, linguistic, fleshy strings unfold into multiple relations with the others: human and non-human, technological and fabricated, textual and discursive. We face a truly radical materialism. No ontological idealism is at play in Braidotti's all-body, all-matter feminism, in which the perspectives of "location," of being positioned in the world and in the human-technological network, produce a form of universal consciousness. Including artificialities, Braidotti gives the material world the role of an interplay between feminine entities and a chance for forecasting. That is the responsibility of realizing and affirming themselves as "great epistemic authority to the lived experience of the writing/speaking *I*."

Based on thinking and creating figurations, in her *Posthuman Feminism* (2022), Braidotti intersects *physis* with the transitive virtues of storytelling, melted with the arendtian mind-bending of "thinking by yourself". Writing and recounting from one's own position allow women, and people in general, to elucidate and spread out the multiple desires which can disseminate as social as creative projects within today's feminisms, for tomorrow.

Because posthuman feminism and critical theory require workable figurations [...] Figurations dramatize the specific cartographic line they pursue in their quest for alternative modes of knowledge production. Thinking is about creativity and enlivenment. It is less a matter of representing others, or speaking on their behalf, than about joining in

²⁹ Comparing Braidotti R. (2014), pp. 44-50.

the collective construction of affirmative ways of knowing. This is crucial to the posthuman feminist project of turning thought into an instrument of creation of the new.³⁰

As Braidotti proposes, we can require staging new figurative practices and performances, by touching the real, affecting poetry and theatre, connecting with aggregative circuits, social associations, and organisms, thus traversing all sexualities. These modes and stances, as intimate as political, engage the ethical values for constructing inclusion, where the *otherness* is the constitutive element of *bios*. Under the skin and organs, the multi-task feminine language stores the alternative models for a virtual, transformative, techno-artificial vocality within the political millennium to come, to draft collectively. From the passage above, we find the crisscrossing coherence of Braidotti's parabola. She asserts:

Metamorphic creatures are uncomfortable 'body-doubles' or simulacra that simultaneously attract and repel, comfort and unsettle: they are objects of adoration and aberration that play upon the deeper structures of our sense of identity. One is reminded of Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath who saw in their mirrors monsters emerging from the depth of their inner selves. Difference is often experienced as negative by women and LGBT's themselves and represented in their cultural production in terms of aberration or monstrosity.³¹

Thus, within Braidotti's footsteps, we interpret the intersection of *self-signals* as forms of resistance and alternative imaginations, as concrete and affective spaces for relationality, and again as precious pieces for composing a renewed idea of transmission and natality, alterity and narrating monstrosity, diversity. These elements bring Arendt and Braidotti together when it comes to responding to the compels of their present. They suggest how revolutionary and resilient it may be to adopt and put into action a critical and reflective dialogue with oneself, yet in constant appeal to others. This aptitude calls for a shared responsibility that understands thinking, loving, and living beings as fragments interconnected, as integral parts of, and for, the terrestrial ecosystem. Such a materialist looks upon events, both personal and collective, enabling us to observe the real as a semantical and seminal constellation which equips the *self* with the capacity to distinguish which ethics to embody, how to react against hierarchical authorities or conformism. Precisely at the height of the socio-political vicissitudes of the twentieth century, the keen female observer Arendt anticipates the crucial aspect linked to the *critical thought*. She has been a pioneer in underlining how the actions of single men and women unfold within a set of preexisting acts and discourses. Indeed, individuals must play History by re-acting the external environment under the awareness of a polyhedral *dynamis* with others who naturally deflect and reshape our inflections. In a few words, the embryonic action deposited in the *zoé* of each undergoes many modifications once it reaches the time of *bios*. Initiated by individuals, thus fully implicated in the productive process, it is the human condition of being-able-to-act that casts a retrospective gaze upon the fragmentary and unachieved status of actions, restoring in turn the presence of a fundamental living unity. Namely, and restarting from Braidotti, the weaving of the

³⁰ Braidotti, R. (2022). *Posthuman Feminism*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2022, p. 213.

³¹ Braidotti, R. (2000). "Chapter 8 Teratologies". *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000, pp. 156-172.

interconnections that underlie the stories and choices of each person offers in each new act a story to be told, a bearer of patterns of resilience.

If the pre-constitutive network of relations nurtures conflicts and handlings upon the primary intentions of the *agent*, at the same time, the semiotic *web of others*, of the narrative forces, becomes the "medium" that gathers individuals together. Through the participative and multi-agent interplay, all the *vivant* keeps transforming into crafts, and translating the fruitful self & others' narration into a passage for grasping our location amid bio-powers, as well as our feelings, emotions, thoughts. Such *human crafting* elaborates and brings forth (whether consciously or not) narrated bodies and stories which both imply the agentive and processual act of reciting as "the first result of men's acting into history" (Arendt, 1961). In some way, the macro history of humanity and the micro plots of each individual, as Arendt argues, intertwine continually, because once men and women apply and set up deeds, rules, battles within the human realm, "history becomes a process", as well as "nature is a process". (Arendt, 1961, p. 62).³²

If narrating the other is indeed a practice, then the frame of the *polis* and of its ethical and sustainable citizenship is assembled in listening and in close dialogue with all living matter. It displays itself in a *cave* of possible pluriverses which need to be depicted and brought into play of the common. In her *Between Past and Future*, Arendt states:

Human action, like all strict political phenomena, is bound up with human plurality, which is one of the fundamental conditions of human life insofar as it rests on the fact of natality, through which the human world is constantly invaded by strangers, newcomers whose actions and reactions cannot be foreseen by those who are already there and are going to leave in a short while.³³

Thus, the phatic and transmissive moment, included *de facto* within the kinetics of birth, is realized as a dialectical interaction among unique subjectivities. Through the others' memories, words, and point of view, the relational *mother-matrix* propagates in the original emblem of being-two. Thereby, the human species reaches reality by fulfilling the event of birth with a bio-molecular tale. Passing through a double-bind observation, subjects become empowered containers of "otherness" from which different existences cohabit and articulate themselves in communication. Self and others' fabulation restitutes us to the terrestrial happening where every element intertwines within the flow of a lively image showing a patchwork of narrated stories. Such a mindset inscribes the experience of becoming-subjectivity within a feminist and feminine perspective. From a *pensée-corps* (as the French novelist Jeanne Hyvrard wrote), the appearing-constituting of the *I* through the other-than-my-self guarantees the most archaic moment in nature, and the most primitive in the collectivity: the survival of the human species in the Polis, in tribes, in caravans, in pluriversal civilizations.

Nevertheless, the extraordinary alien who arrives in life is not *the elected* at all, but just an ordinary being. A kind stranger who reminds us how humans need to be outside of their own locus to survive through others' presence. Similarly, the mother-language is the *presence* that engages the

³² Arendt, H. (1961), *Between Past and Future*, Penguin Books, London, (1977-2006).

³³ Ibid. p. 61.

phantasmatic other that constitutes my subjectivity, my being-speaking, my being-inclined-to the alterity. Life, as in Arendt's and as in Braidotti's perspective, does not abide by the mere zoo-centric survival of the species-*logos*, but roots itself in passion, in affections, and in love for everyone, anyone, as the most common being. This anyone governs me, rendering me to the other life corps and organism's complexity, as to the diversity into the unicum fusing *zoé* and *bios*. Here Kristeva is back again to remind us how powerfully feminine traces carve through theory for designing shared *Amur Mundi* futures. At the same time, the braiding of female reliefs *informs* existence, its visions and landscapes, through vulnerable surroundings, lauding anyone's voice. Looking at Arendt's dimensionality of *what* tends to be a matrix of political actions, the love for *anyone*—just as fragile as I am—is the radical reason permitting me/you/others to *be* in this world. I *am* because of *your* love, as it could be a woman-mother's action of birthing. However, as Arendt suggests, the miracle of love needs to be devoid of any metaphysics or abstraction and constantly reintroduced in the circles of earth's multi-species cosmos, also "disseminated among human plurality... in the infinite temporality of mankind's narratives" (Kristeva, 2001, p. 58). Because if one's/anyone's life is fully a single occurrence, at the same time it is the simplest event among infinite *meanings* of plural lives. Kristeva underlines how feminine experiencing at twice the plurality and uniqueness of nativity, contributes intrinsically to sketch out a new way of perceiving freedom and political chances.

