

## Preface

Artists continually introduce into culture all sorts of Trojan horses from the margins of their consciousness; in that way, the limits of the Symbolic are transgressed all the time by art. It is quite possible that many work-products carry subjective traces of their creators, but the specificity of works of art is that their materiality cannot be detached from ideas, perceptions, emotions, consciousness, cultural meanings, etc., and that being interpreted and reinterpreted is their cultural destiny. This is one of the reasons why works of art are symbologenic.

Bracha Ettinger<sup>1</sup>

Do artists affected by, or obligated to haunting pasts, journey away from or towards an encounter with traumatic residues?

Some artists carry the traces of politically caused, horrific historical experiences; others bear the burdens of secrets, shame, guilt, morbidity, bereavement, exile and abuse. Some artists are in turn sensitized by personal affliction to the calamities of the undoubtedly catastrophic dimensions of imperial, fascist, colonial and post-colonial modernity and the extreme suffering of others vicariously transmitted by mediatized information systems.<sup>2</sup> Hence a second question arises: can aesthetic practices, the creation of *after-images*, bring about *transformation* – this does not imply cure or resolution – of the traces, the *after-affects* of trauma, personal or historical, inhabiting the world that artists also process as participants in and sensors for our life-worlds and troubled histories? Finally, what modes of reading aesthetic practices might be mobilized to answer such questions?

This book presents a series of encounters with art works, Baroque, modernist and contemporary. All of them have arrested me. Reflecting the ethics of feminist epistemology, my readings are 'situated knowledge'. Understanding is always partial, perspectival and inflected by the social formation and personal histories of the researcher.<sup>3</sup> This is not, however, an excuse for relativism. Research is answerable to its subjects. Based on evidence, any analysis must make clear the grounds of the argument. I cannot pretend to a

false universalism, neutrality or detachment. These works affect me, prompting me to undertake close readings. Specific artworks by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Ana Mendieta, Louise Bourgeois, Anna Maria Maiolino, Alina Szapocznikow, Vera Frenkel, Sarah Kofman and Chantal Akerman are my case studies. Some names will be familiar; others deserve to be so, coming, however, from formerly marginalized countries, practices, histories: Cuba, Poland, Brazil-Italy and Canada-Czechoslovakia.

These works do not constitute a new genre of trauma art. They do not share time-frames, locations, subject matter, stylistic features or media. I stand before them in what Bracha Ettinger, artist and theorist of aesthetics and trauma, calls *fascinace* – a prolonged, aesthetically affecting and learning encounter – not aiming to master meaning or stamp an interpretation upon them.<sup>4</sup> I remain with the artworks to encounter certain movements or pressures within them that I identify as *traces of trauma*: events or experiences excessive to the capacity of the psyche to ‘digest’ and the existing resources of representation to encompass.

This book offers a series of impassioned, fascinated readings of selected artworks and art practices that touch on profound and intense events in lives intersecting with histories that are at once ordinary – some of the traumatic events befall many of us like losing parents or falling ill – and extraordinary – historically precipitated by the unprecedented or the horrific. Dying of cancer, being bereaved, living in exile, even being a woman in a phallogocentric order, these are not exceptional but tragically normal, yet they can still be considered traumatic.<sup>5</sup> Surviving genocide, however, may be considered so, as it participates in an event that, while impinging on individuals, is now considered to have massive ramifications for humanity’s future itself.

In a transdisciplinary *encounter* between feminist theory, psychoanalytical aesthetics and the cultural processing of personal and historical traumas, notably but not exclusively the Holocaust, I want to lay out the case for a feminist intervention in trauma studies through/with art. The purpose is to *think with the artworks*, to propose ways of understanding what ‘aesthetic practices’ (to stress both semiotic and psycho-symbolic operations as opposed to the idealization of art and fetishization of the artist) can offer to a culturally post-traumatic condition overwhelmed with unbearable or encrypted memories as well as shaped by the voids of traumatic amnesia.<sup>6</sup> Through careful readings of the trajectories within each artist’s practice over time, I shall be identifying the radically varied effects – and affects – of different psychic economies *working* in the processing of trauma or *failing* to unlock the encrypting of trauma. In some cases it seems that the artists set out to journey away from a traumatic experience that happened in the past. In most cases that is not possible; the repressed resurfaces. In other instances, a lifetime of work prepares a pathway towards the always belated encounter with a trauma that may, or may not, be

transformed by forms created to process it. Both movements or directions are often at work simultaneously.

The secondary or belated arrival of the encounter with traumatic residues or traces may, however, be *the* moment of encounter with non-experienced trauma that, in some senses, never happened until this new encounter. It can only do so in displaced and secondary forms; as such this (re)encounter can be dangerous because it is happening in the present. Chapter 6 deals with a literary text rich with its own imagery and scenarios that I think encountered such a danger. The moment of articulation became psychically menacing for the writer and can be shattering for the viewer/reader who comes to meet it. Some forms of aesthetic encapsulation, therefore, become deadly. It is not possible to predict the manner in which the traumatic will emerge, invited or uninvited, pursued or escaped, through an artistic practice. Some seek to touch it; others cannot help but be reclaimed by it. It is never known in advance what it will do even when seemingly contained in a form of image, narrative or words. On the other hand, some artworks find, and some even give rise to, formal or material means of shaping hitherto unacknowledged psychic economies that enable encounters with traumatic moments that can be processed transitively, hence be shared, transported and passed into another bearer, be that the artwork or the willing partner who comes to meet it. The work becomes a subjectively shared occasion that does not forget or obliterate the trauma, but holds fast to its witness, or perhaps, like the mother who takes on her afflicted infant's distress and detoxifies it on the infant's behalf, processes its traces.<sup>7</sup>

As the resource for trauma theory, psychoanalysis argues that all human subjects are afflicted by founding – or, as I shall name it, *structural* – trauma in terms of separation and cleavage: birth, weaning, loss of the loved object, loss of the loved object's love, all retroactively caught up in symbolic castration which signals the formation of the unconscious and severance from infantile intensities and corporalities focused on the imagined source of life and nurture: the maternal body, voice, gaze, breast and touch. One radicalizing feminist theory, however, reveals another dimension in human subjectivity, also *structurally* traumatic, that is not based on loss and separation. Instead it discloses parallel strings of yearning for connectivity and an inescapable potential for hospitality and compassion towards the other. Bracha Ettinger has articulated Matrixial theory over twenty-five years, situating this capacity as the 'traumatic' legacy of the specificity of a non-phallic feminine sexual difference that affects us all, irrespective of gender and sexuality. The Matrixial is the mark of the shared manner of all human becoming in prolonged prenatality that traumatically, namely non-cognitively, shapes postnatal subjectivity, ethics and aesthetics with another non-phallic potentiality. I draw on this intervention as it speaks specifically to the intimacy between trauma and the aesthetic zone.

An artist working with historical and personal trauma, Ettinger expands the range of the founding traumas of subjectivity identified by psychoanalysis – these undigested shocks and affecting impacts that are not necessarily destructive – by identifying in human subjectivity a primordial sense of becoming a humanized being that is, from its earliest inklings and (aesthetic) sensations, a co-emergence *with* a co-other in a prolonged but notably late prenatal-prematernal connectivity. Such connectivity-in-difference has nothing to do with symbiosis or fusion. Not characterized by the phallic opposition of fusion-versus-separation, it represents a proto-ethical and *aesthetically* experienced durational co-emergence, a nonfusional trans-subjectivity built upon the asymmetrical pairing of hospitality (prematernal) and compassion (prenatal).

Ettinger invites us to acknowledge the implications for thinking about subjectivity through this expanded proposition about a sexual difference *off from* the Matrixial feminine that is not a difference between masculine and feminine. As a theory of relations to the unknown but co-human other, Matrix enlarges our understanding of human ethical capacities, and hence even politics, by recognizing that the traumatic legacy of the prolonged process of becoming human breaches the border between prenatality and postnatality, and thus it bears the imprint of the durational subjectivizing partnership of prenatality/prematernity. This partnership, I must stress, does not place any limitation on women's right to choose the destiny of their own bodies or that of unborn fetuses; precisely the opposite is the case since the adult in the duality alone can and must take responsibility for full human rather than physiological life. Matrix theorizes the 'traumatic' *after-affect* in all of us who have been born, and born with non-conscious knowledge of what must be acknowledged as the specificity of feminine sexuality and subjectivity in that complex, traumatic – hence unrecognized but felt and affected – interface with an-other being, corporality and transsubjectivity. Matrixial theory recasts thinking about our relations to, hence capacities for compassion and hospitality towards, others as well as offering another pathway to understanding contemporary aesthetics in its formal artistic or literary practices as a site of transformational encounter. It has ramifications for contemporary aesthetic theory and hence rethinking art's histories.

Freud offered a double thesis on trauma. Trauma may index something horrible, hence buried, that is nonetheless compulsively acted out. There is also what is compulsively repeated in search of its original *jouissance* (intensities undecidably both painful and pleasurable). Thus, we can argue, in our concern to engage with art that courageously, or even against the artist's will, allows traumatic impressions to rise to the surface and be *formulated* through creative articulations in art, there is a trace of a traumatic imprint of a yearning for reconnection with unknown otherness that was once, prenatally, encoun-

tered in co-emergence and co-affection. Postnatally, such a traumatic (in the second Freudian sense) longing for *withness* can become an ethical foundation and even be actively made into a politically conscious act of human solidarity that itself will have both cultural and subjective effects.

This book studies the presence and effects of the differing psychic economies, Phallic and Matrixial, on the aesthetic negotiation of the entwined affects of structural trauma and of historically induced trauma by offering readings of artworks drawing on Ettinger's key concepts of *aesthetic wit(h)nessing*, *fascination*, *compassion* and *transcriptum*. (I will explain these terms in the Introduction.) While indicating ways of reading the processes of artistic creation, the Matrixial focus on moments of transsubjective encounter also alters our understanding of viewing, reading, responding not 'to' so much as 'with' *artworking* which traverses artist and world, work and viewer.

I hope, furthermore to perform what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick named 'reparative' rather than 'paranoid' reading practices. In queer, feminist and post-colonial critical theory and cultural analysis, Sedgwick identified a trend, justified by history, but theoretically impoverishing, towards paranoia. This involves the normalization, as the only method, of a paranoid stance that anticipates and identifies systemic oppression. The pairing hidden/exposed becomes the axis of what philosopher Paul Ricoeur has named the 'hermeneutics of suspicion'.<sup>8</sup> To seek other than such paranoid methods does not lead to a denial of the reality of enmity or the gravity of oppression caused by class, race, sexuality, ethnicity, disability; it might lead to at least the possibility of imaginative transformation.

Sedgwick draws on the psychoanalytic theory of Melanie Klein. Klein argued that all subjects oscillate between the paranoid/schizoid and the depressive positions. These positions emerge in infancy but become recurrent features of adult psychic formation. The paranoid/schizoid position, characterized by hatred, envy and anxiety, is a form of 'terrible alertness to the dangers posed by the hateful and envious part-objects that one defensively projects onto, carves out of, and ingests from the world around'. On the other hand, the depressive position mitigates anxiety by attempting to 'repair' the damaged part-objects and to create new wholes: 'Once assembled to one's own specifications, the more satisfying object is available both to be identified with and to offer nourishment and comfort in return. Among Klein's names for the reparative process is love.'<sup>9</sup>

Critical readings dominated by the paranoid position know in advance that all culture will be marked and deformed by relations of power. Often justified, paranoid readings anticipate the worst, exposing oppression again and again. Affectively, this orientation has profound effects on our struggle for change. Reading reparatively might allow the reader to be surprised by the possibility of, and desire for, counter and creative possibilities in texts

or histories which, of course, carry the marks of patriarchal, classed, racist or heteronormative oppressiveness, but also fashion the signs of resistance: this Sedgwick called queering works through the use of 'weak theory' and, above all, attention to the ways our cultural analysis generates different kinds of affect. Revisioning her own field of queer studies, Sedgwick offers important suggestions for related projects in feminist studies in terms of daring to seek pleasure rather than merely forestalling pain.

The desire of the reparative impulse ... is additive and accretive. Its fear, a realistic one, is that the culture surrounding it is inadequate or inimical to its nurture; it wants to assemble and confer plenitude on an object that will then have resources to offer to an inchoate self.<sup>10</sup>

Thus we have dedicated so much work to a kind of denunciation of the deformations effected by intersecting axes of power and oppression, and rightly so.

No less acute than a paranoid position, no less realistic, no less attached to a project of survival, and neither less nor more delusional nor fantasmatic, the reparative reading position undertakes a different range of affects, ambitions, and risks. What we can learn best from such practices are, perhaps, the many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture—even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them.<sup>11</sup>

Can we affectively reconfigure ourselves by reparative readings, engaging with transformations of the trauma and injuries of class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender and sexual difference effected by aesthetic operations? This book explores through both Matrixial and reparative modes the possibilities, and failures, of aesthetic transformation in the face of trauma.

