

School of Social Sciences and Asian Languages

The origami of desire: unfolding and refolding the desiring self (f)

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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material previously published by the author which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university, apart from brief quotations from the author's Master's dissertation, used to support the argument and appropriately acknowledged in endnotes and bibliography.

Signature:

Date:

For my children and their children; their love surrounds me and teaches me to extract
something gay and loving from what happens

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Abstract

This thesis celebrates the emancipatory potential of writing, which can be a tool for creating alternative worlds and, as Françoise Lionnet says, for ‘reappropriating the past so as to transform our understanding of ourselves’.ⁱ I use fictional and auto/biographical texts, read through Deleuzian theories of desire and subjectivity, to argue that we can use our powers of thought and expression to change our understanding of self and others and to live more creatively and joyfully.

Traditionally, women have lived secondary lives, shaped and repressed by hierarchical and patriarchal codes of behaviour and thought; many still live like this. Desire has been defined (at least in the dominant Platonic tradition of Western philosophy) in terms of lack and loss; in this binary paradigm, desire is a secondary function of language and culture, and the subject is opposed to, and constituted by, the other. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari propose instead that desire is a primary, impersonal connective force that flows through all life in a Spinozan universe that is composed of one substance, distributed on the intersecting yet distinct planes of the virtual or invisible and the material or visible. On these planes, a multiplicity of incorporeal events and organised forms and subjectivities proliferate and connect in a dance of difference and repetition — always folding, unfolding, refolding, becoming.

The thesis is structured as a *métissage* or assemblage, a braiding of different narrative strands: theory, the literature — fictional and non-fictional — of medieval Heian Japanese court women, and my own auto/biographical writing. My central proposition is that desire is immanent creative energy that produces folds of time, memory, material forms and subjectivity that, ‘like origami, can be unfolded and refolded into different shapes.’ⁱⁱ I use the figure of origami as a recurring motif to describe and explore the ever-changing process of the construction of selfhood, which is both active and reactive, self- and other-folded. This process is illustrated in the literature of Heian women, whose lives were controlled to an extreme degree, but who, in their closeted interiors, created an extraordinary body of confessional and fictional literature, much of which is still extant, translated, studied and enjoyed. Desire, in this labyrinthine world, is active and masculine, yet the literature is a *décoverture* of men’s penetrative and exploitative use of women for their gratification, and a celebration of the women’s hidden desires (for emotional satisfaction and security, for personal freedom, for spiritual fulfilment) and rich

imaginative lives.ⁱⁱⁱ This year, on November 1, Japan celebrates the thousandth anniversary of the creation of *The tale of Genji*, the world's first novel, considered by many scholars and readers to be a masterpiece. Such is the power of the imagination, that a subjugated woman could produce a work that is transformative in its creative power throughout and beyond one thousand years of world history and culture.

Within the braided narrative of the origami of desire, stories of my life are framed by reflections that theorise the themes of failed subjectivity — a construction of femininity within the bourgeois paradigm of woman as mother to her children and wife (and mother) to her husband, without 'a life, sex and desires of her own'.^{iv} The exclusion and censorship of female desire from this subjectification led, in my case, to a pursuit of love that resulted in the loss of my children. The causes and effects of that loss in my life and theirs are narrated in several memoirs, and the interpretive narrative seeks to unfold the old dysfunctional and hegemonic forms of desire and repression that produced this failure and perform an autopoiesis or re-creation of self in different, freer, more fluid forms.

This thesis is a *mise-en-abîme* of stories of self and others folded within the main narrative of desire as origami. Works of fiction and memoirs present narrated worlds that reflect the 'real' world we inhabit, creating stories within stories where, like Alice through the looking-glass, we can see much that is the same, yet much that is different. We return to the everyday world changed in subtle ways, and we can use our perceptions and affective responses to refold ourselves and the way we react to circumstances. The narration of self and other in memoir and fiction is a way in which we can reinterpret the world and thereby change it, becoming worthy of what happens, becoming the offspring of our own events, so that, as Deleuze puts it, we can have one more birth.^v

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I am deeply appreciative of the support, encouragement and guidance given me by my supervisors, Associate Professor Maureen Perkins and Dr Ron Blaber of Curtin University of Technology, and Dr Mary Besemeres, now at Australian National University, Canberra. Dr Besemeres withdrew as supervisor in 2008 when she was appointed to a position at ANU, but she has continued to advise me on substantive points and to take an interest in my progress, generously sharing her literary, linguistic and philosophical scholarship with me. A/Prof Perkins has been an inspiring and supportive mentor throughout, giving me clear and constructive guidance on methodology and structure as well as content. Her historical and anthropological focus has helped me to stay grounded, and her non-dualistic thinking has encouraged me in my desire to write and live the ordinary life in a non-ordinary way. Dr Blaber has come in at a late stage in the writing of my thesis and has given invaluable feedback on my use of theory. His deep knowledge of philosophy, his intuitive and poetic approach to theory as play, and his incisive and insightful comments have inspired me to push my argument further at many points in its development.

I am grateful to Professor Royall Tyler on many counts: for his magnificent translation of *The tale of Genji*; for the conversations I have had with him about the book and about Heian culture; for his generosity in sharing some of his knowledge with me; and for reading early and final drafts of Chapter two. Lacking the deep scholarship and knowledge of classical Japanese language that he has, I am entirely responsible for any errors and idiosyncratic readings of the text and the culture it reflects. In interpreting the texts through Deleuzian theory, I am following in a rich tradition of the many scholars, writers and artists who have been inspired by Heian literature, in particular *The tale of Genji*, to engage in a multiplicity of ways in the cultural

phenomenon of works that transcend the time and the place within which they were written.

Another scholar of Japanese culture I thank is Liza Dalby, who lived in Japan and became a geisha as part of her postgraduate studies in Anthropology, and who has written several books on classical and modern Japanese culture. She generously shared her scholarship by reading a draft of Chapter two and gave some helpful feedback and encouragement.

I am grateful to administrative and academic staff of the Office of Graduate Studies in Humanities for the practical and moral support and guidance they have provided throughout my career as a postgraduate student. In particular, I thank Associate Professors Barbara Milech and Joan Wardrop for their responsiveness, at individual and structural levels, to the needs of higher degree students. They have worked tirelessly with faculty members to develop the research culture of Humanities at Curtin. Among these faculty members, I thank Dr Philip Moore, Dr Paul Genoni, and Associate Professor Tim Dolin, for their support in research and practical matters.

This thesis has been inspired by the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, which has been transformative for me on all levels. I have endeavoured, as Brian Massumi urges, to take the dynamism of their work and use it to construct a plateau of intensity that will open out to connect with other lives.^{vi}

Some of the auto/biographical writing compiled in the writing of this thesis has now been published: in *Antipodes: a North American Journal of Australian Literary Studies*; in *Telling Pacific lives: prisms of process*, eds Brij V Lal and Vicki Luker; and in *Life Writing Annual: Biographical and Autobiographical Studies*. Permission has been given by each publication for the reprinting of the material. I wish to thank Dr Thomas R Smith, editor of *Life Writing Annual*, for his careful and insightful editing of the essay published in his journal.

In the life writing that the thesis contains and theorises, I have changed names where necessary to protect privacy. I am grateful to Dr Bob Grossman for permission to quote from letters he wrote to me, and especially to my daughter, here given the pseudonym ‘Caitlin’, for permission to tell her story in Chapter six.

The narration of other people’s stories as well as one’s own is generic to life writing. Family material is used throughout this thesis for the exploration of concepts of desire and subjectivity. In particular, in the story of my childhood in Chapter three, reprised in the Conclusion, sensitive issues concerning family members now

dead are discussed. I make no claim to discover the truth, which is not knowable. Readers are advised, therefore, to treat this material with discretion and to consider it entirely speculative and provisional.

In matters of style — referencing, punctuation and capitalisation — I have followed the *Style manual for authors, editors and printers*, sixth edition; I have used the documentary-note style for citations, as less intrusive in an inter-generic work than some other systems.

Introduction: To live the ordinary life in a non-ordinary way ...

Between the cries of physical pain and the songs of metaphysical suffering, how is one to trace out one's narrow, Stoical way, which consists in being worthy of what happens, extracting something gay and loving in what happens, a light, an encounter, an event, a speed, a becoming.

Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, 'On the superiority of Anglo-American literature', in *Dialogues*, p. 66^{vii}

It isn't nice not to be writing a book. It isn't nice not to have a more real world than the real world we inhabit.

A S Byatt, *Scribbling*^{viii}

... [T]he symbolic is real, and in symbols lies our only hope for a better world. To reinterpret the world *is* to change it.

Françoise Lionnet, 'The politics and aesthetics of *métissage*', p. 334^{ix}

I have chosen the first epigraph above to open my thesis, because it describes the nomadic life of a traveller whose journey is not shaped by a destination or a set of guiding ideals and does not follow a clearly marked path; a traveller whose way is traced by a series of steps or footprints that disappear as one moves forward, though traces may be left in one's memory and in the lives of others. The desire that propels us forwards is the desire that flows through all life, leading to surprising connections and new becomings.

Deleuze's words encapsulate what I find most worthy, creative and inspiring, as well as most challenging, in the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. Love and worthiness are virtues that are not exclusive to human endeavours; they are also products of the unfolding, ever-changing becomings of the non-human, the elemental, and of our encounters with these events. Such joys cannot be grasped; they are ephemeral and abundant, as are sorrow and pain. Life is difficult; each step we take is subject to outside forces, to chance events; but in our response, in the Stoic determination to become

worthy of what happens to us, we can extract joy and love from those events. In so doing, one can become different.

The second epigraph resonates as a refrain in my life, and though I did not know these words in childhood, I lived them. I had the ability that all children have to create alternative worlds, and I used this escape to entertain myself and to ward off loneliness and unhappiness. As I grew older, what had begun as an imaginative form of play became a neurotic retreat from a repressive reality, and when I tried to use this escape to change my life, I was all but destroyed in the process, and lost my children. I still use this ability to call up a safe place to be on the edge of chaos and unpredictability, an enchanted circle I can create and enter at any time I choose. In it I can experience an alternative reality and see the 'real' world reflected, the same yet different, just as Alice, when she entered the looking-glass world, found things that looked common and uninteresting at first, but as she went more deeply into that world, that turned out to be quite different, surprising and unfamiliar. When I leave the more real world and re-enter the real world I inhabit, I experience my life differently. I am challenged to think about reality: how substantial is the physical, social, economic world that I inhabit, and my life within it? Were I not here, life would go on much as it does now, though a few people would miss me. Though this world seems real to me, I could at any time leave it, either through physical death or through a metamorphosis into a different life, a looking-glass world. Each day I choose to treat this world as real, and myself as real within it, but I also have the ability to escape it, to create worlds within my world, to write stories of self and others, to read others' stories. Were I not able to do this, I would find life very dull and would, perhaps, find other ways of diverting myself. Writing and reading stories is my chosen escape. For many years it was just that, and it is only recently that I have realised it can be a way of becoming different. Although we are defined by our relations to others, we also construct ourselves by our ability to think and act and tell stories about our selves. And so, although, as Byatt suggests, story-telling can create a more heightened, enjoyable and meaningful reality than the real world we inhabit, it can also reflect different ways of seeing and living that can influence our living in the actual world and shape our experience in productive ways. It is my argument that life writing offers a way of becoming worthy of what happens to us. In maturity and old age, I have

found that the creation of alternative worlds need not just be an escape from a repressive reality, it can be an ethical way of living more creatively in the world we inhabit.

In the third epigraph, Lionnet says in more intellectual words what Byatt has said, and extends the thought beyond self-gratification to the ethical purpose of writing. In a postcolonial world, she argues for the emancipatory power of self-writing in fiction and autobiography, in particular, in the rewriting of the feminine, opening a space ‘where multiplicity and diversity are affirmed’.^x

The structuring methodology of this thesis is inspired by Lionnet’s concept of braiding or *métissage*. *Métissage* is a non-dualistic, a-hegemonic approach to theoretical and creative writing and its interpretation that, in a multicultural, postcolonial world, emancipates writer and reader from fixed categories and homogeneous meanings.^{xi} The word *métissage* has no equivalent in English, but can be approximated in terms such as ‘plaited’ or ‘hybrid.’ My project is a *métissage* of literary, theoretical and autobiographical strands of the desiring female self; such a structure is appropriate and necessary to construct an ethical and connected narrative of different elements from diverse discourses, cultures and time periods.

Another concept to describe such a narrative is the Deleuzian one of an assemblage. An assemblage, as I describe it in Chapter one, has two sides, one facing the strata of organised forms and subjects, the other facing the plane of becoming, of desire.^{xii} A book, a thesis, are assemblages, and a Deleuzian production escapes from the binary, arborescent or hierarchical logic that has dominated Western thought to follow a proliferative rhizomatic pattern. The principles of this pattern are connection and heterogeneity, multiplicity and asignifying rupture.^{xiii} Briefly, a rhizome can connect at any point to anything other. It is not a closed or stable system with a unified meaning; its nature is always changing and connecting with other multiplicities; breaks happen, and although there are ‘lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc., [there are also] ... lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees’.^{xiv} As a PhD thesis, my narrative must have organisation, signification and so on, but I aspire to keep it open and heterogeneous, following multiple lines of flight, of creative thought.

When I began this journey, much of what I read spoke a language that was unfamiliar at best, foreign at worst. Yet my ways of thinking about being, desire and subjectivity have changed. When Deleuze and Guattari were unknown to me, I became acquainted with Michel Foucault's reading of Western sexuality, and my understanding of my life as a middle class woman raised in mid-twentieth century Australia was transformed, but I could not see how this new understanding could lead to a viable way of becoming a desiring woman in a changing society. Other scholars and students spoke to me with enthusiasm of Deleuze and Guattari. I kept hearing about them, and dipped into their books in between candidacies for my Master's degree and the PhD. I began to be won over. I gave a paper at a postgraduate conference using their concept of becoming-nomad to interpret my life story, and began the process of collecting an anthology of Australian women's writing on the theme of hidden desires, structured in three sections, 'being', 'changing' and 'becoming'.^{xv} Deleuze and Guattari's concepts have become part of my toolbox for rewriting desire, and they have opened up for me new ways of becoming a creative and desiring woman.

Michel de Certeau reminds us that readers are poachers, who move across other people's lands like nomads and have no place of their own. Writers, on the other hand, construct *un espace propre*, where the subject is produced, a text is constructed, order is established, a world is made.^{xvi} Such a production is arborescent, implying dominance and control over the space; I am not comfortable with this vision of the blank page as a space where the subject is produced and on which 'the ambiguities of the world have been exorcised'.^{xvii} De Certeau is describing the Cartesian move of Western culture, in which every child learns to exercise his will, and 'for the past three centuries learning what to write has been the very definition of entering into a capitalist and conquering society'.^{xviii} I undertake this project knowing that in seeking to construct a space for a desiring self, I am in enemy territory — triply so, for desire has traditionally been defined by men, and language is arbitrary, existence ephemeral. I cannot possess the territory I pitch camp in: my space is as temporary and provisional as is my self. De Certeau acknowledges that the place of the modern writer is hard-won and temporary. He reminds us that it is only in death that the 'desire to say' destroys itself.^{xix} To write, he says, 'is to be forced to march through enemy territory, in the very area where loss

prevails'; 'the writer is ... a dying man who is trying to speak'; his desire 'expects from the other the marvellous and ephemeral excess of surviving through an attention that it alters.'^{xx}

My writing is nomadic in the Deleuzian sense:

The nomad has a territory; he follows customary paths; he goes from one point to another; he is not ignorant of points (water points, dwelling points, assembly points, etc.). But the question is what in nomad life is a principle and what is only a consequence. ... A path is always between two points, but the in-between has taken on all the consistency and enjoys both an autonomy and a direction of its own. The life of the nomad is the *intermezzo*.^{xxi}

The nomadic path does not enclose a space or territory, but '*distributes people (or animals) in an open space ...*' (emphasis in original).^{xxii} The sedentary space of settled peoples is striated by walls, enclosures and roads that connect them, whereas nomad space is smooth, and the nomad distributes himself within it.^{xxiii} Nomadic thought seeks to escape from the enclosed, striated space of 'the State' in which Being is established and subjects are formed, even though it must live within it; it seeks to construct a smooth space of becomings, of assembled desire. These pages are the smooth space on which I create my assemblage, my composition of desire. My hope is that my reader's attention will be altered by my braided narrative, and that in rewriting the desire of a woman, I create a toolbox that can be used by others to make their own spaces in which desire can move and form new connections.

In *Dialogues*, Gilles Deleuze states his preference for those thinkers —Lucretius, Spinoza, Hume, Nietzsche and Bergson — who escaped from the philosophical tradition of dualism, rationalism, opposition and negation represented by Plato, Descartes, Kant and Heidegger.^{xxiv} Deleuze and his collaborator, Félix Guattari, privilege nomadic space in reaction to the established order of 'the State', that is, the codes and organised forms and institutions of society. A space in which desire can move cannot be *un espace propre*, with its regulations and divisions; it will be temporary and provisional. If I am to occupy a plot of land on the plateau of desire (which I can never possess), I need to establish a theoretical position from which to conceptualise and create a positive, non-hierarchical and inclusive space for women's desire.

This groundwork leads me to enquire into the difficult and slippery union of the transcendental and empirical planes of existence that is central to Deleuzian philosophy.^{xxv} Deleuze and Guattari have been accused of dualism, and interpreted by some commentators as privileging the transcendental/immanent plane, by others as promoting revolutionary action on the material/political plane of existence. In this introductory chapter, I give my interpretation of how the work of Deleuze and Guattari is positioned in relation to the concepts of dualism, monism and multiplicities.

In Chapter one I argue that, although Deleuze and Guattari do privilege the immanent plane over the material plane of organisation, in that their purpose is to use creative thought to connect with the flow of desire, and to undermine the rigid and hierarchical nature of settled forms and subjectivities, they see the material plane as necessary and of equal importance with the immanent plane ontologically. Action to change the way things are ordered must be careful, experimental and intelligently observant of our relations with the world around us, our situated existence. My central proposition is that desire is impersonal creative energy (arising on the immanent plane) producing folds of matter that, 'like origami, can be unfolded and refolded into different shapes.'^{xxvi} I shall explore the concepts of becoming, being and desire in Deleuzian philosophy, and will suggest how these can be applied to a practical project of rewriting desire from a woman's point of view.

In Chapter two, I look at a body of literature that was created by medieval women in the mid-Heian period of Japan (late tenth through the eleventh centuries AD). This writing includes poetic diaries and a long prose romance or *monogatari*. Heian women's writing is extraordinary, not only in the quality of the writing, but in the circumstances in which it was produced — in a closed aristocratic society ordered by strict patriarchal hierarchy, polygamous marriage and elaborate aesthetic codes of dress, language and behaviour. I have chosen this literature because it offers a looking-glass experience in which I, a twenty-first century woman writer, can connect with a world in many ways the opposite of that which I inhabit, and in writing of it, create a rhizomatic assemblage of desire. I cannot enter this world in my bodily self, I cannot experience it directly, but I can, in my imagination, trace a nomadic path through this strange territory and capture something of it, becoming different in the process. When I do wander

through it, I find, to my surprise, women whose experiences of love and desire are like my own in many ways. Another fascinating aspect of this created world is that desire folds material shapes into elaborate forms: the bodies and selves of women are wrapped in many layers of silk and hidden behind screens, masks, and elaborate codes of ritual and language. I will explore Deleuze's concept of the baroque fold, and use it to interpret the Heian world. I will show how desire is folded into a sexuality that is driven by men's serial couplings with passive, cloistered female beauty and how women find their own forms of creative expression through artistic production in a world shaped by aesthetic principles. In this chapter, because of the likely unfamiliarity of the texts to many readers, I will use plot summaries and some longer textual extracts to illustrate my argument.

In Chapter three, I frame an essay about my family story, 'Love's last token: the desire for lost lives and origins', with an exploration of the Deleuzian concepts of the Body without Organs and the abstract machine, strategies through which desire, on the plane of immanence, constructs reality on the plane of organisation, as explained in Chapter one. These concepts will be used to interpret the lives of my parents and paternal grandparents in a remote district of New South Wales. The family narrative of two generations of monogamous marriage, shaped by the ideals or abstract machines of true love 'till death us do part', and of successful sheep farming on arid land, is fractured by the forces of years of drought and the Great Depression, by the fundamentally perverse nature of the bourgeois family, and by personal failures and betrayals. My father took a line of flight from the domestic and pastoral assemblage he and my mother had created on marginal territory and had an affair with a woman who was a cook on a neighbouring property. He left, or, as Deleuze and Guattari would say, he deterritorialised, and began a new married life, or reterritorialised, with that woman. My mother endeavoured to maintain the way of life she had created with him, running the property with help from her children until he returned and resumed possession, forcing her to leave precipitately. Together they had created an assemblage of family and working life which was fatally flawed to begin with by the marginality and isolation of the farm and the conditions of their ownership of it, and by the perverse construction of the bourgeois family. My desire is to revisit the story of my family and origins, to find

my place within the narrative, and to understand the fault lines along which the family fractured, and which were the origin of my own failed marriage and loss of my family.

In Chapter four, I look at theories of time as a vehicle for becoming in life writing. The desire to tell the story of past times in response to loss and displacement and the trauma of the unknowable event can be a regenerative force, which enables something new to emerge from the past and the present. I will draw on Elizabeth Grosz's interpretation of time, informed by her readings of Nietzsche, Darwin and Bergson, and Deleuze's rewriting of Bergson and Nietzsche. Drusilla Modjeska's interpretation of temporising in life writing and fiction is another useful way of looking at time and the desire to change the reality we live in. Memory, intuition, imagination, are faculties we can use to access the virtual realm of *aeon* time to construct the plane of desire, on which becoming-different is possible. *Aeon* and *chronos* are the two forms of time Deleuze and Guattari see as defining life. *Aeon* is the time of the plane of immanence, of speeds and affects, indefinite and floating; *chronos* is 'the time of measure that situates things and persons, develops a form, and determines a subject'.^{xxvii} We live in both times, but we tend to get caught up in *chronos* time, fixed and regulated by the linear forces of subjectivity and material forms. Deleuze and Guattari urge us to become aware of the other dimension of our lives, to reach out for the indefinite multiplicities that are possible, to let go of the habit of saying 'I'. These approaches frame and interpret my nomadic journey back through past time in search of new ways of understanding what has happened and becoming worthy of the events narrated in three pieces of my life writing: 'The lost mother', 'Into the void' and 'Seaweed dreams'.