Thus femininity is seen as being not only a given from our first origins, but also a difference that is intrinsic to the action which we know to be, for Arendt, the very essence of the political: femininity does not confine itself to the body as serf, but indeed constitutes the plurality of the world, a plurality in which it participates.³⁴

The woman-mother who reinvents, in every era, the historical not-finitude plurality within the human, draws from the hearth vitality the essence of being in a mutual *reliance*. At this juncture, among linguistics, passions, and members, our analyses coagulate into the path where the *Alter-a Mater* mapped some layers of Braidotti's thought. There, the references weave a framework with other visions while jamming the emergence of critical feminine landscapes. Indeed, our cartography of Braidotti follows circular routes for uncovering the myriad places in which the maternal figure is able to dwell, to dream, to stream.

7. Difference Feminism: Converging and questioning the outspread of feminine politics, literature, and critics

The variety of feminist waves and canons during the last fifty years is the most illuminating and revolutionary historical feature characterizing female and feminine achievements, as well as their main boosts, research innovations, and exploratory paths. Considering this aspect, in this paragraph I go deeper into Braidotti's cartography (which I have engaged with up to now) in order to add a micro-scale perspective of her exchanges with the beliefs of sexual difference. In her Italian essay *Madri, Mostri, Macchine*, 2021 (which is quite dissimilar in content from its specular English version, *Mother, Monsters, and Machines*), Braidotti clarifies her engaged, fair-play critique

³⁴ Kristeva, J. (2001), *Hannah Arendt: Life is a Narrative*, p. 70.

of the thinkers of difference feminism. She highlights the *systemic care* they have shown towards the maternal body since the Sixties, from which a surge of *sexuate knowledge* on corporeality—sparked by feminism—crashed against the humanistic knowledge and its masculine language structuralism.

Braidotti frames the contradictory, hyperbolic aspects that arose within all the women's movements—and particularly within the knowledge of sexual difference—not as composing a post-feminist stance that might appear as a fixed, ultimate arrival. Rather, she sees them as embracing a progressive dismantling of the *architectures* that sustain principles of mind-universality, and of corporeal and psychic unity, both structuring global sociality upon the liberal myth of the modern subject. Also, these female critics facilitated perceiving the alienating contemporary structures as a multi-layered web in which it will be always doable to rescue discursive patterns, cultural resources, and symbolic heritages.

In a crucial passage of her analysis (that I partially reframe),³⁵ Braidotti develops her reading of the school of *difference feminism* and makes it clear how the paradox of a *sexuated knowledge* requires to be revalued, re-mapped within an epistemic and political import. Effectively, it chiefly brought into focus the variety of differences operating on manifold registers and community levels. Thanks to the *different school*, the body became not only a battlefield but the newly printed trace of a woman's becoming-subject. Tangible, organically inspired bodies revealed then as possible staging for feminine politics and knowledges, tracking themselves into the historical signs of a social and symbolic subversion (still underway). By an act of willing, those women deconstruct and re-signify a further becoming-woman, finding within it a methodology in process: an ongoing readjustment toward empathy as the most promising way of embracing alterity and intersectional diversity. Women from diverse backgrounds confront the ethical and practical tasks of differentiating resources, perspectives, gestures, and movements that give rise to a collective, multicolored community of life. This brings to light, and continues to perform, embodied acknowledgments as machines of desire, as new choices, as other histories to incarnate.

It is not by chance that in a double-track interview between Braidotti and Judith Butler (1994, *Feminism by Any Other Name*) around Monique Wittig's cutting-edge poetics, the dialogue becomes fervent, precisely upon the formal breakthroughs which both irrigated and dissected the *sexual difference thinking*. From Braidotti's perspective:

[...] we need to valorize sexual difference as aiming at the symbolic empowerment of the feminine understood as "the other of the other": as a political project [...] whereas [...] everything I am saying rests on a de-essentialized, complex, and multi-layered understanding of the female subject. Woman is a complex entity which, as Kristeva puts it, pertains both to the longer, linear time of history and to a deeper, more discontinuous sense of time: this is the time of cyclical transformation, of counter-genealogies, of becoming and resistance [...]³⁶

³⁵ See Braidotti, R. (2021). *Madri, mostri e macchine*, Castelvechi, Roma, 2021, p. 5.

³⁶ Braidotti, R. in Butler, J. (1994). "Feminism by Any Other Name." *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2-3, Summer-Fall 1994, pp. 2761.

Braidotti situates the intellectual achievements, the consultative and aggregative practices, the emancipation of the manifesting body, and finally the searches within literature, as a female ground-breaking fruit. The *Difference Feminism* has known how to situate itself as different, as a class-in-struggle, in opposition to each kind of power because it embraces the force of plural narratives, languages, devices. It delineates how to exist within allied bodies by aggregating the experience of individual lives into a temporal dimension that rewrites history and its cycles. In like manner, through its re-signifying the maternal polyphony of alterities and metamorphoses, the very valuable analytic practice proposed by *Alter-a Mater*, keeps its foundation on deconstructive modeling for dissecting texts and critically re-play with(in) them a startling scenario. Consistently *Alter-a* picks up the pace of deconstructive methods, by evoking the frolic between *zoé* forces and textualities, and inviting our reflection to an acting-in-common. Deconstruction, conceived and initiated by the philosopher Jacques Derrida, has thus led many *vagues*—including (post)feminist and (post)structuralist currents—to conceive and start the deposition of metaphysical thought. These critical waves have been aiming to install, within the multiple *feminine-S* populating the decolonial era, a discursive alterity which women can functionally enact. Among these voices, we find Braidotti, who prompts how the metaphysical tradition cannot be circumvented by escaping Western codifying alliances of meanings and power. She then *cyphers* Derrida's proposals to re-semanticize and harbor subjectivities within fresh textualities and prompts for releasing interpretations which disclose thanks to other, odd and troubling *utterances*. Whereby this flow, Braidotti gathers within Derridean research the promise of invisible, in-audible spaces assigned to performance & agency which stays, intrinsically, in the sharable, vital link among linguistic subjects. This space reflects, throughout Derrida's formula of *DifférAnce*, an alphabetic ploy that re-fabricates within graphs an archetypal passage to the archeology of western signs and significant mechanism. This *A*, which stands as the un-nominated shifting among meanings and letters, indicates the original distance between form and intentions, comprehension and signals. It intensely overwhelms the relation among languages and tongues which, in the prism of feminine deconstructive affiliation, manifest as a concrete *calling to come*. In addressing this calling, we can recognize that writing and poetry emerge from processes of assemblage, dissolution, and reconstruction. They stage an experience of the self that realizes while dis-incorporating and integrating its *pieces*, covering learning-stages for acquiring new materials, being aware in progress, yet situated within reality, as the bio-changing *heart* of the maternal-*you*, keeping the bond with the first *alterity-you* and sampling the heterogeneity of affective dwells.

By entrusting and delivering oneself into the other-different from us, into the other *mother-tongue*, the language (which) belongs to the other, coming from the other, as the coming of the other (here I translate from Derrida's quote: "la langue (qui) est à l'autre, venue de l'autre, la venue de l'autre,"³⁷) situates a laboratory of loving relations, all the more intimate the more social and political they are. Mirroring the motherhood challenge in the factual and pluri-connected presence of the newborn corresponds to a fulfilment-to-build only by feeling and tuning the interval between corps, a thick profound tear *between you-and-I*, a carnal *DifférAnce* among different organics that is crucial for each communication, life pursuit. It distances the birthing

³⁷ Derrida, J. (1996). *Le monolinguisme de l'autre, ou, la protèse de l'autre*, Galilée, 1996, Paris, pp. 126-127.

entities from each other while it places the mother in a condition of vulnerability and alterity, as Kristeva formulates.³⁸ The bodies involved in the maternal multisensory action perform biocentric consciousnesses and touch at the dark stage of the original fragmentation of meanings and metaphysics. In traversing the awareness of being detached, the need for a systemic belonging gains access to a cognitive frontier towards survival. These jumps open and release the self's display onto the carnality of a single lively body that splits and chops, disjoins by looking to another corps-to-come. Thereby participating, beastly, within a wide, multiple, extending reality, each individual, through the in-borning ordeal of mothering, partakes in and helps to enact the plurality of worlds, both human and non-human. In this process, the subjects become auroral: they engage the cosmic and originary dimension of an *infinite flesh*, and a desiring that sharpens the wisdom of absence while enclosing organs of reception.³⁹

