

# Seduction into Reading: Bracha L. Ettinger's *The Matrixial Borderspace*<sup>1</sup>

Noreen Giffney, Anne Mulhall and Michael O'Rourke

## Bracha's Blessing



Bracha L. Ettinger in her studio, 2009 (photo: A. Berlowitz)

Bracha L. Ettinger, born in Tel Aviv, is a contemporary artist (mainly producing drawings and paintings), a senior clinical psychologist, and a practicing psychoanalyst, who interweaves and enmeshes all three domains by practising what she calls 'matrixial painting', a process which challenges the phallic structuration of the Symbolic. Her visual *poiesis* uncovers the complicities between the twin erasures of sexual difference and jewish difference and this disclosure (rather than foreclosure) of the feminine and the jew in her writing/painting brings about a wholesale reconfiguration of both Western aesthetics and of the (putatively masculine) gaze.<sup>2</sup> Her matrixial artworks have been

exhibited extensively in major museums of contemporary art, including The Drawing Center in New York (2001) and most recently in exhibitions at The Freud Museum in London curated by Griselda Pollock (2009) and The Finnish Art Academy in Helsinki (2009). Bracha's *oeuvre*, or, better, her *oeuvre*, a corpus which emphasises an open gravitational mobility, includes a number of books and essays on topics relating to psychoanalysis, philosophy, visual culture, feminism and ethics.<sup>3</sup> Her writing extends and challenges the work of contemporary philosophers and psychoanalysts (many of whom are her friends) including Emmanuel Lévinas, Jean-François Lyotard, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, Edmond Jabès and Luce Irigaray.

A groundbreaking theoretician, Bracha works at the intersection or borderline between feminism, psychoanalysis and aesthetics and for over two decades she has been forging or weaving a new 'matrixial' theory and language with major aesthetic, analytical, political, and most crucially ethical implications. If for Deleuze and (especially) her friend Guattari philosophy is the 'creation of concepts'<sup>4</sup> or 'idea theft'<sup>5</sup> then Bracha's is a body of work — a neologistic machine — that uniquely wrenches the French language, invents with it, unveils its power and its possibilities both in its lexicon and its syntax. Bracha's language is an *event*; it *does* something with the French language while simultaneously *undoing* all the accepted and formal codes of its sovereignty.<sup>6</sup> Her magical use of words opens new horizons, stretching language in excess of, beyond, even beside, itself: trans-subjectivity, co-emergence, wit(h)nessing, com-passion, communicating, erotic co-responsibility, transconnectivity, borderlinking, partial-subjects, borderspace, metramorphosis, fascinace, *link a*, co-poiesis, encounter-event, artworking, trans-ject, co-naissance, transcription, emoving, erotic antennae of the psyche, in-tuning. This is just a partial list of the words Bracha confects, as she forces language (or languages: in her notebooks she works with French, English, and Hebrew) to swerve and dehisce, in a way which, as Adrian Rifkin describes it, is 'appeasing, assuaging, almost enjoyable'.<sup>7</sup>

This *jouissance* has an effect of stillness. As Rifkin, again, puts it: 'I sat down and waited as I am sometimes wont to do before a work of art'.<sup>8</sup> This stillness, caution, circumspection is captured in Bracha's famous photographs of her friends Lévinas and Lyotard, in her notebooks, her scannographs, and in her paintings. This slowness is a kind of Penelopean textuality linking text and textile, slow writing and slow painting, and we bear wit(h)ness to the preparation, rendering the separation of the work and its fabrication impossible. Bracha's language, her labour, creates a space, an intra-uterine one perhaps, of

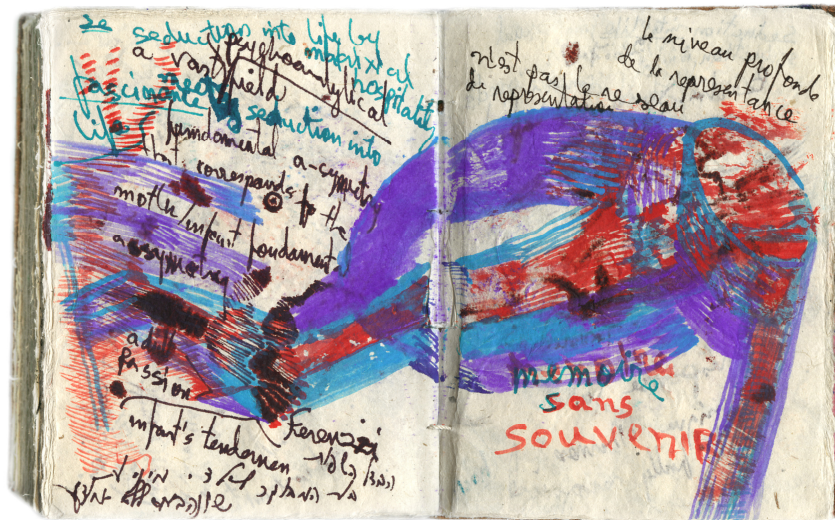
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habitation, generation and regeneration, what Griselda Pollock calls ‘matrixial écriture’.<sup>9</sup> Hers is a vocabulary of waiting and patient transformation, writing as spinning, threading, knotting, tressing, stringing, a language of slowness, of moulding, which affects our ‘seizure’.<sup>10</sup> Like writing itself, Bracha’s artworking stills time and events by freezing things in matrixial borderspace and matrixial bordertime, her palintropic interweaving of the artist’s desire and that of the viewer-under-erasure in a space she terms ‘Eurydicean’, a space where she records barely visible traces, barely perceptible grains of the past, of missed encounters, of the future, matrixial futurity, with Orphic links to the preservation of life and rebirth.