In Chapter five, the concept of becoming is explored further, as becoming-woman, becoming-child, becoming-sorcerer, becoming-animal, becoming-molecular. Deleuze and Guattari see the process of becoming as a kind of journey, in which fibres lead us from one form of becoming to another, passing across thresholds, ending in becoming-imperceptible.^{xxviii} Becoming-child is something that is stolen from us in childhood, when we are socialised into the opposition of masculine and feminine in the dualistic machine of Western society; this is illustrated in an excerpt from my memoir of childhood. Deleuze and Guattari argue that we can reclaim the non-dualistic state of becoming-child, which is contemporaneous with maturity and age, by practising living

the ordinary life in a non-ordinary way. Thus we can make ‘a world that can overlay the first one, like a transparency’; they give the example of the camouflage fish, whose crisscross of abstract lines allows it to blend with rock, sand and plants, ‘becoming imperceptible’.^{xxix} Another threshold of becoming is becoming-sorcerer; the sorcerer is an anomalous being who is on the borderline of the pack or the band, on the wild side of the civilised world. For Deleuze and Guattari, the writer becomes-sorcerer; this concept is explored in my essay, ‘The Crone: a figure of revenge and healing in the writing of a life’. The Crone is a persona who appears in my autobiographical novel; she works at night to restore a moist living cover to the ravaged Hay plains where I lived as a child. She figures the life writer’s desire to create, from the devastated landscape of her childhood and first marriage, a liveable terrain, one that bears the scars of the past but nourishes new life and different ways of becoming. As such, she is interpreted in Deleuzian terms as a refrain, embodying a recurring rhythmic pattern of movements that create a circle within which is a safe place to be, a haven from the forces of chaos that press on it. As writer-sorcerer creating the Crone, I engage in the coupling of two orders that all art and nature enact, folding and unfolding, contracting and dilating, in the flow of movement between the plane of chaos and infinite creation and the plane of organisation and stability.

In Chapter six, I continue my argument that life writing is a creative, future-oriented production that changes the subject; in recreating the past, we change the present, we become worthy of what happens to us, and in ‘becoming the offspring of our own events’, in affirming and releasing them, we enable a different future to emerge. I apply Deleuzian concepts of desire and becoming and of the subject as a piece of origami that can be unfolded and refolded to explore some episodes in my life story and show how the narration of selfhood in formal and informal autobiographical acts is a transformative process. One episode is from childhood, illustrating the formative influences of culture and family on the child’s imaginative, cognitive and emotional life. Another episode from my recent past explores the dialogic process of gossip in the workplace, and how it works to unfold and refold, deterritorialise and reterritorialise the subject along rhizomatic lines of desire that subvert hierarchical lines of control. The last episode takes up again the themes of the Eternal Return and becoming worthy of the

event; it narrates how the past has returned to haunt me and one of my children, and how she and I managed to survive that challenge and escape the black hole of self-destruction and destruction of others, to have one more birth.

In my concluding chapter, I revisit the main Deleuzian concepts that have formed the theoretical strand of this braided thesis, and review how they have illuminated the nomadic quest for the desiring female self in my own and other women's life writing.

Beyond dualism: the one and the multiple, or unity and difference

Deleuzian philosophy offers 'an alternative to the world of the subject and the object'^{xxx} in combining the empirical (knowledge based on experience through the five senses) and the transcendental (belief in the existence of things that transcend sense experience).^{xxxi}

Deleuze explains that a transcendental field:

can be distinguished from experience in that it doesn't refer to an object or belong to a subject (empirical representation). It appears therefore as a pure stream of a subjective consciousness, a pre-reflexive impersonal consciousness, a qualitative duration of consciousness without a self.^{xxxii}

The transcendental field is actualised in things, lived experiences, subjects and objects; the two fields or planes, the immanent/transcendental and the actual/empirical, are different but are coexistent, interactive and immanent to each other. This complex concept will be explored further in Chapter one.

Scholars have wrestled with Deleuze's ontology, though Todd May suggests that it is a moot point among Deleuze scholars whether Deleuze 'has' an ontology, or whether an epistemic commitment to any of his ontological posits can be extracted from his singular and jointly-authored works, and he quotes Rajchman's opinion that his work is more experimental than ontological.^{xxxiii} I am not a philosopher and not qualified to sift and weigh their arguments, but I have a nomadic, intuitive preference for the interpretation put forward by May, Patton, Rajchman and others, which I will summarise here.

The central tenet of Deleuzian experimental ontology is that a plane of immanence has no source beyond, beneath or outside it that can be considered its hidden unifying and ordering principle; it eschews the 'illusion of transcendence' as May puts

it.^{xxxiv} Following Spinoza, Deleuze's concept of the univocity of being implies that rather than a principle of sameness underlying everything, there is difference. Univocity 'is the surface that intertwines difference and unity'.^{xxxv} Alain Badiou, in *Deleuze: the clamor of being*, argues that Deleuze privileges univocity, and that the price paid for maintaining this thesis is that the multiple contained in the univocal 'can only be that of the order of simulacra'.^{xxxvi} He qualifies this by pointing out that Deleuze rejects the Platonic view of simulacra as inferior, mere copies of the original: 'on the contrary, it is necessary to affirm the rights of simulacra as *so many equivocal cases of univocity* that joyously attest to the univocal power of Being' (emphasis in original).^{xxxvii} In the Deleuzian universe, all beings are simulacra, the difference between them is formal, and all affirm the power of the One.^{xxxviii} Badiou goes on to accuse Deleuze of dualism in the concept of 'univocal integrity of Being' and its occurrence in separate beings, in the formal opposition of the active and the passive, the virtual and the actual, and all their manifestations.^{xxxix} However, he concludes that in Deleuze's struggle with duality, he attempts to escape it in his insistence that '[n]either active nor passive, univocal being is neutral'.^{xl} It seems to me that there is only apparent contradiction in what Badiou calls Deleuze's 'nomadic subversion' of formal dualism, and that the opposition of active and passive is an illusion of our situated and limited perspectives; that Deleuze's ontology, in this respect, is close to the Eastern philosophy of yin and yang, summarised by Liza Dalby as the two sides of everything, the complementary essences that regulate the flow of life, dynamically different, alternating in their movement, briefly balanced, equalised and neutral at the spring and fall equinoxes.^{xli} Deleuze himself draws this connection in his Seminar of 26 March, 1973: he refers to a book on Taoism, *Sexual life in ancient China*, which recounts a different story of desire than the Western one. The experience of desire is not related to lack, but is pure process, a flow of female and male energy, yin and yang.

'In the end we are all Chinese [Desire] is conceived as the production of a flow, it defines a field of immanence ... that means a multiplicity [Desire constitutes its own] field of immanence, that is ... [it constitutes] the multiplicities that populate it. But all this is perhaps obscure, a monistic field is indeed a field inhabited by multiplicities'.^{xlii}

Questioned on this, Deleuze goes on to refute the false monism of Descartes, Hegel and Lacan, that defines dualism by employing the one and the multiple as adjectives, and offers a substitution of substantive multiplicities: ‘everything is multiplicities’.^{xliii}

May, in his review of Badiou’s critique of Deleuze, suggests that Badiou may be conflating univocity with identity, a move which would privilege the transcendent, but which Deleuze rejects, and that Deleuze opens up ‘the possibility of a virtuality that is as multiplicitous as the actualities that emerge from it’.^{xliiv} May goes on to argue that John Rajchman has given a more proper reading of Deleuzian ontology, in his *The Deleuze connections*, by placing multiplicity rather than univocity at the core of Deleuze’s thought; Deleuzian univocity is one of difference, whereby immanence and multiplicity are co-existent.^{xliv} May goes on to review Paul Patton’s book, *Deleuze and the political*; he sees Patton as offering an interpretation of Deleuze’s way of thinking and acting that springs from multiplicity, a way of conceptualising how the subject can change or transform, in other words, become:

[a] becoming is not a state of being but a transformation, a movement between things.... A becoming ... [is] a disruption of current understandings and ways of being in the name of ... the singular, the vital, and the multiple.^{xlvi}

I suggest that Deleuze’s ontology is shifting, elusive and ambiguous because of this emphasis on becoming rather than being, on change rather than stasis. Patton, according to May, helps us to see the continuity between Deleuze’s political and ontological thinking, his emphasis on the disruption of stasis and identity by fluidity and difference. My interest in this thesis is in becoming, in the focus on change and transformation in the subject, rather than in the analysis of the conditions that have created and fixed me as subject.

Félix Guattari, in *Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm*, approaches the problem of being from a pragmatic point of view:

Being is like an imprisonment which blinds us to the richness and multivalence of Universes of value which, nevertheless, proliferate under our noses. There is an ethical choice in favour of the richness of the possible, an ethics and politics of the virtual that decorporealises and deterritorialises contingency, linear causality and the pressure of circumstances and significations which besiege it.^{xlvii}

Guattari counters dualism with the concept of ontological intensity, which calls on the subject to engage with the heterogeneous factors that subjectify, to see subjectivity as ‘an illusory artefact’ emerging from the domain of virtual intensities;^{xlviii} it is access to this domain, I believe, that allows creative production of the self. It is a small shift that is needed, a shift from the territory of constraint, of limit, of measurement, to the chaotic zone of infinite speed, of indescribable and unmeasurable diversity in unity.^{xlix} We cannot live in that zone, but we can touch it in our thinking, imagining, desiring, and become different.

I find the Deleuzian concept of desire liberating because it is positive, productive, nondualistic and non-anthropocentric. It challenges the Platonic paradigm of desire as the drive to acquire what we lack, the real object we can only fantasise about, and the psychoanalytic reduction of desire to the Oedipal triangle. As a Western woman born in the mid-twentieth century, I find the syncretic philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari to be the most relevant, multi-faceted and inclusive for my project, because it combines a nondualistic concept of being with a pragmatic, affirmative and emancipatory concept of desire. Deleuzian desire seeks, not to escape from or transcend the world of sensory experience, nor to transform it, but to use the given of the material world to live more intensely and joyfully. To live the ordinary life in a non-ordinary way, to move like a camouflaged fish across bodies of sand, rock, weeds, blending in with them, but always moving on, becoming-different, never becoming fixed in one mode of being. To always see, like a transparency over the solid and substantial world of our existence, the immanent other world of becoming.

My purpose is to rewrite the desiring self from a woman’s point of view. I make this choice recognising that the use of dualistic language to talk about nondualistic being is a translation, and when we translate, we always lose shades of meaning. Nevertheless, unless we translate, we cannot communicate, except in nonverbal ways. Since my project is about women’s writing, I must use translated texts, and I must translate the texts I use.

My desire is the time machine that carries me back to my personal and family herstory and the stories of other desiring women, in order to illuminate the different ways in which women’s desires have survived and endured phallogocentric attempts to

contain and extinguish them. Out of the thick and elastic present of *aeon* time, the potentiality of the future erupts; it is not shaped simply by repetition and causality, but by ‘the indeterminate, the unfolding and the emergence of the new.’¹ The desiring self can become different through revivifying the past in the present, thereby opening up the future to change.

Chapter one: a rough guide to a Deleuzian philosophy of desire

This chapter will explain how some of the concepts of Deleuze and Guattari have opened up new ways of thinking about desire and the self. I will explore the meaning of some basic terms like being, becoming, immanence, difference, as well as some more idiosyncratic and abstruse concepts like assemblages, univocity, multiplicity, simulacra, abstract machines, Body without Organs, rhizomatics, molar and molecular lines, lines of flight and haecceities. I will touch on Deleuze's application of the aesthetic figures of origami and the baroque fold, which are central to my project of rewriting the desiring self. I will argue that these terms are tools in a creative toolbox that can inspire ways of thinking desire differently and of becoming a desiring woman that are not determined by the dualistic and hierarchical paradigms of patriarchy.

My interpretations are personal and experimental. To treat the opus of Deleuze and Guattari as a toolbox is in keeping with the spirit in which they wrote. The translator of *A thousand plateaus*, Brian Massumi, invites the reader to treat the book in this way:

The question is not: is it true? but: does it work? What new thoughts does it make it possible to think? What new emotions does it make it possible to feel? What new sensations and perceptions does it open in the body?^{li}

It is refreshing to be reminded that a body of philosophy can be transformative and can open the individual up to new experiences on all levels of being — cognitive, emotional, physical and, I would add, spiritual. My aim for this thesis is to explore how Deleuzian philosophy can change our ways of thinking, feeling, perceiving and imagining desire and the self. My challenge is to write this exploration, this mapping of desire, in a form that engages, not with the orders of representation and subjectification that have dominated Western thought, but with the smooth space that is the intersection of the plane of immanence, or desire, and the plane of organised forms. Of course it is impossible to map desire differently without some consideration of dominant forms of thought; but I will endeavour, as Deleuze and Guattari advocate, to use this cultural load:

actively, for forgetting instead of remembering, for underdevelopment instead of progress toward development, in nomadism rather than sedentarity, to make a map instead of a tracing.^{lii}

Being, becoming and desire

Desire, says Deleuze, is simple, like walking, sleeping, listening to music, making music or writing, spring, winter, old age, death. ‘Desire never needs interpreting, it is it which experiments.’^{liiii} Being is ‘full positivity and pure affirmation.’^{liv} It is the effect of a universal becoming.^{lv} Desire *is* becoming, which creates being. He describes a simple process of creation, which, as we shall see, covers a complex conceptual field.

Michael Hardt reads Deleuze’s oeuvre, including his collaborative writings with Félix Guattari, as a radical politico-philosophical project to construct ‘a positive theory of ethics and social organization.’^{lvi} Society is created on the plane of organisation or being, which is an ethical sphere. Hardt points out that, in Deleuze’s early work, the Deleuzian project takes the form of a critique of Hegelianism with its negative dialectic.^{lvii} As Judith Butler puts it:

[in] different but related ways, Deleuze and Foucault challenged the formulation of desire in terms of negativity, arguing that not negation, but *affirmation* characterizes primary human longings, and that recognition of this fact will depose the Hegelian subject once and for all.^{lviii}

Butler casts doubt on whether Deleuze is successful in his project, arguing that his postulation of desire as an immanent experience of the Absolute ties him to the Hegelian dream of returning to the lost unity of Being.^{lix}

Hardt’s study of Deleuze traces the evolution of his thought, emphasising that Deleuze’s reading of the philosophers who influenced his thought — Bergson, Nietzsche and Spinoza being the main ones — is selective, and follows an evolutionary course. Hardt warns against conflating Deleuze’s positions with those of the philosophers he drew on, and confusing ‘the different projects that guide his various works.’^{lx} Paul Patton says that *A thousand plateaus* is ‘an ethico-political discourse which provides a positive response to the theoretical and practical conditions of modernity.’^{lxi} Ian Buchanan, reflecting on what a Deleuzian or transcendental empiricist cultural studies would look like, concludes that freedom can be achieved to the extent that active forces transmute reactive ones, and this is

done through ‘the appropriation of the given of everyday life and henceforth living it according to one’s own desires.’^{lxii} Brian Massumi counsels:

The best way of all to approach the book [*A thousand plateaus*] is to read it as a challenge: to pry open the vacant spaces that would enable you to build your life and those of the people around you into a plateau of intensity that would leave afterimages of its dynamism that could be reinjected into still other lives, creating a fabric of heightened states between which any number, the greatest number, of connecting routes would exist. Some might call that promiscuous. Deleuze and Guattari would call it revolution.^{lxiii}

Peter Hallward may have fallen into the trap cautioned against by Hardt when he claims to go ‘right to the heart of Deleuze’s philosophy ... to isolate and make sense of the main idea that informs virtually all his work.’^{lxiv} He states that Deleuze is misread if we see his philosophy as materialist, and that it is best read as spiritual and redemptive. Being is creativity, and the main task of thinking creatures is to learn how to think, and thereby escape from created material being.^{lxv} So we have a paradox. We come into this world as creatural beings, but we need to escape from our material existence, our being. But what is it that we seek to escape *to*? And is Hallward overstating the case for Deleuze’s mystical, pantheistic side to the neglect of his pragmatic politics of desire? In other words, can we live in a Deleuzian world as desiring creatures without constantly seeking to escape from our very created beings? On first reading, I found Hallward’s book persuasive, but I was a little puzzled as to why there seem to be so many different interpretations of Deleuzian philosophy, and why it seems so difficult to grasp a philosophy for living in this world from the writings of one who lived and wrote so passionately and thought so deeply about the nature of existence and the purpose of life. I have come to think, after returning to some of Deleuze’s more translucent writings, and some interpretive readings of his and Guattari’s philosophy, that we misinterpret their conception of being if we read them as consistently advocating either that we need to escape from existence or that we need to transform it. Together and separately, they offer no recipe or formula for being, just a rough guide to reality as they saw it, a toolbox on which a nomadic traveller can draw to make a way through the constantly shifting terrain. It is not irrelevant that Deleuze committed suicide when he was old and ill. I wonder whether it was his final line of flight from an existence that had become too painful for

him to live joyfully, affirmatively and creatively. I like to think his death was an affirmative act, chosen, as he puts it, in ‘a love of life which can yes to death.’^{lxvi}

To return to the nature of being, Deleuze’s project was to map a radical ontology that is ethical and enables us to think creatively. To think, he says with Guattari, ‘is always to follow the witch’s flight.’^{lxvii} Hallward glosses this to mean that the main task facing thinking creatures is to learn how to think, and thereby escape from created material being. ‘Deleuze’s philosophy is oriented by lines of flight that lead out of the world; though not other-worldly, it is extra-worldly.’^{lxviii} If it were other-worldly, it would acknowledge a transcendental reality, a God of some sort. It is, Hallward argues, ‘consistent with the logic of a cosmic pantheism, i.e. the notion that the universe and all it contains is a facet of a singular and absolute creative power.’^{lxix} He traces Deleuze’s line of thinking back through Bergson and Spinoza to Plotinus, and compares it with the thought of the Sufi philosopher ibn al-Arabi. This singular principle of radical creativity involves a *creator* who is unknowable and uncreated, *creatings* or expressions of the creator, and *creatures* (material forms of creations) as well as a virtual state to which the creative returns.^{lxx} The term ‘virtual’ will be explored in more detail below, but briefly, I take it to refer to the creative power of the plane of immanence. Creation is immanent, not transcendent, that is, the whole of being is saturated by creation without any remainder.^{lxxi} Deleuze uses the paradoxical term, transcendental empiricism, to express this principle, in his last published work, *Pure immanence*.

While Hallward emphasises one pole of being — the extra-worldliness of Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts of immanence and transcendental empiricism — other commentators insist that transcendental empiricism is a concept that allows us to think about being as impersonal individuation that is grounded in the materiality of living. John Rajchman expands on Deleuze’s concept of transcendental empiricism as *a life*, that is not characterised by consciousness, memory and personal identity, but unfolds according to ‘the logic of impersonal individuation.’^{lxxii} In contrast to the Lockian conception of the self as defined by individual ownership and sameness over time, “‘*a life*’ is a potential or virtuality subsisting in a purely immanent plane.”^{lxxiii} Deleuze explains that a transcendental field:

can be distinguished from experience in that it doesn't refer to an object or belong to a subject (empirical representation). It appears therefore as a pure stream of a subjective consciousness, a pre-reflexive impersonal consciousness, a qualitative duration of consciousness without a self.^{lxxiv}

By 'impersonal' here, Deleuze is describing a plane of reality that is different from the experiential.

Consciousness without a self? We are on what seems to be transcendental ground here, the field of a universal creative consciousness that is undetermined and unlimited by culture and time, but I think we need to resist splitting the two terms of conjoined reality, transcendental empiricism. Being is transcendental in that it is the flow of *a life*, on the immanent or virtual plane, and it is empirical in that it is actualised in the lived experiences of subjects and objects. Deleuze does not deny the reality of subjects and objects, but he sees this reality as conditional upon the immanent and virtual reality prior to and yet fully expressed in material being. Consciousness is expressed 'only when it is reflected in a subject that refers it to objects.'^{lxxv} As I read it, this means, not that there is a universal consciousness above or beyond the material world, but that the pure stream of impersonal consciousness flows throughout and is fully expressed in created reality. There do appear to be some shifts between the two planes of reality in the thinker's perspective in the texts I have read, and sometimes the point of view slips into the language of personal agency and subjectivity, but more often, it emphasises the impersonal world of physical life and the virtual plane of events, flows and intensities. My own conditioning is to think in terms of the personal, and though I accept that the self is 'a *habitus*, a habit, nothing but a habit in a field of immanence, the habit of saying I', I live within that habit.^{lxxvi} I am so trained in thinking dualistically that it is a tight-rope act for me to think in transcendental empiricist terms. And yet, although my feet slip from time to time, I find it liberating to 'walk the line' between the two planes, moving between them, using concepts and aesthetic personae to gain agency, to create new ways of being in the material world. At the same time, this transcendence of the given is not, in Deleuzian terms, a personal experience; it is a becoming-other in which, though something or someone remains what it is, it also becomes different. It is not an imitation, or an act of conformity, says Deleuze; nor is it a journey, or an exchange of terms:

The question ‘what are you becoming?’ is particularly stupid. For as someone becomes, what he is becoming changes as much as he does himself. Becomings are not phenomena of imitation or assimilation, but of a double capture, of non-parallel evolution, of nuptials between two reigns.... The wasp and the orchid provide the example. The orchid seems to form a wasp image, but in fact there is a wasp-becoming of the orchid, or an orchid-becoming of the wasp, a double capture since ‘what’ each becomes changes no less than ‘that which’ becomes. The wasp becomes part of the orchid’s reproductive apparatus at the same time as the orchid becomes the sexual organ of the wasp.^{lxxvii}

In Chapter five I will explore how the figure of a Crone, who appears in the dream landscape of a memoir that narrates a period of my life when I had an emotional and physical breakdown, is a becoming that personifies the desire of the earth and of the wounded psyche of the narrator for healing; in the double capture of the earth and its vegetative life and the Crone who works to heal the earth, the watching woman, the narrator, is caught up and begins a transformative process that brings change and opens the threshold to a new life.

Ian Buchanan stresses the paradoxical nature of existence in an environment that both produces a subject and is produced or willed by that subject. The fundamental ethical question he sees Deleuze as seeking to answer is: how can this paradox be reconciled?^{lxxviii} A transcendent subject, he explains, ‘cannot be effected by the society it inhabits,’ whereas a subject who is given is constituted by forces external to itself, and cannot have an effect on the social order.^{lxxix} How can a subject transcend the given and attain agency? Deleuze’s answer, argues Buchanan, is that the subject does this by counter-actualisation, that is, through thinking; the passively formed subject becomes active through the practices of everyday life.^{lxxx} So, a thinking subject can transcend the empirical field of existence in daily life and access the plane of immanence; this is creativity. The emphasis here is different from Hallward’s interpretation of the Deleuzian position as saying that the purpose of thought is to escape from created material being. Buchanan’s gloss on Deleuze is close to Michel de Certeau’s description of the ordinary hero who ‘escapes without leaving’ the forces of commerce, politics and culture, through the practice of everyday life.^{lxxxi} A Deleuzian line of flight seems to offer a greater degree of agency than a de Certeauian escape, in that it suggests a more active power; de Certeau’s focus is on the way ordinary people consume or use the

culture imposed by the *élite*, whereas Deleuze's focus is on the creative power of thought that breaks free from organised forms.