Within the lived maternal experience, at the dawn of language, the *other* who speaks inaugurates the deciphering of signification through the legacy, the bond with others. The potency of this bond implies a responsibility which, for both Derrida and Braidotti, is conserved within the other-than-my-self, as a proficiency that renders me available to receive the aporia generated by the wound, the hiatus between *Logos* and bodies⁴⁰. Meanwhile, if we remain within the perimeters of *Sexual Difference*, by giving maternity the chance to nominate things differently from secular worldviews, it's because here we still find and benefit from an ethical response that looks for a renewed coexistence among species and diverse genders. Here fastens Braidotti's imagery, which depicts how hybridized *agency* allows the de-territorialization of socio-identitarian normativity, making of the *self-tongue* a constitutively multi-language, therefore politically active, and activatable too. In her cult-book *Patterns of Dissonance. A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy*, Braidotti pays homage to Derrida's work of excavations undertaken upon the origins of Western language in pursuit of a re-signifying cartography that maps the *avenir* among living beings.

Derrida posits the originary deferral of philosophical subject in relation to the process of signification, of meaning production [...] The philosophical text is in fact governed by the codes of 'onto-theological' language, which give Western thought its distinct character: the illusion of presence, of a fixed point, of a synthezizing whole which takes the place of the subject. This logocentric discourse plays a normative function in philosophy. The solution that Derrida proposes to this endemic disease of philosophy is the eventual possibility of 'unveiling' within the texts, the traces of their adherence to and therefore complicity with this onto-theological mode, that is the signifying code of philosophy par excellence.⁴¹

Braidotti follows Derrida's proposals and curbs the man-subject as the horrific symbol of the *I* that asserts and observes the world from above, through a logocentric violence, neutralizing the

³⁸ See Kristeva, J. (2003). *Le génie féminin. Hannah Arendt, (tome I)*, p. 47.

³⁹ Comparing Muraro, L. (2011). *Non é da tutti. L'indicibile fortuna di nascere donna*, Carocci, Roma, 2011, p. 40.

⁴⁰ See Derrida, J. (1967). *L'écriture et la différence*, Seuil, Paris, 1967 ; see also Jacques Derrida, *Le Toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy*. Éditions Galilée, 2000.

⁴¹ Braidotti, R., (1991). *Patterns of Dissonance. A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy*, pp. 98-99.

feminine multiplicities that exist within it by manipulating their horizons and potential activisms from many cultural and environmental roots. Within Braidotti's system, atomized in modern subjectivity, abstracted from relational and material needs, anchored in the Cartesian logic of a rational Eurocentric male, this "Western Man" becomes one of the pivots endorsing a transition towards the Posthumanist current.

We read from the chapter *Posthuman Feminist Theory* in which Braidotti attunes her speech to the post-human fluxes.

The "death of Man" announced by Foucault (1970) formalized an epistemological and moral crisis that went beyond binary oppositions, cutting across different poles of the political spectrum. Poststructuralist theorists called for insubordination from received humanist ideals. They targeted the humanistic arrogance of continuing to place Man at the center of world history, and more specifically, the implicit assumption that what is "human" about humanity is connected to a sovereign ideal of "reason" as Enlightenment based rationality and science-driven progress.⁴²

8. The modern neutral *Self*: Walking through Deconstruction to Monstrosity. Who's wounding, who's wounded?

Disseminated across numerous fields of study, the strategies that arose with Deconstruction and, subsequently, within Poststructuralism (as mentioned earlier), seem to assimilate some of Braidotti's patterns, mostly when they conjoin with the force of a *language-thought-body* that functions as a brainstorming device. This engages methodologies that endorse a cogitating and composing performativity working on concomitance, collision, assonances, and discordances as the healthy mirror of alternative political and social models. Through them, *feminine identities* (including all kinds of sexual stances or positions, natural gendered belongings, or just intellectual and emotional aggregation) can design habitats and let arise communities around disparate critical textualities. The core of a circling ecosystem synthesizes the strength of theoretical identities, showcasing the *birth-happening* of thinking anew.

Life that happens within the body, within the *life of the mind* (here evoking Arendt's inspiring traces once more), the thread linking the multifaceted figures of mothers and the geographies of maternity, thus appears to traverse history and roam those *lands* which inherit from collective experiences of being born, of being-born-from, and of cultures within the human who thinks, who crafts the world. As the philosopher Walter Benjamin notes, across generations, the temporal planes intersect with divergent souvenirs, creating shocks in the perspectives on power, sometimes dismantling communities or offering new publishing acknowledgments on collective togetherness, futural *milieux*. Because perception of temporal sheets is part of self-biological evolution since everyone's birth, another approach to space-time dimensions can change the course of events and reading, confronting, and dealing with violence and domination differently. Here, Braidotti's project about the female, feminists' fruition and growth, and by hyperbole on the

⁴² Braidotti, R., (2015). *Posthuman Feminist Theory*, in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*, Lisa Disch (ed.), Mary Hawkesworth (ed.), 2015, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 678.

mother-subjects, responds to the radical mutations of our present. Thus, Braidotti sustains all feminine incorporations dancing with the already post-new millennium; her vision circles around the historical changes of the human entity while redrafting them within a fragmentary approach to cultures. In this tableau, the unexplored territories of the maternal, of corporeality, necessitate and promote the equilibria and relations among powers.

Braidotti aims to cherish how during the long journey toward affirming feminine subjectivity in twentieth-century philosophy, *womanly thought* often found grounds and compelling escape routes in approaches and echoes from Deconstruction (though not exclusively there). Thus, deconstructive tools, even if featuring different pathways and roots, allowed the *sexual difference* groups to showcase the monstrous aspect of positing the neuter-masculine as the paradigm of an ahistorical modern subject. Among these perspectives, Adriana Cavarero (briefly mentioned earlier) has contributed to revealing the *signs* of the presumed authenticity of the modern-*I*, as much linguistic as productive of knowledge, and thus epistemic, fully dominant over all other species, other genders. The universal masculine of tradition stands as the univocal subject of discourse: a male subject who *posits* himself as universal... along this path, man traces the arc of the Same, finding and recognising himself as the particular instance of his own universalisation (here rephrasing Cavarero, 1985).⁴³ Cavarero's operation identifies in the *I-Logos* the neutralizing indifference toward any form of sexualization of writing and thinking, any embodiment of life-mind, of granular affectivities as well as textu(r)al, tactile, haptic, vibrating forces, gravitational resiliencies and poetics. In her essay *Towards a Theory of Sexual Difference*, she develops the idea that, at the core of Western language and logics, there is a foundational violence and a resulting unbridgeable alienation borne by women.

Man recognizes himself fully in the neutral universal without the need for any addition, precisely because of that monstrosity which makes a neutral and a male cohabit in the universe man [...] the self-identification of the gendered man with universal-neutral man has its possibility precisely in that finiteness of the masculine gender which is adopted as universal. [...] in this universal (in the subject, in the *I* of philosophy) man [...] recognizes himself, he speaks himself, he thinks himself, he represents himself. The monstrosity of that universal which is at the same time neutral and male does not disturb him since it comes from the logical 'generosity' of finiteness which takes on the burden of holding true for the other sex as well.⁴⁴

Cavarero's postulate is an inspiring movement which sets us critically *trembling*.⁴⁵ She compels us to face how European civilization, entwined with a white, gendered tradition, expanded its purview

⁴³ See Cavarero, A. (1985). *Towards a theory of sexual difference*, in *The Lonely Mirror: Italian Perspectives on Feminist Theory*, Routledge, 1993, pp. 189-221.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 193-194.