Her name, Bracha, is etymologically related to the word *bereicha* meaning a pool or reservoir, a matrixial source from which she draws. Unlike the ettinger, a person who cannot spell or read names correctly, Bracha Ettinger inscribes the secret of her name, signs it *on* the text, *within* the text, making her name into a *work*. Bracha Ettinger has written, traced, scratched her own proper name everywhere. In her conversation with Lévinas, ‘What would Eurydice Say?’ Lévinas refers to the etymology of *Bracha*, Hebrew for ‘blessing’ and Bracha responds by noting that ‘in Hebrew, other *acher*, Other, *-ha’acher*, and responsibility, *-achraiut* are linked by their root: *a.ch.r*’.<sup>11</sup> The secret of Bracha’s name is that it contains both blessing and responsibility for the other, ‘opening to the other through welcoming, ingathering and hospitality’.<sup>12</sup> In this issue of *Studies in the Maternal*, we are blessed with the impossibility of *not* sharing her blessing, her donation of her work in a shareable borderspace in which we, partial subjects, are always-in-joining-and-separating with/from the Other, with/from Bracha, approaching the threshold of her thought, a fragilizing process to be sure but a transporting one of cohabitation nonetheless. We welcome that donation, her blessing, by co-responsibly accepting her provocation to create new spaces of encounter, to fashion new modes of transformative thinking. We accept her *solicitation* to reading, an encounter-event which means a shocking of the horizons, a passage to the limits, a jarring loose of the Same, an opening up of enclosing surroundings, a matrixial frontier to be crossed with a readiness to be surprised but not to anticipate. There is no, can be no, Ettinger-event without reading and this obligation, this task of not forgetting, of *transcryptomnesis*, which we might call, after Pollock, *matrixial reading*, assumes a willingly affirmative exposure to, a *seduction into* ethical reading, *just* reading...

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## An Invitation to Reading



Note-drawing book, 10.3x12.6 cm  
Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger — 2006-2007  
Scannography of pages 005-006, 19x12.6 cm

Note-drawing book, 10.3x12.5 cm

Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger — 2006-2007

Scannography of pages 005-006, 19x12.6 cm

Bracha's invitation to reading calls us to her writing. Putting aside the words that comprise her call, what might it mean for us to focus in on the call itself? How might we become attuned to the timbres and resonances of her call? What must we do to open ourselves to *feel* rather than merely hear her call? *The Matrixial Borderspace* cannot simply be read but must be felt. This is not to say that *The Matrixial Borderspace* will not be read; that we will not stumble over the difficulty of her prose, marvel at the delicacy of her concepts, shiver at the boldness of her claims. It is rather to suggest that we need to develop within ourselves an awareness of the fact that while we are reading — *consciously* reading — another process will be underway, for *The Matrixial Borderspace* works at the perimeter between consciousness and the unconscious, at the im/possible threshold of language.

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‘The analytic writer’, Thomas Ogden tells us, ‘is continually contending with the reality that an analytic experience — like other experiences — does not come to us in words. An experience cannot be told or written; an experience is what it is’.<sup>13</sup> What does it mean to *experience* Bracha’s writing here as an analytic text? It is to recognise the indispensability of language for this task while simultaneously recognising the redundancy of language for this task. As Bracha reminds us, ‘For the matrix-figure the field of discourse is irrelevant, even for what escapes it. Like the *objet a*, the matrix-figure branches from the sensory-bodily level, splitting off from the level of specular images and language’.<sup>14</sup>