Todd May, glossing Deleuze's seminal and difficult text *Difference and repetition*, points out that a plane of immanence has no source beneath or beyond it that can be considered its hidden principle. The illusion of transcendence, the idea that there is some unifying principle, or set of principles, 'outside the planes on which discourse — and other practices — take place that gives them their order and their sense, and that the task of philosophy is to discover that principle or that set of principles' is the primary illusion of philosophy.^{lxxxii} May explains that Deleuze, in conceptualising philosophy as the practice of difference, relies on Spinoza's concept of the univocity of being; this implies 'not that everything is the same, or that there is a principle of the same underlying everything, but instead, precisely the opposite. With univocity comes difference, difference for the first time taken seriously in itself.'^{lxxxiii}

Dianne Currier proposes that Deleuze and Guattari's theory of difference is a more viable way of rethinking experience from a woman's point of view than is Donna Haraway's concept of the cyborg.^{lxxxiv} The latter, in its theorisation of the intersection of bodies and technologies in the fabrication of the cyborg, 'fails to break convincingly with the logic of identity, expressed through binary oppositions, which underpins the western model of subjectivity.'^{lxxxv} Currier explains that there are two kinds of difference; one is a difference of degree of divergence from an original unity; the other, the Deleuzian difference, is one of kind, where multiplicities are 'different in themselves, rather than being different from.'^{lxxxvi} Such multiplicities, in contrast to the homogeneous and discontinuous nature of the One and the multiple, are heterogeneous and continuous. This explains why assemblages composed of different elements, while they are individuated and may be stable for a time, are not essentially so; with each new connection, their individuation changes, a new assemblage is formed.^{lxxxvii}

Univocity is the surface that intertwines difference and unity. It does not mean that there is a shared transcendent sameness of the heterogeneous elements of an assemblage, but that they share an ontological status, *without hierarchy of degree in relation to the One or the same* (my emphasis).^{lxxxviii} This is the radical ontology of Deleuze's theory of difference and becoming. Identity is thus established, not by

differences between things and their degree of difference from the One, not by what they *are*, but by what they *do*, by events rather than essences.^{lxxxix} Identity is not excluded from the assemblage, but it is a by-product rather than a formative principle, the product of historical circumstance, which is shaped by the matrices of power and knowledge.^{xc} Currier argues that the Deleuzian concept of difference and multiplicity moves away from global concepts such as Man and Woman to fragmented and local actualisations of masculinity and femininity. Within these assemblages power is distributed. Feminist readings, rather than assuming that power operates exclusively through the masculine, need to discern how forms and functions of the masculine and the feminine are articulated in association with technologies in these assemblages.

Within any assemblage, the relations between bodies, technologies, discourses, regimes of signs and power relations intersect in a manner in which no one term functions as determinant and in which the autonomous specific status of each, as different, in and of themselves, can be accounted for. Dominant relations of power/knowledge are never stable or eternal and as functional elements of an assemblage, they are open to becoming otherwise in shifting fields of connection.^{xc}

Individuals and collectives of individuals can have a role in impacting on the formulation of these assemblages, though change is unpredictable and the outcome undetermined. Different forms of exclusion and oppression are as possible as liberating ones; we cannot hold to notions of utopia, revolution and progress. Nevertheless, no assemblage is fixed or eternal, and thinking creatively makes it possible to experiment and become different.^{xcii}

May comments that, although Deleuze's antitranscendentalism requires a rejection of the primacy of difference as well as unity, there is a tension in his work, a temptation to privilege difference.^{xciii} In *Difference and repetition*, Deleuze indicates that this privileging is in reaction to the Platonic subjection of difference to the idea of the Same which has dominated Western philosophy. Platonism has sought to exorcise the freedom and anarchy of simulacra.^{xciv} Simulacra are systems which are united only by 'an informal chaos in which they are all included'; there are no privileged positions, no models or copies, no oppositions or analogy.^{xcv} Simulacra are positive, in excess, dynamic, intensive and clothed in masks, displacements and disguises. Faithfulness to the Platonic original in a hierarchical system is rejected in favour of singularity and

coexistence.^{xcvi} I find the concept of masking particularly interesting for my reading of the literature of women's desire, and will explore the implications of the philosophy of difference and repetition in the world of Heian court women.

If the plane of immanence always already exists, and subjectivity is formed within the plane of organisation, Deleuze contends that the immanent plane can be accessed, and creativity can be freed (at least provisionally and temporarily) from the constraints of culture, which in turn can be changed by the connective movement of desire.^{xcvii} Hallward's interpretation would have it that creative freedom can only be gained by escaping from the created world. I think that the truth is more complex, and Deleuze's project has managed to trace a way across difficult terrain, a way of becoming into being in the material world. I will explore this terrain, which Deleuze and Guattari call '[n]omad space [which is] "smooth" or open-ended', unlike the "'striated" or gridded' space of the State.^{xcviii} By this, they mean that 'the plane is populated or occupied (like a desert) by concepts that do not measure or divide it, while the plane holds them together'.^{xcix} I will seek to trace a way that moves between the plane of free-moving creative desire and the plane of daily life, with all the organised forms and restrictions we are subject to.

Behind the fiction of selfhood, which is sustained by habit, is the immanent plane of *a life*, which is 'everywhere, in all the moments that a given living subject goes through and that are measured by given lived objects.'^c *A life* is on the virtual plane of events and singularities, while the subject lives on the actual plane of things in which the immanent event is made to happen.^{ci} The logic of the immanent plane is a connective one, 'an AND prior to and irreducible to the IS of predications'.^{cii} This connective logic is the mechanism of the creative force that produces multiplicity, which, as Elizabeth Grosz explains, is not 'a pluralized notion of identity ... but is rather an ever-changing, non-totalizable collectivity, an assemblage defined ... through its capacity to undergo permutations or transformations, that is, its dimensionality'.^{ciii} Assemblages (which, in their earlier work, Deleuze and Guattari called 'desiring machines') are made up of experimental and temporary connections.^{civ} This is a philosophy of difference 'irreducible to the concepts of identity and representation', for which Deleuze found the inspiration in Nietzsche.^{cv} We, and all forms of matter, are assemblages constantly

forming new connections and transformations. Assemblages are produced in the strata or thickenings of matter; they are territorial, and are doubly articulated, with two axes: the one belonging to the stratum, with its regime of signs and pragmatic system of actions and passions, the other oriented to other territories, drawn along lines of flight to make connections with other assemblages.^{cv} There are two poles, one of stability and organisation, one of change and transmutation.

The paradox of life, according to Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Nietzsche, is that we cannot know anything by thinking about it without first creating the concepts with which we think it.^{cvii} Concepts are not simple or self-sufficient. Every concept is complex and is created from something, and concepts 'extend to infinity'.^{cviii} Concepts are 'throws of the dice' that exist on a philosophical plane that is a 'plane of immanence of concepts'; but they do not lose their singularity or become universal, which would mean that the plane 'would also lose its openness.'^{cix} They are multiple waves that are rolled up and unrolled by a single wave, the plane of immanence. Another image Deleuze and Guattari use is that concepts are the archipelago or skeletal frame, and the plane is the breath that infuses it.^{cx} Or, to use the terms that they favour in *A thousand plateaus*, they are concrete assemblages, and 'the plane is the abstract machine of which these assemblages are the working parts.'^{cx} Does this mean we create our own universe? Or are we created by it? Or is it both? Can we transcend the given by thinking creatively?

The implications of immanence and creative thinking are extensive in Deleuze's ontology, and I will tease them out further in the following passages. Here I want to explore further the concept of becoming, which Deleuze adopted from Spinoza and Nietzsche, and which he and Guattari made the centre of their major collaborative works, *Anti-Oedipus* and *A thousand plateaus*, components of a philosophical assemblage. Put simply, being is the effect of becoming.^{cxii} On a first reading, the plane of creation appears to be above, outside, before, the plane of existence. A closer reading, however, suggests that the planes coexist and intermingle, though, as we have seen, the text usually describes the plane of immanence as prior to the plane of organised forms. I have not found an explanation of this paradox, and, for the purposes of this reading, will

accept that it is so, without being separate from the given. As Hallward explains the creative process,

Deleuze equates being with unlimited creativity. This means that all actual beings exist as facets of a single, productive energy or force. An infinitely creative force expresses itself through an infinitely differentiated creation.^{cxiii}

There is not before and after, cause and effect, but a continuous process of creation which moves from the chaos of which the plane of immanence is composed to the organised forms of created life, which in turn, construct the plane of immanence.

In this account of being and becoming, as we have seen, reality has two planes, an actual plane of organisation, where forms are developed and subjects formed, and a virtual one of consistence or immanence, which is made up of ‘only relations of movement and rest, of speed and slowness, however unformed, or relatively unformed, elements, molecules or particles borne away by fluxes’.^{cxiv} Here there are not subjects, but ‘haecceities’, which is glossed by the translators of *Dialogues* as a term derived from Duns Scotus and given the specific meaning by Deleuze of ‘an individuation which is not that of an object, nor of a person, but rather of an event (wind, river, day or even hour of the day)’.^{cxv} Events or haecceities are ‘degrees of power which combine, to which correspond a power to affect and be affected, active or passive affects, intensities’; these are expressed in indefinite articles and pronouns, ‘proper names which do not designate people but mark events’, infinitive verbs; in other words, in becomings.^{cxvi} It is a plane of process, a plane of immanence, a plane of desire. ‘It is all that, it is all this plane which has only one name — desire — and which has absolutely nothing to do with lack or with the “law”’.^{cxvii} Deleuze credits Spinoza with this conception ‘in opposition to the supporters of order and law, philosophers or theologians.’^{cxviii}

Despite saying that desire is simple, Deleuze resists the interpretation that if desire is not governed by law and lack, it must be natural, spontaneous reality. ‘We say quite the opposite: *desire only exists when assembled or machined*’ (emphasis in original).^{cxix} We, as subjects on the plane of organisation, have access to the plane of immanence; indeed, he suggests, we construct it as we live our lives.^{cxx} Again, we are on slippery ground here. Elsewhere, we are told that the virtual is prior to the actual plane

on which the subject lives. This is the paradox of transcendental empiricism. The plane of immanence is prior, and is ‘a section of chaos’, and it is from this flux that we construct the plane of organised forms; at the same time, in so doing, on the plane of immanence, we construct desire, we construct what Deleuze and Guattari call our ‘Body without Organs’, a concept I will explore below. Desire is an active process, and must be created as we live it. ‘In retrospect every assemblage expresses and creates a desire by constructing the plane which makes it possible and, by making it possible, brings it about’.^{cxxi} Although we construct desire as we live it, desire does not come from within, it comes from the Outside of immanent creativity. Thus we see the paradox of transcendental empiricism in action, producing both created forms and the plane of creative events from which they emerge. We create the very concepts with which we think desire. Thus do we transcend the given, by creating it. We transcend the given because the concepts with which we create it and think it extend to infinity on the plane of immanence. They are not limited by the law of lack. Organised forms of subjectivity ‘subjugate ... [desire] to law and introduce lack into it’.^{cxxii} Assemblages of desire are constructed from ‘*continuations of intensities, combinations of fluxes, emissions of particles* at various speeds’ (emphasis in original).^{cxxiii}

Intensities, flows, fluxes, emissions of particles: this is the discourse of physics, as some commentators have pointed out. Manuel deLanda argues that the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari need to be more systematically connected to current scientific theories and data.^{cxxiv} John Mullarkey, however, cautions that Deleuze and Guattari’s materialism is not reductive, and that they do not believe that everything, including the human, ‘is reducible to the scientific and materialist view of the natural realm’.^{cxxv} Mullarkey sees a tension in Deleuzian thought between vitalism and materialism, that is only resolved when Deleuze returns to Leibniz and the concept of the fold. Patton points out that the vitalism of Deleuze and Guattari’s ethical project of constructing an ontology of becoming is different from all previous vitalistic philosophies since it privileges abstract, non-organic life ‘that can be found in metal-work, film or a piece of music’; its ethical principle is aesthetic.^{cxxvi} Timothy S. Murphy explains that a haecceity, not a particle or a subject, is the basic unit of quantum mechanics and Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy. Energy and matter, time and space, are produced in the same

way; the mechanics of becoming, in which singularities are folded into assemblages, is a convergence that produces events, subjects. The subject is ‘a surface effect of the interaction of series or fields’; it is ‘a complex fold in the infinite surface of times and spaces that, like origami, can be unfolded and refolded into different shapes.’^{cxxvii} The figure of origami is used by Deleuze to express what he reads as Leibniz’s model of the universe: ‘[t]he model for the sciences of matter is the “origami,” as the Japanese philosopher might say, or the art of folding paper.’^{cxxviii}

I find the image of the subject as a piece of origami powerful and poetic, in its suggestion of a created, artificial assemblage of desire that can be unfolded and refolded. This image appeals to me because it links in with the artificial world of Heian courtly desire and the literature that celebrates it. Women can be seen as paper folded and refolded in shapes pleasing to the origami-maker. Yet this implies that women have no agency in the process. To some extent, this may be true of medieval court women living in a polygamous hierarchical society. Yet the literature of these women shows that they took an active part in the creation of aesthetic figures of desire in their literature and other art forms and in their practice of daily life, while conforming to the ethical and aesthetic codes of the court. They were, to an extent that is unusual in patriarchal societies, the makers of their own origami. The trick is to learn how to unfold and refold ourselves, to turn a passive experience into an active process. I shall explore in Chapter two the possibilities of interpreting Heian literature through the style of the baroque, which, as Tom Conley argues, can be seen, not as a capitalised period with a genealogical structure, but as a lower-case style found in diverse environments and periods of time.^{cxxix} For now, it is relevant to say that the central trope of the baroque is the fold, which can be seen in draperies, dermal surfaces of the body, domestic architecture, the novel, harmonics, philosophies, painting, and more. Deleuze says that ‘the Baroque fold unfurls all the way to infinity’; he compares the two levels of baroque construction, matter and the soul, with a labyrinth, in which the upper level, the soul, has no windows, and there is communication between ‘the pleats of matter and the folds in the soul’.^{cxxx} The infinite fold, which exists on the plane of immanence,

separates or moves between matter and soul. Because it is a virtuality that never stops dividing itself, the line of inflection is actualized in the soul but realized in matter, each one on its own side.^{cxxxix}

The concept of being and becoming as infinite folding links to the concept of assemblages of desire. Deleuze gives courtly love as an example of such assemblages; the postponement of pleasure or of the ending of coitus constructs a field of immanence which is without lack and uninterrupted by discharge; this is not a natural process, it is sustained by artifice and ascesis, and its assemblage is made possible by the coming together of two fluxes, that of the warrior and that of the erotic, such that valour becomes internal to love, and love includes the test.^{cxxxix} Desire, in this universe, is always in excess, always baroque in its form. In Chapter two I explore the assemblage of desire in the culture of masked and hidden femininity in Heian Japan. Like courtly love, it is a highly wrought, artificial, disciplined construction of the plane of desire.

As well as describing existence in terms of planes, Deleuze and Guattari tell us that individuals and groups are made up of three different kinds of lines. The first is molar (tracing a contour or border) and segmentary, binary, circular, arborescent, hierarchical in disposition and movement.^{cxxxix} Examples are an individual's family, profession, job, and social institutions such as school, army, factory. The second type of line is molecular (more fluid) and rhizomatic; rather than the line tracing a contour, it passes between things, and constitutes multiplicities which are anomalous and nomadic, 'multiplicities of becoming, or transformational multiplicities, not countable elements and ordered relations; fuzzy, not exact aggregates, etc'.^{cxxxix} These two types of line, though distinct, are immanent to each other, 'each "issuing" from the other after its fashion'; so stems of the rhizome take leave of the trees, masses and flows escape and form connections with others, 'uprooting the trees', perturbing the territory with deep movements; there is equally a constant process of rhizome lines being caught, segmented and stratified by tree lines, and 'lines of flight or rupture that carry them away'.^{cxxxix} The third kind of lines that make up existence are lines of flight, or escape from the strata. Though these are lines of creation, they can also become lines of destruction.^{cxxxix} To describe the criss-crossing and intermingling of lines of being, Deleuze uses the example of a profession, which is 'a rigid segment', but beneath it are connections, attractions and repulsions which are hidden from sight yet related to the

public form; then there are the lines of flight, that carry individuals away from the two others.^{cxxxvii} So, for instance, a young nurse I knew when I was doing my mental health training formed a relationship with the middle-aged charge nurse of the drug and alcohol unit; they went to India together and joined a sect. Their line of flight from the nursing profession and marriage (in the charge nurse's case) detached them from one set of territories or molar lines and eventually connected them with another, where they reterritorialised.^{cxxxviii}

The two types of trajectory, molar and molecular, are multiple lines which enclose (and presumably criss-cross) the planes they are constituted from, that is, the plane of organisation and the plane of consistency; lines of flight are the third force, which has in fact always been there, and the others are derived from it.^{cxxxix} I take this to mean that lines of flight are the central creative force that detaches creatures from organised forms and assemblages of desire, that 'blow apart strata, cut roots, and make new connections'.^{cxl} Does this mean that lines of flight simply happen to us, or that we can access them and use them creatively? This relates to Deleuze's adaptation of Spinoza's ethics. Hardt tells us that the central question posed by Spinoza is how to increase our power to exist and act, to *be* in the world.^{cxli} The short answer, for Deleuze as interpreted by Hardt, is to affirm or create being, to produce it; not just through speculation, but through joyful practice.^{cxlii} This needs to be done, suggests Hardt, by engaging in the constitution of a radical democracy, one that is 'open, horizontal, and collective', by forming social relationships that are joyful, adequate, and affirmative.^{cxliii}

To apply this socio-political program to the unfolding and refolding of women's desire, in Chapter two I explore the baroque forms taken by desire in the hierarchical polygamous society of mid-Heian Japan, suggesting that the intensity and intricacy of aesthetic and erotic life, reflected in dress and manners and the labyrinthine construction of the built environment, are in part a response to the restrictive codes of desire. Desire, when it is confined and repressed, traces rhizomatic routes of escape. In Heian culture, men and women engaged in different ways in the dance of folding, unfolding and refolding, the concealment or consolidation and disclosure or unravelling of hidden desires.

Women in some cultures in the twenty-first century have far more opportunities to create multiple connections with other desiring assemblages, and to live joyfully and affirmatively within democracies which, if not radical, are more open to difference and multiplicity than they have been in the past. Nevertheless, many still live in subjugated positions, and have little choice over how they live. Even in supposedly open democracies, the gap between self and other that develops in infancy continues to be a site of repression as well as creativity. I will use my own life story, in Chapter five, to show how the folding of female desire in the bourgeois society in which I grew up was limited and constrained by hierarchical patriarchal forces — to use a Deleuzian term, arborescent ones — into patterns that were not joyful, adequate or affirmative, and how my own efforts to unfold and refold the forms of desire led me into the destructive path that Deleuze and Guattari warn us of:

If you free it [the Body without Organs] with too violent an action, if you blow apart the strata without taking precautions, then instead of drawing the plane you will be killed, plunged into a black hole, or even dragged towards catastrophe.^{cxliv}

Desire, flowing through us along the lines of flight, is both creative and destructive, destroying sedentary and stratified forms in the process of creating new couplings with other creatures, to form new assemblages of matter. Deleuze stresses that the three types of line are immanent to each other, as are the planes. The plane of organisation arises from the plane of immanent consistence ‘and the latter dissolves the forms of the former.’^{cxlv} There is not a dualism between two kinds of things, but ‘a multiplicity of dimensions, of lines and directions in the heart of an assemblage.’^{cxlvi} They are mixed up, intersect with each other, the lines of desire and the lines of oppression, in the assemblages of desire.

In the radical ontology of transcendental empiricism, created forms are assemblages ‘of linear multiplicities with n dimensions having neither subject nor object, which can be laid out on a plane of consistency, and from which the One is always subtracted ($n - 1$).’^{cxlvii} The One and the many, the subject and the object are features of arborescent culture, where homogenous and continuous forms prevail. Rhizomorphic forms are heterogeneous and discontinuous, with a surface of univocity

interwining differences.^{cxlviii} However, there is not an opposition of the One and the multiple, the centred continuous arborescent system, and multiplicity, the decentred discontinuous rhizomorphous system. Deleuze and Guattari argue that the tree, with its rigid and stratifying structures, has dominated Western reality and thought, our bodies and our sexuality.^{cxlix} But there are despotic formations in rhizomes and anarchic deformations in trees; so it is not a matter of opposing models, but of the transcendent model of the tree being continuously subverted and overturned by the immanent model of the rhizome:

It is a question of a model that is perpetually in construction or collapsing, and of a process that is perpetually prolonging itself, breaking off and starting up again. No, this is not a new or different dualism.^{cl}

Lines of flight are the vectors of change. They are primary in a society, for rather than flying from the social, they ‘constitute the social field, trace out its gradation and its boundaries, the whole of its becoming.’^{cli} Deleuze uses the expedition of the Hebrews in the desert as an example of how the three lines, the sedentary (molar, rigid), migrant (molecular, fluid) and nomadic (line of flight), work together in the plane of organisation. Presumably he means that the Hebrews took a line of flight from slavery, became nomadic, and eventually settled and became sedentary again. Each line has its dangers. For instance, the molecular line can lead to ‘the Stalins of little groups, local law-givers, micro-fascisms of gangs ...’.^{clii} Lines of flight, as we shall see in Chapter six, can turn into lines of destruction of self or others, for example, through death, alcoholism, madness. To avoid this end, he says, we need to ask what are our lines, and what are the dangers on each.

Here is a partial answer to one of the questions with which I began to chart my rough guide: can we live in a Deleuzian world as desiring creatures without constantly seeking to escape from our very created beings? Deleuze is not advocating that we seek to destroy the established forms of society, for we need the segmentarity of this plane:

Even if we had the power to blow it up, could we succeed in doing so without destroying ourselves, since it is so much a part of the conditions of life, including our organism and our very reason? The prudence with which we must manipulate that line, the precautions we must take to soften it, to suspend it, to

divert it, to undermine it, testify to a long labour which is not merely aimed against the State and the powers that be, but directly at ourselves.^{cliii}

Nor is he saying that we can live safely on the molecular line, which has the same dangers as the rigid one (micro-centres of force), and the added danger of sudden crossings of thresholds, dangerous intensities; '[t]his is the 'black hole' phenomenon: a supple line rushes into a black hole from which it will not be able to extricate itself.'^{cliv} Equally, lines of flight have their dangers, those of 'turning into lines of abolition, of destruction of others and of oneself.'^{clv} The lines are all entangled in one another, and we cannot separate them for long, only seek to know what our lines are and what are their dangers.