The questions I shall be asking of my texts and artworks are these: Is trauma that which is encrypted, locked unreachably yet hauntingly within the psyche, an unreachable but shaping void, hence beyond all representation while still being a phantom within so that our reading for its affects is structural to human subjectivity? Or if its *after-affects* are encountered in art or literature, do artworks create what Ettinger names a 'transport-station of trauma', hence a passage to a future through *after-images* that attempt the transformation of the traces of individual trauma?<sup>12</sup> In my studies, I repeatedly stress the significance of *form, formulation, transformation* in order to explore the mediation between *after-affect* and *after-image*, that moves from the psychic intimacy between aesthesis and trauma, structurally, to the role of artworking in touching and thus offering a novel, poietically generated form for the encounter with that which, by definition, is not yet in the grasp of representation.

As what Ettinger has named 'Trojan horses' smuggling shifted meanings and affective possibilities into culture via psychically infused materialities,

can artworks deliver a shared encounter with the unknown and unremembered not-yet-past that can thus shift the burden of historically traumatic events whose legacies transitively inhabit the world, but whose traces responsive artists may also process as they cross-inscribe individual and cultural resonances of catastrophe across generations, time and space? Can thinking trauma with artworking address our responsibility to the traumatic residues of our recent histories that sustain continuing violations of human life in widespread suffering and exposure to terror and horror?

In the thirty-five years of my work as a feminist cultural analyst, I have plotted my course by generating concepts for thinking difference: *old mistresses*, *vision and difference*, *generations and geographies*, *differencing the canon*. Concepts serve as thinking apparatuses. I am working now with the concept of the *Virtual Feminist Museum* (VFM), the performative space for *differencing the canon*. It deals with time, space and archive.<sup>13</sup> Virtual not in the cybernetic but the philosophical sense of always becoming and as yet incompletely unharvested, the Virtual Feminist Museum focuses on *encounters*. It challenges the linear time, nationalized spaces and categories of art history that classifies art objects through period, style, medium and author. Rather than finding out what art is *about*, which often leads back to the artistic subject in whom art is thought to originate or to some other anterior explanation, we need to ask *what artistic practice is doing* and *where* as well as *when* that doing occurs. What are its occasions and its temporalities? Thus a study of trauma and the aesthetic in the VFM focuses on time. Philosopher Jean-François Lyotard identified painting's multiple temporalities:

A distinction should be made between the time it takes a painter to paint the picture (the time of production), the time required to look at and understand the work (the time of consumption), the time to which the work refers (a moment, a scene, a situation, a sequence of events: the time of the diegetic referent, of the story told by the picture), the time it takes to reach the viewer once it has been created (the time of circulation) and finally, perhaps the time the painting *is*. This principle, childish as its ambitions may be, should allow us to isolate different 'sites of time'.<sup>14</sup>

To these 'sites of time' I want to add trauma's timelessness. Trauma is not an anterior source from which imagery is generated by a knowing subject. Trauma is the not-yet-experienced non-thing *towards* which a lifetime of making art might be unknowingly journeying.<sup>15</sup> If trauma is ever encountered, its traces risk a secondary traumatization unless the gesture of its becoming can be transformed by a receptive discourse, a compassionate hospitality that can structure it. Witnessing – hospitable participatory responsiveness – is a reciprocal act allowing the offered trace to be processed in the encounter by another – individually or by the culture that shares in a moment of co-affectivity.

The Virtual Feminist Museum works with psychoanalytical time rather than art history's linear narratives. Psychoanalytically, time is layered, archaeological, recursive. The accumulated past remains an active force even when transformed from infantile urgencies to sublimated creative acts. Psychoanalysis also theorizes delay, repetition and the return of the repressed. Freud's perplexing but wonderful concept of *Nachträglichkeit*, 'afterwardness' as Jean Laplanche usefully translates it, reminds us that, when studying culture in general or an artistic practice in particular, what may happen in chronological time as succession may in fact be the working through of such afterwardness, a belated arrival on the scene of inscription of that which was always working, determining, shaping and energizing from the other scene, the unconscious or pressing from traumatic non-conscious space.<sup>16</sup> Thus our view of a work, or a body of work, or of a practice's place in a larger cultural field, involves a different kind of historical research and different ways of writing it up that avoid teleological, cause and effect, unidirectional development.

In the theory room of the Virtual Feminist Museum, Freud meets Hamburg cultural analyst Aby Warburg (1866–1929) who was an analyst of time in the image. Warburg's concept is *Nachleben*, variously translated as 'persistence' or 'survival' but meaning after-life or remaining lively after. This has a haunting quality, but also involves a capacity to recharge an originary energy in a later time or place. Warburg defined the image as *pathosformula* – the formulation for affect – that encodes what was once a living movement, a gesture in a performed ritual that had expressive freight in terms of affect and emotion when people enacted their anxieties and ecstasies before the fragile and dangerous questions of life, death and social interaction. The image functions as a mnemonic device that can transport, via its iconic after-living, into other times and places, something of that original energy, hence of subjective intensity and affect, when its formulae are re-ignited by contact with a different cultural moment that needs this charge. Warburg worked with a specific classical *pathos formula*, the running Nympha, a female figure with windswept air and agitated drapery, which was reclaimed during the Renaissance to signify and generate emotional energy.

I am arguing here that, in the aftermath of Modernity's traumatic ruptures and as a result of modernism's specific revelation of the potency of form, materiality and process, the artists I am discussing do not look back and reclaim older *pathos formulae*. They have generated new, post-traumatic *pathos formulae*, using diverse media and technical procedures that seek to transmit and transform traumatic intensities and after-affects. I do not seek, as Warburg did, persistent or recurring tropes or formulae. Historical trauma, such as the Holocaust, ruptured the entire classical tradition, changing fundamentally the real status of the body and its image. Nevertheless, Warburg's reading of that tradition can be used to enable us to discern, after the modernist turn to form,

materiality and process, how artists are currently inventing formulations of pathos for post-traumatic conditions.

A Warburgian art historian is not tied to period specializations, national frontiers, stylistic particularities. The entire book of the history of art is open to trace specific moments of reconnection and *Nachleben* between pasts and presents, and the processes of historically contingent transformations of image-legacies in novel historico-political and cultural circumstances. Hence I can place Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta in conversation with Botticelli and Bernini or Szapocznikow with Holbein without losing the specific coordinates – generations and geographies, another of my thinking concepts – of their moments or practices.

Warburgian art history is acutely attentive to historical and documentary specificity while positing the longer duration – persistence – of tendencies in human culture towards both symbolization and imagistic mimesis motivated by profound human emotion and need. Julia Kristeva's place in the Virtual Feminist Museum complements Warburg through her theories of 'aesthetic practices' and women's time. Kristeva distinguishes linear time of national and political histories from the longer, monumental duration of psycho-symbolic formations such as phallogentrism (which concerns sexuality, reproduction, sexual difference) as well as what it represses and hence carries as it structuring other: the feminine with its other, sometimes cyclical temporalities relating specifically to women's bodies as the hinge between life, death and meaning. These latter temporalities regulate our sexualities and the temporal rhythms of life and death as well as the imaginary and symbolic meanings invested in human reproduction: not biology but the life of social humanity and hence history at its hinge with the unthinkable Real of what lies beyond the human.<sup>17</sup>

If Warburg, Freud, and Kristeva open up the study of art's histories to the interface of subjective intensity and cultural modes of *formulation* through image and symbol, how do they take their place in a specifically feminist project? The midwife for this is a painter who is also at home in psychoanalysis, Bracha Ettinger. In her primary activity as a painter, Ettinger's artwork articulates history, memory and subjectivity through expanded painting in a lifelong encounter with and reflection upon art and trauma that links her parents' *Shoah* trauma with the mutually imbricating trauma of currently co-inhabited Israel/Palestine. Her work traverses Modernity itself as a trauma, a shocking assault on existing modes of experience and representation through constant industrial and technological change, urbanization, transport, military technologies and communication networking that also register, traumatically, in art's own technologies. But Modernity's self-image as a rational progress towards humanly engineered betterment was shattered by its own deadly and often dominant forces for exploitation and greed, social inequality and, above all, violence: technological (in warfare notably) and ultimately industrially

enacted genocidal racism. From colonial and imperial racism to religiously and racially targeted genocides, the solidarity of all that wears a human face has been catastrophically exploded. We live its post-traumatic effects. Art – serious and responsible – has, Ettinger argues, slowly come to know this and brings these issues to the surface of our attention by its singular means. Even without knowing it, many trends in twentieth century art ultimately bear witness, symptomatically, to the catastrophe that is ours to process. Ettinger’s art practice, founded in history and attentive to issues of memory, archive and difference, was the seedbed of what she theoretically articulated as Matrixial dimensions within subjectivity in the only other language she knew: psychoanalysis. Matrix names a different sexual difference ‘from the feminine’ and makes knowable the relations between *aesthetic wit(h)nessing* and trauma. Matrixial theory forms one of the foundations for this book’s proposition that feminist aesthetics has something profound to say about our post-traumatic and traumatizing human condition now.

*After-affect* knowingly corrupts a proper English word to signal the temporal displacement of trauma, perpetually present, yet absented from memory that bequeaths unbound affects to later events. *After-image*, suggesting a different kind of secondariness, may contradict the understanding of a postmodern ‘return [from high modernist abstraction] to representation’ typified in new media. I read artistic practices of the later twentieth century as post-iconographic, hence the stress on form /formulation rather than on representation/content. They are not, however, post-iconological in the Warburgian sense of the image having both a symbolic and an affective function. They also perform/engage with the inescapable after-effects of modernist preoccupations with process, materiality, temporality and spatiality beyond the image’s iconicity. The Virtual Feminist Museum assembles new configurations to rework the relations of time, space and archive, now under the sign of trauma and its Matrixial artworking.

The book begins with a long chapter on trauma theory and Matrixial aesthetics, laying out my understanding of trauma and introducing the key concepts from Ettinger’s work that enable me to develop a specifically feminist intervention in art’s histories and trauma studies. The introduction seeks to make accessible the range of theoretical resources for thinking about trauma, aesthetics and sexual difference that have been prompted by my encounter with the artworks themselves. The learning occurs in that encounter and the theories I shall use emerge from the necessity to make sense of the real of historical and personal trauma as they surface in the novel *pathos formulae* generated by artists as makers of forms. Divided into three sections, *Sounds of Subjectivity*, *Memorial Bodies*, *Passage through the Object*, the book initially explores sculpture as the site of invocation and language as well as the place of dissolution of form

and resistance to it. It moves from sculpture as a form of making about, and imbued with, bodiliness and tangible materiality to explorations of memory through video, literature and film. If these tend toward the virtual, the final chapters equally reclaim the body through a metonymic relation to a missing person mediated through a material object. The final chapters stage most dramatically by their shared relation to the Holocaust and the function of the surviving object the uncertainty of outcome when re-encountering traces of trauma as well as the different psychic economies released in the moment of aesthetic encounter with trauma.

Griselda Pollock  
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#### Notes

- 1 Bracha L. Ettinger, 'Matrix and Metramorphosis', *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 4:5 (1992), 195–6.
- 2 Geoffrey Hartman, 'Memory.com: Tele-Suffering and Testimony in the Dot Com Era', *Raritan*, 19:3 (2000), 1–18. Luc Boltanski, *Distant Suffering: Morality, Media and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- 3 Donna Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of the Partial Perspective', *Feminist Studies*, 14:3 (1988), 575–99.
- 4 Bracha Ettinger, 'Fascinace and the Girl-to-M/Other Matrixial Feminine Difference', in Griselda Pollock (ed.), *Psychoanalysis and the Image: Transdisciplinary Perspectives* (Boston and Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 60–93.
- 5 Laura S. Brown, 'not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma', in Cathy Caruth (ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 100–12.
- 6 Julia Kristeva, 'Women's Time' (1979), trans. Alice Jardine and Henry Blake, in Toril Moi (ed.), *The Kristeva Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 210. Kristeva names aesthetic practices (art, music, dance, poetry) as signifying processes energized by proximity to the drives and hence the corporeal, which transgress and renew the existing symbolic system and its current uniformity. On the side of heterogeneity and transformation, they also touch upon what is outside of signification allowing the pressure of psychic resources through sub-symbolic dimensions such as rhythm, pulse, movement, colour and hence affect.
- 7 British psychoanalyst Wilfrid Bion developed a unique theory of thinking by suggesting that there are beta elements (unmetabolized psyche/soma/affective experience) which can be transformed into alpha elements (thoughts that can be thought by the thinker) assisted by the reverie of the mother (or later analyst) who processes the beta elements returning them to the infant as alpha materials. For an account of Bion's theories see Mary Jacobus, *The Poetics of Psychoanalysis* (London: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- 8 Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970).