*The Matrixial Borderspace* might present itself in the guise of the verbal register of language but its reverberations are those enacted by transference and countertransference. Betty Joseph writes that ‘the analyst, in order to understand, has to tune in to the patient’s wavelength, which is a wavelength of action rather than words, though words may be used’.<sup>15</sup> For Joseph, and other psychoanalysts working in the post-Kleinian tradition, the following questions take centre stage: what does it feel like to be in the room with this person? What does this experience feel like? The sense of touching, connecting, sharing, fusing that characterises experiences of transference and countertransference parallel Bracha’s description of the matrixial’s being ‘mainly informed by *touching, hearing, voice, and moving* ... it is relationally connected’.<sup>16</sup> When Bracha informs us that ‘In the matrixial perspective, *becoming-together* precedes *being-one*’,<sup>17</sup> our minds turn to the psychoanalyst’s capacity to sit in the sometimes dizzying swirl of the counter/transference — to allow her/himself to be moved by the analysand’s and her/his own unconscious phantasies — before splitting off intellectually from the analysand through the formulation and delivery of an interpretation.<sup>18</sup> In the words of Griselda Pollock, ‘The matrixial surfs beneath/beside the phallic’,<sup>19</sup> and here we see an example of this co-existence, this interweaving of the matrixial and the phallic in the encounter-event of the co-emergence of the becoming-analyst (analyst-to-be) and the becoming-analysand (analysand-to-be) in the counter/transference preceding, during and after the analyst’s separating out from and proffering of an interpretation to the analysand.<sup>20</sup>

In his recent book on clinical applications of the writings of Melanie Klein and Wilfred Bion, psychoanalyst James Grotstein distinguishes between, what he terms, the ‘“classical” infantile, part-object Kleinian thinking’ and the ‘post-Kleinian emphasis on the analytic process (transference/countertransference) in the here and now — all conceived in a whole-object perspective’.<sup>21</sup> Bracha makes similar attempts to distinguish

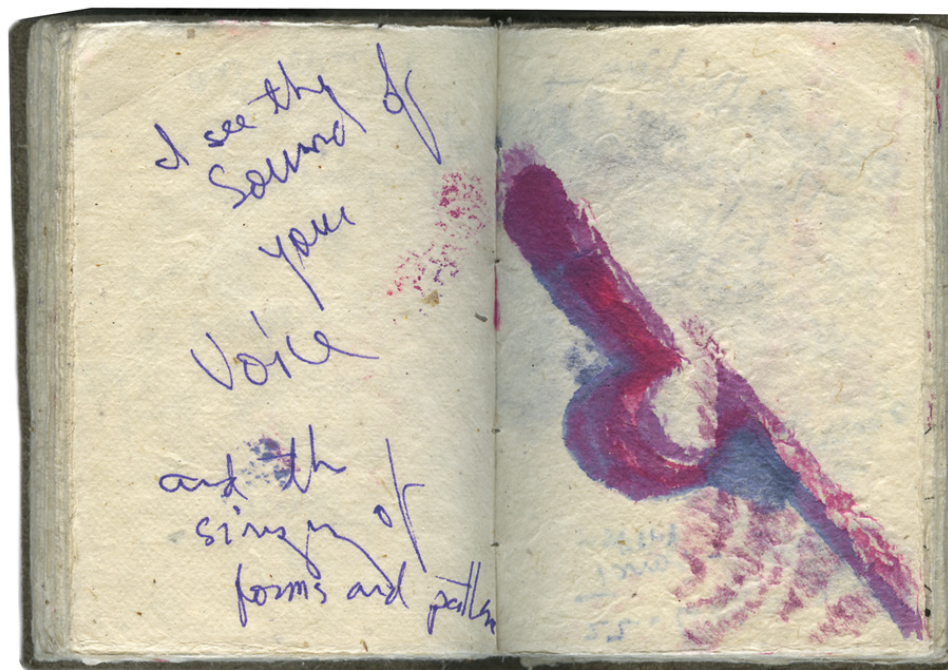
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between the matrix as a part-object (womb)<sup>22</sup> and a process (subjectivising stratum). In a playful gesture towards the messiness of Jacques Lacan's characterisation of the phallus and its (non-)relation to the penis, Bracha remarks: 'The womb and the prenatal phase are the referents to the Real to which the imaginary Matrix corresponds. But as a concept, the Matrix is no more — but no less — related to the womb than the phallus is related to the penis. That is, the Matrix is a symbolic concept'.<sup>23</sup> Bracha's taking of the intra-uterine experience, something we all share, shifts the burden of subjectivisation away from a sole emphasis on the experience of possessing a penis, which is something some of us share and some of us do not.<sup>24</sup> In symbolic terms, the matrix as a concept offers 'a different subjectivizing stratum'<sup>25</sup> to the phallus. The matrixial is not an addendum to the phallic; it exists in and of itself: 'the matrix-figure', Bracha writes, 'is difference itself'.<sup>26</sup>