There is no general prescription. We have done with all globalizing concepts... We have set out to write a book of life, not of accounts or of the tribunal even of the people or of pure thought.^{clvi}

In the conclusion to *Dialogues*, Deleuze muses on the increasingly subtle and diffuse forms that exploitation, control and surveillance are taking in a globalised world, and the lines of flight that are affecting the forms of organisation of the social body. These upheavals constitute:

what can be called a *right to desire*. It is not surprising that all kinds of minority questions — linguistic, ethnic, regional, about sex, or youth — resurge not only as archaisms, but in up-to-date revolutionary forms which call once more into question in an entirely immanent manner both the global economy of the machine and the assemblages of national States. Instead of gambling on the eternal impossibility of the revolution and on the fascist return of a war-machine in general, why not think that *a new type of revolution is in the course of becoming possible*, and that all kinds of mutating, living machines conduct wars, are combined and trace out a plane of consistence which undermines the plane of organization of the World and the States?^{clvii} [emphasis in original]

So we are creatures that live on two planes, and we need both; we can change the forms of our organisations, but as created beings we need settled forms as much as we need movement and flight. Deleuze suggests that the primary revolutionary force is desire, and that the enormous social changes we are experiencing come from the claiming of the right to desire at micro-levels of society. The struggle continues.

Hallward explains that we can only access the real (virtual, creative) level of existence by 'dissolving the habits and organization of material existence', that is, by

creating what Deleuze and Guattari call a Body without Organs.^{clviii} This term, which they borrowed from Antonin Artaud, is another way of describing the plane of consistency, immanence or desire. To recap, this plane is distinguished from the plane of organisation where forms are developed and substance or subjects are formed. The plane of consistency is inscribed by haecceities or modes of individuation, and consists in ‘relations of speed and slowness between unformed elements, and in compositions of corresponding intensive affects ...’.^{clix} On this plane are consolidated ‘multiplicities of the rhizome type’, becomings, ‘which draw one another into zones of proximity or undecidability’, and ‘*smooth spaces*, composed from within striated space.’^{clx} The Body without Organs, or BwO, is ‘powerful nonorganic life that escapes the strata, cuts across assemblages’; Deleuze and Guattari do not decide whether the plane of consistency is constituted by the Body without Organs or vice versa, or whether they are the same thing: ‘[i]n any event, composer and composed have the same power ...’.^{clxi} The BwO is *something we can all make in everyday life*, whether we are aware of it or not. They begin the plateau titled ‘How do you make yourself a Body without Organs?’ with the statement:

At any rate you have one (or several). It’s not so much that it preexists or comes ready-made, although in certain respects it is pre-existent. At any rate, you make one, you can’t desire without making one. And it awaits you; it is an inevitable exercise or experimentation, already accomplished the moment you undertake it, unaccomplished as long as you don’t.^{clxii}

They also caution that we must be careful, for the BwO swings ‘between the surfaces that stratify it and the plane that sets it free’, and if we free it too violently by blowing the strata apart, we will be destroyed; so we need to find a stratum where we can lodge, experiment with its opportunities, find lines of flight, try out continuums of intensities and ‘have a small plot of new land at all times.’^{clxiii} Again and again Deleuze and Guattari, and Deleuze alone, emphasise the importance of knowing where we are, seeing how we are connected to the strata, then linking up with the flow of desires and intensities, thus constructing our assemblages, which can connect with others. So a BwO is:

necessarily a Place, necessarily a Plane, necessarily a Collectivity, (assembling elements, things, plants, animals, tools, people, powers, and fragments of all of

these; for it is not “my” body without organs, instead the “me” (*moi*) is on it, or what remains of me, unalterable and changing in form, crossing thresholds).^{clxiv}

What gives the Body without Organs unity is the abstract machine, which is encased in the BwO, and functions as the ideal of the assemblage on the plane of organisation. The abstract machine is a centre of unity that is outside of the thing it organises; the assemblage actualises or effectuates the abstract machine.^{clxv} It is sense, which in French has direction as one of its meanings; it inheres in things and gives them meaning, but it is not visible. It is a frontier between the BwO and the assemblage, articulating their difference. So, for example, Buchanan suggests that sex is the BwO on which gender, the abstract machine, stands. I will suggest here, and develop later, how this can help us to understand a particular cultural organisation of sex. In the Heian period in Japan, I see the BwO of sex formed to organise desire around cloistered and veiled female beauty; this is the field in which polygamy plays. The abstract machine or principle of unity for this formation is the aesthetic quality of desire —a desire which, in the BwO of sex, is constructed as active in men and passive in women, but in the BwO of art and culture, is expressed actively by women in literature, calligraphy, style of dress and self-presentation, music and other arts.^{clxvi} The assemblages of desire are the clothes, furnishings and artefacts, the rituals and ceremonies of daily life and the poems and romantic narratives which are circulated between women and men; these regulate relations between members of Heian society and express their shared ethical and aesthetic experiences of being. The court women are themselves, on one level, assemblages of desire, packaged and constructed to please the men who circulate amongst them, to keep the machinery of desire working. On another level, in their literature and aesthetic life, these women create their own BwO from which they construct assemblages of desire, especially in their copying, reading and writing of *monogatari* or prose fiction. The men also connect with these assemblages. In Chapter two I will look more closely at how Heian women express, within the constraints of their screened and masked lives, their own desires by constructing a rich, often subversive, culture of ethical and artistic life.

To return to the question of how we can live affirmatively and joyfully in this world, I think that Hallward weights Deleuzian philosophy too heavily on the side of the

plane of virtual reality when he interprets its central task as the dissolution of the habits and organisation of material existence. Deleuze and Guattari say that we must live on the plane of organisation, which arises from the plane of immanence, which in turn dissolves the former; but this is a continual process, and if we are to make ourselves a BwO, to connect with the flow of desire, it must be by a meticulous process of dismantling the stratum we are on, but not all at once:

[Y]ou have to diminish it, shrink it, clean it, and that only at certain moments. You have to keep it in order to survive, to ward off the assault of the nagonal.^{clxvii}

When Hallward concludes that Deleuze's work is 'essentially indifferent to the politics of this world', and that the subject is paralysed by the disqualification of actuality, and action is disabled in favour of contemplation, I think he overemphasises the 'extra-worldliness' of Deleuze's philosophy of creation.^{clxviii} Hardt stresses that Deleuze's ethical project is practical, and seeks to free the creative forces of being from predetermined forms.^{clxix} There are multiple readings of Deleuze and Guattari, which is how they would have wanted it.

Conclusion

My readings of Deleuze and Guattari prepare me to begin the creative experiment of constructing a smooth space in which desire can flow. This will be done with the awareness that if we are to live with intensity and joy, we must continue to swing between the two planes, to achieve 'meticulous relations with the strata' so that we can free lines of flight:

Connect, conjugate, continue: a whole 'diagram,' as opposed to still signifying and subjective programs. We are in a social formation; first see how it is stratified for us and in us and at the place where we are; gently tip the assemblage, making it pass over to the side of the plane of consistency.^{clxx}

This is how we make our Body without Organs, our assemblages of desire.

My purpose in this thesis is to experiment with unfolding and refolding the origami of a desiring woman, both by interpreting the writing of women in another culture and time, and by reflecting on my own life and family story. I will test whether the Deleuzian concepts of desire and its workings in the material world provide useful

and creative tools for living a life that moves between the plane of desire, of virtual reality and the plane of organised forms and subjectivities. By working in this way I will seek to construct an assemblage of desire and an abstract machine which are experimental, creative and affirmative, and can be used as a toolbox by others who want to live creatively in the flow of desire.

Chapter two: when caged birds sing: the many-folded subject in Heian Japanese women's writing^{clxxi}

In Chapter one I summarised the interpretations of several Deleuzian scholars who argue that it is possible, within a transcendental empirical reality, to transcend the given and attain agency by thinking creatively about the reality of our existence. We are passively formed, but as thinking subjects, we become active, as Ian Buchanan puts it, by self-actualisation in our interaction with the social structures and cultural commodification of desires in everyday life.^{clxxii} We can access the plane of immanence and become-different. As Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari frequently point out, this is only a partial answer because the binary machines that organise society and mark our daily lives into segments are so much a part of us that we cannot destroy them without destroying our selves. We must be careful always to keep a plot of ground to stand on, and if we do not work prudently to soften, suspend, divert and undermine the stratum,^{clxxiii} we are in danger of outcomes that may once again entrap us in subjugated positions, or that may be destructive to ourselves and to others.

In this chapter, I will look at the production of subjectivity in a body of literature created by women in the mid-Heian period of Japan (late tenth through the eleventh centuries AD). This writing includes poetic diaries and a long prose romance or *monogatari*. Heian women's writing is extraordinary, not only in the quality of the writing, but in the circumstances in which it was produced — in a closed aristocratic society ordered by strict patriarchal hierarchy, polygamous marriage and elaborate aesthetic codes of dress, language and behaviour. To interpret the world of Heian women's literature, I will use Deleuzian concepts of desire and becoming and figures of the rhizome, the baroque fold and origami, and Elizabeth Grosz's concept of art as originating in the impulse to seduction. I will show how, in a world shaped by aesthetic principles and ordered by hierarchical patriarchal codes, desire is folded into a sexuality structured by men's serial couplings with passive, cloistered female beauty and women find their own forms of creative expression through artistic production. Within these constraints, Heian women writers created a rich body of literature that both celebrated

and subtly critiqued their world, and that outshone and has outlasted the creative production of Heian men.

Japanese women were writing poetry in the seventh century, and in the Heian period (794-1185) they were the principal producers of the singular art of fiction called the poem-narrative [*uta monogatari*]. Its masterpiece was *The tale of Genji* (ca.1010), by the court lady Murasaki Shikibu....^{clxxiv}

Chinese was the official written language, used by men for ‘official records, laws, and proclamations, as well as poetry and diaries’.^{clxxv} It was women who developed a literature written in the vernacular, and a significant body of their prose and poetry is extant, still being read and translated. *The tale of Genji*, arguably the world’s first psychological novel, is, as its most recent translator into English, Royall Tyler, says, ‘the oldest novel still widely recognized today as a masterpiece’, and has been transformed into other cultural products (opera, movies, plays, dance, modern novels, Kabuki, comic books or *manga*, musical theatre); it has been translated into many languages and continues to be read and enjoyed a thousand years after it was created.^{clxxvi} Apart from Tyler’s 2001 translation, there were two English translations of the *Tale* in the twentieth century, by Arthur Waley (1933) and Edward Seidensticker (1976). Another famous Heian work is Sei Shonagon’s *The Pillow Book*, available in Penguin Classics in translations by Ivan Morris (1967), Richard Bowring (1996), and Meredith McKinney (2006). The durability and transformativity of these and other works and their translations and metamorphoses bear out Grosz’s argument that art ‘participates in the (political) overcoming of the present and helps bring a new, rich, and resonating future into being’.^{clxxvii}

Through the looking-glass with Deleuze and Guattari

Before looking at Heian women’s writing in detail, I will run through the Deleuzian terms used, with examples of their application to the texts. Deleuze and Guattari, in *A thousand plateaus*, describe existence in terms of planes and lines. We live on the empirical plane of organisation or material forms and within the collective institutions that determine our subjectivity. This plane is created or folded from the immanent plane of pure creativity and chaos. On the immanent plane:

There is no structure, any more than there is genesis. There are only relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness between unformed elements, or at least between elements that are relatively unformed, molecules and particles of all kinds.^{clxxviii}

In Chapter one, I summarised Deleuze and Guattari's account of how, on the plane of organised forms and subjectivities, individuals and groups are made up of three different kinds of lines, molar (tracing a contour or border), molecular (more fluid) and 'lines of flight or rupture that carry them away'.^{clxxix} On the plane of organisation of Heian court life, within the rigid segment of polygamous marriage, attractions and repulsions work, molar and molecular lines issue from each other, intermingle, entangle and are disrupted by lines of flight. The first volume of the *Tale* opens with a chapter called 'Kiritsubo', translated as 'The Paulownia Pavilion', a palace pavilion that has a paulownia tree in its garden. Here the reigning Emperor installs his favourite wife, known as the Kiritsubo consort. She is 'someone of no very great rank' yet, of 'all His Majesty's Consorts and Intimates, [she] enjoyed exceptional favor'.^{clxxx} This causes great resentment among his other women, who persecute her until she wastes away and dies. The Emperor's desire creates a rhizomatic connection that crosses the hierarchical lines of favour, upsetting both those women of superior rank and the lesser Intimates. The son he fathers with Kiritsubo grows into a child of exceptional grace and beauty; his father decides, rather than 'set the boy adrift as an unranked prince, unsupported by any maternal relative', he will have him serve as a commoner, with the name of Genji.^{clxxxi} This strategy allows the young man to belong to both the imperial and the common realms, and gives him far more narrative scope as a character, as he is less constrained by official duties and protocols.^{clxxxii} Genji grows into a romantic hero whose brilliance outshines all other courtiers. He is married young to Aoi, the daughter of a powerful courtier, but falls in love with his stepmother Fujitsubo, whom the emperor chooses because of her striking resemblance to the Kiritsubo consort. Genji secretly makes love to Fujitsubo, and their son succeeds to the throne. This, and other lines of flight on Genji's part, disrupt and at times threaten to destroy the molar and molecular lines that make up his existence. At one stage he is forced into exile because of an affair with a

daughter of his chief political enemy. But outside of the few official and many unofficial liaisons he forms, he longs for someone ‘who can be his alone’.^{clxxxiii} Murasaki, a ten-year-old child when he finds her, looks just like Fujitsubo, whom he still yearns for. He abducts her and brings her up in his household, and when she is old enough he marries her. She remains the love of his life until she dies. He dies broken-hearted not long after her, but in the course of their marriage, he knows many other women. Some of them are annexed into the molar lines of his life and live in the splendid complex, with four interconnecting mansions, he has built to house them; other women whom he pursues are outside or unofficial, anomalous or nomadic connections. The affair of the heart that he has with Murasaki combines all the lines, in that it begins as a line of flight — the abduction of a child who is without adequate protection — and becomes a molecular, private marriage, that is gradually recognised in court circles as a molar, public and honourable connection, though she never achieves the status of principal wife, because of the ambiguity of her origin and lack of powerful parental support.

Deleuze points out that this intermingling of the lines that fix and segment created forms with the lines that destabilise the assemblages and lead to the formation of new ones can lead to repression as much as to freedom:

To the question ‘How can desire desire its own repression, how can desire desire its own slavery?’ we reply that the powers which crush desire, or which subjugate it, themselves already form part of assemblages of desire
^{clxxxiv}

The shaping of a self is a process of subjectification that takes place on the material plane of organised forms, where we assume identities, roles, molar or fixed patterns within the assemblages created by desire. In the case of Genji and Murasaki, as we shall see, the lines of segmentation and destabilisation do, indeed, repress and enslave desire; in Genji’s case, he is caught between the desire to make more conquests and his great love for Murasaki, who becomes increasingly unhappy and insecure because of the uncertainty of her position. Her plight is a poignant dramatisation of the situation of women in a polygamous society. As in all patriarchal societies, women are shaped into patterns to conform to men’s desire, and their desirability is subject to the erosion of favour and the destructive force of the ageing process.

A partial answer to the problem of the entrapment of desire within the matrix of forces on the plane of organisation is that *we* can unfold and refold *ourselves* into different shapes through recognition of the forces that shape us and conscious manipulation of the forms we are given. We can transcend the given and attain agency by thinking creatively about the reality of our existence. I am not suggesting that Heian women, as they are represented in the literature, were able to exercise a high degree of agency in their daily lives, but that Heian women writers did achieve considerable creative freedom in their practice of the traditional forms of *monogatari* and the poetic diary. In *The tale of Genji*, we see the *monogatari*, traditionally a romantic tale considered to be beneath men's dignity, developed into a complex narrative woven from many plot strands, with detailed and subtle characterisation and multi-stranded point of view, shifting between the observing narrator's voice and the voices of male and female characters. Murasaki Shikibu and other writers developed the diary form, using it as a confessional medium as well as a record of the social and cultural life of their time. Both forms, I shall argue, are used not only to observe and record, but also to reveal the inner life of the personae and to critique the world they lived in.

Timothy Murphy argues that Deleuze has taken a line of flight from the dominant phenomenological line of descent of western philosophy and created his own tradition; his main antecedents are Baruch Spinoza and Friedrich Nietzsche, and his work resonates with the physical sciences.^{clxxxv} He does not begin with the fact of the thinking subject, as René Descartes and Immanuel Kant do, but sees the subject as a component of energy and matter, produced as 'a complex fold in the infinite surface of times and spaces that, like origami, can be unfolded and refolded into different shapes.'^{clxxxvi} The figure of origami is used by Deleuze to express what he reads as Gottfried Leibniz's model of the universe: '[t]he model for the sciences of matter is the "origami," as the Japanese philosopher might say, or the art of folding paper.'^{clxxxvii}

Origami is an art that developed in Japan after the introduction of paper-making from China via Korea in the fifth century AD.^{clxxxviii} Origami's original use is believed to have been as *katashiro*, long chains of folded paper used in purification rituals around temples. Paper was scarce and valuable, and it was during the Heian period, when paper production expanded, that it was developed as a form of religious and artistic expression

and entertainment. The folded paper charms and woven straw streamers that decorated Shinto shrines were intended to shield and purify the sacred space and to contain the wishes of those who served and worshipped there. A Shinto priest who dedicates an offering to God always places a piece of folded white paper under the offerings on the dish. In rites of exorcism, bad spirits are transferred into a human paper doll and thrown into the water or burnt. Origami, therefore, is a practice or poiesis of desire. Folded paper both protects from evil and contains wishes. In the poiesis of desire, the materialisation of energy is potentially both destructive and creative, the two sides of everything. In Deleuze's application of the figure of origami to the universe of created forms, the tension between creativity and destruction — fixed forms, disintegration and re-formation, folding, unfolding and refolding — is elegantly and concisely expressed.

I find the image of the subject as a piece of origami powerful and poetic, in its suggestion of a created, artificial assemblage of desire that can be unfolded and refolded; it aptly describes the world of Heian courtly desire and the literature that celebrates it. Women can be seen as paper folded and refolded in shapes pleasing to the origami-maker. This implies that women have no agency in the process. To some extent, this may be true of medieval court women living in a polygamous hierarchical society. Yet the literature of these women shows that they took an active part in the creation of aesthetic figures of desire in their literature and other art forms and in their practice of daily life, while conforming to the ethical and aesthetic codes of the court. They were, to an extent that is unusual in patriarchal societies, the makers of their own origami.

For Deleuze, a figure closely related to that of origami is that of the baroque fold. I suggest that Heian life and literature can be interpreted through the style of the baroque, which, as Tom Conley argues, can be seen, not as a capitalised period with a genealogical structure, but as a lower-case style found in diverse environments and periods of time.^{clxxxix} Deleuze identifies the central trope of the baroque as the fold — 'the Baroque fold unfurls all the way to infinity' — which can be seen in draperies, dermal surfaces of the body, domestic architecture, the novel, harmonics, philosophies, painting, and more; he compares the two levels of baroque construction, matter and the soul, with a labyrinth, in which the upper level, the soul, has no windows, and there is

communication between ‘the pleats of matter and the folds in the soul’.^{cxv} The infinite fold, which exists on the plane of immanence:

separates or moves between matter and soul. Because it is a virtuality that never stops dividing itself, the line of inflection is actualized in the soul but realized in matter, each one on its own side.^{cxvi}

Though some of the qualities associated with the baroque style in music, art and architecture — dynamic movement, exuberance, and flamboyance — are not present in Heian creative arts and self-presentation, the qualities of constricted richness and controlled excess in the many-folded labyrinthine architecture, décor and fashion are baroque in the Deleuzian sense, as is the tension between constrained, conventional forms and detailed and intricate variations and elaborations (foldings) in ornamentation and expression. The classical formalism and closure of the frames within which men and especially women live in the court world is only apparent, for the screens and masks are permeable and shifting and the characters are self-aware and multi-faceted. Desire, in this universe, is always in excess, always baroque in its form.

The baroque fold of being and becoming links with another term developed by Deleuze and Guattari — assemblages. The French term, *agencement*, is translated as ‘putting together’, ‘arrangement’; it expresses a process, not a product that is assembled according to a preconceived plan. However, as J Macgregor Wise points out, it is not a random collection of things, for ‘there is a sense that an assemblage is a whole of some sort that expresses some identity and claims a territory’.^{cxvii} Heterogeneous elements come together in particular relations that have certain characters and qualities; but the key question is not what an assemblage *is* but what it can *do*.^{cxviii} In the Heian period in Japan, desire is actualised and assembled in cloistered and veiled female beauty and the built environment and arts of daily life; this is the field in which polygamy plays. The principle of unity or abstract machine articulating these formations is the aesthetic quality of desire — a desire which is constructed as active in men and passive in women, but in art and culture, is expressed actively by women in literature, calligraphy, style of dress and self-presentation, music and other arts. Heian Japan drew many of the forms and codes of its culture from classical China, and the Chinese worldview was aesthetic, that is, the shaping of a life was a process of education and refinement

according to *tao*, the patterns of order that are both observed and created in the natural world.^{cxiv}

The assemblages of desire include the clothes, furnishings and artefacts, the rituals and ceremonies of daily life and the poems and romantic narratives that are circulated between women and men. These are affective and effective conduits between members of Heian society, vehicles for the flow of shared erotic, ethical and aesthetic experiences of being. The court women are themselves, on one level, assemblages of desire, packaged and constructed to please the men who circulate amongst them, to keep the machinery of desire working. On another level, in their literature and aesthetic life, these women construct their own assemblages of desire, especially in their copying, reading and writing of *monogatari* and poetic diaries. The men also connect with these assemblages. Within the screens, masks and folds of their secluded and secret lives, Heian women perform their subjectivity in ways that both celebrate and critique the conditions of their enfoldment, that unfold and refold the origami of desire.

The women whose lives are described in these texts are dressed to conceal and suppress their individuality and embodied selves and manipulated to remain hidden from men's eyes except in strictly defined circumstances, and to yield passively to men's desires. Yet, beneath the mask, there is an inner life that can be, variously, passionate, playful, jealous, vengeful, power-seeking, resistant, nostalgic, lamenting, world-weary, desirous of enlightenment. The lives lived behind the masks of desire are rich and intense for both men and women. The 'real world' of Heian court life created in literature has stood the test of one thousand years and still speaks vividly to readers today.