- 9 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 'Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading' in *Touching, Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy and Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 128.
- 10 Sedgwick, 'Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading', 149.
- 11 Sedgwick, 'Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading', 150.
- 12 Bracha L. Ettinger, 'Art as a Transport-Station of Trauma', in *Bracha Ettinger: Artworking 1985–1999* (Gent: Ludion, 2000), 91–116.
- 13 Griselda Pollock, *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum: Time, Space and the Archive* (London: Routledge, 2007), and *Differencing the Canon; Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories* (London: Routledge, 1999).
- 14 Jean-François Lyotard, 'Newman: The Instant', in Andrew Benjamin, *The Lyotard Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 240.
- 15 Griselda Pollock, 'The Long Journey: Maternal Trauma, Tears and Kisses in a Work by Chantal Akerman', *Studies in the Maternal*, 2:1 (2010), n.p.
- 16 Jean Laplanche, 'Notes on Afterwardness', in John Fletcher (ed.), *Essays on Otherness* (London: Routledge, 1999), 260–5.
- 17 Julia Kristeva, 'Women's Time' (1979), 187–213.

## Introduction: trauma and artworking

The abundance of suffering tolerates no forgetting; ... Yet this suffering, what Hegel called the consciousness of adversity, also demands the continued existence of art even while it prohibits it; it is now virtually in art alone that suffering can still find its own voice, consolation, without being immediately betrayed by it.

Theodor Adorno(1962)<sup>1</sup>

This book, like trauma itself, arrives belatedly on the expanded but contested field of trauma studies in the humanities although the journey to its writing has taken almost twenty years.<sup>2</sup> Swiftly taken up in literary, historiographical and cultural theory from the early 1990s, the engagement with trauma as a concept in art history and visual culture has been slower and more varied. Initiated in the 1990s by Kristine Stiles, Hal Foster and Ernst van Alphen, and elaborated since 2000 by Jill Bennett, Lisa Saltzman and others, each scholar, however, approaches trauma and visual art from a different theoretical foundation.<sup>3</sup> Arguing against the notion that we are done with trauma as a topic, I aim to introduce a specifically feminist-psychoanalytical and feminist-aesthetical dimension into still vibrant debates.

We are accustomed to think about trauma with the model of cure. Bad things happen to individuals. We should try to get over them. Time will heal. They are in the past. We must move on and let go. Or, if the event is historical, we build a monument, set up a memorial day, make a movie and leave our burden to them. The problem is that trauma, as we now understand the wounding of the psyche by an extreme event or by accumulated suffering, is not like that. When we borrow trauma as a term for personally affecting psychological shocks or as a metaphor for historical events that exceed existing representational resources, we also confront a problem that will not sort itself out by itself. The point of trauma studies is the necessity for individuals and for cultures, in different ways, to confront the 'wounding' that, according to our theories of trauma, engenders symptomologies such as the compulsion to repeat and acting out. Trauma possesses and inhabits us.

Originating in the Greek word for what pierces the body, *trauma* originates as a medical term. Adopted by psychology at the end of the nineteenth century, the concept of trauma was needed to convey the shattering experiences typical not only of modern life in the city and the railway age but, notably, of warfare – shell-shock in the First World War, for example – that ‘pierced’ the psychological mechanisms established to shield the psyche from excessive external stimuli.<sup>4</sup> Events and assaults that cannot be processed, or ‘digested’ by the psychic apparatus are thus considered traumatic; they function as piercing but *psychological* woundings. Unlike physical wounds, trauma is not subject to organic healing. As a psychological problematic, even if there is evidence of physiological changes in the brain because of severe shocks, trauma becomes a form of subjective non-experience that nevertheless, like a virus, becomes a structural part of the subject in ways which by inhabiting the psyche in uncognizable ways, *de-in-habit* the subject. Bracha Ettinger explains trauma with reference to a Freudian-Lacanian term for that which is beyond thinking that may also be tied closely to the pressure from which art emerges.

Psychoanalytical thought concerning both art and repetition revolves around the impossibility of annulling originary repression and accessing a psychic *Thing* encapsulated and hiding in an ‘outside’ captured inside in an unconscious ‘extimate’ space. The *Thing* is traumatic and aching, and we do not know where it hurts and that *it* hurts. It struggles unsuccessfully to re-approach psychic awareness, but only finds momentary relief in symptomatic repetitions.<sup>5</sup>

Given the difficulty of trauma itself, I propose that we can approach its implications for studies of art through five defining features: perpetual presentness, permanent absence, irrepresentability, belatedness and transmissibility.

#### Trauma’s no-time-space

Psychic trauma knows no time. It is a perpetual present, lodged like a foreign resident in the psyche. Trauma colonizes its hosts by its persistent inhabitation of a subject who does not, and cannot, know *it*. *It* happened but *I* do not know *it* – that it happened or what it was that happened. It is the eventless event, unremembered because, being never known, it could not be forgotten. This happening is not in the past, since it knows no release from its perpetual but evaded present. No words or images are attached to this ‘Thing’.

The passage from trauma might best be understood as a move into a narrativity that institutes time, into the pause in which memory forms, hence spatializes the subject’s relation to its own place in time as a subject with a history. Or perhaps, we should speak of a passage into the temporality of narrative that encases, but also mutes, trauma’s perpetually haunting force by

means of giving it a structuration that representation delivers as a spacing, that allows momentary dispossession of a possessed subject.

In this model, repression is a relief. It functions as delivery from overwhelming affects of an anxiety that remains over-present and unmanaged for the very lack of representation (spacing and temporalizing) that serves to structure it in encounter with the other's words, words of culture. Thus repression is needed, to distance the subject from the unsignified and unknown proximity to the 'trauma' of the insistence of the unmediated *corpo-Real*. Some kind of representational formation offers deliverance that *returns* the 'event' to the subject changed through temporizing and spatializing – all the effects we understand to be the effect of what Derrida called 'writing'. We benefit, therefore, from what I name 'the relief of signification' which manufactures both a distance from the overwhelming, undigested thingness of trauma as perpetual but unsignified presentness.<sup>6</sup>

Ettinger's aesthetic theory points us beyond Lacan's relay between Thing (trauma) and Object (psychic representative) to another kind of complex wherein there can be no direct substitution or displacement from the Real to the Imaginary. Instead, a certain compulsion or activity indexes both a presence of the unknown and unknowable and the subject's actions as the symptomatic site of its pressure and the struggle for translation. Thus Ettinger directs us aesthetically away from content towards *gesture*. The performative processes in the artwork both take and index their own time to create a new space of encounter, that may become the place of a transformative registration of the *movement* between trauma and phantasy which does not knock out either end of the always vibrating string between them. Artworking itself becomes significant.

### Absence

Trauma is also to be grasped as a permanent absence. Like the molecules that comprise the air inside a molded vase, trauma exerts its invisible pressure on psychic life. Or we might call it a shadow without a form we do not know. Yet its work produces affects such as melancholia, anxiety and depression, and in some cases flashbacks that crack the continuity and logic of time with moments of literal intensity, witness to permanent presentness unassimilated into temporal and syntactical memories on which we build our known personalities. The work with and on trauma, a structural aporia, therefore, is to create an apprehensible form within the structures of time – that is, inside the grammar of representation and hence of subjectivity. Artworking also, however, tries to touch its voidedness with a virtual presence in some form that is not a representation of a knowable content, but is the after-affect of representational *work*, through what become paramount in twentieth-century

art: effects created by the art process itself that echoes but transforms the pressure indexed by symptomatic repetition.<sup>7</sup> By definition trauma cannot be represented. But it can be approached, moved and transformed. This is not cure; it is *poiesis*: making.

### Irrepresentability

Herein lies the confusion at the heart of any discussion linking art, trauma and representation: trauma is the radical and irreducible other of representation, the other of the subject and, linked to the unrepresentable traumatic Thing, cannot thus become something. We try to think of it as an effect, a condition, even a shadow that will never be identical to that which might be its displaced narration or transforming representation, both of them always being a passage away from trauma, a transformation – a working in Freud's sense of the psyche as economy: *Arbeit* (dreamwork, mourning work, working-through) – into a memory, henceforward into the psychic apparatus. So the purpose of art in attempting to engage with trauma is different from the purposes of representation, which is very different for the traumatized victim who may well wish to be delivered of the unbearable ab/presence of the traumatic by means of the structuring discourse of the other through which traumatic experience is recast as painful memory, owned as part of the narrative that now secures the subject as the subject of his/her own memory and knowledge in a communicative exchange. Beyond testimonial or witness practices that have been so significant in literary trauma studies and psychotherapeutic work, what might be the value for us of an aesthetics of trauma as an engagement with history and politics of traumatized times in which art reaches out to others' events and makes spaces for the encounter with them for yet other others that is not testimonial? Is there a way to think about artistic processes precipitating a passage through co-emergent, transsubjective transformation by its creating the occasion of encounter when passage might occur through the work of the many partners – events suffered, mediated by the artist-transmitter and mediator, viewers as those open to sharing the trauma of the other?

I suggest we think about trauma, not in terms of event (which we cannot know), but in terms of *encounter with its traces* that assumes some kind of space and time, and makes some kind of gap as well as a different kind of participating otherness. We might then be able to distinguish for the aesthetic process of both the making-encounter itself (between the artist, the world and her/his others), and the viewing-, reading-, seeing- or listening-encounter for the viewer/reader, a specific relation to the destructuring void that is trauma but which ceases to be trauma once transformed by the structuring of aesthetic translation of after-affect into after-image while still carrying, as both words suggest, traces of trauma.

Psychoanalysis is a theory of time and of affect, both intimately connected. The temporalities of subjectivity do not follow the logic of linear development. Repetition is a key concept. Differing times are also embedded in subjectivity through coexistent processes that manifest themselves not only in repetition, but in return and retroaction. This is the Freudian concept of *Nachträglichkeit* best retranslated as ‘afterwardness’ rather than deferred action.<sup>8</sup> The practice of analysis is an afterward working-through, in the present, in a transference encounter in the now, a process without a fixed goal that, nonetheless, brings about shifts and transformations in the psychic dispositions of both partners in asymmetrical ways, depending on the unconscious workings of both parties.

Yet how can a formal, intentional act of creation of knowledge address trauma: that which is unknown, unremembered and without time? Why would artists be inclined to do so? In an essay ‘On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies’, literary theorist, Geoffrey Hartman writes:

Traumatic knowledge would seem to be a contradiction in terms. It is as close to nescience [unknowing] as to knowledge. Any description or modelling of trauma, therefore, risks being figurative itself, to the point of mythic fantasmagoria.<sup>9</sup>

Trauma belongs to the ‘Real’ (in the Lacanian sense) – but

the real is not the real, in the sense of specific, identifiable thing or cause; ... the encounter with the real takes place, on the part of both analyst and analysand, with a world of death-feelings, lost objects, and drives. It might be described, in fact, as a ‘missing encounter’ (the *troumatique*, Lacan puns) or an unmediated shock.<sup>10</sup>

In Lacanian terminology the *Real* – the domain of trauma – lies behind and beyond phantasy: the Imaginary and beyond thought: the Symbolic. It happens, but ‘it’ occurs before the still-to-become subject has developed a psychic apparatus by means of which to metabolize the incoming event, to translate it, to process it, to imagine with it and to think about it. Trauma is thus a *structural* term for a condition of human receptivity to, and for the non-verbal intensities and affectivities resulting from, incoming stimuli from the world outside and from inside: the proto-subject’s own organic and proto-psychic events. For Lacan, this is the realm of the Thing before the world can become an object (psychically represented) within the psychic system of drives and interpersonal relations.

In the later stages of his thinking, however, Lacan recognized the possibility for psychoanalytical reflection on what lies between trauma (the Real) and phantasy (the Imaginary), an expanse that Bracha Ettinger suggests has become a key field of research in contemporary artistic practice, and for deeply historical reasons.<sup>11</sup> We live, historically, in a post-traumatic era. That is to say, we come after events of such an extremity that they challenge all

existing modes of understanding and representation; 'we' are the late-coming witnesses to events that are not our own, through time or geopolitical difference. Yet such traumas inhabit our cultures surcharged with their unprocessed and unbound affects, culture itself become a source of traumatic marking of subjectivities born into haunted worlds. The traces of these disturbances resonate across culture: in how we think about human sociality and ethico-political living together after accumulating atrocities against humanity.

