

Copoiesis

Bracha L. Ettinger

I have named matrixial borderspace the psychic sphere which is trans-subjective on a sub-subjective partial level. A mental matrixial encounter-event transgresses individual psychic boundaries even if and when its awareness arises in the field of the separate individual subject, and it evades communication even if and when it operates inside intersubjective relational field. Subjectivity here is a transgressive encounter between 'I' (as partial-subject) and uncognized yet intimate 'non-I' (as partial-subject or partial-object). Co-poietic transformational potentiality evolves along aesthetic and ethical unconscious paths: strings and threads, and produces a particular kind of knowledge. Unconscious transmission and reattunement as well as resonant copoietic knowledge don't depend on verbal communication, intentional organization or inter-subjective relationships. Aesthetical and ethical processes are impregnated by matrixial copoiesis. In aesthetical working-through the artist transforms time and space of an encounter-event into matrixial screen and gaze, and offers the other via com-passionate hospitality an occasion for fascinace.



Bracha L. Ettinger, Eurydice, n. 36.
Oil and mixed media on canvas. 2001. © B. L. E.

'I' meets a 'non-I,' 'I' meets another 'non-I.' This 'non-I' meets another 'I.' Each encounter creates its own psychic resonance field, and each resonance field is with and in other fields of resonance. Thus, each matrixial cluster is a web of meeting of one with-in the other, where each one – and each other – belongs to several such clusters. The matrixial web is thus the body-psyche-time-space of the intimate even though it is a web of several, and it is from the onset transgressive. Transgressive and intimate – even when the encounter is between, with, and in two subjects, the encounter is not symbiotic. Transgressive and intimate – even if the encounter is between three subjects, inside this sphere triangulation is not Oedipalizing. Com-passionate matrixial empathy is not oedipalizing, yet difference is being swerved there already. Individuation and differentiation do not wait the third subject. The third in the matrix is not the one who will introduce difference inside a supposed symbiosis and thus bring about the first differentiating instances, but is the one who will also co-emerge with-in a matrixial web as an I or a non-I. Uncognizing yet knowing one another on a partial level – by erotic borderlinking, by affective, empathic, intuitive and even quasi-telepathic knowledge and by erotic investment and sensual and perceptive sensitivities, as well as by way of the sharing in fields of resonance and influence, and in one another's pulsative intensities – sharing in terms of wavelength, frequencies and vibrations not perceivable by the senses but transmissible and translateable by the mind, thus sharing via virtual, traumatic and phantasmatic strings to create coeventings or encounter-events – I and non-I are cross-printing psychic traces in one another and continuously transform their shareable threads and sphere. While continually inspiring one another, I and non-I create a singular shared trans-subjectivity where even traces of each one's earlier or exterior trans-subjective co-emergences, co-eventings and cofading with other non-I(s) influence the newly arising time-space. The sharing and exchange of traces of mutually subjectivizing agencies that dwell in different levels and frequencies create a mutating co-poietic net inside a singular trans-subjective web. The interlacing copoietic strings and threads create the ever-transforming transgressive metamorphic borderlinks in a relatively stable yet fluid jointness in severality.

In the opening to an unconscious matrixial event-encounter, the artist can't not-share with an-other, she can't not witness the other. The I and non-I are wit(h)nessing one another, and by that they become partialised, vulnerable and fragilised. The artist doesn't build a defense against this fragility but freely embraces it. Transmissibility and transformative potentialities "wake up" to vibrate the virtual and real strings. Sensitivities are reattuned, unconscious imprints cross-inspire, traces are reaching one another beyond each one's personal boundaries. Inspiring psychic strings covibrate and traces are stored in shareable threads. The matrixial psychic space concerns shareability and severality that evade the whole subject in self-identity, endless multiplicity, collective community and organized society. The matrixial borderspace is drawn and is further drawing virtual and real traumatic and phantasmatic as well as imaginary and symbolic transgressive psychic contacts by inhabitation and erotic co-tuning in the same resonance field; vibrating space or elusive time of which each participant becomes partial by its own reattunement and attention. Affective vibrations that tremble with virtual strings, body-psyche-space-time cross-imprints and uncognized memory traces accumulated in several threads transform each partial-subject into some kind of mental continuity of the psyche of another partial-subject. Each psyche is a continuity of the psyche of the other in the matrixial borderspace. We thus metabolize mental imprints

and traces for one another in each matrixial web whose psychic grains, virtual and affective strings and unconscious threads participate in other matrixial webs and transform them by borderlinking in metramorphosis.