The multiplicity of masks of desire in the world of the Heian court can be interpreted in Deleuzian terms as simulacra that are not merely disguises or substitutes for the original or real thing, but have a strong life force of their own, producing the realer-than-real in a proliferating process of creation. I will relate the concept of the fold as creative principle and the proliferation of simulacra to Elizabeth Grosz's Irigarayan-Deleuzian-Darwinian exegesis of art as affiliated to the animal force of sexual selection and the nonhuman, universal, chaotic forces that are exerted on matter, inorganic and organic.^{cxv}

The allure of the Heian female body is intensified by the elaborate aesthetic process of enclosure and veiling to which it is subjected. This intensification is repeated in the arts that surround the many-folded embodied selves of Heian women — the simulacra of music, painting, poetry, incense, and romantic narratives. The concept of intensification through aesthetic practice is developed in Grosz's argument that art is generated by the impulse to seduction and produces constricted and intensified forms that materialise erotic energy.^{cxvii} Art is the way in which life experiments with materiality, or nature, to bring about change. Grosz, following Luce Irigaray, grounds her work on the concept of 'the irreducibility of sexual difference', opening feminist theory to 'major ontological questions about matter, force, nature, and the real and to the vast explorations of a politics of difference'.^{cxviii} Heian women are aesthetic assemblages that actualise cloistered and veiled female beauty. All the Heian cultural products, the most enduring of which is women's literature, are assemblages that actualise Heian aesthetic principles. Within and beyond this artificial and constricted aestheticism of a cloistered culture, Heian women's literature and other artistic creations have a radical energetic function of change and experimentation, contained though it may be. Their art both celebrates and subtly critiques the dominant polygamous hierarchical culture. Women have a more active role than men in the desiring-production of literature, though men have a more dominant and active role in defining and producing the assemblages of sex and love.

Eros and excess in the Heian world

[For Darwin] natural selection is about survival, and sexual selection ... is largely about reproduction or about sexual seduction. And what I think is the origin of art, basically, is that impulse to seduction. So I take it that all forms of art are a kind of excessive affection of the body, or an intensification of the body of the kind which is also generated in sexuality.... What art is about is the constriction of the materials, so the materials then become aestheticised or pleasurable. The pleasure of those materials has to do with the intensification of the body. So this impulse to art is to not make oneself seductive but to make

oneself intense, and in the process to circulate some of that eros that would otherwise go into sexuality.

Elizabeth Grosz, 'The creative impulse'

Elizabeth Grosz's comments on art offer an explanation for the excess that we see in the natural world — in the abundance of beauty around us, in colours and textures of flowers and leaves, in plumage and songs of birds, in shapes and markings of animals and insects — and in the human world, in the arts. The excess of erotic energy in life is constrained by form, transmuted into the materiality of the object, and transmits sensations of pleasure to the viewer. 'I think everything living has this artistic impulse to excess and to the revelry and the pleasure of that excess'; Grosz adds that only some of us have the discipline to impose form on that sensation and thus to give it life as art.^{cxviii}

The literature of the Heian period depicts a leisured aristocratic society regulated primarily by aesthetic principles. In the small and select society of the Heian court circles, art is a way of life; men and women have the leisure and the means and are supported and inspired by their culture to celebrate the excess of erotic energy in the forms of poetry, romantic tales, music, dance, dress, incense, calligraphy. There are differences in the ways men and women express this excess, determined by the hierarchical, binary, asymmetrical structure of social and sexual life. Men orchestrate and perform displays and contests of music, dance, painting and poetry; women watch from behind screens. In general, women's artistic performances of music, poetry and *monogatari* are enacted in more secluded scenes, with female attendants present and sometimes (outside curtains) male admirers and visitors listening or exchanging poems and conversation through the media of screens and attendants.

The Heian period in Japan takes its name from the capital, Heian-kyo, now the city of Kyoto. Heian Japan in the tenth century enjoyed political stability and advanced culture in a time when, as Ivan Morris puts it, much of Western Europe was experiencing 'one of the bleaker periods of cultural history'.^{cxci} In the seventh and eighth centuries, Japanese culture had developed under Chinese influence, but official embassies to China had ceased in 894.^{cc} In the Heian period, the wealth of the aristocracy came from large provincial estates held by absentee landlords. By mid-Heian times, the head of the realm,

the emperor, had only priestly and cultural functions. Real power was wielded by the northern branch of the Fujiwara family.

Ramirez-Christensen argues that the autobiographical turn in Heian women's literature, the 'quest for the self and the meaning of a life' that women's memoirs reveal, was engendered by a

major loss of power and status when they were excluded in the main from holding positions in the local and central governing structures established by the *ritsuryo* legal reforms in the mid-seventh century.^{cci}

Prior to these 'reforms', there had been a degree of equality in sexual relationships and property ownership, and the social structure was matrilineal and matrilocal. One of the changes was that the male was identified as head of the household, even though women retained the right to own and administer property, and it was customary for a woman to live with her parents after marriage, and for her partner to visit or to reside with her family. Although the *ritsuruyo* codes provided penalties for bigamy,^{ccii} polygamy and the exclusion of women from public office were the norm in the Heian period, and women's dependency on men increased.^{cciii}

In the Heian period, women had only secondary status, and were confined to women's apartments behind screens, blinds and curtains and within many-layered garments.^{cciv} At the political and economic level, a daughter was 'a resource for the betterment or at least the maintenance of her father's position'.^{ccv} The ambition of a Fujiwara patriarch was to have his daughter chosen as imperial consort, so that he could be the father-in-law and ultimately the grandfather of the reigning sovereign; the policy was for emperors to abdicate early so that the father-in-law would become regent, and when his grandson came of age, chancellor.^{ccvi} Court society was based on a rigid system of grades, marked by the colours of the robes worn; rank was not determined by merit, as in classical China, but by a hierarchical network of favour and political power. It was an endogamous group of no more than two thousand individuals who were almost all related to each other, uninterested in everyone outside their own circle and sensitive in judging the social level of each member of the group.^{ccvii} There was a hierarchy of consorts to the

emperor, from the principal wife down to the attendants who were recipients of the emperor's casual attentions. The emperor and his consorts were attended by women of the middle ranks of the aristocracy, the *zuryo*, from which came the provincial governors and the scholar-poets.^{ccviii} These women had access to scholarship and were trained in all the arts of courtly life: poetry, painting, music, calligraphy, incense-making. 'Women's hand' (*onna-de*) was written in the vernacular, and 'male letters' in Chinese; men had access to both forms of writing, but *onna-de* was the only recognised form of writing for women.^{ccix} It is from this educated group that the two most famous women writers of the period, Murasaki Shikibu and Sei Shonagon, emerged, along with several other women whose diaries and poetry are still extant.

The model of beauty for both males and females was a round white face, minute mouth, slits of eyes, and for a man, a tuft of beard at the point of the chin.^{ccx} Hair, especially for women, was a most important feature; women's hair was desired to be thick and glossy, and reach the ground by the time they were mature. Eyebrows were plucked and women's teeth were blackened. Bodies were veiled in robes of at least twelve thin unlined silk layers, the patterns and colours of which were carefully blended; to show this blending to the best advantage, each sleeve was worn longer as it came closer to the skin.^{ccxi}

The unveiled body was not pleasing to Heian men and women and was not regarded as an aesthetic or erotic object. In her diary, Shikibu describes a scene where two maids of honour are robbed of their clothes in the middle of the night; pandemonium reigns, and when order is restored, she describes the experience of witnessing their humiliation as 'dreadful' and the memory as frightening, though it had its 'amusing side'.^{ccxii} As Grosz points out, the devotion of intense aesthetic effort to the veiling of the body is an erotic intensification of the body; what is hidden or glimpsed is mysterious and alluring, and what is open and unrestricted to view is unattractive and distasteful in this culture.

Women are cloistered and lead a sedentary existence; they watch ceremonial events from behind screens and fans, or in carriages if it is an external event. The many-coloured layers of a woman's sleeves spilling under the blind in a carriage is an erotic

glimpse of veiled beauty and desirability. A common erotic trope in Heian literature is *kaimami*, ‘seeing through a crack’ — a hole in a fence or sliding panel, or a gap in a curtain; such sights, whether accidental or intended, often have far-reaching effects.^{ccxiii} For example, Genji’s first sight of the young Murasaki is through a brushwood fence enclosing a grove, in which is a house where a holy man lives in seclusion. Genji is visiting an ascetic’s temple in the hills, seeking a cure for fever. He is surprised to see, through a gap in the fence, two women, some page girls and a little girl of ten or so,

wearing a softly layered kerria rose layering over a white gown and, unlike the other children, an obvious future beauty. Her hair cascaded like a spread fan behind her as she stood there, her face all red from crying.^{ccxiv}

He spies on the domestic scene and eavesdrops on the conversation between the little girl and her carers, and is captivated:

What an enchanting girl he had found! Those companions of his, so keen on women and always exploring, might indeed come across their rare finds, but he had found a treasure just on a chance outing! He was delighted. What a dear child! Who could she be? He now longed for the pleasure of having her with him day and night, to make up for the absence of the lady he loved [Fujitsubo].^{ccxv}

He discovers that the child has lost her mother and lives with her grandmother under the protection of the holy man; so begins his plan to bring Murasaki up himself to be his future wife. His stolen glimpse, and subsequent visits to the child and her carers, are followed by his abduction of the child after her grandmother dies.

No one in this world is ever alone; courtiers live surrounded by a large staff of women inside, and outside, men. Ladies sleep within curtains, and their gentlewomen sleep just outside the curtains on the floor. A man courts a lady through her attendants, without seeing or touching her. Again, this distancing and formalising process intensifies the erotic appeal of the object. Though a woman may choose to speak in her own voice rather than through her attendants or in writing, her visitor does not normally see her, even if he is allowed into the room; ‘if he then takes it upon himself to brush her curtain

aside and go straight to her, he will by that gesture alone have claimed something close to the final intimacy'.^{ccxvi} For instance, after a party at the palace to honour a blossoming cherry tree, Genji, 'drunkenly unwilling to grant that the night is over', trespasses in the wing where Fujitsubo lives, and finding the door to her chamber is locked, stumbles on to the Kokiden wing (the chambers of another consort of the emperor); there he finds an open door, and in the dark, catches the sleeve of a young woman.^{ccxvii} He has his way with her, and so begins the affair that forces him into exile, for she is a younger sister of the Kokiden consort, his chief political rival and enemy. Her inaccessibility (in political terms, though she willingly consents to his secret visits) makes her all the more appealing to him.

In the Heian world, the central assemblages of erotic desire are the women and the supporting ones are the masks or folds of matter — attendants, screens, fans, robes — behind which the women are hidden, as well as the poems and other aesthetic artefacts that mediate desiring-intercourse. Poetry is the language of courtship; it was 'the ritual language of the Heian cultural elite for communicating feeling, whether publicly during occasions of celebration and mourning, or privately during the course of a love affair'.^{ccxviii} Poems are written in cultivated calligraphic hands on handmade paper of various colours and textures, folded and tied in intricate shapes, usually adorned with a flower or fronds of herbs or grass, or the twig of a flowering tree. The sentiments of the poem, the ink, the handwriting, the paper, the folding and tying, the decoration, are all crafted and chosen to express the heart's desire, to impress the reader with the writer's refinement of breeding and aesthetic and literary accomplishment, and to win a favourable response from the recipient. Thomas LaMarre explains that the cloistering of a woman (a custom that developed during the ninth century) was a strategy to ensure her future worth, which depended on 'the degree of her invisibility to male eyes ... [and] on the quality of the poems that emerged from the darkness — the finesse of her hand as it yielded the brush, as it folded the paper'.^{ccxix} There is another level to these transactions, that of passion and desire. Tyler comments that poetry, considered the noblest of all the arts, allowed people to address each other from the heart.^{ccxx} Yet this is a highly conventional and aestheticised form of expression. Ramirez-Christensen points out that the lyrical 'I' of these poems is different from the Western sense of self, because 'the heart' was conceived of as 'what

binds everyone together in a common humanity rather than setting them apart'.^{ccxxi} The writer is judged by the degree to which variation is subtly extracted from a conventional repertoire of choice — of paper colour, texture, thickness, ink colour and intensity, and expression of appropriate sentiment, seasonal references, witty turn of phrase, allusion to classical Chinese poetic tropes. Writing a poem is an erotic and aesthetic act, and its efficacy depends on the skill of the writer in using the conventions to suit the occasion, the speaker and the audience. For example, at the beginning of winter, during Genji's affair with the younger sister of Kokiden, now Mistress of Staff to the emperor, she sends him a secret note:

He was not displeased that she should feel deeply enough in this saddest of seasons to contrive a secret note, so he had the messenger wait, opened the cabinet where he kept his Chinese paper, chose a particularly fine sheet, and prepared his brush with great care. The gentlewomen present nudged each other and wondered who the lady could be, for his every gesture was a lover's.^{ccxxii}

The art of poetry is learned by copying and memorising the canon of poetic literature; although many of the 795 poems in *The tale of Genji* are spoken or written spontaneously, they are studied and highly allusive, and their worth and effect are judged in terms of their mastery of 'complex rules of diction, vocabulary, and form'.^{ccxxiii} Love and artifice are inseparable, and the intensity and worth of feelings are measured by the refinement of the medium of expression, whether it be the voice, a musical instrument, layered and perfumed robes, a poem, or a combination of forms. Ramirez-Christensen comments that the poetic utterances of particular characters in prose narratives endow the speakers with 'an interiority and a psychology' within the conventional settings and actions that they inhabit and perform.^{ccxxiv} Poetic discourse has an integral and central function in social intercourse, not merely a decorative one, and enables a literate individual to enhance and express a sense of self and to establish affective bonds with others within the traditions of Heian court society.

Nevertheless, Heian women have very limited agency in the articulation of sexual desire and the conjugal and domestic arrangements of their lives. A woman who marries usually continues to live in her parents' home and under her father's protection, at least

during the early part of her marriage, and her husband either visits her there or lives under the same roof. It is unusual for a woman to live in her husband's house, as Lady Murasaki, the heroine of the *Tale*, does. The Genji-Murasaki domicile changes the dynamics of the conjugal relationship, as we shall see, from one of exchanges of varying frequency determined almost wholly by the man's desire, to one not unlike the modern idea of companionate marriage. Genji is an ersatz emperor (appointed Honorary Retired Emperor by the reigning emperor, who is his secret son) when he establishes a complex of interconnected mansions with four wings, each housing a woman who is important to him.

The author of the *Tale*, known to us as Murasaki Shikibu (a made-up name), is a widow who lives in the court of the empress she serves, though from time to time she withdraws to her own home. In her diary, she does not mention any lovers, and expresses strong ambivalence toward court life and disenchantment with her ambiguous position as an unattached widow/lady-in-waiting. It seems her status as a widow, her relationship with the empress and other attendants and her role as creator of a prose romance that is avidly copied, read and circulated within the court circle, are not enough to give her a secure sense of identity.

Another woman diarist, 'the mother of Michitsuna', wrote the earliest extant text in the body of Heian women's writing, *Kagero nikki*, translated by Edward Seidensticker as *The gossamer years*. She creates a portrait of herself in sepia tones; she is not a lady-in-waiting, like Shikibu, and lives in her own home. Her identity is no less troubled than Shikibu's, and her writing, it seems, is a solitary occupation, without the circle of readers Shikibu enjoys. Her diary relates the unhappy story of her marriage to a high-ranking Fujiwara; she is not his principal wife, and lives separately from him. She spends much of her life waiting for him to visit, bewailing his inconstancy and neglect, and jealously meditating revenge on the other women he pays attention to. She desires revenge, not on his principal wife, 'the lady in the main house', who is similarly neglected ('her plight I thought was even sadder than mine') but on his lesser lovers, especially one who, she discovers by having him trailed, lives 'up a certain narrow side street' near her house.^{ccxxv} Sonja Arntzen reads the diary as a record, not merely of female jealousy, but 'of the author's emotional and mental growth that culminates in a greater freedom of mind'.^{ccxxvi} I

find this interpretation interesting, but strained; my experience of the diary is one of reflected passion; she wishes to have her lover with her ‘thirty days and thirty nights a month’.^{ccxxvii} Her passion is thwarted far more than it is required, until it turns into resignation. There is no closure; the diary ends in mid-sentence, when, after an unsatisfactory exchange of notes with her lover, she and her attendants are getting her son ready for the New Year’s Day festival:

As I oversaw preparation of the gifts he was to take with him, I thought of how quickly the years had gone by, each with the same unsatisfied longing. The old, inexhaustible sadness came back, and I went through the rites for my ancestors but absent-mindedly. Late on the eve of the new year there was a pounding outside^{ccxxviii}

Many of her lover’s visits over the years have been announced by his impatient pounding on the gate, and the echo here leaves one wondering if it is indeed him, or just some messenger bearing a dusty answer to her last sad note.

On the other hand, Sei Shonagon, the author of *The pillow book*, which is more a collection of notes interspersed with narrative fragments than a diary, is an unattached woman, lady-in-waiting to Empress Sadako. The picture that emerges from her jottings is of a woman who enjoys her life at court, has many interests and finds much to appreciate as well as to criticise in the social and natural world she inhabits. She mentions several lovers, current and past, and seems relatively unconstrained by the seclusion and surveillance under which she and her peers live. She writes:

I do wish men, when they’re taking their leave from a lady at dawn, wouldn’t insist on adjusting their clothes to a nicety, or fussily tying their lacquered cap securely into place. After all, who would laugh at a man or criticize him if they happened to catch sight of him on his way home from an assignation in fearful disarray, with his cloak or hunting costume all awry?

One does want a lover’s dawn departure to be tasteful. There he lies, reluctant to move, so that she has to press him to rise.... He sits up, but rather than proceeding to put on his gathered trousers he instead snuggles up to her and whispers a few more words from the night’s intimacies; then there’s a bit more vague activity, and somehow in the process his belt turns out to have been tied. Now he raises the lattice shutter and draws her out with him to the double doors, where he finally slips away, leaving her with assurances that

he'll spend the day longing for their next meeting. She sits there watching as his figure disappears, filled with delightful memories.^{ccxxix}

Shonagon is thought to have been about thirty at the time her notebook begins. A Heian woman at thirty is no longer thought of as young, but the veiling and darkness of the interiors work to a woman's advantage. Shonagon describes many scenes where she flirts verbally with courtiers, wins their admiration and enhances her reputation by her wit, erudition and charm. This does not win her friends everywhere; Shikibu, in her diary, speaks disparagingly of her as being 'dreadfully conceited' because she shows off her erudition by 'littering her writings with Chinese characters'.^{ccxxx}

The style of Heian life as depicted in literature is baroque; the excess of erotic energy is captured, controlled, constricted — aestheticised — in artistic forms, where matter is intricately folded like origami. Bodies are clad in many layers of clothing, and hidden by screens, curtains, sliding panels, fences. The architecture of the Heian period is flexible, with boundaries that are flimsy and insubstantial. Wooden walls divide inner space from outer, but these are mostly removable screens, and behind are layers of blinds and curtains. Permeable boundaries are also a feature of inside space, yet there is a strong focus on the positioning of people, reflecting the 'cultural obsession with hierarchy and status'.^{ccxxxi} How does this architecture of daily life express the fold? The many screens are another layer of folding, and the maze of partitioned rooms forms a labyrinth designed to conceal and protect what is valued, cultivated and pursued — beauty and high rank. Valued individuals are surrounded by attendants of lesser rank who provide further layers of protection and concealment, though they also act as intermediaries between the inner and the outer — the female object of desire and the desiring male subject, or the holders of high rank and those who seek their favour. For instance, when a mature lady whom Genji has courted but more recently slighted, the Rokujo Haven, retreats to the Ise shrine with her daughter, who has been appointed Priestess there, Genji, excited by her new inaccessibility, sends letters pleading for an audience. She agrees to receive him behind screens, but at first uses her attendants to converse with him. He protests:

His appeal moved her women to intercede for him with their mistress. “Yes, my lady,” they said, “It is a shame to leave him just standing there; one must feel sorry for him.”

Oh dear, she thought, I do not like the spectacle I am making—he can hardly think well of me for it; I would much rather not go out to him at all. She did not have the courage to treat him coldly, though, and at last she emerged amid reluctant sighs, delighting him with the grace of her form.^{ccxxxii}

Tyler has a note here explaining that they were still separated by a blind, and Genji sees her silhouette through it. There are screens behind screens, many layers of veiling. In Heian architecture, decor, lived interior space and clothing, the labyrinth is horizontally rather than vertically arranged. Deleuze describes the quintessential baroque costume as ‘broad, in distending waves, billowing and flaring, surrounding the body with its independent folds, ever-multiplying, never betraying those of the body beneath ...’.^{ccxxxiii} This is a perfect description of Heian costumes and the architecture that contains the heavily veiled and adorned human figures.

Deleuze says: ‘the Baroque fold unfurls all the way to infinity’; he compares the two levels, matter and the soul, with a labyrinth.^{ccxxxiv} The upper level (or inner, continuing the horizontal translation) is the soul and has no windows, and the lower or outer level is matter; this differentiation encloses an entanglement of the two, and is reflected in baroque architecture: ‘[t]he infinite fold separates or moves between matter and soul’.^{ccxxxv} The architectural metaphor applies also to subjectivation. Conley says that ‘Deleuze suggests that the upper room and its folded furnishings become the imaginary space where subjectivation can be realized’; through thinking, we have agency of the self, ‘doubling the outside with a coextensive inside’.^{ccxxxvi} I suggest that the very concealment and elaborate outer layers of material and aesthetic folding that contain the Heian women as objects of desire intensify not only the pleasurable eroticism of their being, but the inner imaginary space where they fold themselves, from which new aesthetic-erotic-poetic becomings emerge. When everyday life is secluded, constricted and intensified, the imagination finds ways to ‘temporise’, to escape to other levels of reality. Temporising, as we will see in Chapter four, is a concept developed by Drusilla Modjeska in her essay, ‘Writing *Poppy*’; it is a psychological manoeuvre that allows the subject to play with time, to slip into other time frames, to tell stories ‘as a way of coaxing life into more

controllable possibilities'.^{ccxxxvii} The caged bird sings sweetly, sometimes more so than its wild relatives. Many great books have been written in prison.