Bracha's writings on the matrixial can be understood, like her art practice, as psychoanalytic interpretations: facilitating the unfolding of unconscious processes, assisting in our capacity to symbolise experiences through naming, containing primitive anxieties arising from the emergence of psychical and emotional understanding. As with the psychoanalytic encounter-event, *working through* is a gradual process; it takes time, effort and commitment. It is an experience that cannot be absorbed in one sitting. Bracha's interpretations, such as 'The matrix-figure is the unseen object of originary repression' and 'the matrixial incest cannot be forbidden — its occurrence gives life', are the result of years of work; of Bracha's thinking and feeling.<sup>27</sup> *The Matrixial Borderspace* offers us — in Bracha's invitation to reading — what we might think of as an assemblage of enigmatic signifiers.<sup>28</sup> Enigmatic signifiers, in John Fletcher's estimation, 'are enigmatic, not just because the infant has no access to a code to determine their meaning, or because they outstrip its capacities for understanding, but because, compromised by the unconscious wishes of the other, they are opaque to the adult as well'.<sup>29</sup> Bracha's invitation is one that we might receive though we do not know what we are being invited (in)to because it is an invitation into an experience which cannot be known in advance, which cannot be imparted except through the experiencing of it. It is an invitation that has been accepted by the contributors to this issue, and all who make their way towards *feeling* — tentatively, slowly, carefully — *The Matrixial Borderspace*.

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## Working-Through



Bracha L. Ettinger, Page from Notebook, 2004

As with the invitation to reading, so too the encounter-event with the theory-work and artworking of Bracha is an invitation to co-respond in a working-through. This sense of working-through is captured by Jean-François Lyotard in his essay ‘Anamnesis: Of the Visible’, where he describes the work of Bracha Ettinger as ‘a work of anamnesis [...] guided by the presence of the Shoah’. Lyotard elaborates, against the orthodoxy of history and history-writing, saying that the anamnesis must surely accompany the telling of traumatic histories. ‘True history is not only veridical’; beneath and within ‘trajectory’ and ‘narration’, there is also that which is ‘[a]bsent from memory, unrepresentable’, but that nonetheless has ‘presence’ and is ‘ever-“present”’.<sup>30</sup> The page above from Bracha’s notebooks (2004), one of many images of her work that she has so generously shared with us here, figures forth the *omega*, an image that recurs in the artist’s work, and that speaks to the phallic oscillations of ‘absence-presence’<sup>31</sup> and the unrepresentable that

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Lyotard speaks of. Here is the Alpha and Omega — the first and the last, the beginning and the end — signifiers of eternity, and of apocalypse. Before and beneath the alpha and the omega is the Hebrew root they hellenise: *Emet* — truth, ‘the seal of God’ — which comprises the first, middle and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and thus is held to express that truth encompasses all things. In Bracha’s omega, a womb or *matrix* precedes the omega, in a move that subtly shifts the hermeneutical ground on which Western philosophies have been staked. Here, in omega, the seer sees, as Bracha has described it, ‘a womb that occasionally opens into the form of the [Greek] letter omega’.<sup>32</sup> Beside the cataclysmic omnipotence delineated by alpha and omega, beginning and end, touching upon it, we are reattuned in the emerging and fading of the womb-matrix to what may have been occluded within the sign of a phallic foreclosure. This recurring image does not belong to the economy of either/or but, rather, is a movement of the between, of borderspacing and borderlinking, opening up an other dimension which, as Griselda Pollock says, enables ‘a transformation beyond the blocked presentness of an unknown absence-presence’.<sup>33</sup> In several series – for instance, in *Omega* (1985); *Means of Transport* (1986); *Means of Transport — Family Album* (1986; 1988-1989); and *The Eye of the Compass* (1989-1990) — the omega becomes a wheel on a railway track, an other transmission of the horror of the unrepresentable that is yet ever-present, the truth that lies beneath the visible: ‘In Europe train stations are cemeteries. Stadiums are meeting places on the road toward station-cemeteries. In Israel trains are ill-frequented’.<sup>34</sup> However, the transport station is not the final destination, but a liminal space where, borderswerving between several elements, the omega, the wheel on a railway track, the womb-matrix, and more, what Bracha terms ‘self-fragilization’ might occur<sup>35</sup> — and thus the space of art itself is revealed as ‘the transport-station of trauma’<sup>36</sup> — not amnesia, nor anamnesia, but ‘transcryptomnesia’: ‘the artwork’s working-through of the amnesia of the world into memory is a transcryptomnesia: the lifting of the world’s hidden memory into its outside with-in-side. [...] Art as transcryptum gives body to a memory of the Real consisting in virtual strings and memory traces of the oblivion of the Other and of the world’.<sup>37</sup>

In the enigmatic, challenging, and beautiful essay that Bracha has shared with us for this issue, the matrixial working-through of the omega — if understood in one of its aspects as a signifier of apocalypse, an ‘expression of the death-drive’ — in the artwork and therapy-work resonates, for us, with the feminine names of God that she unfolds in her concluding piece, ‘Neighbourhood and Shechina’. Here, Bracha touches upon an