Bracha L. Ettinger, Matrix - Family Album, n.8.
Oil and mixed media on canvas. 2003-2005. © B. L. E.

Matrixial transformation is a co-transformation-in-difference. Matrix that signifies womb and indicates femaleness, prenatality and pregnancy supplies the symbol and an image by which we can identify and recognize the moves of the transgressive and partial trans-subjectivity behind or beyond the moves of the differentiated subject and draw the activity of a specific Eros with its aesthetical and ethical consequences. I have named 'metramorphosis' the ensemble of joint eventing of transmission and reattunement in encounters where I and non-I coemerge, co-change and co-fade in borderlinking to each other with-in virtual and real strings. Copoiesis is the aesthetical and ethical creative potentiality of borderlinking and of metramorphic weaving. The psychic cross-imprinting of events and the exchange of traces of mutually (but not symmetrically) subjectivizing agencies, occurring via/in a shared psychic borderspace where two or several becoming-subjectivities meet and borderlink by strings and through weaving of threads, and create singular trans-subjective webs of copoiesis composed of and by transformations along psychic strings stretched between the two or several participants of each encounter-event. Thus, a matrixial borderspace is a mutating copoietic net where co-creativity might occur.

A matrixial co-emergence has a healing power, but because of the transgression of individual boundaries that it initiates and entails, and because of the self-relinquishment and fragilization it calls forward, it is also potentially traumatizing. Therefore, to

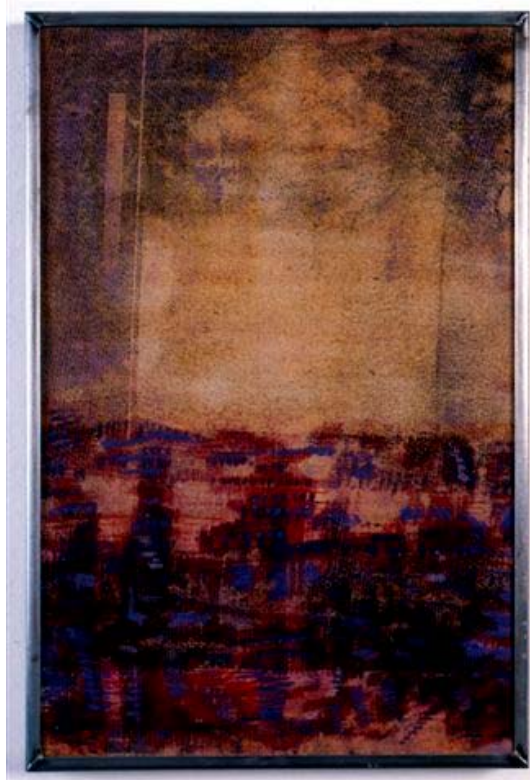
become artistic or generate healing, the aesthetical transgression of individual borderlines (that occurs in any case with or without our awareness or intention) calls for the awakening of a specific ethical attention and erotic extension: an artistic generosity. In art, the aesthetical working-through bends towards the ethical with matrixial response-ability in wit(h)nessing; in psychoanalysis the ethical working-through that entails the generosity expressed by compassionate hospitality and by effects and affects of *fascinace* bends toward the aesthetical realm.



Bracha L. Ettinger, Matrix - Family Album, n.3.
Oil and mixed media on canvas. 2001. © B. L. E.

Matrixial trans-subjectivity hosts moments of coemergence-in-differentiation that weave their own time zone – a matrixial bordertime. Composite partial subjectivities produce, share and transmit assembled, hybrid and diffracted psychic objects and links, as well as their mental traces, via originary psychic conductible borderlinks. As strings, the erotic antennae of the psyche disperse different aspects: links, waves, frequencies and intensities, affects, together with their threads composed of imprints and memory-traces of jouissance and of traumatic events shared or transmitted between me and the stranger who thus unknowingly becomes ‘my’ intimate anonymous partner. New traces are inscribed along psychic matrixial paths and threads and more strings are vibrating. This very psychic coemergence also depends upon the capacity and quality of witnessing of the non-I in jointness: on that particular quality I have named wit(h)nessing, witnessing while sharing in the distribution and reabsorption of traces of

the event and participating in trans-subjective transmission via unconscious strings and threads.



Bracha L. Ettinger, Matrix - Family Album, n.5.
Oil and mixed media on canvas. 2001. © B. L. E.