The play between inner and outer, the folding and refolding that choreographs Heian court life, can be described in terms of *omote* and *ura*. Takeo Doi, in his study of the relationship of the Japanese individual to society, *The anatomy of self*, explains the pervasive concept that underlies Japanese culture: the complementary ideas of *omote* and *ura*, 'the two sides of everything,' which, in classical Japanese, were synonymous with *kao* (face) and *kokoro* (mind, heart).^{ccxxxviii} There are no exact corresponding terms in English, which makes the dyadic pairs — façade versus inner truth, outside versus inside, appearance versus reality, evil versus good — into hierarchical oppositions.^{ccxxxix} Even when *omote* and *ura* are used separately, 'one term implies the other'.^{ccxli} Doi points out that while the face usually expresses the mind, it also hides it; so *omote* or face both expresses and conceals *ura* or mind.^{ccxli} The relationship is not binary and divisive, but symbiotic and mutually constitutive.^{ccxlii} Here, Deleuze's concept of the fold is relevant. Simon O'Sullivan explains the concept of the fold as, on one level, a critique of typical accounts of subjectivity, that:

presume a simple interiority and exteriority (appearance and essence, or surface and depth)... For the fold announces that the inside is nothing more than a fold of the outside.^{ccxliv}

The outer (*omote*, face) is folded into the inner (*ura*, mind/heart) in a texture in which the two layers are continuous and connected. For the court ladies of Heian Japan, the *omote* of their physical existence is composed of the many-folded layers (of material forms and attendant staff) within which they live, by which they are enclosed. Since these layers veil and protect their physical face and form and their inner thoughts and feelings from outside surveillance and inquisition, but are also subject to manipulation, covert observation, intrusion and rupture, the layers or masks conceal but also express, in nuanced variations of form and arrangement, their *ura* or heart-mind. *Ura* for Heian Japanese women is both protected and vulnerable. *Omote* is a permeable and leaky many-layered border framing their hidden lives. For instance, when Genji brings Tamakazura, the daughter of a *zuryo* woman he had loved when he was young (and who died suddenly in tragic circumstances)

to live as his adopted daughter in a wing of his mansion, he takes every opportunity to use his privileged position to attempt to seduce her. On one occasion, he calls on her unexpectedly (as was his wont) and her women, in deference to his assumption of intimacy as her ersatz father, withdraw:

He was always this way with her, but so rare an opportunity, ... now moved him skillfully to disguise the rustling of his meltingly soft robe and to lie down beside her. Heartsick and appalled by what her women might imagine, she felt dreadful. She knew that no such a disaster could have overtaken her if she had been with her real father, whether he thought highly of her or not, and her tears spilled over despite her effort to hide them, until she made an extremely unhappy sight.^{ccxliv}

Genji protests that ‘any woman should properly yield, it seems to me, even to a complete stranger, because that is the way of the world’, but withdraws after urging her not to dislike him, and to make sure that ‘no one suspects anything’.^{ccxlv} His reputation is more important, at this stage, than his desires; at 36, he is less impulsive than he used to be.

Heian women’s cloistered existence is not entirely a passive process. They can, if they choose, covertly or less subtly (as in Sei Shonagon’s case, and that of some of the bolder women Shikibu depicts) drop the veil and invite penetration and intercourse, whether sexual or eroto-social. For example, Shonagon reflects that if a man comes calling again after a lapse of time,

You’d be thoroughly delighted to see him. Even if it was some highly inappropriate place for such a meeting, and you had to be careful not to be seen with him, you’d certainly want to exchange some furtive conversation before sending him on his way, even if you had to stay standing as you talked, and if it was a situation where he could spend the night, you’d surely urge him to do so.^{ccxlv}

In Deleuzian-Leibnizian terms, the material folding of masks or layers is a labyrinth that both conceals and expresses, protects and actualises, solidifies and dissolves the hidden self. The solid fixed forms of material life are constantly being destabilised and re-formed by molecular lines of rhizomatic disconnection and connection and nomadic lines of flight. This instability is reflected in shifting points of view and the self-awareness of the

personae we encounter in the literature. The screens that create the illusion of a secret inaccessible world are unstable, permeable and unreliable, and there is a constant unfolding and refolding of self and outward expression. The fluidity of the points of view is reflected in the structure of the narrative in *The tale of Genji*, which folds, unfolds and refolds stories within stories, pulls back screens and curtains to reveal the inner lives of the inhabitants, and creates a *mise-en-abîme* of worlds within worlds: the outer world of the court, fixed in arborescent lines of power and influence and dominated by the male hierarchy, but criss-crossed by molecular lines of desire and subversion, such as Genji's amatory adventures and transgressions; the secret world of the interiors, constructed by men to contain their women, who entertain themselves, when they are not entertaining their admirers and engaging in family life, by reading, copying and telling stories of romance and betrayal and unsatisfied desire; and the deeper levels of secret thoughts and desires of the women and men who are caught in the webs of desire and power. The narrative is itself labyrinthine, convoluted, with layers upon layers of story created to divert and entertain the courtly audience, performing a subtle and sustained discovery and critique of desire in a rigidly hierarchical patriarchal world. The origami of the narrative is intricately folded and refolded, changing and flowing into new forms that repeat the stories of desire in multiple and different shapes.

In Grosz's terms, folding or material expression intensifies and eroticises the desiring self and its artefacts. Individuation or selfhood is performed by the folding of the immanent or virtual into the empirical or material. The shaping of a self is a process that takes place on the plane of organisation, or to put it another way, desire folds the intensities, flows and fluxes of the virtual plane into the multiplicitous origami of existence. Although subjectivation is a product of many forces on the plane of organisation, individuals have agency in varying degrees through their ability to think.

Sexual desire in Heian court life, constructed around men's repetition of seduction and the pursuit of novelty in new/different embodied female selves, is baroque in its expression. The baroque comes from the creative tension between the old and the new, the familiar and the unfamiliar, the conventional stereotypical behaviour or artistic erotic expression and the new/different female object or modulations of affective experience. From the erotic excess that generates this creative tension is produced a proliferating series

of simulacra, artefacts of desire in poetry, prose, music, dance, food, incense. For instance, when a man ‘marries’ a woman by calling on her for three nights running and sending her a love letter after each visit, he celebrates and ritualises the union with a gift of special white rice cakes. When Genji lies with fifteen-year-old Murasaki as his bride for the third night, the cakes he has ordered are delivered:

The gentlewomen knew nothing of all this, but when Genji had the box removed early the next morning, those closest to their mistress understood what had happened.... The little carved stands were so delicate and the cakes themselves so beautifully made — it was all as pretty as could be.^{ccxlvii}

Women, too, are artefacts, assemblages or simulacra, whose carefully constructed individuality is expressed in the nuances of shading and layering in their clothing, the length, thickness and fall of their hair, the intonation and pitch of their voices, the elegance and character of their handwriting, their skill in turning an occasion into a poetic phrase with rich allusions, their grace, modesty and charm of posture. Again, the baroque energy comes from the marriage of the conventional with the individual embodiment of desire. For instance, when Genji visits Tamakazura in the west wing of his mansion, he is struck by how stylishly she has settled in there:

Her brilliance banished every shadow until all was light and loveliness, and one wished only to gaze at her. Her hair thinned out somewhat toward the ends, perhaps because of the trials she had suffered, and it fell with a beautiful, clean grace. She was in all ways so striking that Genji keenly appreciated what he would have missed if he had not known her, and he also understood how little he would be able to let her go. Although accustomed to being with him this way, face-to-face, she felt on reflection that many matters still came between them, matters sufficiently awkward to give her manner a delightful reticence.^{ccxlviii}

Her brilliance comes from the combination of the expected and the unexpected; she is dressed in kerria rose, a conventional layering of colours, and her hair, though thin at the ends, falls gracefully. Hair is admired for thickness and glossiness, but in her case, the thinned ends suggest youthful maturity and the triumph of beauty over suffering. Her reticence, a conventional quality of Heian femininity, makes her all the more alluring. She is a conventional young lady, but what makes the situation unconventional, risky, and

erotically exciting for Genji, is her ambiguous position as his adoptive daughter, courted by other men, and her resistance to his charms. Within the subtle variations of beauty there is a high degree of similarity; they are different yet they reflect each other, and their attraction lies in both registers — difference and repetition.

Domestic heroines of the middle ranks

In a polygamous society even the most favoured women are insecure, since men constantly seek new conquests, and an official or favourite wife may be supplanted in her husband's attentions by a new wife or mistress. Secrecy and concealment invite penetration and unveiling, and the proliferation of simulacra offers novelty and drives repetition. By cloistering their women and rendering them difficult to reach, Heian men fuel the desire to penetrate the covers, to unveil the hidden, and if the object is persistently elusive or out of reach, or when they become bored with the women they have captured, they will likely seek additional or alternative lovers.

Genji's marriage to Lady Murasaki is, as Richard Okada points out, one of many instances of a *zuryo* or middle-rank woman winning out over women of higher birth and more powerful patronage. Murasaki Shikibu was herself a *zuryo* woman, and in the *Tale*, she has constructed a world which shows the private, *ura*, or underside of official life, as does her diary and those of other *zuryo* women writers. Genji himself, despite his high birth, is on the underside of official life, by virtue of his birth to a woman of lesser rank and power than her rivals. His narrator has him win ascendancy in power and influence, through his exceptional charisma, over others who have greater official power. Both he and many of the heroines in this hierarchical world have marginal status, and achieve their distinction through personal superiority, against the grain.

Nonetheless, Lady Murasaki, though she is Genji's favourite wife and his 'live-in lover', has lesser status than his principal wife Aoi (who conveniently dies young in childbirth) and is subject to the ambiguity of her status and the errant nature of his passions, just as his other women are. She has to suffer the torture of watching Genji, now middle-aged, marry the young Third Princess, not because he wants to, but because the retired emperor, who is both the princess's father and Genji's half-brother, pleads

with him to take her under his protection (which, in Heian Japan, is usually synonymous with marriage). The Third Princess has higher status than Lady Murasaki, for though the latter is the granddaughter of an emperor, the unceremonious manner of her entry into Genji's life as a ten-year-old child whom he abducts marks her status as unofficial for the rest of her life.^{ccxliix} The Third Princess is not, however, a surrogate for the favourite wife; the marriage follows the template of the political marriage of expediency favoured by the Fujiwara dynasty, whereas the marriage to Lady Murasaki is an affair of the heart. The Third Princess offers an expedient marriage for Genji, but she also has the attraction of being another simulacrum of desire to add to the assemblage of his mansion that already houses several of his women. The marriage to her is driven by the syntax of connection, an 'and' not an 'or', a new assemblage his desire connects him to. As Deleuze and Guattari say, 'The tree imposes the verb "to be," but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, "and ... and ... and ..."'.^{cccl} This syntax does not work in Lady Murasaki's favour; indeed, it subjugates her further in the position of a favourite wife who is, to some extent, displaced by the new official wife. The passivity of her subjecthood allows her little choice, as we shall see. For her there is no 'and', there is only the punctuation of entrapment, the hiatus in the flow of her life as his favoured wife and mistress of his mansion. The two patterns of marriage conflict, and this conflict is played out between Genji and Lady Murasaki, with the Third Princess naïvely unaware of the heartache and complications she is the catalyst for.

Lady Murasaki is a replacement for the Fujitsubo lady, her aunt and consort to Genji's father, the Kiritsubo Emperor. Genji has an illicit passion for Fujitsubo, his stepmother (who is only five years older than him) and fathers a child by her. Lady Murasaki bears a striking resemblance to Fujitsubo, who was chosen by the emperor because she resembles the Kiritsubo lady, Genji's dead mother. So there is a series of transferences, to use a psychoanalytic term. Fujitsubo replaces Kiritsubo both as favourite consort of the emperor and as mother to Genji, and later exceeds this role by becoming his lover. Genji instigates the transgression and so trespasses on his father's territory and risks disgrace for himself and for Fujitsubo. The liaison is kept secret and Fujitsubo manages to resist Genji's pursuit of her after their child is born. This child grows up to become emperor. The emotion that was unfulfilled when Genji lost his

mother, and that is transferred to Fujitsubo, transmutes into quasi-incestuous sexual passion, which is surreptitiously consummated but denied fulfilment by the conflicting loyalties of the partners and the political expediency demanded by the status quo. Fujitsubo, doubly forbidden as ‘mother’ to Genji and as wife of the emperor, is one example of many problematic relationships in the tale, where metaphoric incest is flirted with but not always or fully actualised.

Genji seeks another object of desire, and finds it much less riskily, though still quasi-incestuously, in the child Murasaki, who graduates, under his tutelage, from beloved child to lover and wife. This time Genji is not constrained by filial and political obligation, as Lady Murasaki is without support apart from her grandmother and attendants; she has lost her mother and lives apart from her father. Nevertheless, in adopting an unknown child and bringing her up to be his live-in wife, Genji is not conforming to the pattern expected of him: a duolocal marriage with a high-born woman and the acquisition of several secondary wives and mistresses. When Genji adopts the child Murasaki, it is in defiance of his obligations to his principal wife, Aoi, a high-ranking lady, disdainful and remote. Although Genji continues for some years to take other women as mistresses and sometimes wives (for example, the Akashi Lady, who bears him a daughter who becomes an empress) Lady Murasaki, who is childless, remains his best beloved.

Genji indulges in more than one flirtation at the height of his power that endangers his reputation and Lady Murasaki’s position as favoured wife. The most serious of his indulgences involves the young woman, Tamakazura, who is the orphaned daughter of To No Chujo, Genji’s great friend and rival, and Yugiri, a young woman Genji had loved in his youth before he adopted the child Murasaki. When Genji installs Tamakazura in the west wing of his mansion, he tells Lady Murasaki the story of his youthful love, and hopes that she will accept the newcomer at face value as his adoptive daughter and protégée. Tamakazura becomes the object of desire of several gentlemen, and Genji encourages the charade of courtship, using it as a smokescreen for his own desires. Tamakazura’s position becomes increasingly ambiguous and distressing as Genji presses his attentions on her; her only defence is to act innocent, to pretend his intentions are above board. ‘What a terrible shame it would be, he thought, to let anyone

else have her!’^{ccli} Dependent on Genji’s protection, with no family of her own, she is torn between gratitude and revulsion at his increasingly open desire for her. Interestingly, Genji shows signs of a developing conscience, musing ruefully over his own ‘warped and deplorable disposition’.^{cclii} The narrator plays out, with great subtlety of description and dialogue both direct and indirect over many scenes, the conflict within and between the two characters. During the rainy season, Genji visits her to find her surrounded by illustrated tales (*monogatari*): ‘Among her assemblage of tales she found accounts, whether fact or fiction, of many extraordinary fates, but none, alas, of any like her own’.^{ccliii} Genji proceeds to lecture her on the falsely seductive nature of fiction; when she replies in defence of the truthfulness of tales, he changes tack, and defends tales for their realistic portrayal of the details of life. He then tries to persuade her to turn their own story into ‘one like no other and give it to all the world’.^{ccliv}

When she failed to look up, he stroked her hair, so upset that at last she replied

“Yes, search as you please through the tales told of the past: you will never find in all the world a father with feelings resembling yours!”

Her response shamed him, and he took no further liberties. As she was, though, what was to become of her?^{cclv}

In this case, she effectively uses a poetic response to challenge his exploitation of the position of father and guardian in his attempt to seduce her.

Tamakazura wins out in one respect in that she manages to withstand Genji’s seductions, but loses in another in that in order to escape his attentions, she is constrained to accept a suitor she is not attracted to — Hige-kuro, a heavily-built unprepossessing man who already has a principal wife. Tamakazura’s fate is to be the wife and then the widow of an unremarkable man. She subsides into domesticity, ‘a functional character’, as Field says.^{cclvi} Her distinction is the grace and strength of character with which she manages her ambiguous life as Genji’s ersatz daughter and withstands the pressure to yield to his seductions. It is the nuanced portrayal of the conflict in each of the two principals in this dance of seduction that lifts the episode above the convention of the amorous adventures of the romantic hero. Tamakazura may be a functional character on the level of plot, but she stays in my mind as a heroic young

woman who manages in a difficult and powerless situation to resist being subjugated as one more conquest of the shining prince. Shikibu uses the plot convention of seduction and resistance here to comment on and critique the construction of desire in a polygamous patriarchal society. Tamakura is not a surrogate heroine, she is a heroine in her own right, and exercises choice in a subtle and becoming refusal of Genji's seduction.

Genji's marriage to the Third Princess has a far more disturbing effect on his relationship with Lady Murasaki than his pursuit of Tamakazura does. Though Genji has no intention of leaving Lady Murasaki, she is the domestic spouse who has to perfume his robes for his obligatory visit three nights running to the Princess, and urge him to overcome his reluctance to go and do the honourable thing. Genji is caught between his desire for a succession of lovers and his great love for and devotion to Lady Murasaki. This tension becomes stronger as he ages, and apart from the Third Princess, who does not meet his expectations, and with whom he is a reluctant lover, he does not pursue his erotic fantasies as enthusiastically and unreflectingly as he did when he was younger. The author creates narrative suspense through the dramatisation of Genji's inner conflicts when he courts other women, and of Lady Murasaki's private suffering over his errant fancy. There is tension between the two plot lines, that of the romantic hero pursuing a string of women, some more desirable than others, and that of the shining prince who meets his match in the *zuryo* woman whose beauty and grace outshine the attractions of all her rivals. This tension is played out in the minor key of the unofficial wife who yearns to be the only one, but is defeated by the insecurity of her position and the inconstancy of her beloved.

In Lady Murasaki's thirty-seventh year, Genji reflects on her perfection:

... [S]he was a success in every way, so much so that Genji even feared for her, remembering the example of others, *equally* perfect, whose lives had not been long, for she was that rarity: someone who in every single thing she did remained beyond cavil or reproach. His wide experience of women convinced him that all her qualities made her *incomparable*. [Emphasis added.]^{cclvii}

Genji's allusion to other perfect women who had died young refers to his mother and to Fujitsubo, who died in her thirty-seventh year. Here again we have difference and repetition. Lady Murasaki is not a surrogate for Kiritsubo and Fujitsubo. She exists in her own right, meriting the accolade of perfection, just as her predecessors in his affections did. Although Genji thinks of her as incomparable, she is one of several women whose perfection he has loved and praised. His culturally-driven desire to seek out surrogates is in tension with his unique passion for Lady Murasaki. She is both incomparable and equal, an oxymoron. In the conversation that follows, Genji tries to persuade her that she is more fortunate than other ladies in being domiciled with him, for she has enjoyed his protection from the rivalries and jealousies of court life. While he acknowledges it has been difficult for her to have the Third Princess come to live in a wing of his mansion as his official wife, he points out he has been even more devoted to Lady Murasaki since the Princess's arrival. (One wonders if he could have boasted of this if the Third Princess had been less disappointing.) Lady Murasaki's reply is circumspect:

As you say, ... I expect that to others I seem to enjoy favor beyond what I deserve, but by now more sorrow than I can bear has entered my life, and that is what has inspired all my prayers.^{cclviii}

Thus she subtly reproaches his judgement (and the reflected one of the court circle) that she is privileged beyond her deserts, and affirms her unbearable grief at the loss (as she sees it) of her previously unchallenged position as his most favoured wife and mistress of his household. She goes on to reiterate that she feels she has little time left, and to beg his consent for her to take holy orders.

Lady Murasaki believes her only release from suffering — the suffering of watching what she sees as the inevitable decline of Genji's affection for her — lies in withdrawal from her worldly state into a religious life. Genji, however, refuses to allow her to renounce her sexual being and to cease social intercourse, which is what the religious life demands.^{cclix} For Lady Murasaki and other heroines in the story, 'becoming a nun is an act of self-expression that can only take the form of denial'.^{cclix} Genji concludes a conversation in which he reflects on the women in his past by paying Lady Murasaki a

compliment: ‘I have known a good many women, but never anyone else like you’.^{cclxi} Her only flaw, he implies in an indirect postscript, is her jealousy. Later, toward evening, he goes to visit the Third Princess, and Lady Murasaki, as is her wont on the nights he is away, sits up late and has her women read her tales:

These old stories are all about what happens in life, she thought, and they are full of women involved with fickle, wanton, or treacherous men, and so on, but each one seems to find her own in the end. How strange it is, the insecure life I have led! Yes, it is true, as he said, that I have enjoyed better fortune than most, but am I to end my days burdened with these miseries that other women, too, find hateful and unendurable? Oh, it is too hard!^{cclxii}

Her lot, she implies, is harder because she has known superior favour and now faces the loss of it. Her unexpressed wish is not to have known such fortune only to lose it. She lives on another three years in her secular state, her spirit much diminished, and dies ‘with the coming of the day’ despite Genji’s efforts throughout the night to restore her with scripture readings by monks.^{cclxiii} The magnificent home that Genji has created and bound her to with his love is insecure and becomes a comfortless prison because it houses, in separate wings, not only the Third Princess, but other women who are under his protection. Her worldly state as an unofficial wife is, by its nature, temporary and subject to loss and rejection. What we have, then, is repetition with differences of a theme that runs through Heian women’s literature: women’s insecurity and inevitable loneliness, whether their status as lovers is official or unofficial, whether they are loved and honoured or neglected and disparaged.

Field and Okada have argued that surrogacy is a driving force in the Heian court, as depicted by Shikibu. Field says that Lady Murasaki’s ‘identity depends on what she is not’ — not Fujitsubo, not a politically useful wife like Aoi, Genji’s first wife, not a mother to Genji’s child, like Aoi and the Akashi Lady.^{cclxiv} Okada says that Genji’s substitution of Murasaki for Fujitsubo is a metonymic pattern ‘the constant association serving to console an ultimately unfulfillable desire that nevertheless has been and remains realizable’.^{cclxv} This argument can be misleading because it implies that the individuals in the chain of repetition are inferior copies of the original. This is not borne out by a considered reading of the texts through Deleuzian lenses. The problem with the words ‘substitute’ and

‘surrogate’ is the implication of inferiority and lesser status or worth in the repetitions, bringing us back to an essentialist, binary ideology.^{cclxvi} I find the term simulacra to be more useful, because it bypasses ideas of a hierarchy of value, from the original to the copy, and opens up a rhizomatous proliferation of individuations that are different in themselves. Deleuze rejects the Platonic notion of the simulacrum as a copy of a copy of the model, in a world of identity and order, in favour of a world made up of simulacra, which are different in their own right, not representative of a superior model, and have their own power to act.^{cclxvii}

I acknowledge that in seeing Lady Murasaki and Tamakazura as simulacra rather than surrogates, I speak from a Deleuzian perspective that was not imagined in the polygamous hierarchical society of tenth- and eleventh-century Japan, and I evoke from the text *my* simulacrum of the subversive female writer, Murasaki Shikibu, who both presents and critiques a binary production of desire in her created world. Though she did not have a concept of simulacra available to her, there is evidence in the text that she saw in her female characters (and some of the male), beneath the surface appearances of rank and faithfulness to a model or stereotype of desirability, a singularity of being, both unique and common, a site of difference and repetition.^{cclxviii} This vision is played out in the baroque tension in the *Tale* between principal/original and secondary/new which arises from the criss-crossing and intertwining of binary molar lines of rank and power and changing molecular and nomadic lines of favour and desire. So we have Genji’s father the Emperor’s preference for the Kiritsubo Lady over his other more powerful wives, and for Genji over his principal son, and Genji’s preference for Lady Murasaki over the principal wives of his youth (Aoi) and of his maturity (The Third Princess). The desire for the conventional and acceptable is in tension with the desire for difference and the unexpected, and with the heart’s desires, which do not follow molar pathways.