⁴⁵ Comparing, Delahaie, F. (2023). *Créations participatives en espaces urbains : entre dérive et ancrage aux vibrations esthétiques du vivant*. « Fédérer Langues, Altérités, Marginalités, Médias, Éthique, (1) ». Fiona Delahaie is an eco-semiotics scholar here explaining how it can be fruitful to push a critical outlook upon the living spaces, as neighbours or common trails, by activating a positive tension within our bodies. The trembling moves lead to perceive things through a constitutive organic vibrancy that makes us living—and, in turn, creative. See also, Touam Bona, D. (2021), *Sagesse des lianes*, Le Kremlin Bicêtre, Post-Éditions, 2021.

until it claimed the whole field of the existent. The universality of the I-man's worldview relies on the category of the neutral male not only to distinguish *the feminine*—which has to barely signify the *other sex*— but mostly for constructing a taxonomy of Nature and the hierarchies of civil society, its relations of power. Her analysis strongly echoes Braidotti's reasoning while she dissects the Man-body and its *Logos*. We read:

Anti-humanism constitutes the core of the feminist critiques of « Man » as the alleged « measure of things » for being androcentric, exclusionary, hierarchical and Eurocentric. The dominant norm of the subject – the former « Man » of classical Humanism – was positioned at the pinnacle of hierarchical scale that rewarded the ideal of zero-degree of difference. This norm is used to justify the deployment of rational epistemic and social violence that marks « others » whose social and symbolic existence is unprotected.⁴⁶

Cavarero and Braidotti, in a porous shaping, not only subvert and dismantle the secularization of power ruling the act of speaking and naming things but also unmask the monstrosity performed by the modern rational animal. This *type*, yet so familiar, contained the logic of voracity and extraction upon Nature and species, minoritarian people, and territories. Similarly, both thinkers shift monstrosity—an excluding and discriminatory attribute—from the woman-sign to the man-sign, lifting the woman-body from its subordinate nature. Meanwhile, women's body-minds reveal themselves reborn from the iconicity that for centuries has been characterising them as a vulnus exposed to the horrorism of the Other, that colonising and logocentric masculine which ascribes to the feminine the marks and wounds of *trouble*. Also in the previously evoked volume *Mother, Monster, and Machines*, Braidotti reiterates how being *other-than*, that is, the "different par excellence", overlaps with monstrous features, subjected to marginalization, to powerlessness and violence. Again, the Mother-monstrosity has been exposed to social judgment and invisibility, to the conflicts and bio-powers exploitation upon all these bodies (that) *matter* but do not conform to the normativity of binarism and its codes.

Braidotti states:

[...] through her identification with the feminine, she is monstrous by displacement: a sign of the between areas, of the indefinite, the ambiguous, the mixed woman/mother is subjected to a constant process of metaphorization as "other-than". In the binary structure of the logocentric system, "woman", as the eternal pole of opposition, the "other", can be assigned to the most varied and often contradictory terms. The only constant remains her "becoming metaphor" call mom whether of the sacred or the profane, of heaven or hell, of life or death. "Woman" is that which is assigned and has no power of self-definition. "Woman" is the anomaly that confirms the positivity of the norm.⁴⁷

The purpose of the mother-monster figure, associated with the machine and extensively with technological presences, is in *speculum* with the Western history of culture. By disguising the category of the other-than-self as well as the ideal of the opposite that serves the accords of

⁴⁶ Braidotti, R. (2015). *Posthuman Feminist Theory*, p. 677.

⁴⁷ Braidotti, R. *Mothers, Monsters, and Machines* in Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, Columbia University Press, 1997, pp. 59–79; p. 66–67.

gender, this maternal and monstrous machinery inscribes physicality into logic and into grammar, into organic and biotic productivity, producing a figuration out of norms instead. Coded through etymologies, within the binary system governing the links between thought and affects, our avatar, the *Mater Alter-a*, springs from the vivisection of Braidotti's corpus and reclaims its own bending, its particular inflection in the transit of syntaxes, into a critical translational monstrosity.

Under this lens, the mother generative body—what Muraro calls the embodied and extraordinary experience of existence—becomes, symbolically, a site for inborn events, weaving languages and love into cognitive structures. The monstrosity of "Woman" is overturned into a *querying* fluidity, embracing a unicum of heterogeneous singularities, races, origins, sexes. They branch out across all the dispositions of imaginative and social temporalities and through Braidotti's setting acquire a re-lightning empowerment. They allow us to plan and re-design the animality inherent to humans and re-cast our anthropological memory throughout *other-codifying* significations. Drifting into liminal zones animated by *queering* materials, the rigid play of opposites gives way and encounters the affective and political practices of domination, of violent conflicts. What matters most—especially here, where methods, contents, plots and filial heritages converge—is the dialogue between Braidotti and Cavarero. Their exchange traces a webbing and unpredictable genealogy, while opening theoretical junctures and shifting. From them come pioneering corpora that unmask the habits of reasoning, where sexual difference represents an amphora of rehearsals: an epistemology of mothers as the first legitimate subjects, transforming biopower into possibility, action, and lively *engagement*. As the French philosopher Judith Revel cleverly suggests, because power is not a coherent entity but historically a shaping and conditioned system of relations, it requires acute observations on the complex workings and social assemblages where practices, knowledge, and institutions intersect. Consequently, any genealogy of power is inseparable from a history of subjectivity.⁴⁸

Surfing upon the "fictional chat" among female thinkers and interweaving their productions, we constate how the subordinate measure which has been marking feminine discourses and postures also characterizes the dominant perception/perspective on mothers and women. According to the philosophers I have called up here, the tradition of logos fixed and signified the being-female through the function of the negative-other. The category of the feminine, named since Plato as the Mother, is placed vis-à-vis of that universal man taken as the originary, from whom it is distinguished solely by negative attributes. The feminine is formless, unrepresentable compared to the *father-logos*, that omnivore engine which locks the eternal forms of the cosmos, and holder of monolithic axioms.

Braidotti and Cavarero, with other feminists, lay the critical foundations against the supposed truth of the one-masculine and, at the core of the postmodern, bring to light the fragmentary nature of the contemporary subject. In this fracture, they uncover its generative force—the opening of possibilities, above all for feminism, toward a critical and politically engaged method rooted in intellectual nomadism. Concretely, as Braidotti explains in her French essay *Les sujets nomades*

⁴⁸ Comparing Revel, J. (2003). « Devenir-femme de la politique ». *Multitudes*, 2003/2 no 12, 2003. p.125-133; pp. 128-129. She argues that the late revolution in the paradigm of *labor* has dismantled modern industrial categories, shifting the problem from simply *what is to be done* to how new subverting forces can self-organize in non-hierarchical ways and deploy strategies of resistance.

féministes comme figure des multitudes (2003), nomadism is an insightful jamming that, from the women's movement to decolonial studies, unfolds the notion of rhizome. It proliferates along with a keen approach toward the whole of origins and births. As the Creole decolonial poet-thinker Édouard Glissant prompts, "the notion of the rhizome maintains, therefore, the idea of rootedness but challenges that of a totalitarian root » (Glissant, 1997).⁴⁹ Braidotti refers frequently to Glissant also to make visible, and let speak, the multiple critical journeys that feminine aggregations have been tracing along the reticular poetics of relation. In this matrix, every identity expands only *in relation* to the others, and women's bodies, increasingly grafted by technological means, encompass them inside the shifting tides of procreation and production. Within the present, women channel the rhizomatic branching of the maternal, which stirs key questions about the multiplicity enlivening all feminine subjects. Indeed, the actual *sujet-femme* plays a *plural-we* who, in turn, both reactivates and deconstructs the one-subject images beyond the postures of European white feminism.

The *I-We* of women interacts with differentiated positions and conditions of life, riding the impulses of a *Politics of Location*. Thus, the polyphonic feminine identities, as a nomadism circulating amidst the ruins of Eurocentric postulates, confront the desire for a sort of differentiated and monstered universality (as Cavarero states), for a humanism mutation and hybridity, as Braidotti declares. According to the two philosophers, such biotic humanity, such *bios* that is mindful of the non-separation between *nature&culture*, survives within our species and lets the pluralities of the feminine decompose the theme of the unity of a subject that posits, imagines, and represents itself as One, as the Center.