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other Eros, ‘Love for the friend/neighbour [that is] neither sexual nor that of attachment’, a potentiality that is ‘hidden’ within *Shechina*, one of the ‘feminine Hebrew names of God’ and ‘that reaches human subjectivity by expressions of communicating in a womb-like neighbouring — this particular resonance — between foreign beings’. The evocations of the neighbour and of the foreigner, the stranger, further resonate with Ruth the Moabite and with Bracha’s resonant returns to that figure in her work. The potentiality of *Shechina* is fragile, delicate. *Kherem*: boycott, ban, shame, death-drive—rends *rekhem*: womb, compassion, matrixiality:

*Different/other sides of these spiritual potentialities are the horror of expelling and outcasting — the disgrace and shaming of the ban, banishment and excommunication that the Hebrew words nida and kherem express. Kherem, boycott and ban in Hebrew (composed with the same letters as rekhem, womb and compassion in Hebrew) reveals the horror of the undoing of a matrixial knot which is always already hidden within other matrixial knots. The disgrace of kherem tears holes in the matrixial tissue itself. Kherem is an expression of the death-drive. In rekhem life begins: it is therefore an expression of nonsexual Eros.*<sup>38</sup>

The equation of the feminine and of woman with death, apprehended through the rend(er)ing of *rekhem* through/by/in *kherem*, is revealed as a ruse of phallic logic. Within that logic, *kherem*, womb, woman come to signify the horror that is enacted upon them, here instantiated in the mutilation of the word. The fragile vulnerability of *rekhem*, the violence that tears ‘the matrixial knot’, speaks to the questions raised by Chrysanthi Nigianni in her probing exploration of the matrixial. How, she asks, can ‘matrixial conditions broaden the Symbolic order without affecting and changing the latter’?

The mutilation of the word has been extensively explored in queer theory in recent years, and Leo Bersani and Lee Edelman have differently expounded the ways in which the queer and the rectum have been made to signify death and the death-drive within heteronormativity and heterotemporality. In what ways are the kinds of relationality implied by a queer embrace of self-shattering, self-divestiture, the death-drive, and self-extensibility in touch with the matrixial, and inimical to it? In this issue Fintan Walsh and Sudeep Dasgupta both address this question in their different ways, opening up valuable, productive dialogues between matrixiality and the ‘anti-social thesis’ in queer theory. Beside these important ‘reouvertures’,<sup>39</sup> other encounters between the matrixial and the queer might emerge within approaches to queer temporality that seem to reach toward an other stratum that cannot be described within the objectivising and inter-subjective models of identification and alterity, construed as identification’s

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opposite, afforded by an oedipal framework. In recent years there has been a persistent interest amongst theorists and critics in partial connections, resonances, vibrations transconnecting subjects across time, revenants transgressing the thresholds of life and death, with the critic and writer ‘touching’ and sharing traces through and in the text itself. This gives us another way of apprehending the ‘less fractured, more oceanic [...] way of being with great art’ that Bracha opens up in her work, the psychoanalytic significance of which Olga Cameron Cox incisively explores in her piece in this issue. In the work of queer theorists and critics such as Carolyn Dinshaw, Carla Freccero, Valerie Rohy and Heather Love, the movement of affective connections across past, present and future and the threshold-crossings of queer transhistorical touches seem to yearn toward something that remains just beyond articulation. While naming such yearnings as affect, relationality, desire, the feeling is of something else that is stirring, something else that awaits notice. For Carolyn Dinshaw, for instance, the ‘queer historical touch’ resonates across thresholds of time, trembling the ‘partial connections’ between subjects who are transconnected yet differentiated, while she describes the ‘vibrations’ that resonate between Michel Foucault and the abjected others he touches upon in the archive.<sup>40</sup> Carla Freccero’s queer spectrality may be reaching toward such becoming-transsubject too, disturbing the hygienic discreteness of past, present and future in a space of ghostly ‘cohabitation’.<sup>41</sup> Elizabeth Freeman intuits a certain porousness obtaining between past, present and future queer bodies and queer times.<sup>42</sup> In *Feeling Backward*, Heather Love likewise explores ‘the cross-historical touch’, while her yearning toward those iconic figures who turn back and turn away — Lot’s wife, Orpheus and Eurydice — resonates with the figures who emerge and fade, turn toward and turn away, in Bracha’s artworking.<sup>43</sup> For Valerie Rohy, a queer ahistoricism exposes the anachronism of the present through an always already dissolving anamorphic glance<sup>44</sup> that shares some common thread with the ‘sideways, scanning glance’ that, for Sofie Van Loo in her extraordinary, illuminating matrixial analysis in this issue, characterises Bracha’s *Eurydice and Ophelia* series. Anne Verougstraete’s striking elaboration of the matrixial in the letters of Rainer Maria Rilke and Lou Andreas-Salomé likewise shares this string, the subtle oscillations, fading and emerging, that these subjects-becoming-transsubjects cannot quite articulate, and that they yet intuit in a feel-knowing of an other stratum.