Let me explain a key distinction. According to psychoanalysis, trauma is a *structural* property of the formation of human subjectivity. Trauma is an inevitable condition for human subjectivity because in our primary formation we are impacted by events the proto-subject cannot yet imagine (phantasy) or know (thought). Events such as birth or the encounter with the other, with sexuality, with sexual difference, carve grooves or cavities into the emergent psyche around loss of the matrixial prenatal web and postnatally of the breast, loss of love, abandonment, engulfment mutilation (castration). This, *structural*, foundation of psychic trauma must, however, be distinguished from *historical* trauma.

Once formed as subjects, we may, in the course of our life-histories encounter overwhelming, and thus traumatizing, shocks such as sexual abuse, bereavement, torture, violence or life-threatening illness, whose psychological and affective 'amplitude' not only overwhelms the psyche's capacity to handle the immediate event. Its profundity is overdetermined by the degree to which this 'historic' event mimes or echoes the unremembered/unforgotten, structural traumas of loss, abandonment and fear of mutilation that it now, *afterwardly*, reignites. From the *structural* formation of the subject in relation to the archaic Real, the new, *historical* event may unevenly inherit haloes of unbound affects. The secondary, *historical* event paradoxically, becomes, retroactively and simultaneously, both a repetition of an unknown past and, incomprehensibly, the originary moment of the traumatic *nachträglich* load, and for the first time; afterwardness is the condition for the impact of the *structurally* traumatic into *historical* time. The event – created between both the structural and the new, historical traumatic assault – is now experienced for the first time in this dual, afterwardly structure, even while the nature of trauma is, fundamentally, ever to be *non-experienced*. The historical traumatizing shock itself may also be void and over-present, only reappearing belatedly, symptomatically re-ignited by its own deferred, secondary event forming a relay of trauma, unremembered, deferred and retrospectively inherited. It is here that what the painter Ettinger names *artworking*, or what Hartmann proposes as form-making in literature, enables us to understand how this retroactive chain of the non-experienced traumatic can become known to us, not as a therapeutic cure for an individual analysand in abreaction (Pierre Janet's term for curing traumatic shock), but as a cultural process of coming, belatedly and

*differently*, and in a shared encounter, to a knowledge that is affective rather than only cognitive because of the gap created by its passage to an aesthetically fashioned, not fully symbolic, form in which we can otherwise begin to work with the event and its affective freight.<sup>12</sup>

Geoffrey Hartman, therefore, names a process he calls *literary knowledge* that he says ‘finds the “real”, identifies with it’. Hartman emphasizes the possibility of creating, through art or literature, a form of figuration, which is a rhetorical means by which the unknown and unexperienced may, none the less, be introduced in an indirect, non-represented form into the realm of cultural knowledge, ‘in the negative’. The manner suspends the desire to see and to have an image of ‘it’, while also deflecting the will to master through cognitive knowing. The traumatic event or its affects are not represented; yet through art or literature that can aesthetically affect – that is, perform more than representation – something of trauma’s radical otherness may be intimated and hence encountered aesthetically and affectively. *Something* is the key word here. Not everything, but some aspects may be allusively *encountered*, but never mastered and not fully seen. Thus artworking in the space *between* trauma and phantasy is also a possibility precisely because of the potentialities created by expanded, contemporary artistic practices that have the freedom to work with so many processes without being confined by critical orthodoxies and formalist constraints that hitherto seemed to prescribe a singular path of modernist legitimacy as either the over-visualized or the non-visualized. The originating, creative gesture of art becomes a belatedly originary site for an encounter with the affective ripples around the non-experienced, hence, absent traumatic pool, so that we intimate traumatic residues rather than reducing it to a representation it cannot but evade. Riddling and playing – both suggesting repetition and time – emerge as a perplexing mode of access to a negative knowledge of the unknowable, which does not raise the traumatic to some sublime inexpressibility before which we declare we cannot know anything. When aesthetic or literary activity creates its forms, these are not a repetition of that which already exists as a memory or a known event in the subject or in culture. They are occasions for potentially transformative encounter marked by the potentiality of the aesthetic to touch, identify with and formulate trauma as trace, as tracing.

There cannot be repetition because that to which art or literature is giving a form, *and is doing so for the first time*, creating a form by means of which to know it affectively is, in fact, a negative moment in experience. Art/Literature creates what has neither yet nor ever entered into experience, that being the definition of trauma. Hence it is creative, poietic. Art does this by being periphrastic rather than constative, moving around, evoking, seeking to touch the elusive ‘something’ that structures subjectivity, and yet is impossible to know while being affecting and making its own kind of sense. It molds anew

the vase to sense the shaping pressure. Trauma is the exceptional non-experience that, nevertheless, certain kinds of aesthetic practices may 'find' through creating new modes for encounter with its traces, remnants or scenes.

Artworking about trauma risks, however, being traumatic; but it can also stage at one and the same time both a passage to the encounter with its traces and a passage away from it – precisely when, through the processes it offers to the viewer to experience and the gazing it invites, the artwork disrupts the hunger for mastery (*epistemophilia*) and sadism or voyeurism (*scopophilia*) and the viewer becomes a partner-in-difference (Ettinger).

If we focus on the negative moment in experience – the traumatic, the Real – which apparently is encountered, again, but effectively for the first time, in the art work as its *formulation*, in the *pathos formula*, in Warburg's terms, the image-formulation for intense feeling, we need to ask: What is the relation of aesthetic practice to the structural trauma of the archaic encounter and to historically traumatic events that may determine the subject's later actions which then become the sites of the created memory of the unremembered? Such a new form of non-memory, involving duration and reflection, opens then onto a future, a passage with the trauma that has remained latently at work for the lack of such delivery into forms by which we can work with its legacies and challenges.

Yet, of course, people who have been abused, tortured or raped, bereaved, diagnosed with mortal illness, forced into exile, imprisoned in a ghetto or concentration camp, usually know that these events have happened to them. Thinking with trauma, however, attends to those dimensions of such extremity or suffering that 'wound' in ways that remain beyond conscious recuperation as memory, that persist as 'non-experience' either through a form of immediate repression or through a different kind of psychic entombment. For instance, I can say: 'my mother died in 1964.' But the meaning, and, more importantly, the affect of that event is not contained or experienced by saying it, or naming the date. The excessive nature of the traumatic rupture of bereavement gives rise to prolonged affects that happen perpetually, making the bereaved person subject to recurrent feelings and even symptoms that plunge her/him down wormholes of time and surface vividly and unchanged at any moment.

### Belatedness

The third key aspect of trauma is thus belatedness, also understood as latency. Freud formulated this aspect in his final text, *Moses and Monotheism*, written between 1933 and 1938 under traumatic historical circumstances when he was dying of cancer and threatened with extinction by the conquering Nazis. The book is about trauma and marked by it. Freud describes as traumas 'those impressions experienced early and later forgotten, to which we attach great

importance in the aetiology of neuroses.<sup>13</sup> Trauma can either be *positive* – impelling us to repeat its originary situations in the search for repeated gratifications or *negative*, causing us to bury all traces. But it *returns*. Freud gives the example of a man who is in a train accident and apparently walks away unharmed, only to fall prey to a series of inexplicable symptoms somewhat later. The period between the event and the symptoms reveals a key characteristic of trauma: latency.<sup>14</sup>

The gap is critical to trauma theory. The most influential reader of Freud's thesis is Cathy Caruth, who transfers the theory of latency to render history itself as trauma.

The historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all. And it is this inherent latency of the event that paradoxically explains the peculiar, temporal structure, the belatedness of historical experience; since the traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time.<sup>15</sup>

If there is a gap of latency, there is also always the return. Since trauma does not occur in its own moment, the unbound affects generated by traumatic impact, like ripples in a pond in which the originating stone is deep and unseen, can be inherited by later events, similar or associated. A later occurrence, even a trivial one, can trigger the displacement of the unassimilated anxiety which surcharges the secondary event with more intensity than it itself warrants. By the same token, there can be a certain capture in the second event of that which resonates as the unknown affects of originary trauma which can be structured into a representation of another event that is at once not the trauma itself and the secondary but initial experiential site of its *encounter*. Thus any form of separation, itself quite manageable, may trigger in a precociously bereaved person more anxiety than can be accounted for by the current event. In representing the secondary event, the shadow of the former can acquire a body that nevertheless veils the originary source of its excess pain. The traumatic is at once out of time but ever inserting itself into other times as a promiscuously repeating excess of affective intensity. This has implications for the analysis of art works in terms of latency and return through secondary situations: cause and effect or direct connection are thus displaced.

### Transmissibility

Whose trauma? Can trauma be transmitted intergenerationally? Is it even generically transsubjective?

All children absorb many things from their parents through non-verbal and non-intentional communication. This is acculturation. Latent trauma of

afflicted parents can, however, also be transmitted to the extent that a child's psychological present is pre-occupied by a past s/he never directly experienced, and of whose undischarged affects as well as sensorial and imagistic links it may become the locus. Such transmissibility forms secondary trauma that can also become more than affliction; it offers a means to transform, on the traumatized other's behalf, those traumatic residues. The subject opens itself to a displaced and belated grieving or a working through not available to those who suffered the actual traumatic event or to the victim at the moment of suffering.

Furthermore, through such individual mechanisms of transmissibility, trauma can become culturally transitive, affecting a society as a whole through recurring accumulation and generational transmission. Typically trauma refers to individuals' events and or a personal psychic shattering. Yet trauma has been taken up in cultural analysis because certain kinds of historical events are of order of extremity that they may be said to 'traumatize', not collectively, but culturally. How?

Obviously, the mechanisms of an individual psyche are not present in a 'culture'; there is no collective psyche or unconscious to account for what we can theorize as the traumatic wounding at the level of the individual or of what might be transmitted in intimate familial relations.<sup>16</sup> If trauma refers to events that cannot be processed by existing mechanisms for making sense of them, we can extrapolate metaphorically that extreme historical events can shatter prevailing schemes of representation – cultural digestion so to speak – so that some dimension of real events remains unknowable for lack of cultural metabolization, and as such persists, shadows and engenders certain reactions or affects, even tendencies to repeat because they have not been processed into self-reflective knowledge.<sup>17</sup> Especially here it is vital to maintain a theoretical distinction between the study of the psychological impact of trauma and the cultural problematic of representation of events that occasion trauma, notably the representation of violence and violation, which have ethical and political consequences, and the legacies, hence responsibilities, of perpetration.<sup>18</sup> If trauma is overgeneralized as an undifferentiating condition of traumatic suffering from extreme events, we lose all political purchase.<sup>19</sup>

It is at this difficult intersection of what we might call the ethical turn in trauma studies to the question of suffering, transmitted, inherited, witnessed, and the philosophical issue of representability of extremity that the atrocious crimes against humanity of the modern era from enslavement to genocide can be considered under the rubric of trauma without removing questions of responsibility and agonistic conflict. Trauma is not now the general condition of humankind in modernity; it must mark specific sufferings that have roots in and leave traces in historical time even whole that may be overdetermined by structural – hence general – psychic predispositions, themselves evidently culturally sensitive and variable.

After-affects as well as real effects persist, however, in cultures that have not addressed their legacies – not merely with empty gestures of commemoration – and they persist because it appears that individual trauma is transmissible down the generations not only by the exposure of individual subjects in typical intersubjective relays but also what has been named encryption, which imagines trauma not only as extreme suffering but also as the legacy of guilt, shame and other side-effects of compromised existence caused by extremes of oppression and violence/violation. To explain this, I need to digress to elaborate more fully on Matrixial theory itself.

From studies with children of Holocaust and other atrocity survivors, there is consistent evidence that a second generation, and beyond, are vulnerable to the affective impact of the traumatic suffering of their parents, and that each generation is itself already a historical carrier of unprocessed pasts often elaborated by projective phantasies.<sup>20</sup> Matrixial theory advanced by Bracha Ettinger contributes specifically to our expanded understanding of the mechanisms for such transmissibility. Matrixial theory raises the ethical and potentially political implications of our vulnerability to both the pain and the crimes of the past in the struggle against the cultures that persist in committing atrocities against human life.

So what is happening in artworks made by artists who may be marked by personal tragedy or who are engaged with historical calamity that has the quality of trauma: unknownness, presentness, absence, belatedness and transmissibility? In both making and viewing, what is it for one subject to incline towards or attempt to register that which marks an other? Can we share and shift through aesthetic mediation the pain of others from other times, places and cultures, when that pain is psychological rather than physical?<sup>21</sup>

What has art – what I am calling the aesthetic, not as the pacifyingly beautiful in the traditional sense, but as creative, poietic, affective formalization that may induce internal, subjective transformation in the affected participants in the encounter (these include the artist as well as later viewers) – to do with horror, pain, suffering, violence? What can it *do*? How does the aesthetic work in relation to the now contested field of trauma and cultural studies, between philosophy and the questions of representability and psychology with the thesis that trauma is that which happens but remains beyond imagining or knowing? How does it deal with the timelessness of trauma and the permanence of an absence that both presses upon us affectively and yet seeks to be processed, somehow, in words and images, in order to generate movement from blocked stasis, to allow a future to flow from the interior frozen lake of trauma? What have such questions to do with a political rage against suffering and a compassionate hope for a future? How are these feminist questions?