A true contemporary gaze encloses, indeed, a feminism which is *located* by many feminisms that interrogate themselves by interrogating other socio-identitarian movements. Today, feminine forces seek within situated points and nodes of women's realities which frontiers of geopolitics can be run for expanding a nomadic thinking. As proposed also by great minds such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak or Françoise Vergès⁵⁰ the nomadism is a culture of resisting displacement that arises from the bottom, from the underside of unearthing conditions. In tandem, Braidotti states that nomadic thinking offers insightful keys for evaluating the most current biopower relations and their effects on knowledge, learning, and community structures. Also, and it is a key point of my reflection, she intersects the fruitful *knitting* between feminisms and (post)structuralist philosophies by contributing, within the linguistic and semiotic edges, to dismantle the logocentric system⁵¹ and create, conversely, desiring cartographies of the present that can valorise the complexities of the feminist subjects. For Braidotti, nowadays women are the opposite signs of the specular masculine-Other no more. They *signify* a quantitative plurality and a qualitative multiplicity—who have already found alternative and productive systems of significance and auto-

⁴⁹ Glissant, É., *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997, p. 11.

⁵⁰ See Cago, V., Montanaro, M., (2023). *Les Théories Féministes voyageuses. Internationalisme et coalitions depuis les luttes latino-américaines*, Éditions Divergences, Paris, 2023.

⁵¹ See Braidotti, R., (1994). *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, pp. 92-98.

representation.⁵² From a variety of perspectives, and with highly heterogeneous forms of engagement and heritage, they no longer (or ever less) recognize themselves within discursive and symbolic orders which are tied to the masculine prototype of self-foundation. *Les femmes* perform, on the actual stages of politics and intellectual mindset, an embodied multiplicity—an intricate, sometimes contradictory whole—the subjects of a real mutation, of a singular and collective metamorphosis. Monsters who taught us that normality is merely “monstrosity’s zero degree” (here I rephrased Braidotti, 2003).⁵³ To conclude, Braidotti called the political project engaged by *Sexual Difference*, “the virtual feminine of sexual difference feminism”: it assumes a politics of materialism by processing, through the strength of virtual utopias, imaginaries to signify anew, the multi-scale feminine corporeal realities.

9. Affirming to be *vulnerable*: A key gesture towards contemporary Ethics

If the political distancing from Western hegemonies unites the feminisms of our world and lets them go against the clues of a Europe as the world’s centre, the notions of alterity—especially within maternal and corporeal dynamics—continue to multiply the questions on being-women, on being-mothers. By integrating into the sociality of the feminine the horizons of responsible interdependence and relationality, feminine subjects, and all their companions, even by grappling with diverse consciousnesses and origins,⁵⁴ can fulfil and liberate the negative attributes attached broadly to the notion of *dysmorphia*, and infuse a pluriversal criterion that can foster *reciprocity* between:

[...] two moral (gender) perspectives... that answer to two different visions of the self, both equally legitimate and necessary: one emphasizes separation and autonomy, the other attachment and connection. Evoking the metaphorical images of ‘hierarchy’ and ‘network’, Carol Gilligan proposes the complementarity between the two universes. She repeatedly insists [...] on the need—above all psychologically—for their reciprocal integration by the two sexes, while pointing out the intrinsic shortcomings of any unilateral view of moral development [...]⁵⁵

To recognize in the constitutive fragilities and exposures of the subject, the common value of an inter-dependency among individuals and entities, feminists eclectically open up the upcoming, tribal circuit around the deposition of modern individualism. Inscribed in the terminal parabola of a sovereign subject, it has obscured that ontological condition of need and vulnerability that is common to all forms of life. In secularised forms, the autoregulated-male archetype reflected the denial of all-living *ab ovo* reciprocity. On the contrary, as the woman intellectual Elena Pulcini

⁵² Comparing Braidotti, R. (2003). « Les sujets nomades féministes des multitudes ». *Multitudes*, 2003/2 no 12, 2003. p.27-38 ; pp. 32-33.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ See also Vergès, F. (2019). *Un féminisme décolonial*, La fabrique éditions, Paris, 2019, pp. 41-43

⁵⁵ Here translation is mine. See Pulcini, E. (2017). La cura è un dono? in Genevieve Vaughan, *Le radici materne dell'economia del dono*, VandA.epublishing, Milano 2017, pp. 4-9. See also, Pulcini, E. (2021). *Giving Care*. *Mauss international*, No 1(1), 90-105.

claims, one is rescued and fulfilled within life, for permanently being bound to other lives and exposed to, and for, toward other destinies.

The passage above indeed quotes feminist intellectual Elena Pulcini, who develops a perspective on the communitarian and ethical logics of care, drawing near to Braidotti and embracing relationality and the inter-symbiosis of life. She recognises them as ethical pillars for gearing fresh identitarian and political groundworks. Within this network, the fragilities and exposures of the contemporary subject— embedded in exchanges and reciprocities among individuals and entities—reveal the sediments of modern individualism. Thanks to feminism, the self-made individual is now tracing the final arc of its sovereignty, which has obscured the ontological condition of need and vulnerability.

Indeed, Braidotti emphasises the immanence of the living subject in its radical embodied ipseity and the desiring and productive force released by its sexuated nature. She thus observes how sexual difference —mostly in the European intellectual panorama— has been entrusted to mothers and the maternal, the task of deactivating the perverse logic irradiated by the dominant subject. Disarming its excluding and polarising power, potential caring agents, actors, and *performers* can build and move joyfully through a pluriversal dimension in which care toward every element of life surpasses—even in its contradictions—the masculine-feminine dichotomy. As Braidotti proposes, we need to continue to put into check the Man, because it constitutes through what it excludes and disqualifies, and not through what it authorises and valorises. The others are merely constitutive and productive. On the contrary, post-human errancy carries alterity in the subjects who start a process of deterritorialization. Twisting in this dance of differences, the sexed or feminised other, the other in ethnic or racialised terms, as well as the other in nature or from an ecological pole, do not *signify* anymore. This doubling of the subject within discursive practices entails both a reactive and critical side and migrates to an active/positive significance (here rephrasing Braidotti, 2003). Besides, she emphasises how women, for decades, have been concretely experiencing how to re-craft several *mapping oceanic methodologies*. Whereby this in-progress mobility of mind and body, all living settings can be reconfigured as interactional habitats, among classes and ethnicities, hierarchies and sexes, finally, among biodiversity.

Since cartographies' methods allow for embracing situated knowledges, to find out power relations within figurations and imagery, the feminine expected horizons come into view for punctuating identitarian paths that are writing (about) themselves and planting the seeds for a posthuman multiplicity of becoming.⁵⁶ Perhaps Braidotti foresees a utopian reality, yet one that is precisely politically needed to dream. Since they are "to be allowed to happen", the anti-humanist and post-feminist universes will encompass discourses and alliances capable of nourishing and replanning the fields of knowledge. Here is the land of disclosing practices of life and of education, as operational alternatives to the dominant cultural, sexual, and economic models. Therefore, our philosopher identifies in women the emergence and the safeguarding of an *affirmative ethics*, which she describes as "a process, and not a product." Through it, they handle reflections on living together, on coexisting and surviving as a species.

⁵⁶ See Braidotti R., (2016). "Posthuman Critical Theory," in *Critical Posthumanism and Planetary Futures*, ed. Debashish Banerji and Makarand R. Paranjape, New Delhi: Springer India, 2016, pp. 13-32.

In her Italian volume *Materialismo radicale. Itinerari etici per cyborg e cattive ragazze*, Braidotti shares a curated selection of previous essays and describes her proposal for an *Ethics of affirmation*. She surfs the new millennium dashboard, and reframes body and emotional perceptions as the double-bind for a nomadic agency, a whole earthly change. She explains how affirmative ethics praxis lies upon a radical transformation of negative feelings. Once we make habits of interpreting the relational bindings by objectifying and depersonalising painful affects, all striking behaviours can be overcome. This dynamic would stimulate *energetic forms* of self-liberation which overlap virtuous proceedings towards *the* future-oriented collective. Meanwhile, it is necessary to acquire and query, to incarnate a nomadic thought & sensitivity which will be able to translate loss into resourceful becoming, and multi-access alliances. Trying to rephrase Braidotti's words, "affirmative ethics restores movement to emotion and action to activism, bringing with it changes, processes, and becoming". (L'etica affermativa restituisce il movimento all'emozione e l'azione all'attivismo, portando con sé cambiamenti, processi e divenire, Braidotti, 2019).⁵⁷

Affirming oneself is an ethics⁵⁸ and it leads to change our self by transcending the ego and its self-referential units. Coming back to the categories of birth and life, we perceive them as they are concrete engines for bursting forth pluri-located consciousnesses and mutating bodies. From these multi-situated corps, a fruitful dissemination can spread across all regions of *relationality*, linking to that womanly *other-than*. Affirmative ethics runs through marginalised figures and collections by pursuing another system of archiving. Women's images coming from the *feminine* pluriverse recompose and predict various cognitive dimensions, ready to store the narrated memory of the mother-organicity. Because its historical and dialectical existence has never been universal, nor indexable by fixed categories, it imposes on research pluri-femininity, and motherhood as well, into treasuring devices that we need to plunder.