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Is it the matrixial that such ‘feel-knowing’ aches for, and aches with?<sup>45</sup> In ‘Fragilization and Resistance’, Bracha’s elaborations of art as ‘a transport-station of trauma’ certainly resonate with/in such queer yearnings:

*The place of art is a co-poietic time-space-event of passage, a transport-station of trauma and an occasion for joy. A transport-station that more than being a dwelling place or time is rather a time-space offered for coemerging and cofading, borderlinking and borderspacing, over different times and different places, where the same place is stretched between different times and the same time connects different time-spaces, the here with the there, the now with the then, a space-time-encounter, a space-time of Encounter-Event, which allows the opening-up of a spiral time-place of encounter. Not inter-subjective but trans-subjective and transjective encounter-events take place by way of subjectivizing experiencing with an artobject or art-process, an other or an event, others, alive or not, met and unmet, that continue to induce and transmit.<sup>46</sup>*

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**Anne Mulhall** is a College Lecturer in the School of English, Drama and Film at University College Dublin, Ireland where she teaches critical theory, Irish literary and cultural studies, and co-ordinates the MA in Gender, Sexuality and Culture. She has published in the areas of contemporary writing in Ireland, Irish popular culture, queer and feminist theory, and migration in contemporary Ireland. She has edited (with Wanda Balzano and Moynagh Sullivan) *Irish Postmodernisms and Popular Culture* and is co-editor of a collection of essays on women in Irish culture and history with Maria Luddy and Gerardine Meaney, forthcoming in 2010.

**Michael O’Rourke** lectures on Continental philosophy at Independent Colleges, Dublin, Ireland. He is the co-editor of *Love, Sex, Intimacy and Friendship between Men, 1550-1800* (Palgrave Macmillan 2003); *Queer Masculinities, 1550-1800: Siting Same-Sex Desire in the Early Modern World* (Palgrave Macmillan 2006); *The Ashgate Research Companion to Queer Theory* (Ashgate 2009); and special issues of the journals, *Romanticism on the Net* (Queer Romanticism) and *Borderlands* (Jacques Rancière on the Shores of Queer Theory); and the editor of *Derrida and Queer Theory* (Palgrave Macmillan 2010); and special issues of the journals, *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* (The Becoming-Deleuzoguattarian of Queer Studies) and *Medieval*

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *The Matrixial Borderspace* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006) contains a number of essays by Bracha L. Ettinger published originally between 1994 and 1999 and later collected together in 2006. All images reproduced in this article, and throughout this journal issue, are courtesy of Bracha L. Ettinger. We are grateful to Bracha for her generosity and support, and for the provocation of her work.

The articles published in this issue were originally presented as responses at ‘Reading Bracha L. Ettinger’s *The Matrixial Borderspace*’, a two-day intensive, interdisciplinary seminar convened by us at University College Dublin, Ireland on Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 April 2009. The seminar formed part of The(e)ories: Critical Theory & Sexuality Studies and was organised in collaboration with University College Dublin’s MA in Gender, Sexuality and Culture and the Graduate Research and Education Programme in Gender, Culture and History (GREP). We are grateful to Professor Gerardine Meaney and Professor Nick Daly in the UCD School of English, Drama & Film/Irish Studies for their sponsorship of this event.

The seminar was devoted to responding to *The Matrixial Borderspace* from a range of interdisciplinary perspectives: psychoanalysis, psychology, philosophy, film studies, art history, literary studies, theology, feminism and queer theory. The seminar provided a unique opportunity to read a small sample of Bracha’s *oeuvre* closely and discuss its implications for a range of fields but especially for the insights offered for considering gender and sexuality and the potential for a sustained dialogue between psychoanalysts and psychologists, critical and cultural theorists, and practitioners of the arts.

The first day of the seminar featured a discussion of Sigmund Freud’s paper on the uncanny (in *The Uncanny*, trans. Hugh Haughton (London: Penguin, 2003 [orig. 1919]), pp. 121-162), together with Bracha’s formulation of the matrixial, before a lecture by Bracha on her current research. Day two of the seminar was devoted to discussing *The Matrixial Borderspace* in more detail and the various theoretical, ethical, cultural, clinical and political questions the book raises more generally. Each session began with four short responses of ten minutes by leading specialists in the area of the theme being considered, after which the facilitator of the session opened up the discussion to seminar delegates. The emphasis in the seminar was on discussion.

We owe our thanks to the respondents and facilitators for their careful work during the sessions: Olga Cox Cameron, Sudeep Dasgupta, Dimitra Douskos, Katherine Johnson, Patricia MacCormack, Chrysanthi Nigianni, Pauline O’Callaghan, Carol Owens, Emma Radley, Adrian Rifkin, Medb Ruane, Sofie Van Loo, Anne Verougstraete, Fintan Walsh and Eve Watson.