Why is Lady Murasaki more than a mere surrogate? Field traces the theme of surrogacy through the major plot and the minor ones, and interprets Lady Murasaki as ‘the substitute realization of a fantasy’, whose fate as such ‘is to be not only homeless but imprisoned in this world’.^{cclxix} In my reading, Lady Murasaki, as she is regarded by Genji and others, transcends the role of substitute through her unparalleled grace, beauty, good taste, loyalty and discretion. These qualities are constantly affirmed and

celebrated in the text in the voices of Genji and other characters and of the narrator. She achieves a status which, if not exactly that of ‘official’ wife, is recognised by Genji and by others who come into her sphere as that of a lady without peer. She is, as Tyler points out, designated as ‘*Tai no Ue*’, which approximates to ‘the mistress of Genji’s household, who lives in the wing (*tai*) of his residence’.^{cclxx} So although her status is defined through him, and is secondary to and dependent on his, she is nonetheless a star whose light reflects on those around her, and when she is gone, the shining prince himself does not long survive her. Moreover, from this reader’s point of view, she develops into a three-dimensional heroine through her nuanced perceptions of Genji’s behaviour and her situation, and her struggle to find a way of being that escapes from the prison her life has become.

I read Lady Murasaki’s fate in terms other than that of the surrogate who has no ‘true identity’ of her own compared to the ‘ideal’ Heian court lady. In a world where all identity (including Genji’s) is constructed and contingent on rank, favour and reputation, her decline into ill health and death is the outcome of the conflict between the hero’s and heroine’s desires to be true to their love for each other, and the hero’s subjectification as a polygamous Heian aristocrat bound by the codes, obligations and expectations of court society. This subjectification is reflected in Lady Murasaki’s own entrapment in these codes, passively constrained to respect his right to have multiple partners, and to wait for him to return to her when he chooses. Her agency is limited by the roles prescribed for her; when the path she seeks as an alternative to that of neglected wife — holy orders — is denied her, she descends into an irreversible decline and dies.

Genji suffers deeply because of the fragile nature of his bond with Murasaki and the transience of worldly pleasure, and does not survive long after her death, because he has no wish to live:

Very little in this life has really satisfied me, and despite my high birth I always think how much less fortunate my destiny has been than other people’s. The Buddha must have wanted me to know that the world slips away from us and plays us false. I, who long set myself to ignore this truth, have suffered in the twilight of my life so awful and so final a blow that I have at last seen the extent of my failings....^{cclxxi}

His death is a hiatus in the text; he dies between chapters. This may be an accident of the fragmented and corrupted state of the text that survived into the thirteenth century, when two scholars set out to restore it.^{cclxxii} However, the fact that the reader is denied the narration of Genji's last days has a strangely poetic and haunting effect; his absence casts a shadow over the other characters: 'His light was gone, and none among his many descendants could compare to what he had been', and over the rest of the narrative.^{cclxxiii} Both he and his favourite wife are trapped by the codes and conventions of Heian society, and both end their lives tragically, haunted by loss and regret; their fate overshadows the lives and loves of the other characters.

Lady Murasaki's tragic fate can be read as a critique of the polygamous society she and her lover inhabit. Haruo Shirane argues that the *Tale* is a highly wrought work that 'not only transforms plot conventions, established poetic motifs, and contemporary norms, it constantly reworks itself'.^{cclxxiv} She explores how the social romance created in the early chapters is undermined and placed in perspective, and finally collapses. In the last part of the tale, which is the focus of Shirane's study, the themes of romance and marriage are 'given a new, and frequently ironic, twist'.^{cclxxv} In her creation of a more real world than the real world she inhabits, Shikibu infuses the genre with tension, surprise, irony and tragedy by allowing her characters to deviate from and transgress or subvert Heian social and political codes, particularly those relating to marriage. In this way, through the intensification of the artistic process, the author herself attains agency, not in her 'real' life, but in the creation of a more real world through art.

Reflexive subjectivity in Heian women writers

The theme of disillusionment with the world and men's inconstancy in the *Tale* is echoed in the diaries of other Heian women, such as the mother of Michitsuna. To open her memoir, she describes herself in the third person as:

one who drifted uncertainly through [these past times], scarcely knowing where she was.... [A]s the days went by in monotonous succession, she had occasion to look at the old romances, and found them masses of the rankest fabrication. Perhaps, she said to herself, even the story of her own dreary life, set down in a journal, might be of interest; and it might also answer a question: had that life been one befitting a

well-born lady? But they must all be recounted, events of long ago, events of but yesterday. She was by no means certain that she could bring them to order.^{cclxxvi}

Of course, the diarist, writing a generation before Shikibu, had not read *The tale of Genji*, and if she had, she may have revised her opinion as to the value of fiction, which, when written with complexity and subtlety, realism and imagination, creates a mirror world where much is the same, yet much is different. Nevertheless, she is making an interesting comparison here between the artistic and therapeutic value of fiction and that of life writing proper. The claims she stakes for life writing are that it may be interesting, even if it tells a life that has been dreary and uneventful, and that it might question the way in which she was born — indeed constrained — to live her life. We are in the presence of the reflexive self, narrating and questioning the experience of being ‘I’ and the agents and circumstances that construct it, and in the process, exercising agency that challenges those constituting forces and deconstructs the established position of ‘a well-born lady’. Thus the narrative art of life writing is a site from which new becomings can emerge. The diary starts in 954, at the beginning of Fujiwara Kaneie’s courtship of her. What develops is an intense and bitter account of a woman who waits with unsatisfied longing for visits that become less and less frequent.

Shikibu has a dual identity; she is both a subject, a lady-in-waiting, and an origami-maker, an author of *monogatari*. The mother of Michitsuna, of course, also creates for herself an identity as a diarist, but apart from brief passages like the one quoted above, she shows little consciousness of agency in how she lives her life. She narrates herself as continuing to be constrained and identified by the failing relationship with Kaneie. For Shikibu, it is the attributes that identify her as different from the ranks of ladies-in-waiting that make her life difficult. In her diary, she reflects ruefully on her reputation for learning, which was not an attractive attribute for an aristocratic woman:

When my brother ... was a young boy learning the Chinese classics, I was in the habit of listening with him and I became unusually proficient at understanding those passages that he found too difficult to grasp and memorize. Father, a most learned man, was always regretting the fact: ‘Just my luck!’ he would say. ‘What a pity she was not born a man!’ But then I gradually realized that people were saying ‘It’s bad enough when a man flaunts his Chinese learning: she will come to no good,’ and since then I have avoided writing the simplest character.^{cclxxvii}

She goes on to confess that she gave the Empress secret lessons in reading the collected works of Po Chü-I, a T'ang dynasty poet. A learned woman is a contradiction in terms, and women who surreptitiously acquire learning take care to conceal their knowledge.

It seems her work was unfinished. It is conjectured that Shikibu wrote the *Tale* before and during her period of court service, when she served the Empress; there is some scholarly dispute as to whether she is the author of all the chapters, or whether they were written in their present order. We know that the tale existed in something like its present form in 1024, when a young girl, returning to the capital from a distant province, received a complete copy of over fifty bound chapters from her aunt. This same young girl began a diary which she continued in later life; it is known as *The Sarashina Diary*. In it, she describes how obsessed she was with the romance:

Although I was still ugly and undeveloped [I thought to myself] the time would come when I should be beautiful beyond compare, with long, long hair. I should be like the Lady Yugao [in the romance] loved by the Shining Prince Genji, or like the Lady Ukifuné, the wife of the General of Uji.... Could such a man as the Shining Prince be living in this world? How could General Kaoru ... find such a beauty as Lady Ukifuné to conceal in his secret villa at Uji? Oh! I was like a crazy girl.^{cclxxviii}

The diarist remembers herself as a young girl imagining herself as one of the heroines, loved and pursued by the hero Genji, or by his lesser type, Kaoru. Her memoir covers forty years of her life, and is a morality tale about the seductive nature of *monogatari* and the evanescence of desire. As Ramirez-Christensen points out, Heian women writers' representation of desire as insubstantial must be read within the framework of the patriarchal Heian social order that subjectifies women as daughters, wives, mistresses and mothers of powerful men.^{cclxxix} In such a universe, women's desire is always second-hand and under licence.

Shikibu paints a sad picture of her self in her diary as a disillusioned introvert in the court circle where appearance is everything and gossip is rife; where learning is unwomanly, and even the feminine art of writing in the vernacular is frowned on if it is practised to excess. She describes a scene where the Empress and her handmaids are busy binding the stories (presumably Shikibu's) to send to people, when the Empress's father

finds them and scolds his daughter for not resting; yet later he brings her paper, brushes and ink, some of which she passes on to Shikibu. Then, when Shikibu is attending the Empress, he sneaks into the author's room and steals her only fair copy of the *Tale*.^{cclxxx} His show of disapproval is a front for collusion and appropriation of the artist's work, suggesting the envy and disguised admiration felt by a powerful male for the beauty and richness of the woman's writing, which he can only possess in a secret and illicit manner.

Shikibu follows this vignette, which shows us how influential and yet how vulnerable both her position in court life and her status as a writer were, with a sad passage of reflection:

As I watched the rather drab scene at home, I felt both depressed and confused. For some years now I had existed from day to day in listless fashion . . . doing little more than registering the passage of time. How would it all turn out? The thought of my continuing loneliness was unbearable, and yet I had managed to exchange sympathetic letters with those of like mind — some contacted via fairly tenuous connections — who would discuss my trifling tales and other matters with me; but I was merely amusing myself with fictions, finding solace for my idleness in foolish words. Aware of my own insignificance, I had at least managed for the time being to avoid anything that might have been considered shameful or unbecoming; yet here I was, tasting the bitterness of life to the very full.^{cclxxxii}

Her complaint reflects a bad day, or few days, perhaps, in the life of an author — the loneliness, the introversion, the sensitivity to criticism, the comfort of a few like minds, the anxiety that what one is doing is trivial, insignificant, of little worth in the real world. She expresses the sense that her writing, indeed her very existence, lonely and idle, are of inferior worth in comparison with the 'real' world of courtly society. Yet she could not have felt like this all the time, or she would not have managed to write a book that is twice as long as *Don Quixote*, *War and Peace*, or *The Brothers Karamazov*,^{cclxxxii} and a thousand years later, is still being read, enjoyed and analysed by ordinary people and scholars in Japanese and in translation. Perhaps Shikibu's depression is an effect of her genius; she pushed the boundaries of identity for a court woman by creating a work of fiction that was read by men and women in aristocratic circles, in a time when, so far, only men had created works of fiction, and other women were writing poetic diaries, but nothing as complex or ambitious as the *Tale*.

‘Fictions and foolish words’ are all she has to give her life a deeper meaning; the forms and rituals of the court occupy her daily life and give her a place in the real world, but she feels like an outsider at court. She questions the value of her writing: ‘I tried reading the *Tale* again, but it did not seem to be the same as before and I was disappointed’.^{cclxxxiii} She loses confidence even in the support of those with whom she has shared mutual interests:

Those in whose eyes I had wished to be of some consequence undoubtedly thought of me now as no more than a common lady-in-waiting who would treat their letters with scant respect.^{cclxxxiv}

In her depressive state of mind, she feels ‘as if I had entered a different world’.^{cclxxxv} The world of court, in which she had found a kind of reality, seems empty, and her private life at home is no better. Retirement from the court does not relieve her depression and self-doubt. She misses her constant companions, and receives letters from them, including the Empress, and so she returns.

Murasaki Shikibu is an outsider, an observer of the world she inhabits, one of middle rank who, having lost her husband, has no official status other than through her service to the Empress. She cannot live independently, as a modern woman would have the opportunity to do; she is without a powerful man’s favour, and her status as a writer is problematic. So she returns to court life, the pettiness of which continues to annoy her. Later, in a long reflective passage, she reveals more of her situation at court. Even at home, she feels unable to be herself, aware of her servants’ prying eyes, and finds that it is worse at court: ‘where I have so many things I would like to say but always think the better of it, because there would be no point in explaining to people who would never understand’.^{cclxxxvi} ‘They’ would never understand because of the standards they apply to other’s behaviour—standards Shikibu sees as narrow and petty—‘So all they see of me is a façade’.^{cclxxxvii}

It is that façade that interests me as the frontier or interface between the ‘real’ world of court and the aristocratic woman’s hidden life that is not revealed because if it were, it would be dismissed as being of inferior worth, even inauthentic. The façade allows

Shikibu to move and be accepted in the Heian court world. From her perspective, it is a frontier between the public fiction that the outside world sees, and the inner reality of her private world. A frontier is an articulation of the difference between the two things or states it divides; though it does not unite them, it allows exchanges to take place. The façade, the mask, *omote*, is the surface that conceals and protects *ura*, the inner thoughts, feelings and desires of the woman whose outward appearance and behaviour are defined and monitored by the society she inhabits. In so doing, *omote* allows for a safe and indirect expression of *ura*. In Heian court life, the construction of appearance and reality is not a surrogate one where the surface is simply an abstract representation of the qualities that are valorised in that society, hiding emptiness or an inferior level of being. Rather, outer reality is both an outward and visible expression of, and a mask for, inner heart/mind. It is what allows the individual to relate to others while having an inner life that is at least partly hidden. Shikibu's façade is a simulacrum that is seen as authentic by others, but is a strategic device that masks her inner life, which, to her, is more real than her persona and the outer world she inhabits. The outer both discloses and protects the inner. Ambivalence is a way of life.

Shikibu moves uneasily between her outward persona, constructed and constrained by her relationship to the powerful figures of the Empress and her Fujiwara relatives, and her inner self, which both performs and resists the life of a court lady, so highly regulated in behaviour and appearance. Her art arises from the baroque tension between the conventional outside and the singular inside, the common and the unique, the same and the different. Her perception of the world she inhabits is singular and her greatness is in her ability to turn these aesthetic percepts into a vision that is still vital. As Conley says, interpreting Deleuze's concept of singularity:

[Singularity] . . . is what makes the writer change the world at large through microperceptions that become translated into a *style*, a series of singularities and differences that estrange common usages of language and make the world of both the writer and those in which the reader lives vibrate in unforeseen and compelling ways.^{cclxxxviii}

It is the tension between the conventional and the singular that makes Shikibu's writing fascinating to a modern reader, and allows us to enter and identify with the autobiographical consciousness of a subjugated being; one who manages to escape, in her imaginative life, from the limits imposed on her. Ramirez-Christensen suggests that the confinement of Heian women behind screens and robes and strict codes of behaviour threatened the obliteration of a woman's self, and that it was in resistance to this imposition of dreamlike status on her life that she raised her writing brush 'to inscribe her autograph, so to speak, the physical mark that she existed ...'.^{cclxxxix} Her vision of the texture of Heian women's cloistered lives as fragile, insubstantial, threatening their sense of self with extinction, seems to me to overemphasise the unreality of their existence and underestimate the intensity and creative power of the desiring self, even in such confined spaces.

Karma Lochrie, in a study of the uses of secrecy in the English Middle Ages, discusses the construction of women as secret; English common law borrowed from French legal terminology the term *femme covert* for a married woman.^{ccxc} The feminine and domestic sphere was secret and private, regulated and contained by men. However, women had the capacity to exercise the secrecy that defined them, and this worried their men. Geoffrey Chaucer, in *The miller's tale*, depicts the Miller creating a narrative technology that Lochrie calls literary *coverture*; that is, he 'engages in the secret activity of inquiring into, penetrating, and revealing the secrets of women for laughter, pleasure, and enjoyment of his reader'.^{ccxci} The masculine recuperation of the feminine secret, Chaucer's narrative technology of literary *coverture* — 'creating the secret in order to reveal it'^{ccxcii} — compares with Heian Japanese women's literary *décoverture* of women as secrets penetrated, used and circulated for the pleasure and satisfaction of men. Just as the Miller uncovers the secrets of wives, so Murasaki Shikibu narrates Heian aristocratic men engaged in the same sort of violation, but more, narrates women's subjection and resistance to this dominance. We don't find women discussing and dissecting men in the same way men do women as objects, but we do find them seeking solace in reading, listening to and telling each other stories of women in all their subjectifications and lines of flight. Literature is one of their main ways of 'escaping without leaving'.^{ccxciii} Shikibu, in her *décoverture* of men's multiple and repeated violations of women's 'secret' lives,

critiques a way of life that makes women objects of desire, for the gratification of men, and that traps men in their own webs. Yet the lives that are suspended in these webs are rich and many-layered, and the light that shines through them illuminates the texts still.

The remarkable aspect of Shikibu's diary and fictional writing is that, in recording her sensitive and penetrating awareness of the ambiguity of living as a woman in this society, she achieves so much. The living, aching reality of leading a double life is revealed in her confessions, and in the introspection of the fictional characters she creates. Her court persona has an extra layer, a mask that self-consciously performs the multi-layered reality she inhabits. This is the mask of the writer, the teller of tales, who traverses between the outer and the inner world and brings both to life in a form that outlives the author and her society.

Conclusion

Murasaki Shikibu is an artist who observes and mirrors the society she inhabits in a fictional world that is, to the reader, 'more real' than the historical world of the Heian court, which we can never know except through indirect and fragmented reports, poetic diaries, and its fictionalisation in *monogatari*. *The tale of Genji* is a complex and many-layered world of the imagination that we can enter as we turn the pages that number 1120 in the Penguin edition of Tyler's translation. Though the court women's diaries of the period give fascinating glimpses of this world, they remain glimpses, written from one point of view, discursive and sometimes fragmented.

The fictional and confessional narratives of Heian court women show the ambiguity of the female desiring self as *other* within the culture of men, outwardly conforming to rituals, representations and rules, yet inwardly resisting and escaping in subtle ways. One of these ways, their reading and writing of *monogatari* and poetic diaries, became, paradoxically, a flowering of cultural life that outshone and has outlived the works and lives of the powerful men who ruled their lives. They used a script, 'woman's hand', that, though it was used by men as well, became the vehicle for women's literature that dramatises Heian vernacular culture so powerfully that it has, as Okada says, 'come to be regarded as a great (if not the greatest) flowering of Japanese culture'.^{ccxciv}

The subjectivity of Heian women depicted in their literature is complex and many-folded, as are the costumes, architecture and artistic productions of court life. In the intricate layering of folds that surround them, the bodies and personae of women are erotically intensified. Behind the façades and rituals of their social life, subjectivity is folded from the immanent into the embodied self, and creativity is released from within the imaginary space of the inside into the outside of the material world. In this cloistered culture, the literature of Heian women celebrates the natural and artificial beauty of the world that surrounds them and critiques the codes of polygamy. *The tale of Genji*, in particular, constructs a world in which: *zuryo* women of middle rank are favoured above their higher-ranking rivals; the hero himself is of ambiguous birth but outshines all others; and the restrictive and repressive effects (especially for women) that are the cost of the liberty and variety enjoyed by men in this polygamous society are vividly and poignantly enacted in the complications, losses, disappointments and tragedies of the characters' lives. The politics of difference is subversively and subtly enacted through art in a closed and constricted world. We can enter the looking-glass world of Heian women and be surprised and delighted by the similarities and differences between their lives and ours, and be inspired by the triumph of art, which, in experimenting with the materiality of nature and culture, overcomes the present and imagines the possibility of a different future.

Chapter Three: a schizoanalysis of monogamy and ‘true love’ in my family story

The only acceptable finality of human activity is the production of a subjectivity that is auto-enriching its relation to the world in a continuous fashion.... And to learn the intimate workings of this production, these ruptures of meaning that are auto-foundational of existence — poetry today might have more to teach us than economic science, the human sciences and psychoanalysis combined.

Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm*, p. 21^{ccxcv}

Guattari is speaking of what he calls ‘the apparatuses of subjectivation’.^{ccxcvi} In his radical psychoanalytic practice, for which he coined the term schizoanalysis, he worked with a plural and polyphonic cartography of subjectivity (following Mikhail Bakhtin) against the ‘traditional systems of binary determination’.^{ccxcvii} Schizoanalysis is an ethico-aesthetic practice that allows, not the ‘transferential interpretation of symptoms as a function of a preexisting, latent content [as in psychoanalysis], but the invention of new catalytic nuclei capable of bifurcating existence’.^{ccxcviii} As in the creative processes of art, writing, music, schizoanalysis seeks to rupture old dysfunctional and hegemonic forms of subjectivation to allow unheard, unknown rhythms and polyphonies to emerge. In ruptures of sense, singularities, semiotic content as it fragments from context can ‘originate mutant nuclei of subjectivation’.^{ccxcix} The relationship between analyst and patient is like that between the creator and the interpreter or admirer of the work of art. The emerging subjectivity is freed by the poetic-existential catalysis to mutate, to bifurcate, to diverge from dominant classifications and ordering systems. Guattari proposes this ethico-aesthetic paradigm of subjectivity as a way of reviving the ‘three ecologies — the environment, the socius and the psyche’,^{ccc} and his collaborative work with Deleuze offers a toolbox for this purpose.

In Chapter two, we saw how Heian women lived intense and highly aestheticised lives within a closed and constricted social system, and how some of them created diaries and a work of fiction that performed a literary *décoverture* of desire in a hierarchical patriarchal society. Though the forms that subjectified Heian

women were dysfunctional and hegemonic, the selves that were unfolded and refolded within the labyrinthine social and material world they inhabited were, in their difference and repetition, plural and subtly polyphonic. The very repression and constriction of subjectivity and social life forged baroque sensitivities that were expressed in a complex and elaborately-folded origami of desire. As a Western woman living in a much more open and democratic society, I draw inspiration and joy from these songs performed in captivity. I have much greater freedom of choice than Heian women had, and my choices are shaped by unfolding the lines of desire and repression that determined my early life and subjectivity.