At the core of this despoiling move, the maternal organics stay as key pieces of *somathèques*.⁵⁹ These constitute cultural living archives made of political strings, which the philosopher Paul Beatriz Preciado invents for expanding the traditional notion of the body. Even by trailing *somathèques'* lines and legs, it will be profitable to gather the singular stories of *maternal plurality* that occur through bio-narrative textualities. Each unique experience comes to light in identities in translation and *in transition*, while the events of life join a *maternal thinking* that exposes us to alterity. Our *Mater Alter-a* gets off again from the backstage of our critical reading and plays within the active body, the memory of birthing. It's wholly of origins' nature, as well as its creatures' features,⁶⁰ reminds us of the value of inter-dependency and plural-connectivity amidst not only human environments, but mostly across all organisms' ecosystems. In conjugating the *affirmative*

⁵⁷ See Braidotti, R., (2019). *Materialismo radicale Itinerari etici per cyborg e cattive ragazze*. Traduzione e cura di Angela Balzano, Meltemi, Milano, 2019, p. 103.

⁵⁸ About Braidotti's book *Materialismo radicale*, see Vecchi, R. 2019). *Una politica affermativa capace di leggere e decifrare la realtà, Il manifesto*, Ottobre 2019. Web Reference : <https://ilmanifesto.it/una-politica-affermativa-capace-di-leggere-e-decifare-la-realta>.

⁵⁹ See Grino, C., Preciado, B. P. (2012). "Beatriz Preciado," *Inter* no 112 (automne 2012), pp. 23-29.

⁶⁰ See Pulcini, E., (2008). « Assujetties au don. Réflexions sur le don et le sujet féminin ». *La société vue du don* Manuel de sociologie anti-utilitariste appliquée, La Découverte, 2008. p.229-242.

ethics inside a non-unitarian and rhizomic identity, Braidotti looks into Pulcini's proposal for a full-humanity care and discovers the epistemic and maieutic motor of vitalism. It brings inside the generative power of living beings, a disclosing notion of *zoé* for which self-identities are certainly very special words-engines, but among myriads of becoming, of metamorphosing. (Braidotti, 2019).

This ethical scenario sets up a mapping in which we find out the peculiarity of human need entangled in the intrinsic, natural symbiosis with self-diversity. Humans reveal here as political bodily archives in which they recognise and activate their vulnerable and exposed property as a skilling-connecting gift for zoetic and bios-*outers*, possible *uterus*. Thus, the subjects can acquire the capacity of caring while becoming genuine creators in the circle of a listening-narrative exercise. The *I* who narrates and is narrated, by reconning "in turn, as needing the same care, and driven by... a passion for the Other" (Pulcini, 2017; translation is mine), reincorporates its own uniqueness. The alterity flowing through passions and resonating in the relation-between-lives, extends to the maternal and fully entwines within emotional boards and psyche,

Opened to maieutic chances, the feminine subjects entangle a spreading iconography and, as Pulcini suggests, awaken an ethical power that embraces the Self into vulnerability, by forging again unfolded voices for a more equitable, ideally universal care, as proposed by the thinker Joan Tronto. Recomposing the interactions among feminine thoughts, Cavarero and Braidotti meet once again around Pulcini's circuits and cross the *sister of care*. Circles. By rethinking gender and the post-human, the feminist sisters' bodies excavate within the emerging identities that reclaim for becoming other-S' future-S. Here, once more, from the contributions of sexual difference—*firmly squared within a humanist gender binary model*—Cavarero and Braidotti seal their common commitment to better focus on posthumanism's self-contradictions.⁶¹ The roads they walk carry on restructuring human landscapes, assuming the mistakes of Man's omnivorous species over the other ones, used and perceived as subalterns.

Braidotti often emphasises how the next generations' communities might be founded upon the "perversion" of the binary logic, to foster a solidarity among non-living and humans, genders and species, communications and technologies. Indeed, in Braidotti's galaxy, at the threshold of frontiers, "biotic and abiotic spectrum... bacteria and animal... geological structures and technology *coexist*" (Braidotti, 2013)⁶² knotted into the multi-limbs of *zoé*. Immersed in a present yet to be imagined, Braidotti fuses the composite diversity of feminism, which she considers a prelude, within the Modern age, to progressive identitarian revolutions, metamorphosis. Against colonization and the extensive cultivation of socio-political singularities, of earth territories, of the passions of the *feminines*, and of feminisms, illuminates Braidotti's *thinking-together*. Her creole and telluric co-fabricating (to say it again with Glissant) moulds the mother-materiality to deconstruct biological destinies ascribed to genders, and to decipher their social and attributive character instead.

⁶¹ See Leake E., (2015). Cavarero, Braidotti, and the Feminist Foundations of the Posthuman, in *La camera blu. Rivista di studi di genere*, 2015, pp. 48-49.

⁶² Braidotti, R. (2013). *The Posthuman* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2013), p. 60.

Braidotti calls for dialectical actions at the edge of gender turns, within hybrid zones of sexualities, to create groups, constituting a class, endorsing movements and critical-communitarian groups. Here, human and technological bodies converge, and the feminine and maternal bodies stand as nodes of political, transformative monstrosity. The scholar Sophie Del Fa describes Braidotti's engaged strategies for an affirmative ethics with the following formulas :

La subjectivité posthumaniste n'est pas un humanisme, mais une pratique (praxis) et un projet politique [...] l'émergence de ce « nouveau » sujet reconfiguré [...] comme une nouvelle forme de vie et comme un devenir-autre (terme... deleuzien). En effet, le posthumanisme pose la question de ce que « nous » pouvons devenir ; sa réponse : nous sommes capables de devenir une multitude de personnes disparues (minoritaires), un devenir-monde-ensemble qui glorifie les différences (de sexe, de genre, de matière) et qui produit un monde alternatif et une Nouvelle Terre. En somme, les sujets posthumains, en tant qu'assemblage zootechnique sont politiques et établissent des alliances pour résister [...] [Posthuman subjectivity is not a humanism but a practice (praxis) and a political project [...] the emergence of this 'new' reconfigured subject [...] as a new form of life and as a becoming-other (in Deleuze's sense). Indeed, posthumanism poses the question of what 'we' can become; its answer: we are capable of becoming a multitude of minoritarian 'disappeared' persons, a becoming-world-together that celebrates differences (of sex, gender, and matter) and produces an alternative world and a New Earth. In sum, posthuman subjects, as zoe-technical assemblages, are political and forge alliances in order to resist.]⁶³

Braidotti foresees an ethical constellation we can explore by suppressing negative passions and fulfilling with increasing solutions for new lives and rebirthing. New relational, caring, vulnerable, and inclined subjects thus perform learning exchanges, legacies, and testimonies, narratologies that rewrite culture, reinvent it, and co-create minds and energies of resistance to dominant rules. Within the assemblages of feminist knowledges, Braidotti champions a pioneering spirit and a utopian logic that reveals what the anthropocentric Logos has hidden, de-vocalising the female thinking voices. On the contrary, alliances of "sirene" can come to the surface for unsettling powers, reaffirming the vitalism that disrupts the off-silence of feminine tales. They can regain their power, using the disturbing, the oddity, and the otherness by allowing each unique sonority to signify and map the world, its archipelagos, forces, and vulnerabilities.