A matrixial borderlinking is transformational. I have called the aesthetical duration of affective and effective participation within a transformational subjectivizing potentiality of a matrixial link (or link *a*) be it gaze, voice, touch, movement, breath, gaze-and-touching, move-and-breathing, etc.: fascinancy. Fascinancy is an aesthetic affect that operates in the prolongation and delaying of the time of encounter-event. It allows a working-through of matrixial differentiating-in-jointness and copoiesis. Fascinancy can take place only if borderlinking with-in a real virtual, traumatic or phantasmatic encounter-event meets with compassionate hospitality arriving from the other (as *m/Other*). It is the ripening of a transformational potentiality in a matrixial prolongation of a time of coemergence with and in a sensitive image, sound, touch, move, breath, etc. Fascinancy might turn into what Lacan describes as *fascinum* when castration, separation, weaning, split or rejection abruptly intervene. Working through traces of the Other in me is also an aesthetical gesture where compassionate hospitality and generosity meets with fascinancy. Co-poietic differentiation-in-coemergence is possible only with-in compassionate hospitality and with fascinancy. Artworking, like psychoanalytical healing of long duration, is a compassionate encounter-event of prolonged generosity. The artist who is working through the cross-inscribed traces and is worked through by virtual, phantasmatic or traumatic real strings practices her art –

art that is an aesthetic-in-action – as a healing, healing that is an ethics-in-action. Such is the co-response-ability of artworking and of healing in copoiesis.



Bracha L. Ettinger, Matrix - Family Album, n.6.
Oil and mixed media on canvas. 2003-2004. © B. L. E.

By aesthetical and ethical joining-in-differentiating and working-through, a spiritual knowledge of the Other and the Cosmos is born and revealed. Artworking and art-works create such knowledge. It is reached by borderlinking one's own soul-psyche to the breath of the psyche of the other and to the spirit of the Cosmos. In each particular copoiesis with the Other or with the Cosmos, being-with and being-in is 'self'-differentiation and individuation within transgressive reattunement, which creates spiralic metamorphic vectors. Freeing the potentiality of an other while being transformed by it too is a kind of love – an ethical co-birthing in beauty. I and non-I share co-response-ability when a non-I co-responds in compassionate hospitality to an I who bathes in this resonant atmosphere by way of fascinace. In the aesthetical practice which is artworking, an ethical working-through occurs as long as subjective emergence is woven within a trans-subjective pulsative borderspace. This openness between an I in fascinace and a m/Othernal compassionate agency paves the way toward openness to the Cosmos. By this openness the psychic transforms the virtual. If rejection occupies the space of such a fragile openness, devastating unconscious effects necessarily occur.

Metamorphic processes remap the traces of the event by specific routes of passability and transmissibility, transitivity, conductivity, and transference between various psychic

strata of different individuals. The matrixial exposure of the becoming-m/Other is an openness to the uncognized world and to unknown but intimate others by a compassionate Eros that is not a sexual libido in the usual sense. Compassionate Eros and sexual libido are different psychic instances. They might intermix, but they nurture different kinds of love. Where sexual libido takes the lead, Thanatos – death drive – is there too, never too far. In that case, the potentiality for compassionate erotic hospitality is often deformed. By compassionate Eros a non-aggressive thanatos is revealed. Not death, but the *non-life* as *the not yet emerged*, the *not yet becoming alive*, is accessed and intended.



Bracha L. Ettinger, Matrix - Family Album, n.7.
Oil and mixed media on canvas. 2003-2005. © B. L. E.