## Aesthetic wit(h)nessing and matrixial theory

In art today we are moving from phantasy to trauma.<sup>22</sup>

Reflecting on trauma, transmissibility and the role of the aesthetic, painter Bracha Ettinger registers a shift in contemporary art towards aesthetic engagements with traumatic residues of twentieth-century catastrophes and continuing conflicts from Cambodia, Rwanda, the Middle East back to the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust. Working with Lacanian terms in which the Real is synonymous with structural psychic trauma, the unthinkable and the unimaginable, and with Lacan's suggestion of a possible access via art to the relay between trauma (the Real) and phantasy (the Imaginary) and specifically aesthetic processes associated with that interval, Ettinger suggests that artistic process, understood as generating aesthetic transformation, can negotiate a passage away from trauma that, however, we must first be willing to encounter. Ettinger's contribution to the field of trauma studies in general and that of trauma and aesthetics in particular is her emphasis on the very early emergence of psycho-aesthetic and trans-subjective processes to facilitate transmission and transformation of residues and traces of traumatic events personal and historical, premised on a specific human capacity that is primordially (in the Real) linked to a *non-phallic feminine difference*. Feminism has been wary of claims for any specific definition of a feminine difference since the risk lies in reconfirming an essential – i.e., naturally given – femaleness derived from a sexual morphology, founded in the biological body. Ettinger, however, refuses to be scared off into abstracted constructionist notions of gender. Her rigorously psychoanalytical aesthetic theory has nothing to do with such risks of essentializing or naturalizing male/female difference. Matrixial theory of trauma, aesthetics and non-phallic feminine difference emerged in the face of trauma and art. Ettinger introduces two key concepts:

We are carrying into the [the twenty-first century] enormous traumatic weight, and *aesthetic wit(h)nessing* in art brings its awareness to culture's surface.

Certain contemporary art practices bring into light *matrixial alliances* in confronting the limits of shareability in the trauma and jouissance of the Other.<sup>23</sup>

Ettinger suggests that whether or not we are personally victims or perpetrators of such events, 'we' are collectively carrying residues of transitive trauma dispersed through time and space, rendering ours a post-traumatic era. This era raises the 'pain of others' and our ethical responsibility to human suffering to the surface of cultural attention via philosophy and political thought, but also through what Ettinger names, extending Freud's economic metaphor of *Arbeit/work* – dreamwork, working through, the work of mourning – *artworking*.<sup>24</sup> Artworking draws fully on the legacy of modernist understanding of the

effects of self-conscious aesthetic practice. Through a proto-ethical concept of beauty arising from trauma, Ettinger explains how aesthetics addresses this condition:

The beautiful accessed via artworks in our era – and I emphasize again our era since we are living through massive effects of transitive trauma, and it is captured and illuminated by different art works – carries new possibilities for *affective apprehending* and produces new artistic effects, where aesthetics approaches ethics beyond the artist's conscious control.

'Affective apprehending' recalls Hartman's notion of literary knowledge as nescience. If ethics, the orientation towards the other, approaches the affective-aesthetic, it is not at the level of conscious intention or commitment of an engaged artist. This is not relational aesthetics or political commitment. Unlike many current trauma theorists who perceive our response to catastrophic history in terms of obligatory mourning and loss, Ettinger considers art as potentially creative transformation premised on the intimate relation between aesthetic process/sensibility and com-passionate (hyphenated to stress the sharing with of pain or feeling) relations to the other.<sup>25</sup> In response to the deep ethical questions about human suffering and our historically inflicted injuries that urgently surface in art and in philosophy, aesthetic practice may perform a mode of *aesthetic wit(h)nessing*.

Into the legal figure of the *witness* whose presence, or testimony, guarantees from outside the veracity of the victim's experience or the event, Ettinger inserts the momentarily suspended letter 'h'. This graphic move shifts the term witness to *wit(h)ness*, suggesting being with, being beside, sharing. The brackets, however, keep both meanings in play and create mutually inflected positions.<sup>26</sup> *Aesthetic wit(h)nessing* can be an effect of the artwork and its processes or of the viewer's openness to what the art work itself has remained 'with' in its own encounter-event during the making of the work which itself took time and perhaps encapsulates even longer temporalities of memory and immemory. For instance, in her own paintings, Ettinger works with an archive of freighted photographs and documents that carry traces of lost worlds, modern warfare, surveillance, psychiatric violence and perpetration of mass murder. Her process involves remaining with the indexical traces left in the archive, which she transforms by initially passing the document or image incompletely through an interrupted photocopier. This translates the readymades of history into granular apparitional traces because the photocopier deposits what its blind light has translated electromagnetically as ashen grains that have not yet been heat-sealed to replicate the original. Onto this fragile ground of disappearing appearance of the traumatic trace the artists works in oil and glazed colour, repeatedly traversing surfaces with abstract hand gestures that build membranes of aching colour veiling the virtual space of encounter with this

residual haunting past that cannot be grasped but must never be abandoned (Plate 1). Each painting evolves over years. It takes time and is materialized time, building its coloured layers as sediments of her prolonged reverie at the threshold of the then and the now she has invoked. What is encountered in the completed painting is not a resolved composition but a Lyotardian palimpsest of times charged with the affectivity of apparitional colour that lures a metamorphic or Matrixial gaze. This gaze never centres or masters but traverses and pauses, opening and self-fragilizing to the pulse of colour and the rhythm of touch that aesthetically wit(h)nesses what is both lost and found and neither lost nor found. This process is metamorphosis, a specific forming (morphology) relating to the legacies of feminine sexual difference experienced not organically but itself as a psychic trace of a primordial – but not frightening – trauma.

Metamorphosis is a co-poetic activity in a web that ‘remembers’ [these] swerves and relations, inscribes affective traces of *jouissance* and imprints of trauma and encounter, and conducts such traces from *non-I* to *I*, from one encounter to further encounters. Metamorphosis transfers knowledge of these events with-in-to the matrixial psychic sphere. Through art’s metamorphic activity, these traces are transmitted into culture and open its boundaries ... The matrixial gaze corresponding to these transgressive processes is not relegated to the level of invisible figurality or unintelligibility, due to metamorphic cross-inscriptions that *impregnate subjectivity with partial-objects and objectivity with partial-subjects*. Sub-symbolic tunings that do not function on the level of distinct units of signification nevertheless make sense here. Artworking makes this meaning available for later conceptual elaboration.<sup>27</sup>

*Aesthetic wit(h)nessing* fosters *matrixial alliances* that do not refer to sympathy or even empathy between fully formed human subjects, but indicate another level of the fragilization of parts of a partial self, opened by the aesthetic processes, to share in, to carry something of, to be a transsubjective partner in transformation, whatever the affective cost, for the trauma and *jouissance* of the Other. This possibility is founded in and re-solicits the recurrence of what Ettinger daringly conceives of as a primordial human capacity for co-affectation and transsubjective sharing that she names *Matrixial*.

Pregnancy has a medical, physiological, even biological ring. But it is one of the great human mysteries that even those who experience pregnancy and birth can hardly conceptualize or speak. It is the join of life and meaning. Every born person is its product and hence the bearer of its traces. Move away from physiological preconceptions and think its significance conceptually. What does it mean on a human, psychological or philosophical level that human becoming is premised on a prolonged subjective and potentially subjectivizing *intimacy of the several* in which the proto-subject senses an already-human

subjectivity across a shared, aesthetically sensed borderspace? For Ettinger, the time of human becoming involves a mutually inflecting jointness: prenatality with prematernity, when a functioning, sensate proto-subject matures in almost incestuous proximity to a phantasizing already-formed subject, rich with nonconscious echoes of her own traumatic joint becoming belatedly reanimated in this inverted severality. This severality of jointness-in-difference generates the potentiality of a matrixial dimension in all subjectivities long before birth and before Oedipal gendering begins a parallel but differentiating process in a phallic logic of the cut. Matrixial capacity is the gift to humanity of our singular and humanizing co-becoming 'with' an unknown but sensed other. Its archaic, hence traumatic, transsubjectivity may be re-awakened in several postnatal instances. One is transference in the analytical scenario. The other is the aesthetic encounter, already Matrixial and transsubjective.

If I am 'moved' or touched or changed by an encounter with/through an artwork, I am being changed within myself by an unknown event that is not mine. I let it happen. I want this change. I am not merely a witness to the existence of this artwork as the object created by an other. When it has an effect, I participate in wit(h)nessing, as it were, when I allow myself to be transformed through feeling or recognition, pleasure or pain by this otherness that I cannot know fully, yet which I internalize and process on its behalf through a mechanism otherwise not yet theorized. I am not merely a passive recipient of a coded message. Nor am I the mastering interpreter of a code. When we think of the specifically aesthetic event and its poignancy – from piercing in a pleasurable traumatic sense – there is a mechanism at work which Ettinger's concept of *aesthetic wit(h)nessing at a shared borderspace becoming a threshold* might momentarily capture. If this openness is part of the normal event-encounter that can occur when we meet art, can this be extended to the situation of artworking with achingly traumatic residues?

#### *Transport station of trauma*

I have already cited Ettinger's key concept for this book:

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 of occurrence and encounter, which 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.<sup>28</sup>

Ettinger thus proposes a specific operation effected by the aesthetic process that is not concerned only with witnessing or testifying to trauma which has become the dominant thesis in the Caruth/Felman field of trauma studies. Neither is she talking about art as a *representation* or testimonial document of

a traumatic memory or event, or its phantasy-coloured reconfiguration.<sup>29</sup> The issue is 'transport', a term already heavy with historical horror in the context of genocide, but equally evocative of other kinds of transformations in *jouissance* that shift subjectivity at its loosened boundaries. We speak of transports of delight.

The encounter may not always happen; it is contingent on the viewer's openness to resonance with the artworking. Aesthetics are thus not therapeutic; they do not aim at a cure and are not about expression. But they can contribute to change by poignancy as opposed to puncture, and one that is not only intersubjective but is *transsubjective* across time and space, across differences of real incomprehensibility.

The traumatic event *is*: it has happened. It marks the surfaces of individual psyches and impresses itself in cultural forms of (im)memory: *a memory of oblivion* in Ettinger's own words.<sup>30</sup> It leaves traces in individuals and, when it has occurred on a mass scale, it can resonate through whole cultures, challenging cultural memory because of the rupture with existing modes of representation and collective commemoration. Unprocessed, the event haunts. Having happened, it demands acknowledgement without which we may, like the neurotic, be compelled to repeat or act out effects whose source we do not know. The potentialities of art, as a result of the specific histories of its modernist practices and changing postmodern conditions, can become occasions for encounter with and transport beyond the haunting traumas of Modernity in general and notably of the horrific events of the twentieth century in particular, many of which persist, unresolved, into the present. To do so, we must discover *through aesthetics* the nature of the subjective capacity we have as human beings to share in the trauma – the events – of the other without confusing ourselves with the actual suffering victims, to encounter, and perhaps even to process some of the remnants of their traumas that circulate in our cultures, on behalf of others, by means of a transsubjective capacity, in which opened borderspaces can become thresholds of transport/transformation. Ettinger explains:

The transport is expected at the station, and it is possible, but the transport station does not promise that the passage of the 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.<sup>31</sup>

Contemporary art creates occasions – stations – at which a transport may arrive and may enable passage. The encounter is not ruled by a sociolect, by common sense or general assumptions. Response is possible, invited, solicited, but it cannot be predetermined. Responsiveness – response-ability – lies within our singularity, what we already bring, what we may not know but find vibrating through the event of the other in the intensity of aesthetically solicited

affects. We lend our own lives and traumatic residues to animate otherness encountered and that inflects the potential of such otherness to animate itself in us. The transport hopes that we will allow ourselves to be fragilized so that our armoured selves are loosened and passage may take place across the trans-subjective transferential threshold of the aesthetic encounter. Such art incites compassionate hospitality that does not pathologize or abject the suffering of others, but recognizes a deeply humanizing creative dimension for such co-affectation already latent within us in the gift of the Matrixial feminine to humanity that is now more than ever important for us to acknowledge as a source for changed orientation to the excessive pain of our worlds.