Braidotti renders a sirenic vocality expressing polyhedral femininities with whom she has, over time, woven a "primate" companionship, a "becoming animal," intersecting the function of a founding mother-alterity. Thus, the scenario Braidotti dedicates to the generative mother appears as a wounded, shaped by struggle, melancholy of the human species, and at once the paradigm of rhizomic methods and mutants. Through the *affections* of the Deleuzian lineage, feminine lyrics and papers err within history to narrate their being-present, weave their threads, feed wolves, dismantle genders, and nourish utopian maternities. By recognising these fleshy and soundly textualities, Braidotti sings the *jouissance* of inhabiting the earth, both in desire and in trauma,

⁶³ Del Fa, S. (2020). « *Rosi Braidotti, Posthuman Knowledge, Polity Press, Cambridge & Medford, 2019* ». Sociétés, 2020/4 n° 150, 2020. p.151-156. (Translation is mine).

while aggregating in the *common* (to which I associate a remarkable study by Judith Revel)⁶⁴ a transformative power. Braidotti's figures reconstruct submerged *agora*, between urbanisms and Tribes, creolization and stellar journeys, navigating within a Babel universe with the words of care, of repair, of decolonial mindsets. To this effect, we once again rediscover the chiasms between Braidotti's projects and Kristeva's intentions, clearly inclined toward transformative ethics, perfectly inscribed within feminine urgencies.

Le féminin comme l'éthique demandent à être abordés avec précaution et délicatesse, tant les stigmates de la métaphysique et de la politique les alourdissent et les déforment [...] le féminin m'apparaît aujourd'hui, dans mon expérience clinique et dans la percée sociopolitique des femmes dans le monde, comme un constituant aussi radical qu'incernable de nos identités psychosexuelles [...] Elles, voire le féminin, évalue les capacités de se métamorphoser, qui sont inhérentes aux identités, actions et intentions [...] Entre puissance et limite, l'évaluation éthique prend comme modèle le corps, avec ses aptitudes aux affects, et leur puissance d'affecter d'autres corps ou bien celle d'être affecté par eux. [Both the feminine and ethics require to be approaches with care and delicacy, insofar as the marks of metaphysics and politics weigh them down and distort them. Today, in my clinical experience and in the sociopolitical breakthrough of women worldwide, the feminine appears as a crucial component of our psychosexual identities, that is radical and elusive. Women—or indeed the feminine—assess the competencies for multiple that inhere in identities, actions, and intensions. [...] Between potency and limit, ethical evaluation takes *the body* as its model, with its capacities for affects and their power to affect other bodies—or, conversely, to be affected by them].⁶⁵

Attuned to Kristeva's passage, we trace Braidotti's tracks and meet our *Alter-a Mater* who incarnates a micropolitical ethics, gathering hybridity, queer bodies, nomadic thought, reproductive labour, and the subtle resistances against biopower, centring the mothering—zoé in the midst of decolonial strategies, and unsettling the vertical Western thought. From Braidotti to the *escrivência* of Conceição Evaristo, poetic practice is a truly *Artivism* "a form of writing born from daily life, memories, and life experiences of the authors themselves. It seeks to reveal and disturb the *unfair sleep* of oppressors." (Evaristo, 2015; rephrasing is mine).⁶⁶ Yet the feminine, as the body of "thousands tiny desires" (Braidotti, 2021), is a *pluriverse* and a *pluriversal system of thinking* from which such a *mother* aims to become a progenitor of the latest critical lineages. This mothering ancestor pursues the millenary abuses inflicted not only on women—mothers, daughters, female lives—but on entire cultural imaginaries, scarred by archaic fears and biopolitical practices of erasure, extermination, violence and discrimination against all minorities.

⁶⁴ See Revel, J. (2019). « III. Commun : essai de cartographie ». *L'alternative du commun*, Hermann, 2019. pp.61-73.

⁶⁵ Kristeva, J. (2025). *Le féminin transformatif. Entretien avec Julia Kristeva*, Propos recueillis par Patricia Boyer Latour in Études. Révue de culture contemporaine, Dossier Féminisme, mars 2025, pp. 45-46. (Translation is mine).

⁶⁶ See, Evaristo C. (2015) in Mezzanotti, G. ; Håndlykken-Luz ; Å ; Ben Achour, M. ; Shange, S. ; Aricapa, LMG ; Nduta Miring'u, C. 2025. "Why Do You Fear My Way So Much?" Artivism as a path toward pluriversality in Human Rights Education: our *escrivência*. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, Oxford Academic.

10. The Post-feminism Argonauts: Braidotti's travelling & cosmogony

In the *Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory* anthology, among other essays, Braidotti opens thus:

The political passions and innovative epistemologies of feminist movements, however, were never indexed solely on the interests of women, but rather contained explicit blueprints for the improvement of the human condition as a whole. In so doing, women's movements renewed the shared understanding of the basic unit of reference for our common humanity. This made them humanist at an almost visceral level, positing women's liberation as human liberation. That intrinsic connection to humanism, however, was never without critical distance.⁶⁷

The passage is selected from a compendium of feminist instances with the posthuman, which Braidotti outlines through an unsacred pilgrimage towards the virtual consciousnesses of the current era. At the dawn of hyperconnected communities, Braidotti addresses all those *netizens whose possible landing on the borders* would convert into an all-encompassing futurity. The whole of humanity is summoned to participate in Braidotti's ground-breaking project, remembering the blueprints inscribed within the twentieth-century histories and battles of women. Braidotti signals and lets herself be spoken through an urging *embodied positioning*. Even during the 2024 conference at Utrecht University, entitled *Posthumanism, Materialism, Affirmation: Feminist Perspectives*, Braidotti shows her desiring project to "become a good ancestor" by running between posthumanism and Indigenous philosophy, promoting speaking freshly about politics of location, a politics of immanence. She reminds the auditorium that she pursues "a radical form of materialism feminism" that offers "clear coordinates as do race and ethnicity studies and race theories" which are truly "relational and effective... in the midst of several networks and webs of connection." (Braidotti, 2024).⁶⁸

Braidotti indeed shares her passions and her intent to migrate into the role of the ancestor and confer upon feminine and feminist knowledge the empirical figure of a threshold, while still exploring body-materialist philosophies. Braidotti invites us to traverse them to find the affirmative coordinates for being implicated, inside and outside the academy, incorporating disciplines and *pluriversal politics*, finally making ourselves *corporeal practices of ethical relations* within many resonances and echoes. In fact, the voices of others resonate in Braidotti's argonaut thought; she sails as a mythical navigator searching uncertain seas of meaning and memory, probing living archives and layers of intellectual and sensory otherness, togetherness. Part of a crew and a network, the Argonaut-Braidotti is a body & mind in voyage, exposed to the net-worlds and compelled by the context of theories of race, ethnicity, and situated identity. The mythic image of the argonaut turns into a powerful device incarnating high-tech, postcolonial, diasporic, queer, mestizo subjects whose testimonials sustain Braidotti's claims in her quite recent essay *Posthuman Feminism* (2021). In turn, she focuses upon the meta-critical forms that organize its flows, and which present themselves as rhythms to follow for a co-interpretative creation. I quote directly from one of her speeches about her work:

⁶⁷ Braidotti, R. (2015). *Posthuman Feminist Theory*, p. 673.