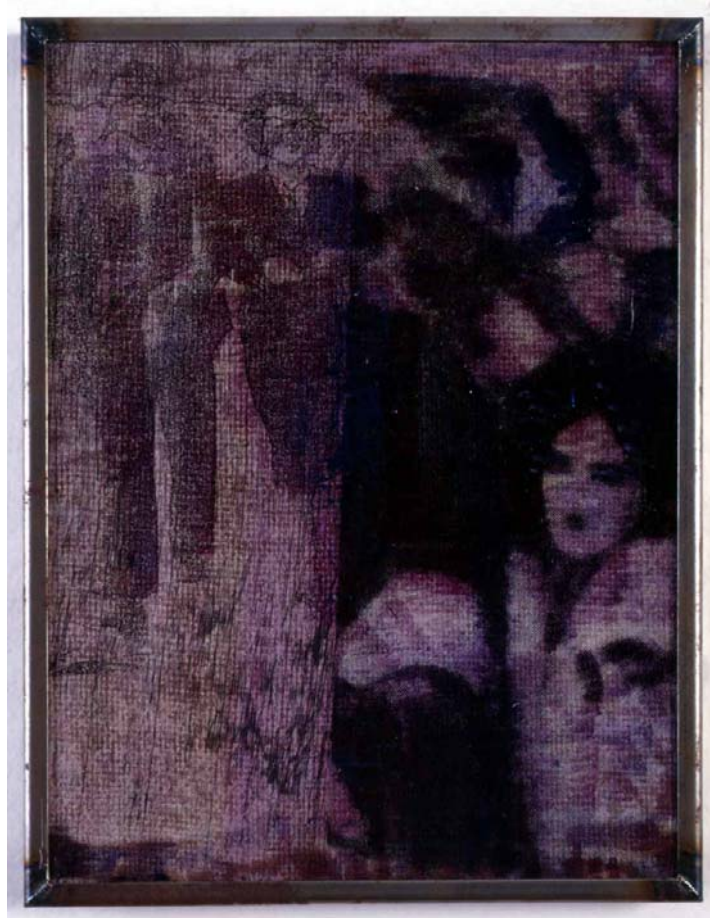
The sense aroused by minimal reattunement in distance-in-proximity within the same resonance camera obscura is transmitted behind words and beyond symbolic-phallic comprehension, and we are reminded of Freud's remark regarding direct "psychical transference" of ideas: "One is led to a suspicion that this is the original, archaic method of communication between individuals and that in the course of phylogenetic evolution it has been replaced by the better method of giving information with the help of signals which are picked up by the sense organs. But the old method might have persisted in the background" (1933, p. 55). Therefore, in the attempt to open up the foreclosure of a matrixial borderspace, an artist-healer must take the responsibility to become a concerned and compassionate open channel for both I and non-I. Traces from a memory of oblivion of such a field are impossible for access outside deep human compassionate connectivity which is love. Without wit(h)nessing, the openness to this unconscious level becomes very painful – a dangerous event. There is always a danger of re-opening

a painful, frozen thread and adding a traumatic weight to it instead of transforming it in a life-enhancing direction. This is where artworking and healing step forward. In co-poietic moments of exposure towards the other, the artist as healer transforms the traumatic event into a subjectivizing potentiality.

The matrixial gaze is a vacillating trace of the nearly-missed borderlinking of an I with a non-I. A link is ebbing and flowing with each coemergence and cofading. The matrixial gaze is a touching gaze, it is never purely visual, and it enters and alters the screen of vision which by definition is im-pure and inseparable from other unconscious dimensions of the psyche, informed by different sources of sensibilities, and mainly, connected to and affected by the unconscious of the Other and the consciousness of the Cosmos. The artist in the matrixial dimension is wit(h)ness in com-passionate hospitality. The viewer, and this partially includes the artist in her unconscious viewer position is a wit(h)ness in fascinane. The viewer will embrace while transforming traces of the event and will continue to weave metramorphic borderlinks to others, present and archaic, cognized and uncognized appealing from the future, from the past or from an unrealized virtuality. The viewer is challenged by the artwork to join a specific anonymous intimacy. The potential embracing of the memory of oblivion can't be 'just' aesthetic. Someone must join in. With the idea of wit(h)nessing in encounter the scope of aesthetics itself shifts. By borderlinking, the artist can bear wit(h)ness and articulate sub-knowledge of/from the other. The matrixial gaze exposes instances of co-birthing and co-fading in which some excess that surpasses the artist as subject is suddenly distinguished out. What is captured and is given form to at the end of such a trajectory is what was waiting to be born and to receive almost-impossible articulation, in a body-psyche-time-space of suspension-anticipation that you can only 'view' or glimpse by joining in.

Artworking is sensing a potential co-emergence and co-fading and bringing into being objects or events, processes or encounters that sustain these metramorphoses and further transmit their effect. Art evokes further instances of trans-subjectivity that embrace and produce new partial subjects, and makes almost-impossible new borderlinking available, out of elements and links already partially available in bits. These are going to be transformed in ways that can't be thought of prior to artworking itself, on the way to shifting with-in-to the screen of vision inside the tableau. In art today, trauma more than phantasm determines the trajectory of what is, out of art, a forever no-time and no-place. Art links the time of too-early to the time of too-late and plants them in the world's time. Metramorphosing traumatic Thing-encounter and Thing-event means extracting times of too-early and too-late out of virtuality or indifference on-to with-in-visibility with-in-difference, when new affects wake up virtual or archaic ones and conjointly offer a wit(h)nessed Thing its first apparition. The contemporary effect of beauty meets the effect of the sublime when it indicates for us, not only the place of relationships to one's own trauma, but also the rapport of the I to the trauma of unknown others and the real of an encounter with a virtual string, thus replanting transcendence with-in the borderline and transforming it into a threshold. The artworking and healing might fragment an unconscious path and melt a psychic thread into a vibrating string. The artwork processes a matrixial time-space. Thus, a memory of oblivion that can't be otherwise processed and a virtual string that can't be otherwise touched are realized in a time-space. From art and back into the world, aesthetical but