Ettinger hopes that '*Contemporary aesthetics is moving from phallic structure to matrixial sphere.*' As symbol and signifier of an order of meaning, affects and phantasies, Matrix challenges the exclusive hegemony of Phallus as the only arbiter of meaning, subjectivity and a logic of sexual difference that renders the feminine merely the negated other of the one sex.<sup>32</sup> In classical psychoanalytical theory and underpinned by a much longer tradition of binary thought, the feminine is defined only in negative relation to the masculine: sun/moon, sky/earth, day/night, man/woman.<sup>33</sup>

The challenge of Matrixial theory of the feminine as a sexual difference is to grasp a difference that is not a difference from the masculine and is not derived from any opposition between masculine and feminine. Matrixially, feminine sexual difference is a non-gendered structure of difference between partial subjects – for example, the severality of differentiated but co-emerging prematernal and prenatal partial subjects. It is feminine insofar as it derives as a psychic apparatus or dimension from human becoming which involves a sexed subject and body in relation to a non-yet gendered/sexed other. Matrix signals a sexual difference that is non-Oedipal and non-gendered even while it is sexuated. This structure generates the proto-ethical capacity donated from a matrixial sphere of feminine difference to sustain human compassionality.

Matrix differs from phallogocentric thought insofar as it arises in and persists from an even more archaic zone of the Real that occurs before birth, the traditional limit imposed by Lacan on psychoanalytical theory and also policed by feminist theory for a false fear that anything of the prenatal can only be physiological. Deeply in tune with Freud's psychologization of the corporeal in terms of drives, Matrixial theory of prenatal/prematernal severality is a 'thinking apparatus' that 'thinks' for us a primordial connectivity in which all human subjects are, traumatically, in the Real, formed in an intimacy with an unknown, co-affecting other, an *unknowable* and humanizing *partner-in-difference*, hence a co-other that installs a proto-ethical familiar strangeness at the heart of anything a human subject becomes. This Matrixial potentiality is brutally crushed after birth when conditions of survival necessitate other relations to the world and the familiar elements of aggressivity, narcissism

and object relations take over. But it is not obliterated. We already sub-know it and affectively use or abuse it. We are susceptible to specific forms of trauma as a result of it.

When operating on a Matrixial thread of subjectivity that plays alongside the necessary phallic pathway to language and Oedipal sexual positions, we relate to the pain or trauma of the other because, from this primordial potentiality, we cannot but share it, bear it, transport it, and potentially create a future precisely by such sharing, by recognizing co-humanity rather than anxiously policing the boundaries of difference, expelling the foreign other, fearing the confusion of difference. We can abuse or kill this capacity through disavowal.

The Matrixial is a space of sharing within difference: its partners are radically unknown to each other, yet they share events and are imprinted with the traces of the other. Matrix signifies a shared subjectivizing border-space. But since the originary event of Matrixial borderspacing occurs for the becoming human infant in the Real, traumatically, before it has an apparatus to absorb and metabolize the event-encounter, we must understand this not as an experience. It was fundamentally an aesthetic event, and is linked forever with aesthesis, with resonance, movement, rhythm, affect. Aesthesis also refers to a transformation of the inner worlds of each partner by the impact of a co-emergence and co-affectation with an other. The Matrix thus refers to a shared borderspace between co-affecting subjective entities that completely explodes the phallic myth of human gestation as a pre-human biological oven in which the mother becomes momentarily psychotic and the baby is physiologically cooked before the single moment of human origin: birth – i.e., severance from the maternal feminine. This is then mythically reduced to having been merely an organ, womb, or body as if the subjectivity of prematernity freighted with its own memories and memories of memories can be rendered utterly devoid of human significance. The obliteration from thought of the possibility that the feminine-maternal has any meaning for humanity in the face of obvious enormity of its inevitable and prolonged subjective significance indexes the phallic narcissistic neurosis we must explode.

Borderspacing is the psychological inscription of this sense of co-emergence that creates a capacity for, even a yearning for *borderlinking*. Defying the phallic notions of subjectivity as a necessarily severed, individuated, territorialized entity, scarred, however, by a series of losses (*objet a*) for which it perpetually mourns, confronting the world as its substitutive other, *borderlinking* suggests that in addition to the phallic track of separated subjectivity, human subjects also acquire, as the traumatic legacy of our prolonged prenatal encounters with a primordial co-emerging human otherness, a capacity for and even a pleasure in linking with an-other, for sharing and processing with or on behalf of the other. Postnatally we desire the lost object; but we also yearn matrixially for instances of connectivity.

The primordial, traumatic Real of the originary Matrixial severality is re-animated postnatally, in phantasy and in thought, as a proto-ethical resource for enacting but also theorizing ethical responses to the historical suffering of others, to the trauma of the world. A new way of understanding aesthetic practices, themselves already deeply Matrixial in their affective and transferential potential, becomes the bridge inclining artistic practice from its classic individualized image of self-expression and from its collectively explored function as articulating or even disrupting ideological formations towards a different understanding of its cultural implicatedness and capacity for transformation. The encounter with an artwork, itself registering a prolonged encounter with trauma, can foster subjective openness that may become ethical and then, through conscious decision and commitment, can also be moved from this sphere into that of the political action.

Certain contemporary art practices ask us to consider the trauma of the Other – other people, other times, other histories – namely, what is not already mine, familiar and my own. But there are limits to the degree to which the Other's trauma can be shared. It is ineradicably other. Art can, however, seek to create *matrixial alliances*, to bring human subjects closer to the possibility of recognizing and being affected by the pain that is other, and to assenting to receive and hence transform some of its burden. This does not make the viewer feel a good or better person, or a more sensitive one. The aesthetic encounter created by art practice can open up the borderspace to become a threshold between now and then, us and them, to create a shared borderspace that acknowledges the gap between different beings, times and places – difference – while ethically making each partner compassionately vulnerable to the other's trauma and *making us want to know it and even process it*.<sup>34</sup>

For Lacan, beauty arises to shield us from the encounter with death.<sup>35</sup> For Ettinger, beauty arises in the moment of connection to life. Hence beauty is the ethical capacity of the art experience, its ability to stimulate what Ettinger names *response-ability*, the ability to respond compassionately to the human vulnerability of the other, and to any risk or threat to her humanness compromised by the cruelty of violence. This is not the product of the artist's intentions, her good will, her politics (as Sartrean commitment aspired to and Lacanian concepts of the Imaginary exposed as compromised); instead this ethical capacity to respond to the other is a result of the way in which formal and aesthetic processes can re-generate in the present encounter Matrixial affects that solicit sharing founded in, and afterwardly reclaimed from, our archaic, traumatic formation in the Real of co-emergent humanizing life.

## Encryption and transcriptum

To summarize: trauma is a no-thing that is itself never representable; but that does not make it ineffable, only a structural gap. It impresses itself in the rhythm between silence and words. Its traces, *after-affects*, may thus be processed aesthetically. I now want to introduce a different theory of trauma that points to why transport might fail. This too solicits a Matrixial revision.

For Lacan the psyche is shaped negatively by what he names *objet a*: traces of the loss of part-objects, traces of the severance from the subject's bodily orifices and from the mother's body. Meaning is generated by a rhythm of disappearance and appearance of what Ettinger has named the *archaic m/Other* so that the meaning of mother, for Lacan, lies only in the compulsive repetition of this rhythm of the interval between appearance and disappearance. The Lacanian subject mourns perpetually its losses and separations and its trauma is a constitutive, intrapsychic condition in which what is lost never was possessed. Loss itself forms the foundational 'hole' or void Lacan calls *troumatique* – word-playing on trauma and the French word for hole: *trou*.

In contrast to this vision of the subject as a discrete psyche scarred by the lineaments of the imagined missing things (not even thinkable as actual objects that an other than could satisfy: so we are thinking about voice, gaze, milk, breast etc.) from which it had to be severed in order to emerge as a distinct subject, Maria Torok and Nicholas Abraham postulate a different kind of internal space: an intrapsychic crypt inhabited by a phantom. This space is included in the unconscious not by primary repression but by conservator repression. 'The self has no relation to its secretly crypted phantom that does, however, haunt the transference and countertransference psychoanalytical relations and all other relationships of love.'<sup>36</sup> What is important is that the phantom traverses the generations.

To this intergenerational scenario, André Green added a further dimension by exploring a form of narcissistic wound that comes about not through the phantasized loss of a real object or an actual loss. It is the effect on the forming subject of the *psychological* absence of the mother when she is depressed and thus not psychically available to her child because she is absorbed by her own trauma. Inexplicably the child is forced to grieve for a lost relationship that itself becomes encapsulated within. The subject at the same time identifies with a 'dead mother' and traces of her trauma are thus invested within the subject itself as it is formed in this nexus.

Drawing on the work of psychoanalysts with children of Holocaust survivors – the second generation as it has come to be known – Bracha Ettinger then asks us to ponder the phenomenon of subjects who carry and sense a trauma that is not their own. The survivor (first generation) lives in a chronic

traumatic state, where only the denial of suffering and the perseverance of amnesia and oblivion allow the continuity of psychic life. The survivor's child (the second generation) carries the weight of the buried unknown knowledge of and for the survivor-parent while being recathected by the survivor as a carrier (memorial candle) of both the survivor's lost objects and encrypted phantoms. The question for such a second-generation subject is about how to come into contact with and get rid of the weight of the trauma inside itself, a trauma not directly experienced, whose story was untold, and which was neither incorporated nor introjected by the survivor, and was not directly included and isolated either. Here we realize the necessity for a subject who carries its others' (parents') crypt in their place.

Let me elaborate the theory of encryption.

Unfettered by Freudian attachment to the structural trauma of castration and all it encapsulates of the psycho-sexual Oedipal model as the only formation of subjectivity, psychoanalysts Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok argue that neurotic distress may be traced back to something more historical and contingent that occurs *between the generations*. They suggest that what is experienced as this unknown, haunting, *after-affect* may be the *after-image* of a transmitted but *encrypted* secret, often shameful or guilty, passed from generation to generation. It is a coded secret and thus undecipherable to the subject it lies within, and it is entombed in the subject as a cold, dead haunting presence. Thus some trauma may be encrypted, unavailable for the *working* because it is not connected with Freud's notion of libidinal energy invested in the love object or cause or country that must be detached, decathected and resumed by the subject for new investments in the world.

How does this extraordinary condition of encryption come about?

First, Abraham and Torok imagine the formation of subjectivity from a 'dual unity'. They propose that subjects are formed by processes of self-differentiation from the primary post-natal union with the mother. In the early post-natal state before the formation of the child's own conscious and unconscious, in a condition of constant play, the child interacts with the mother's thoughts and gestures and does not distinguish its mother's conscious and unconscious. This only comes about when the child uses words to designate events beyond the mother's unconscious. So Abraham and Torok invite us already to register the mother as a psychic being, a subjectivizing presence, but they still argue that subjectivity demands individuation – i.e., separation from this psychic confusion of the child's not-yet-individuated unconscious and the mother's. Yet 'the maternal unconscious becomes part of the child's language. Communicated without ever having been spoken, it resides as a silent presence within the newly formed unconscious of the child'.<sup>37</sup> The child's singularity arises in a permanent symbolic relation with the mother, and the child becomes itself by the negation of its previous unity. This leads to a radical

displacement of the phallogocentric myth at the heart of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, namely the Oedipus Complex.

For Abraham and Torok, the Oedipus myth is an alibi with which culture furnishes the child a means to detach from the mother while simultaneously asserting continuing love for her. Neither fear of incest nor of castration precipitates detachment from the mother, thus dethroning the phallus as the only arbiter of becoming speaking, sexed subjects. For Freud and Lacan, the mother is that dark engulfing symbiotic space from which the intervention of the father alone saves the child. For Abraham and Torok, a child 'gives birth to itself' dyadically by differentiating from the mother and becoming 'not the mother'. Yet this process is precisely the means by which all children receive a transmission across the generational divide and become part of the family history. Thus subjectivity begins in a primordial psychic interface from which differentiation occurs in a manner that nevertheless establishes joint pathways through which the past leaks into and becomes embedded in the future at this intersubjective level. If the parents are themselves already bearers of such transmissions, or were themselves the locus of some unspeakable and unspoken traumatic event, the emerging subject carries it within itself as a *phantom*.

Should a child have parents 'with secrets' ... the child will receive from them a gap in the unconscious, an unknown, unrecognized knowledge – a *nescience*. The buried speech of the parent will be [a] dead gap without a burial place in the child. This unknown phantom returns from the unconscious to haunt its host and may lead to phobias, madness, obsessions.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to the term phantom, Abraham and Torok theorize the crypt using again their specialized theoretical vocabulary:

The crypt is neither the dynamic Unconscious nor the ego of introjections. Rather it is an enclave between the two, a kind of artificial unconscious, lodged in the very midst of the ego. Such a tomb has the effect of sealing up the semi-permeable walls of the dynamic Unconscious. Nothing at all must filter to the outside world. The ego is given the task of a cemetery guard.<sup>39</sup>

Abraham and Torok worked with analysands to assist those they called *cryptofores*: bearers of such encrypted secrets that were in fact not their own. Using Shakespeare's Hamlet as a case study, Abraham also showed how cultural narratives and works of art exhibit this structure of encrypted secrets or guilt and can be deconstructed. But the process is not the usual one of interpretation. Abraham and Torok introduce a specific way of understanding the function of the symbol, and symbolization: any speaking or representing. The word 'symbol' refers to an ancient practice of breaking a single piece of pottery in two so that a traveller, carrying one part, might be recognized on his/her

return. The noun comes from the Greek word *symbolleîn*, which means to put together or to unite. Thus it is not about substitution but about connection.