⁶⁸ Comparing Braidotti R. in *Rosi Braidotti: Posthumanism, Materialism, Affirmation: Feminist Perspectives*, May 2024, Utrecht. Web Reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etMbLbmEPKw>

A reader said to me that the way to read this book is by making a playlist through the music [...] and I think my favorite way of reading the book is, you know, (to) follow the music through it: from Beyonce to Gaga to Vanderson and Bowie. There's a soundtrack in the book that I disseminated across the text [...]⁶⁹

A playlist narrating the effort undertaken by Braidotti to build genealogies in somewhere other than *logos*, to connect to cycles of generations, to reveal the immense variety and tenacity of queer and trans-feminist mindness. Braidotti insists upon the terrestrial multiplicity of women's movements, the difference of globes and perspectives, the metamorphic innovation of the human within creatures and the feminine figurations. Concerned with an impoverishment, a banalization, even a boycott of the narratives that accompany minoritarian theories, Braidotti exhorts us to employ unsuspected allegories by engaging a poietic memory which can deploy a re-birthing and re-starting temporality. From the Sanskrit *kred*, we can invest in the reciprocal incarnations dwelling a mutual intimate touching, an anthropological need to believe in others, in humanity. (Kristeva, 2024; rephrasing is mine).⁷⁰

Here resurfaces Kristeva's blending of linguistics and psychoanalysis traces, which intersects Braidotti's postmodern issues again, yet is most driven by a dialogical force within the *women's transformative power*. Kristeva's essay *Prélude à une éthique du féminin* casts her enduring meditation on the feminine—especially the maternal faces—along intertextual borders that weave politics, therapy, and a *poetic care*. It is described as a tool for drawing out an extended and often silenced *collective trouble*. Kristeva speaks about her clinical experience in which she associates feminine identity with a lifelong, structurally transformative process, with many stages to traverse, a plurality of facets to confront. Embracing this complexity enables working through repression, violence, and harassment, yielding a multiform maturity for putting into place renewed ethical policy. In today's chaotic and menacing social and political context worldwide, Kristeva deposits in women's awareness the primary engine for an anthropological change. In its countless planes, the feminine thought-in-the-body is already able to manifest the fruitful skills issued from an *agentivité éthique*. It reclaims and redefines spaces of shared communitarian life, precisely for women. Alongside, the mother-desires reach the *concreteness of history* and join the multi-dimensionality of women, condensed within their own becoming. *Nous, les femmes* achieve themselves transmuting in-between reliance and erotism and overseeing sensitive geographies to narrate again, to craft relations. Indeed, Kristeva's women are actresses and performers of being-divergence as well as non-mutual recognition. Exercising re-founded dialectics of empathy and hospitality, they sediment their body-telling into micro and (possibly) macro alliances. Kristeva believes that women can make of their self-matter a board of experimentations and incubators of lives, *bio-cores* resisting those acts and discourses alienated from masculine biopower, as such a cycle-producer of bio-violence. Symmetrically, as we have seen, Braidotti's ideas are strongly fixed in a radical materialist imagery which is populated by the multi-species entities of our millennium,

⁶⁹ Braidotti, R. (2022). *Posthuman Feminism Book. Launch with Rosi Braidotti*. Polity Press, 16th March 2022. https://youtu.be/JTbMzf_e2t0?si=i6fa4Khsi3ABnI7N

⁷⁰ See Kristeva, J. (2024). *Pour une éthique du féminin*, Fayard, Paris, 2024.

showcasing the multi-layered and multi-located inputs that come from the rhizomatic politics of women. She writes in her *Posthuman Feminism*:

All feminist politics is body politics. But, to paraphrase Deleuze (1988), a body can be anything: animal, or vegetable; it can be a body of sounds, a linguistic corpus, a mind or an idea... a social body, a line of code, a DNA sequence, or a collectivity. They are all modulations on the same, vital, matter [...] materialist feminist is a precursor of the posthumanism turn, because it redefined the body as a materially embedded heterogenous assembly and not only as a social constructed entity [...] ⁷¹

Braidotti probes the vitality of matter, sitting in council with the feminine, envisioning not transcendence but a co-building disseminated by grafted bodies, entangled in the techno-zoé, from organisms' cells to species' genetic code. Braidotti dislocates the figures connected to a conventional notion of the body and showcases how "the embodied feminism self, far from being a unitary point of epistemological verification of lived species, turns into a crowd of human and non-human housemates" (Braidotti, 2022), ⁷² and extensively all the *Alter mothers*. Braidotti, then, ironises upon the systematised discrimination against social and gender categories, subverting the dominators' point of view while entrusting minorities of every non-nature, category, sexual difference, culture, with the task of:

[...] (To) Provide an accountable location for embodied subjects within the post-human convergence and its zoé/geo/techno-mediated potentialities. Women, LGBTQ+ people, anti-racist and other alternatives forces, with their historically 'leaky bodies'... are ideally paced to reassert the powers, prerogatives and pleasure and the postman flesh. ⁷³

Braidotti and Kristeva look like responding to one another, in unspoken agreement with Butler when she affirms that:

As much as we must insist on there being material conditions for public assembly and public speech, we have also to ask how it is that assembly and speech reconfigure the materiality of public space, and produce, or reproduce, the public character of that material environment [...] bodies in their plurality lay claim to the public, find and produce the public through seizing and reconfiguring the matter of material environments; at the same time, those material environments are part of the action, and they themselves act when they become the support for action. ⁷⁴

From the thinkers' trio-cluster standpoint, we regraft strategies and inspirations of contact among consciousnesses. In a skin-to-skin with a desiring, then, repairing models which *stay with the trouble*, we are called to envision and assemble, to perform and give spaces to a community of

⁷¹ Braidotti, R. (2022). *Posthuman Feminism*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2022, p. 140.

⁷² Ibid., p. 141.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Butler, J. (2015), *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, 2015, p. 71.

borders along which heteroclit forms of politics can emerge by questioning the streets to occupy for re-writing history and public rules, co-living.⁷⁵

11. Conclusions: Opening for the *nexus-infans*

To conclude—and to remain immersed in this playful society where embodied feminine performers enact the transformative ethics we've travelled—I echo the scholar Recchia-Luciani, who at the *Festival delle Donne e dei Saperi di Genere* (2012) celebrates feminism's leap among academia, citizenship, arts, and cultures. In her manifesto-essay, she also recalls the epistemic revolution that feminism accomplished over the last decades, sealed in the non-return toward a sublimation of corporeality and its functions, its abilities. A conquest that I consider a secure landing for a praxis embodying a fair nexus between feminine knowledges and productive bound-together bodies' dysphoria. Marching and finally setting themselves free from the phallogocentric foundation of Western thought, the polyphonic women enact a corporeal subjectivity which luminously transforms intellect's faculties through the matter-mother shaping. It nourishes corollaries of tools for developing political opportunities, lodging a decolonising and desirous time that invokes the *OpoPONax* imaginary, as sketched in Daring Wittig's novel. The lesbian writer marks and dreams, upon the horizon, "the coming of a tide of little girls that comes over you and overwhelms you (...), a tide of children". (Translation is mine).⁷⁶

It is precisely such future imaginaries, such teratological corporeality, that can entrust younger generations with planting a new self-recognition in the powerful seeds of critical *otherness*-devices. They can be sustained through opening a question upon the invisible status of the *infans* in our societies, research, and projects. By mirroring the marginal(ised) appendix of a category already appended to the dominant—*infants* and children, as maternal and minoritarian identities, have been reduced to mutism or phantasmagoria in philosophy and intellectual discourse for centuries. This is the reason animating the *Alter-a Mater* figure, which critically embodies and indicates a *query* we should co-construct in assembly and alliances, towards a journey for a hiatus that needs to be re-covered, re-signified. Perhaps step by step, retracing and privileging an *out-of-codes* relation, between generating and nascent bodies, where the im-maternal humanity sits besides all of *physis* and reawakens alterity and queering utopias: otherness *ab origine*, separating the "body-mine" to create the world anew. Because writing, poetry, and artistic landscapes have been the compass all over my paper, I will conclude by quoting Adrienne Rich, whose language has inspired a feminine consciousness, by breathing a feminine utterance for all (our, earthly, worldly) daughters, for the *Musas* of the future.

[...] whatever the individual mother's love and strength, the child in us, the small female who grew up in a male-controlled world, still feels, at moments, wildly unmothered. When

⁷⁵ See Julien, P. (2023). « *Se faire marginal de l'intérieur* ». *Intervalles et contretemps dans la production de l'événement*, in *Penser l'événement*, sous la direction de Hugo Dumoulin, Judith Revel, Jean-Baptiste Vuillerod, CNRS éditions, Paris, 2023, p. 62.

⁷⁶ See Duras, M. (1964). *Mon OpoPONax*. *Postface* in Monique Wittig, M. (1964). *L'OpoPONax*, Les Éditions de minuit, Paris, 1964-2018.

we can confront and unravel this paradox, this contradiction, face to the utmost in ourselves the groping passion of that little girl lost, we can begin to transmute it, and the blind anger and bitterness that have repetitiously erupted among women trying to build a movement together can be alchemized. Before sisterhood, there was the knowledge—transitory, fragmented, perhaps, but original and crucial—of mother-and-daughterhood.⁷⁷

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⁷⁷ Rich, A. (1976). *Of woman born: Motherhood as experience and institution*. New York : W. W. Norton.

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