also ethical is the transform-ability of the no-time and no-place of archaic encounter in a new transferential co-emergence and co-fading in copoiesis.



Bracha L. Ettinger, Eurydice, n. 36.
Oil and mixed media on canvas. 2001. © B. L. E.

I would like to end with a quote from my essay ‘Art as the Transport-Station of Trauma’ (2000): The place of art is for me the transport-station of trauma. A transport-station that more than a place is rather a space that allows for certain occasions for occurrence and for encounter that will become the realization of what I call *borderlinking and borderspacing in a matrixial trans-subjective space* by way of experiencing with an object or process of creation. The transport is expected in this station, and it is possible, but the transport-station does not promise that passage of remnants of trauma will actually take place in it; it only supplies the space for this occasion. The passage is expected but uncertain, the transport does not happen in each encounter and for every gazing subject. The matrixial trans-subjective field is a field in whose scope there is no point to speak neither of such certainty nor of absolute contingency. Likewise, it is pointless to evoke there the whole subject, a definite hindrance of encounter, a neat split between subject and object, a total evacuating of the subject, its death or its shattering into endless particles. In this psychic field, a gathering of several of its potential intended correspondents is possible – of several – and not of all of them, and not at just

any moment, in their actualization as partial objects and partial subjects. Beauty that I find in contemporary art-works that interest me, whose source is the trauma and to which it also returns and appeals, is not the beauty as 'private' or as that upon which a consensus of taste can be reached, but is a kind of encounter that perhaps we are trying to avoid much more than aspiring to arrive at...

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the artist & author

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Exhibitions (Selection)

2006 Breathing/Suffocation. The Royal Museum, Antwerp

2003 Solo Exhibition. Gerwood Gallery, Oxford University

2003 Solo Exhibition. La librairie, Les Abattoirs, Toulouse

2003 Aletheia. The Art Museum, Gothenburg

- 2002 Solo Exhibition. Maison de France. Hebrew University, Jerusalem
2001 Solo Exhibition. Drawing Center, N.Y.
2000 Solo Exhibition. Le Palais des Beaux-Arts, Bruxelles
2000 Now Permanent exhibition, at: Freud's Dream Museum, St. Petersburg
1999 Interarchive. Kunstraum der Universität Lüneburg
1999 La Mémoire. Villa Medici, Rome
1999 Voices from Here and There. Israel Museum, Jerusalem
1998 Eurydice. Solo Exhibition. Cinemateque, Bergen
1998 Artists in Israeli Art (The Ninties). Haifa Museum
1997 Suspension. Image and text in: J. Crandall's project for the Documenta X, Kassel
1997 Kabinet. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
1997 Body. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
1997 Inside the Visible. Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
1997 Oh Mama. Museum for Israeli Art, Ramat-Gan
1996-7 Face à l'Histoire. Centre G. Pompidou, Paris
1996 Duo Exhibition: Bracha L. Ettinger and 'Africa'. Memory and Amnesia. Pori Art Museum
1996 Inside the Visible. ICA, Boston; National Museum for Women, Washington; Whitechapel, London
1995 Solo Exhibition. Israel Museum, Jerusalem.
1994 Solo Exhibition. Leeds Metropolitan University Gallery, Leeds.
1994 Solo Exhibition. Kanaal Art Fondation, Béguinage, Kortrijk, Belgium.
1993 Solo Exhibition. The Museum Of Modern Art, Oxford.
1993 Solo Exhibition. The Russian Museum of Ethnography, Saint-Petersburg.
1992 Solo Exhibition. Le Nouveau Musée, Villeurbanne.
1992 Routes of Wandering. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.
1991 Israeli Art Now. Tel Aviv Museum of Art.
1990 Solo Exhibition. Goethe Institute, Paris.
1990 Feminine Presence. Tel-Aviv Museum of Art.
1988 Solo Exhibition. Musée des Beaux-Arts et de la Dentelle, Calais.