We are used to treating symbols like archaeologists who attempt to decipher written documents in an unknown language. What is given is 'something' with a meaning. Many of us live with the convenient misconception that in order to decipher [the document] it is sufficient to add meaning to the 'thing' or the hieroglyphs ... Yet in doing so we merely convert one system of symbols into another and this latter system still stops short of laying open its secret. Actually the reading of a symbolic text cannot be content with registering one-to-one equivalence between two terms. The work of deciphering will be completed only if we restore the entire circuit of functions involving a multiplicity of subjects and in which the symbol-thing is simply a relay.<sup>40</sup>

Thus inscription leads us towards the idea that symbolic mediation, saying, writing, painting and so forth can performatively process and even register in the negative the presence of the unknowable yet haunting trauma. Abraham's and Torok's thesis on encryption (secret coding) and encryptment (entombing) take us back from the intervention of symbols to a different psychic mechanism in that what is said or written – the symbolization – betrays a missing element that must be read across a relay of fragments that circulate but point to the relations, between past and present, self and others, that are the invisible network in which they travel. Translating from the scene of psychoanalysis to the scene of cultural analysis, I hear in the following statement a guideline for a method:

Whereas we are normally given meanings, the analyst is given symbols. Symbols are data that are missing an as yet undetermined part, but that which can, in principle, be determined. The special aim of ... listening is to find the symbol's complement, in other words, the fragment that 'symbolizes with' – or, we might say, that 'co-symbolizes'.<sup>41</sup>

Reading works of art that may be shaped by trauma, may passage trauma, may encrypt traumatic secrets, is not a matter of conventional decoding a source, biographical or historical interpretation. It involves acute attention to the aesthetic and formal movements of that which symbolization is attempting to touch, connect with and transform while registering that there is always another dimension, not available for symbolization but not, therefore, entirely beyond its negative referencing. There is a co-symbolization that may then be operating on several different registers in which making artworks, films, written texts becomes element of the travelling away from and towards.

Abraham and Torok, define trauma thus:

An event too painful to be absorbed by the ego whose stability it would threaten, trauma drives the individual to speak and behave in ways that simultaneously

conceal and reveal their catastrophic source. Implicit in this view is the idea that the content of an event does not in itself classify it as traumatic. *The manner in which it is 'lived' or experienced psychically by the individual renders it a trauma.* This perspective removes trauma from external moral or ethical taxonomies to situate it as a function of the specific mental configuration and psychic history of an individual.<sup>42</sup> (my emphasis)

Trauma is thus clothed by Abraham and Torok in always singular histories; it is 'lived' in unpredictable ways determined by particularity and experience. For this process of analysis they created the term *anasemia*, from *ana* meaning 'back up towards' and *semia* meaning signification. If, as Esther Rashkin puts it, 'Anasemia allows [the analysts] to construe an individual's existence as constituted by the constant creation of symbols in response to trauma' and to 'read these symbols – and thus the individual's life – as a series of tell-tale symptoms that tacitly speak of their founding silence beyond perception,' could I propose a form of art historical and cultural analysis that construes an artistic practice or oeuvre as constituted by the constant creation of symbolic forms in response to trauma as a pressing but unknown urgency, so that the work of analysis is a reading for that which speaks of a founding silence, a trauma, beyond perception and thus neither a cause nor a content, and never an explanation, but rather a condition that is at work constantly? What Bracha Ettinger names *artworking* delivers the visible scene upon which these rhythms of symbolic inscription and haunting encryption can be traced but also through which they can either be inscribed or become re-encrypted.

In the light of Abraham and Torok's brave and radical re-reading of classic psychoanalytical theories of the autonomous individual created only by cutting out from and abjecting the maternal through the mediation of the phallically empowered father, and their theorization of transgenerational unconscious sharing of traumatic material and repressed and uncanny affects, it may become easier to locate the theoretical and feminist intervention offered by Bracha Ettinger into this field of transsubjectivity, time and the archive. She too is working with a non-Oedipal understanding of transsubjective, transgenerational and hence intercultural encounters.

Matrixial theory, however, differs in turn and radically from that of Abraham and Torok. Ettinger does not displace the phallogocentric formation of subjectivity by the Oedipus complex entirely. She *supplements* this still effective track in the formation of subjectivity with a supplementary one that brings about a shift in the conception of trauma/the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic. Her naming stresses a Matrix as a mathematical structure, something abstract and formal, while also engaging with the embodied, carnal, corporeal and sexual location of subjectivity that is lived through a sexuated (but that does not imply a gendered) body, with and without organs, and invests its body parts phantasmatically with meanings and affects. Freudian psychoanalysis

teaches us how the becoming human subject 'thinks' with its body: orally, anally, genitally, though vision and skin, touch and sound. Lacanian psychoanalysis recast the classic Freudian tropes by passing them through the prism of structuralism and its linguistic matrix. For both systems the question of femininity remained indecipherable.

The difficulty of femininity expresses itself as hysteria: a body in trouble with language as the offered terms of being sexed and gendered, or a body whose phantasmatic elements become a kind of corporeal alphabet displacing words onto feelings, pains, anaesthesias, physical symptoms. So bodies are part and parcel of subjectivity and its [traumatic] articulations. We accept Freudian understanding of how the actual oral experiences of feeding give rise to pleasures and investments that may enhance our capacity to speak as well as to take in ideas, to digest different materials the world offers us conceptually and imaginatively. The real may be transmuted, sublimated from physical to psychological. Ettinger uses such fundamental psychoanalytical terms to bring into view a different moment of coexistence than that which Abraham and Torok posit only in order to insist once again on separation.

Ettinger proposes *transcryptum* as a new form of memory work performed by art:

I am proposing that the crypt – with its buried unknown knowledge, with what could not be admitted and signified by the mother as loss and was buried alive in an isolated nonconscious intrapsychic cavity together with the trauma that caused it, the signifiers that could have told the story, but remain detached and isolated, the images that could have held together the scene and the affect that accompanied it – this crypt, transmitted from m/Other to the subject can be further transmitted from the subject to yet another subject.<sup>43</sup>

Arising psychoanalytically at the level of the intergenerational and familial, Matrixiality adds this transsubjective mechanism to other kinds of historical, diachronic and lateral transmissibility:

A crypt, transmissible in a psychic sphere we call Matrixial, can become in a subject a lacuna that corresponds to an unsymbolized ancestral event – an event not of its parents, but of its parents' parent. Thus, we can conceive of a chain of transmission, where a subject 'crypts' an object/other/m/Other, who in turn had crypted her own object/other/m/Other, so that *the traumatic Thing inside my mother's other is aching in me*. We are now going to propose that in a similar vein the traumatic Thing of the world is aching in artworking.<sup>44</sup>

The artist or, rather, the artworking as a space of encounter between art and the world and the viewer of that world mediated via the art is a 'transport station of trauma'. This is a sign of our times that are never pre- but indelibly post-traumatic:

The creation of an intrapsychic crypt and the identification with it (endocryptic identification) are considered psychotic phenomena. I propose that they are such only in what can be looked at as a pre-traumatic era; but in our era, which I consider post-traumatic, where there is no pre-traumatic psychic reality, and where no 'innocence' can be presumed, such a psychic reality cannot only remain psychotic. It is contemporary art as transcriptum that gives body to this 'knowledge of the Real' and generates symbols for what would otherwise remain foreclosed from the transmitted trauma of the world. Such a post-traumatic era becomes, then, trans-traumatic.<sup>45</sup>

Ettinger's theorization of the matrixial capacity for transsubjective sharing enables the transgression of the boundaries of the individuated subject to be understood as non-psychotic. Matrix reveals the means by which we might transport the trauma of the other, while also revealing how such a capacity, specifically animated by a form of ethical aesthetic operations, might serve to de-psychoticize our current post-traumatic era.

#### Post-traumatic art

Spurred on by Jean-François Lyotard's profound reading of Ettinger's own aesthetic practice, Jacques Rancière entered this field to challenge Lyotard's linking of art, trauma and the sublime. Lyotard suggests that selected artworks confront – bear witness to – a novel and real (rather than natural) immensity, in history, for which all existing means of measurement have been destroyed so that art must register, but cannot hope to master, what it has, nonetheless, faithfully to confront seeking to phrase what he called '*le différend*': that which has yet to be phrased and thus causes a perpetual search.<sup>46</sup> Arguing against what he takes to be Lyotard's position on the sublime as the privileged mode of post-traumatic art, Jacques Rancière refutes the notion that recent history produces a kind of traumatic sublime beyond representation. He argues that there is nothing inherently unrepresentable about, for instance, the Holocaust. Creating, as does Lanzmann's nine-hour film *Shoah* (1985), a negative impression such as absence is itself a representation: of absence.<sup>47</sup>

Rancière's irritation with Lyotard, however, misses entirely Lyotard's subtle point that does not render trauma and catastrophe ineffably unrepresentable. Lyotard suggests that certain events by virtue of their extremity may be effectively *forgotten* by being *remembered*, that is, when mastered by a mode of representation inadequate to the uncontained nature of the challenge such events should continuously pose to any form of obliterating representation. Post-traumatic art pays tribute to the shattering of existing means of comprehension and representation resulting from real historical outrages by a constant fidelity, by working towards a phrasing – not merely linguistic, but gestural, sonic or graphic – a touching or encountering of some affective

elements capable of shifting us both subjectively and collectively that do not arrive at containing the event in finite forms.<sup>48</sup> The aesthetic performs a shattering awakening into sensate thought and incites continual research for ways to say what remains out of our cognitive reach.

I seek to enquire into how, if and when, aesthetic formulations emerge through the specificity of their formally generated affective processes that enable encounter with and *aesthetic wit(h)nessing* of traces or residues of what could not be immediately represented: hence they bear *after-affects*. These may create what we need to name *after-images* as formulations or frames within which the *after-affects* are held at the station of potential transport of trauma. Both accept their afterwardness as a painful or perhaps *jouissant* necessity at the point where aesthetic specificity inclines towards and fosters ethical humanizing compassion. Affect is not the same as emotion. Affect is as intense as it is without shape or focus: grief, anxiety, melancholy, *jouissance*. Affect is more like a colouring of our whole being; an opening towards something or a complete enclosure in its grip such as depression. Thus affect can be transmitted via mediated experience of the aesthetic.

The chapters that follow are reparative readings of a singular range of art works whose diversity bears witness both to different forms of traumatic experience and very different psychic and aesthetic economies in their artworking. Enriched by psychoanalytical theory, the book also aims to allow artists and artworks to teach us from their processes something beyond what our theories already hypothesize about trauma and aesthetic transformation.

### The book

A book informed by Matrixial theory paradoxically begins with hysteria. 'Gasping at violence' begins with my hysterical mimicry before one of the most arresting statues of the Baroque period by Gian Lorenzo Bernini in the Galleria Borghese, *Apollo and Daphne*. My bodily response initiated a reading of a work that indexes the trauma of gender culturally encoded in mythology, lodged in the museum and the canon. In wondering how to read the opened mouth of a woman offered rape or death by becoming a tree, I set off on a journey to meet Ana Mendieta and Anne Brigman who otherwise rework the mythic entwinement of femininity, life and death through the trope of the tree. What is the meaning of metamorphosis in all these works and what could be a reparative feminist re-reading?

The Ovidian tale of Arachne leads to Chapter 2's reflection on the magnificent arachnid created out of New York heating pipes and marble and known as *Maman* (1999) by Louise Bourgeois that is, I argue, linked to Daphne's opened mouth by sharing the notion of invocation. Through close readings of one of Bourgeois's earliest sculptures, and her own pre-1982 and post-1982

statements, which insist upon the formal geometry of her work, I plot a path to my reading of *Maman* as *Maman!* a form for a bereaved feminine subjectivity calling out to the missing *m/Other*. Refuting reductive biographical readings of this artist's oeuvre, I seek instead to trace the genealogy of this arachnid *pathos formula* across the double scene of seduction and bereavement.

Completing a trilogy on sound and subjectivity in sculpture, 'Being and language: Anna Maria Maiolino's Gestures of exile and connection' links the mouth to language and the hand to trauma. Childhood terrors of starvation in wartime Italy, multiple migrations, dictatorship and the fragile hopes for democracy in Brazil inform Anna Maria Maiolino's multi-media sculptural practice. I draw upon both phenomenology and Deleuzian concepts of difference and creativity to examine the works and the words of the artist – her poetic parallel to her formal search for a language for being – into the response to the challenge that repetition in her work in unfired moulded clay poses.