<sup>2</sup> We are following Jean-François Lyotard by using lower case ‘j’. For him, the name jew, refers to that which is always already forgotten, erased, silenced, that which eludes representation. See *Heidegger and ‘the jews’* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> A complete list of exhibitions and writings can be found at <http://www.metramorphosis.org.uk/> [accessed 6 December 2009]. For an excellent introduction to Bracha L. Ettinger’s work see Griselda Pollock’s ‘Mother

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Trouble: The Maternal-Feminine in Phallic and Feminist Theory in Relation to Bracha Ettinger's Elaboration of Matrixial Ethics/Aesthetics' in the inaugural issue of this journal, *Studies in the Maternal* 1:1 (2009), pp. 1-31.

<sup>4</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (London: Verso, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> Félix Guattari, 'I Am an Idea-Thief', in *Soft Subversions: Texts and Interviews 1977-1985* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2009), pp. 21-32.

<sup>6</sup> In this respect her writing resembles that of Hélène Cixous. Here is Cixous describing Jacques Derrida's French but she could just as well be describing Ettinger's or her own: 'In a French that is accelerated, pushed to the limits, paroxysmized, overexcited, unloosed, frenzied, caressed, delivered, incanted, charmed, attuned, granted, not given, untameable, in a French to another power, stolen, flying, launched toward the to-come'. See *Insister of Jacques Derrida*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p.12.

<sup>7</sup> Adrian Rifkin, '...respicit Orpheus', *Drawing Papers 24: Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger: Eurydice Series* (New York: The Drawing Center, 2001), p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> Rifkin, '...respicit Orpheus', p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> Griselda Pollock, 'After the Reapers', in *Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger: Halala-Autistwork* (Jerusalem/Aix-en-Provence: The Israel Museum/Cite du Livre, 1995). Cited in Ettinger, *Matrixial Borderspace*, p. 222, n. 74.

<sup>10</sup> Bracha L. Ettinger, 'Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze: From Phantasm to Trauma, from Phallic Structure to Matrixial Sphere', *Parallax* 7:4 (2001), p. 95.

<sup>11</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas in conversation with Bracha L. Ettinger, 'What Would Eurydice Say?' *Athena* 2 (2006), p. 139.

<sup>12</sup> Lévinas and Ettinger, 'Eurydice', p. 139.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas H. Ogden, 'On Psychoanalytic Writing', in *This Art of Psychoanalysis: Dreaming Undreamt Dreams and Interrupted Cries* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 110. For the difficulties involved in imparting experience, see Wilfred Bion, *Learning from Experience* (London: Karnac, 1984 [orig. 1962]).

<sup>14</sup> Bracha L. Ettinger, 'The Matrixial Gaze', in *Matrixial Borderspace*, p. 76.

<sup>15</sup> Betty Joseph, 'On Understanding and Not Understanding: Some Technical Issues', in *Psychic Equilibrium and Psychic Change*, eds. Michael Feldman and Elizabeth Bott Spillius (London and New York: Routledge, 1989 [orig. 1983]), p. 150.

<sup>16</sup> Ettinger, 'Matrixial Gaze', p. 48; italics in original.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 72; italics in original.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Betty Joseph, 'Transference: The Total Situation', in *Psychic Equilibrium* (orig. 1985), pp. 156-167.

<sup>19</sup> Griselda Pollock, 'Introduction — Femininity: Aporia or Sexual Difference?' in *Matrixial Borderspace*, p. 6.

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<sup>20</sup> ‘The *becoming-mother* (the mother-to-be) and the becoming-subject (baby-to-be) engender an alliance and turn into partial-subjects — (*I(s)* and *non-I(s)*) of the same matrixial time and space’. See Ettinger, ‘Matrixial Gaze’, p. 66.

<sup>21</sup> James Grotstein, ‘... *but at the same time and on another level ...*’: *Clinical Applications in the Kleinian/Bionian Mode*, vol. 2 (London: Karnac, 2009), p. xiii. For examples of the so-called Kleinian and post-Kleinian modes of working, see the following two sources respectively: Hanna Segal, *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, ed. Nicola Abel-Hirsch (London and New York: Routledge, 2007); Edith Hargreaves and Arturo Varechekver (eds.), *In Pursuit of Psychic Change: The Betty Joseph Workshop* (London and New York, 2004). We would argue that the post-Kleinian concentration on the here and now works better in the context of Bracha’s notion of partial subjects rather than whole objects.

<sup>22</sup> Of course the womb is also a space; a somewhere as well as a something.

<sup>23</sup> Bracha L. Ettinger; quoted in Pollock, ‘Introduction’, p. 17. Bracha’s reference to the matrix as a symbolic concept also functions to pre-empt charges that she is dealing in concrete terms with a psychotic time and space. A number of psychoanalytic studies have been undertaken on the prenatal period of development. See, for example, Alessandra Piontelli, *From Fetus to Child: An Observational and Psychoanalytic Study* (London and New York: Tavistock/Routledge, 1992); Guy Hall, Françoise Hivernel and Sian Morgan (eds.), *Theory and Practice in Child Psychoanalysis: An Introduction to the Work of Françoise Dolto* (London: Karnac, 2009). In addition, Winnicott’s comments that ‘The analyst must be prepared to expect whatever type of material turns us, *including birth material*. The analyst must indeed expect environmental factors of all kinds. For instance, one needs to recognize and assess the type of environment that belongs to the intra-uterine experience’. See ‘Birth Memories, Birth Trauma, and Anxiety’, in *Through Paediatrics to Psychoanalysis: Collected Papers* (London: Karnac 1984 [orig. 1949]; emphasis in original), p. 177. See also Winnicott’s comment that ‘It is surprising how early (*even before birth*, certainly during the birth process) awareness of a *premature ego* can be mobilized’. See ‘Fear of Breakdown’, in Gregorio Kohon (ed.), *The British School of Psychoanalysis: The Independent Tradition* (London: Free Association Books, 1986; emphasis added), p. 182.

<sup>24</sup> ‘I am proposing that with the help of the notions of Matrix and metamorphosis, experiences concerning the prenatal, the intrauterine, gestation, and pregnancy can deconstruct and dissolve the concept of the unitary separate phallic subject split by the castration mechanism, rejecting its abject, and mourning its m/Other’. See Bracha L. Ettinger, ‘Weaving a Woman Artist with-in the Matrixial Encounter-Event’, in *Matrixial Borderspace*, p. 183.

<sup>25</sup> Ettinger, ‘Matrixial Gaze’, p. 48.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>27</sup> Bracha L. Ettinger, ‘The *Heimlich*’, in *Matrixial Borderspace*, p. 156; Bracha L. Ettinger, ‘The With-In-Visible Screen’, in *Matrixial Borderspace*, p. 107

<sup>28</sup> An enigma, writes Jean Laplanche, ‘is to be distinguished just as much from a riddle as from a problem to be resolved, or from a *mystery*. When we hear enigmas talked of, I propose this procedure to move from the enigma *of*, to the enigma *in*, and then to the function of the enigma *in*’. This leads back to the subject’s

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'otherness to [her/]himself'. See 'Time and the Other', in Jean Laplanche, *Essays on Otherness* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999; emphasis in original), pp. 254-255.

<sup>29</sup> John Fletcher, 'Introduction: Psychoanalysis and the Question of the Other', in *Essays on Otherness*, p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, 'Anamnesis: Of the Visible', *Theory, Culture & Society* 21:1 (2004): 118, 109.

<sup>31</sup> Griselda Pollock, 'Art/Trauma/Representation' *Parallax* 15:1 (2009): 46.

<sup>32</sup> Ellie Armon Azoulay, 'Unbroken Circle', *Haaretz*, Thursday 27 August 2009  
[<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1108964.html> (accessed 15 November 2009)].

<sup>33</sup> Pollock, 'Art/Trauma/Representation': 46.

<sup>34</sup> Bracha L. Ettinger; quoted in Griselda Pollock, 'After the Reapers: Gleaning the Past, the Feminine and Another Future, from the Work of Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger', in Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, *Halala-Autistwork* (Aix en Provence: Cité du Livre; Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1995), p. 133.

<sup>35</sup> Bracha L. Ettinger, 'Fragilization and Resistance' (this issue), p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> Bracha L. Ettinger, 'Art as the Transport-Station of Trauma', in *Artworking 1985-1999* (Ghent and Brussels: Ludion, 2000), p. 91; quoted in Pollock, 'Art/Trauma/Representation': 52.

<sup>37</sup> Bracha L. Ettinger, 'Transcriptum: Memory Tracing In/For/With the Other', in *Matrixial Borderspace*, p. 167.

<sup>38</sup> Bracha L. Ettinger, 'Neighbourhood and Shechina', p. 35.

<sup>39</sup> Ettinger, 'Fragilization and Resistance', p. 5.

<sup>40</sup> Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 3, 14, 136-142.

<sup>41</sup> Carla Freccero, *Queer/Early/Modern* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 80.

<sup>42</sup> Elizabeth Freeman, 'Time Binds, or, Erotohistoriography', *Social Text* 23:3-4 (Fall-Winter 2005): 57-68.

<sup>43</sup> Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (London and Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 48, 5-9, 49-51.

<sup>44</sup> Valerie Rohy, 'Ahistorical', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12:1 (2006): 65, 61-83.

<sup>45</sup> Ettinger, 'Fragilization and Resistance', p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.