Section II, 'Memorial bodies', focuses on two works touched by the reality and the shadow of the Holocaust. In 'Traumatic encryption: the sculptural dissolutions of Alina Szapocznikow', I study the works of a Polish-Jewish artist who died in 1973 just on the cusp of an emerging feminist art movement that might have recognized her novel carnal aesthetics but would have missed the legacies of still hardly recognized Holocaust trauma. In her sculpture I discern a movement from an initial reparative forming of integral and even, under socialism, heroic bodies, to the engagement with the painful intersection of fragile body and machine that suggests encrypted – unmourned – losses that progressively melted and dissolved Szapocznikow's sculptural forms, until remnants of the past archived in photography surfaced, dissipating into abject materials, infused with image-traces that almost tattoo the genocidal past into a new artificial residue that mimics skin.

In 'Fictions of fact: memory in transit in Vera Frenkel's video installations', I turn to the vidéothèque of the virtual feminist museum, and consider the specificity of the medium of video and installation as the site of transformative encounters with trauma as it is being formed as multi-centred memory. Vera Frenkel, born in what was once briefly Czechoslovakia in 1939, is now one of Canada's most distinguished video artists and one of the major pioneers and elaborators of this medium. In her installations of the early 1990s she resumed the broken threads of memory of the Holocaust in order to weave a polyvocal pattern of memories of forced migration that had contemporary resonances in an era of resurgent racism and xenophobia. Reading Frenkel's creation of fictional spaces such as '*... from the Transit Bar*' (Documenta IX, 1992) and her installation *Body Missing* (1994) evoking Hitler's aesthetic and cultural policies and the looting of European treasures for the Linz museum project, I identify her imaginative and ultimately web-based anticipation of what Michael Rothberg only recently identified as multi-directional memory.<sup>49</sup>

The final section, 'Passage through the object', works with text and video, words having been a constant object of study so far, to explore the function of objects as 'transport stations of trauma' and to explore contrasting aesthetic and psychic economies with radically different outcomes as the encounter with trauma finds its secondary moment through filming and writing. 'Deadly objects and dangerous confessions: the tale of Sarah Kofman's father's pen' analyses philosopher Sarah Kofman's memoir as a hidden Jewish child in Occupied Paris. Identifying its structuring rhymes, topographies and primal scenes, I detect an encrypted trauma that became unsurvivable. In '...that again!': *pathos formula* as transport station of trauma in the cinematic journey of Chantal Akerman, I discern across the making of a film and an installation a transformative and transgenerational psychic economy. Crossing Warburg with Ettinger in a study of a *pathos formula*, I respond to a gesture, a kiss, occurring in two different forms of films made in 2004 by Akerman which led to a reappraisal of the entire trajectory of Akerman's work from independent, feminist cinema to time-based art installation and sought an ultimately creative passage from and for her mother's trauma. It is here that the opening questions about journeys towards the encounter with trauma and their varying outcomes find their origin and thus function as a conclusion when autobiographical exchanges are acknowledged between this writer and her chosen topics of analysis. Is writing also part of a journey towards what I meet riddled in these artworks?

#### Notes

- 1 Theodor Adorno, 'Commitment' [1962], in Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (eds), *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), 312.
- 2 The key texts include Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (eds), *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (London: Routledge, 1992); Cathy Caruth (ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); Cathy Caruth (ed.), *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996). A counter model appeared in Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). See also the keen defence in Shoshana Felman, *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 171–83. For trauma and history see Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994) and *Writing History: Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000). Critical readings of this new trend include Mark Selzer, 'Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Cultural Sphere', *October*, 80 (1997), 3–26; John Mowitz, 'Trauma Envy', in *Theorizing Trauma: The Cultural Politics of Affect in and beyond Psychoanalysis* (New York: Other Press, 2007), 349–76.

- On trauma as a feature of post-colonial societies, see Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996).
- 3 Kristine Stiles, 'Shaved Heads and Marked Bodies: Representations from Cultures of Trauma' [1993], in Jean O'Barr et al. (eds), *Talking Gender: Public Images, Personal Journeys and Political Critiques* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 36–94; Jill Bennett, 'The Aesthetics of Sense Memory: Theorising Trauma through the Visual Arts', in Peter Weibel (ed.), *Trauma and Memory: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 2000), 81–96; Ernst van Alphen, *Caught by History: Holocaust Effects in Art, Literature and Theory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997); Lisa Saltzman and Eric Rosenberg, *Trauma and Visuality in Modernity* (Dartmouth College, 2006).
  - 4 For a curative model of trauma and a medico-psychological genealogy see Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1992). A comprehensive genealogy of the term is offered in Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* (London: Routledge, 2008).
  - 5 Bracha L. Ettinger, 'Traumatic Wit(h)ness-Thing and Matrixial Co/in-habituating' *parallax*, 5:1 (1999), 89.
  - 6 Griselda Pollock, 'Gleaning in History or Coming After/Behind the Reapers: the Feminine, the Stranger and the Matrix in the Work and Theory of Bracha Ettinger', in Griselda Pollock (ed.), *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings* (London: Routledge, 1996), 274.
  - 7 On the paradoxes of representation as making something present in its essential character and of finding 'a scheme of intelligibility equal to its material power', see Jacques Rancière, 'Are Some Things Unrepresentable?' in *The Future of the Image* (London: Verso, 2007), 109–13.
  - 8 Jean Laplanche, 'Notes on Afterwardness' in John Fletcher (ed.), *Essays on Otherness* (London: Routledge, 1999), 260–5.
  - 9 Geoffrey Hartman, 'On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies', *New Literary History*, 26:3 (1995), 537.
  - 10 Geoffrey Hartman: 'On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies', 539.
  - 11 In 'The Matrixial Gaze' (1995), reprinted in Bracha Ettinger, *Matrixial Border-space*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 73–80, Ettinger identifies research in this archaic domain in the varied works of Pierre Férida, Jean-François Lyotard (*Figure/Discours*), Christopher Bollas (*The Shadow of the Object*) and others in object relations such as Donald Meltzer.
  - 12 Griselda Pollock, 'Art/Trauma/Representation', *parallax*, Issue 50 (January–March 2009), 40–54. This formulation mirrors, but not quite, a similar distinction between structural trauma of loss to which all are subject, trans-historically, and historical trauma which is the specific experience of particular victims, made by Dominick LaCapra in 'Trauma, Absence, Loss', in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, MD: Jon Hopkins University Press, 2001),

- 76–8. LaCapra focuses on absence and loss, and on empathy in order to avoid rendering traumatic loss ‘in hyperbolic terms or immediately equating it with loss or lack’. My purpose is not to distinguish the two in such terms, since trauma may also refer to any overwhelming incoming, unmediated event, including pleasure or contact, and in order to propose the structural trauma as a primary sculpting of psychic susceptibility into whose grooves historical events nestle giving rise to the personal specificity of the manner in which historical events impact on individual subjects whose structural formations are also subject to the archaic and early infantile relations in familial history.
- 13 Sigmund Freud, ‘Moses and Monotheism’[1939], Pelican Freud Library, Vol. 13: *Origins of Religion* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 315.
  - 14 Freud: ‘Moses and Monotheism’[1939], 308–23.
  - 15 Caruth, ‘Introduction’, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, 8.
  - 16 See Jeffrey C. Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). For the strongest case against cultural trauma see Wulf Kansteiner, ‘Genealogy of a Category Mistake: A Critical Intellectual History of the Cultural Trauma Metaphor’, *Rethinking History*, 8:2 (2004), 193–221.
  - 17 For an important argument against the grain of Caruthian trauma studies that focuses on the continuing issue of Germany’s troubled relation to its traumatizing perpetrator past, see Sigrid Weigel, ‘The Symptomatology of a Universalized Concept of Trauma: On the Failing of Freud’s reading of Tasso in the Trauma of History’, *New German Critique*, 90 (2003), 85–94.
  - 18 Kansteiner, ‘Genealogy of a Category Mistake’, 193–222.
  - 19 For an important explication of this issue, see Felman, *Juridical Unconscious*, 171–83.
  - 20 For instance Dina Wardi, *Memorial Candles: Children of the Holocaust* (London: Routledge, 1992). On transmission of trauma see also Louise J. Kaplan, ‘Images of Absence: Voices of Silence’, in *Lost Children: Separation and Loss Between Children and Parents* (London: HarperCollins, 1995), 216–39.
  - 21 Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London; Penguin, 2003).
  - 22 Ettinger: ‘Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze’, 147–8. For a fuller introduction to Ettinger as painter, see Catherine de Zegher and Griselda Pollock (eds), *Bracha L. Ettinger: Art as Compassion* (Brussels: ASA, 2011).
  - 23 Ettinger: ‘Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze’, 148.
  - 24 Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*; Judith Butler, *Precarious Lives: The Power of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso Books, 2004); Bracha L. Ettinger, *Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger: Artworking 1985–1999* with essays by Brian Massumi, Christine Buci-Glucksman and Griselda Pollock (Gent: Ludion, 2000).
  - 25 LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*; Sigmund Freud [1914g]. ‘Errinern, Wiederholen und Durcharbeiten (Weitere Ratschläge zur Technik der Psychoanalyse, II)’. *Internationale Zeitschrift für ärztliche Psychoanalyse*, 2,

- 485–91; ‘Remembering, repeating and working-through’. *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works* (London: Hogarth, 1958) 12, 147–56; ‘Mourning and Melancholia’ [1915], *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, 14 (London: Hogarth, 1957), 237–58.
- 26 On this neologism see Anna Johnson, ‘Nomad Words’, in Anthony Bryant and Geislda Pollock (eds), *Digital and Other Virtualities* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 217–36.
- 27 Bracha L. Ettinger, ‘Wit(h)nessing Trauma and the Matrixial Gaze’, in *Matrixial Borderspace*, 143.
- 28 Bracha L. Ettinger, ‘Art as the Transport-Station of Trauma’, in *Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger: Artworking 1985–1999* (Gent: Ludion, 2000), 91.
- 29 Susannah Radstone, ‘Screening Trauma: *Forrest Gump*’, in Susannah Radstone (ed.), *Memory and Methodology* (New York: Berg, 2000), 79–107.
- 30 Bracha L. Ettinger, *Matrix Halal(a)-Lapsus: Notes on Painting* (Oxford: Oxford Museum of Modern Art, 1992), 11.
- 31 Ettinger, ‘Art as the Transport-Station of Trauma’, 91.
- 32 Bracha L. Ettinger, ‘Matrix and Metramorphosis’, *Differences: Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 4:3 (1992), 176–208; See also Griselda Pollock, ‘Thinking the Feminine: Aesthetic Practice as Introduction to Bracha Ettinger and the Concepts of Matrix and Metramorphosis’, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 21 (2004), 5–64.
- 33 For an excellent analysis of gender as long-standing figure of binary thinking independent of human sexes, see Clare Colebrook, *Gender* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
- 34 Ettinger, *Matrixial Borderspace*, 140–154.
- 35 Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis Book VII 1959–60*, trans. Dennis Potter (London: Routledge, 1992).
- 36 Esther Rashkin, *Family Secrets and the Psychoanalysis of Narrative* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 253.
- 37 Esther Rashkin, *Family Secrets and the Psychoanalysis of Narrative*, 17.
- 38 Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, ‘A Poetics of Psychoanalysis: “The Lost Object – Me”’, *SubStance*, 43 (1984), 17, note 1; also in “‘The Lost Object – Me’: Notes on Endocryptic Identification’ (1975), in Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, trans. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 140, note 1.
- 39 Abraham and Torok, ‘The Topography of Reality’ (1971), in *The Shell and the Kernel*, 159.
- 40 Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, ‘The Symbol or Beyond Phenomena’ (1961), translated cited in Rashkin, *Family Secrets*, 38.
- 41 Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Wolfman’s Magic Word*, trans. Nicholas Rand (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1989), 79.
- 42 Rashkin, *Family Secrets*, 42.
- 43 Bracha L. Ettinger, ‘Transcriptum’, in Linda Belau and Petar Ramadanovic (eds), *Topologies of Trauma: Essays on the Limits of Knowledge and Memory* (New York: Other Press, 2002), 255.

- 44 Ettinger, 'Transcryptum', 55.
- 45 Ettinger, 'Transcryptum', 256.
- 46 Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* [1983], trans. Georges Van Den Abeele (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).
- 47 Rancière, 'Are Some Things Unrepresentable?', 109–38.
- 48 Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger and "the jews"*, trans M.S. Roberts (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); *Postmodern Fables*, trans. Georges Van Den Abeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).
- 49 Michael Rothberg, *Multi-directional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009).