In this chapter, I experiment with a schizoanalysis of my family story and my part in it, using the concept of the Body without Organs (BwO), a Deleuzian figure for the field of immanence or plane of consistency of desire,^{ccci} which exists between, all around and within the organised social forms that subjectify us, and ‘offers an alternative mode of being or experience (becoming)’.^{ccci} While the BwO, a process of continual becoming, desires escape from the systems of stratification on the plane of organisation, it must exist within those systems; if it seeks to destroy or break away from these binding forces entirely, it risks reterritorialisation or even destruction.^{ccciii}

Discussion of how the forces of subjectification worked and were resisted in my family prefaces a memoir called ‘Love’s last token: the desire for lost lives and origins’.^{ccciiv} It tells of my search for meaning within the family story, which has been narrated to me in stories told by my mother of my father’s family and origins and her experience of marriage, and is revisited through the relics I have of my grandparents’ and parents’ lives. When I say ‘search for meaning’ I am using traditional terminology, for my search has been structured in the past by the abstract machines of family, sexual and parental love within the cultural institution known as the bourgeois or nuclear family. These subjectifying forms have proved dysfunctional, and in my growing understanding of the repetitive pattern of their failure in my parents’ and my life, I have turned to the ethico-aesthetic paradigm of plural and polyphonic subjectivity practised by Deleuze and Guattari. My search has been informed by the desire to find my own space, to revive my psyche, in a narrative that has been shaped by my parents’ desires and actions; but that space can only be created by rupturing the meaning they created, to

allow ‘mutant nuclei’ of subjectivity to emerge, mutate and become-different. I need to perform an autopoiesis of the self, to deterritorialise my subjectivity from within the exhausted arborescent representations of the bourgeois family.

I begin the story in the Riverina district of south-western New South Wales, on the black soil plains of Booligal, where my paternal grandfather took a leasehold of a few thousand acres in 1886. When his children grew older and needed more consistent education than could be provided by an intermittent supply of tutors and governesses, he bought a house for the family in the town of Hay and continued to work his property, riding a motor-bike into town at the weekends. Booligal is 78 kilometres (55 miles) from Hay, a much larger town which grew from a small river crossing settlement on the Murrumbidgee River in the 1860s to a town of 3000 in 1900.^{cccv} In the days of the Cobb and Co coaches, started in Victoria in 1853 by a partnership of four Americans, Hay became the headquarters of Cobb’s southern operation in Victoria and the Riverina.^{cccv} Booligal was part of the run north to Ivanhoe and Wilcannia on the Darling River, and had a population of 500 in this period, though the number shrank after 1914 when the motor car and the railway took over from horse-drawn coaches and it was no longer a staging post. It is now a hamlet with a population of less than 20, a hotel, a general store and a one-teacher primary school.

I drove through it on my return visit to Hay in 1996; I wanted to stop and search for my grandfather’s leasehold on the Lachlan River, ‘The Cubas’, as he called it, after the only trees that grew there. But I had only two days to spare, a set itinerary and a limited budget, and I wanted to research the local newspaper and other historical records in the Hay library, and look around the town. So I had to content myself with a swift drive to Booligal and back. I stopped and took a photo of the derelict One Tree Inn south of Booligal, and remembered my father’s story of how the One Tree Plain became treeless. The inn was a staging post for the Cobb and Co coaches; the guests used to complain about the flock of galahs, who settled in the tree in hundreds at night, screeching and chattering, and woke everyone at dawn as they took flight. One day an old swaggie turned up at the hotel. He told the licensee he could get rid of the plague for everyone. Before sunset, he climbed the tree and, working from the top down, painted all

the branches he could reach with glue. In the morning, when the galahs took flight, they took the tree with them.

Their (fictional) line of flight, the physical loss of the tree (which was actually destroyed by a bolt of lightning) deterritorialised the One Tree Plain and its identity is now defined by the absence of one of the features that made it habitable and distinct from the seemingly limitless spaces around it. It has reterritorialised as a space of loss, of absence. What remains is the derelict inn, a memorial to a past time when travel was slower and more uncertain and people more dependent on such outposts of hospitality and shelter. My family story resonates with this treeless plain, this broken building, this story of loss. Behind, within and around these remnants of subjectification is the infinite plane of becoming, of desire, the Body without Organs.

Hay and Hell and Booligal

And people have an awful down
upon the district and the town
which worse than Hell itself they call;
in fact, the saying far and wide
along the Riverina side
is ‘Hay and Hell and Booligal!’

.....

Just now there is a howling drought
that pretty near has starved us out —
it never seems to rain at all;
but, if there should come any rain,
you couldn’t cross the black-soil plain
you’d have to stop in Booligal.

We’d have to stop! With bated breath
We prayed that both in life and death
our fate in other lines might fall:
‘Oh, send us to our just reward
In Hay or Hell, but, gracious Lord,
Deliver us from Booligal!’

AB (‘Banjo’) Patterson^{ccecvii}

It was here, between Hay and Hell, that my father Eric began his life and spent his childhood years. It was here that his dreams of a property on the river where he would raise merino sheep for fine wool were formed. In Hay, his education, which had been retarded by frail health in childhood and intermittent tuition, finished at Intermediate level (equivalent to Year Ten now in the Australian education system) at the age of nineteen. His family story was very different from that of my mother's family. She came from Wollongong, a large port city, a centre of coal-mining, steel and dairy-farming industries, on the coast of New South Wales, south of Sydney. Anne was a highly educated woman, a Bachelor of Arts from Sydney University, majoring in English and Latin. Her father was the editor of Wollongong's newspaper, *The Mercury*, and her mother was a housewife. Both she and her sister had a tertiary education, which was unusual for a woman in the early 1900s. Her younger brother became a journalist, which she also wanted to be, but her father thought this an unsuitable career for a woman, and so she became a teacher.

The parental narratives that framed my childhood were: my mother's narrative of the grazier's wife and mother of a large family in an isolated rural place, which became the narrative of the deserted wife struggling to bring up her children and keep the farm going; and my father's narrative of the struggling grazier on a marginal sheep farm on the arid Hay plains, which became the narrative of the unjustly condemned and exiled husband and father. Desire, in this story, was a source of disappointment, betrayal, heartbreak and loss. The story has been recorded in my mother's memoirs, my own memories, and in my conversations with my father when he was an old man. Their stories were set within the older colonial narrative of my grandfather's migration to Australia and his life as a jackeroo and pastoralist in the outback, as told in his journal and other family histories, and in the stories told by my mother of the Hay district and my father's family. I add my own frame to this *mise-en-abîme* by telling the story of the stories.

Anne had come to Hay to teach at the high school in 1923, and met Eric soon after. They were, she said, 'accepted everywhere, from the beginning, as destined to marry, and we accepted it ourselves; it had a fatal inevitability about it, although he had no prospects.'^{cccviii} Anne shared Eric's dream of a life on the land, despite their different

backgrounds. Before she settled with my father, she requested a transfer to Wollongong to spend a year with her recently widowed mother. Anne and Eric married at the end of 1925, when Anne was 30 and Eric was 27. By the time she joined him, Eric was established on Thononga, a small property on the Murrumbidgee River, about 25 miles east of Hay. In 1930, the continuing drought and the Great Depression forced Anne to return to teaching in Hay and hire a maid to look after her two small children, aged 31 months and 11 months. Eric took a job as a jackeroo on the neighbouring stud station, and visited her and the children at the weekends. Her pay cheque shrank, as the government under J T Lang, the Labor prime minister (in Anne's words) rode 'a wild course which eventually left the government flat on its back, unable to pay its public servants and forced to close the Savings Bank'.^{cccix} Anne contemplated moving from the flat she rented in my grandfather's house to cheaper rooms, but he reduced the rent; she cut down on the cost of domestic help by leaving my sister, the younger child, at the maid's mother's house during school hours, and putting my brother in the crowded kindergarten. Anne returned home to Thononga in 1934, when the seasons were briefly better; by then, she was pregnant again. In 1947, when I, the fifth and last child, was seven years old, just as the seasons were turning good again, Eric left the property and his family; the catalyst in his leaving was an affair with the cook on a neighbouring property.

Eric returned to Thononga in 1955, when I was away at boarding school, and took possession of the farm, to which he had kept the title. My mother fled, assuming 'that he had come home to live on us'.^{cccx} In fact, he was living in a de facto relationship and wanted to sell the property so he could establish his new family more securely. My parents were not formally divorced, and he was responsible in the terms of their separation for paying Anne a living allowance (he had been getting the income from the property) and the children's school fees. Divorce ensued, and a property settlement which awarded Anne a one-third share of the sale proceeds — an amount insufficient to live on or provide another home for herself and her still dependent children. She returned to teaching, and the year after leaving the farm, when she was 60, she came to my boarding school as senior mistress of English and Latin.

My purpose here is to unravel the threads of my family story and look at them through the lens of desire, of becoming. What were the lines of being that described and intersected the planes of existence in my parent's lives? What were the molar or ordering lines, what the molecular lines of change, and what the lines of flight that destabilised and destroyed the settled plane? What Body without Organs, or plane of desire, suffused my parent's existence? What ideals or abstract machines informed the assemblages they constructed on the plane of their organised lives?

In my Master's thesis I theorised my parents' story in different terms, using Foucauldian post-structuralist theory; now, I feel the need to go beyond that analysis. I need to talk about desire, a term almost absent from Foucauldian discourse, which I found 'simplifies the discourse of sexuality, reducing it to the level of bodily sensations and behaviour, just as he reduces family life to the interplay of power and pleasure'.^{cccxi} Foucault's analysis of the incestuous construction of the bourgeois family does not consider the emotional force of the desire to find love, or the possibility of changing the way our lives are constructed within society, except in limited ways of resistance. Luce Irigaray critiques Freudian theory for its exclusion and censorship of female desire and the pre-Oedipal bond with the mother; this deconstruction is her foundation for 'conceptualising a world in which a heterosexual woman can be both mother and lover, and relate to a man without loss of desire and self-love.'^{cccxi} I thought, when I finished my dissertation, that her project would offer a positive way of becoming a desiring woman. However, I have not found that Irigaray's work, which focuses on the ethics of sexual difference and on developing a language that anticipates a way of loving, a wisdom of love, offers me a practical and liveable way of living differently now.^{cccxiii} Her Utopian picture of love between two self-realised beings seems to me yet another myth of desire. 'Becoming means to accomplish the plenitude of what we can be. This trajectory is, of course, never achieved ...'.^{cccxiv} Fulfilment, self-realisation, as I read her philosophy, is postponed, located in the beyond, outside of our human lives, on the transcendental plane, an absolute state, while the individual remains in a state of division, loss, lack.

I choose Deleuze and Guattari as my mentors in this enquiry because I find their approach combines a stoic materialist view of existence with a desire for difference and

experimentation; one that offers me a creative way of becoming different within an immanent universe, of living the polyphonic poiesis of existence in a continuous process of becoming.

The story of my family is predominantly my father's story, at least until he left, because his narrative formed the warp in the patriarchal fabric and my mother's narrative was the weft. Eric's father, Antonio George Houen, was born in England in 1860 and came to Australia to be a sheep farmer in 1877.^{ccccv} He was endowed by his father, a wealthy Norwegian merchant, with an interest free loan of £10,000 sterling, which was converted to a gift with an added £3,000 on his father's death. He took a position as a jackeroo on a large sheep station, Illillawa, in the Hay district. The position of jackeroo was like an apprenticeship in farming; the trainee lived at the station homestead and took part in the family and social life; he worked on the property for a small wage, if any, and his keep. Illillawa was a large merino stud extending over 150 square miles, employing about 100 workers, and had an extensive river frontage on the Murrumbidgee; it was later divided up, and the property my father bought was part of that land. The rich alluvial flats along the river yielded, beyond the river bend, to arid plains with few trees; sparse and unreliable winter rains were supplemented by artesian bores; temperatures could rise to 122 degrees F (50 degrees C) in the summer, with hot winds and sometimes blinding dust storms. The average rainfall was 13 inches per year, or 325 mms.

George's journal ends in June 1878, and we know nothing of his life after that until 1886, when he took up a conditional lease of a few thousand acres in the Booligal district, near the Lachlan River. My mother writes of his time as a lessee in her memoir. George fell in love with and married the beautiful daughter of a neighbouring squatter who was a renowned stud breeder. George was, it seems, modestly successful as a sheep farmer. He held the land under a system called Western Land Lease, a tenancy under the Crown with a limited term, at the end of which the land had to be surrendered and re-let. Although the leaseholder would be compensated for improvements (which, Anne says, were reputed in George's case to be the best in the Western District) this was a meagre allowance based on the condition of the fences and buildings at the time, rather than their original cost. The lease could be sold at a price of eighteenpence per acre for each

year the lease had to run; when George sold his leasehold, he got only £5,000. Anne's judgement is that he was foolhardy in spending so much money and effort for a poor return. The system of Western Land Lease came to be seen as a bad one, and was altered in the 1930s to perpetual leasehold, which, Anne says, was 'as good as ownership'.^{cccxvi}

Eric was the fourth of four sons born in four years, and was treated as a delicate child, and according to Anne, indulged by his mother Lillie. When it became obvious that all the boys were behind with their education, Lillie persuaded George to buy a house in town so the boys could go to school and prepare for their examinations. Eric's two surviving older brothers (the eldest, a banking trainee, died at the age of 19 from a pneumonic influenza epidemic) matriculated and went on to qualify in law and medicine. Eric, after completing the Intermediate exam at the age of 19, took a job at a stock and station agent's in town. He found an acreage on the river, twenty-five miles east of the town, and borrowed the money to purchase it; his father advanced the money for stocking it with sheep. Anne remarks:

... [L]ooking back dispassionately on our financial position and prospects, it seems extraordinary that we ourselves and those who helped us to settle in on Thononga could ever have expected us to succeed... [W]ithout irrigation nothing could be done with our pastures.... Everyone must have known that Daddy had nothing; it was also common knowledge that Grandfather was near the end of his resources. I don't know how anyone, even I, could have thought we had a chance, but no one tried to stop us.... [I]t was drought-time, and Grandfather, according to Daddy, was borrowing freely for himself on the security of the sheep; so early in 1926 ... it was decided that Grandfather should withdraw, and that arbitrators ... should determine the position of their tangled finances.^{cccxvii}

There is a pattern of diminution of material prosperity and reputation in the three generations of the Houen patriarchy that my mother entered when she married my father. Great-grandfather Anton Christian Houen was a wealthy and successful merchant; he had gone from his birthplace in Norway to Europe to gain experience in importing and exporting, and settled in England, then later in Italy, where he owned two large estates, and was knighted for services to the king of Italy; he left a large fortune, part of which was divided among his family and the major part of which was left to the arts and to charities in Norway. Neither of his sons (the younger son also came to Australia and became a sheep farmer) was able to establish a fortune or a reputation

outside his own immediate circle. Grandfather George's lifestyle was modest, and his ability to educate his sons and establish them in professions limited. The family romance of life on the land, translated into a colonial setting in the outback of Australia, was attenuated and reduced by the contingencies of the climate, the economic conditions, and the personalities of the dreamers. Anne comments in more than one context that George was regarded as extravagant and incautious in his financial management. My father set out to prove himself on the land, perhaps believing he could achieve more than his father had. But the marginal nature of the small landholding (under 6,000 acres to begin with) the aridity of the land without irrigation, the fact that he started out owing a large amount of money, all compounded by persisting drought and the Great Depression, meant that his dreams were doomed to fail.

It was not only the dream of material success and reputation as a woolgrower that failed; it was the dream of the bourgeois family. I have analysed the bourgeois family in Foucauldian terms as a fundamentally perverse construction, and used Freud's theory of the formation of heterosexual desire to argue that heterosexual relations in the bourgeois family are contingent on the dynamic of incestuous desire, as well as being asymmetrical and hierarchical.^{cccviii}

The form of the family which we call the bourgeois, nuclear or traditional family has at its centre the monogamous couple, with dependent children, isolated from kin and community to a much greater degree than in early modern times.^{cccix}

In my family's case, this isolation was compounded by their choice of a home 25 miles from the nearest town of any size, five miles from the nearest neighbour, and over 500 miles from my mother's family. For much of the 25 years of their marriage, they were not only without electric power or telephone, but also without a vehicle other than a horse-drawn sulky. Eric was a naturally gregarious man, who was drawn into town or to the neighbour's stations by his social needs. His frequent trips away from home and his duties were rhizomatic lines branching away from and disrupting the molar, arborescent lines of family and work, connecting him with other assemblages. Anne considered that he neglected his duty and his family life; this was a pattern she observed early in their marriage, when she was working in town, before he began work on the neighbouring station:

As an employee, Daddy was a capable and conscientious worker; self-employed, he simply wasted his time. He would appear on Friday afternoon, mean to return to Thononga on Monday morning, and find, each morning and afternoon until Wednesday afternoon at the earliest, urgent reasons for going downtown, where he idled the hours away in endless yarning. Needless to say people gossiped about his leaving the breadwinner's duty to me, and I was concerned not for us but for him; I couldn't stand the worry of knowing him so feckless. But apart from the periods when there was inescapable work to be done, this was to be the pattern of his life; things might have been very different if he had been in some employment and I could have supplemented his earnings.^{cccxx}

One of her favourite epithets for him was a 'flash-in-the-pan'. After he left, she pointed out to me all the things he had neglected — the broken-down machinery such as the electricity generator, the fences that needed repair, the rusting tractor and plough and the broken irrigation pump that he had used, for a while, to grow a crop of wheat in the home paddock. When he began an affair with the cook on a neighbouring property, he was away from home more than he was there.

Anne was more introverted and reserved than he was, and although she loved intelligent conversation, had neither the desire nor the means (she could not drive a car or a sulky or ride a horse, and only learned to drive after my father left) to wander from home to find company. She was a conventional wife of her time in that she worked indoors, cleaning, cooking, mending, sewing, and overseeing her children's education (which was conducted by Correspondence lessons during primary school years); while my father and my brothers, when they were old enough, did the outdoor work. Her rhizomatic lines of becoming, between the molar lines of her duties, were mostly on the mental plane: the newspapers with the cryptic crossword delivered twice a week to our nearest siding by the small motor train from Hay, books from the circulating library, the ABC on the wireless, the occasional visitor with whom she could converse. As their circumstances got worse, and she became more discouraged by Eric's behaviour, she must have dreamed of escape, of a line of flight. She tells a story in her memoir of a woman who was married to a man who lived in the Booligal district in my grandfather's time there. He had a reputation for bad temper and was known as 'Bloody Waugh', as distinct from 'Civil Waugh', his brother. She had come from a well-to-do family in Sydney. One day she decided she had had enough, and packed some clothes for herself

and her children into a dress-basket, and carried it, walking with her children, to the front gate of her property, where she waited for a lift into Booligal and thence on to Hay and Sydney. Anne comments:

Having often walked round for days on end, mentally packing suitcases, and deciding each time, in an era of cars and trains, that we couldn't do it, I am always impressed, when I think of this story, by the thought of what she must have been through, before she took this amazing step.^{cccxxi}

The segregation of labour, which was a common pattern in the traditional family both in Europe and in Australia,^{cccxxii} disadvantaged Anne when my father left, and she had to learn (at the age of 52) to drive a vehicle and take on all the outside work. Wally Seccombe describes how bourgeois ideology entails idealising the home as a sanctuary from the world of commerce and industry and as a place where the ethical values of love, devotion and loyalty are fostered. In that sanctuary, woman as nurturer has the primary domestic role in practising and teaching these virtues and, although the man's daily absence leaves her in charge, she is responsible to him.^{cccxxiii} Once my father left, that changed in that she had to take on his roles as well; nevertheless, he was landlord *in absentia*, taking the income from the property, and she was answerable to him for its management.

What, then, were my parents' dreams, separately and together? They shared the dream of life on the land, as Anne says: 'The whole venture was, I think, typical of me — it was what I wanted Daddy to do, and it had to be on the river.'^{cccxxiv} Despite the 'fecklessness' Anne describes, Eric did try, at least when they were together on the property, before he lost interest in making a go of it, to realise their dream of a self-sufficient life and a healthy flock of sheep with fine wool. Anne describes how he established the front lawn, enclosed by a hedge, and planted an orchard, vegetable garden and flower beds. There was a tall shapely cape lilac tree that spread over the front lawn and sheltered the house; outside the hedge, the citrus orchard was watered by drains, which also fed the orchard of apples and stone fruit on the east of the house. Beyond the garden borders, between the house and the river, he built a shearing shed with timber acquired from pulling down a cottage and outhouses on a small property he bought north of the railway line; he carted the timber on a dray pulled by horses. He also built a hut for shearers' accommodation and an engine shed. I remember the garden, in

my father's time, as fertile and productive of fruit and vegetables, as well as abundant in flowers and ornamental trees and shrubs. The house was basic, two bedrooms and a living room and small kitchen, with wide verandas front and back. Anne describes how, when she first went there, the bathroom was an open-fronted shed on the river bank, with a bath and shower, but no hot water; when she inherited some money from a family estate, she used most of it to extend the house, adding a kitchen and bathroom, and enclosing the verandas with louvres; later, my father made canvas blinds for them, so that they were comfortable for sleeping. The house was, for me, a perfect and comfortable shelter, set in a Paradise garden in the wilderness. As Dorothy Hewett says,

The first house sits in the hollow of the heart, it will never go away. It is the house of childhood become myth, inhabited by characters larger than life whose murmured conversations whisper and tug at the mind.^{cccxxv}

The fertile garden enclosing the small house, with the acreage beyond and the animals that grazed on the pastures, was the territory of my parents' life together, and my siblings and I shared it with them; our lives there, and the tools, plants and animals that sustained them, were assemblages on the plane of organisation. It was made by their desire for a healthy and productive haven in a harsh landscape. Our life on the land was a stratification shaped by cultural and social beliefs and values and by the environment. Behind, within, between and all around was the pre-cultural, pre-social, implicit field of immanence, of desire, the Body without Organs. A BwO is

necessarily a Place, necessarily a Plane, necessarily a Collectivity, (assembling elements, things, plants, animals, tools, people, powers, and fragments of all of these; for it is not "my" body without organs, instead the "me" (*moi*) is on it, or what remains of me, unalterable and changing in form, crossing thresholds).^{cccxxvi}

Although our lives were assembled on the BwO, we as subjects, 'articulated and organised organism[s]'^{cccxxvii} lived folded lives, in shapes determined to a large extent by the abstract machines or ideals of rural bourgeois capitalism and the nuclear family, as well as by the natural forces of environment and climate.

The BwO, as Kylie Message explains, 'exists within stratified fields of organisation at the same time as it offers an alternative mode of being or experience (becoming)'.^{cccxxviii} My parents' BwO was a smooth space composed within the striated

space of the plane of organisation, the rural life of a bourgeois family. It existed behind the 'me' of each person who inhabited the space. It was a collectivity on which were assembled plants, animals, tools, people, house and sheds. It still haunts my memory and my dreams, as it did my father's when I visited him, an old man of 95, recovering from an amputation of his leg. He talked to me for hours of Thononga, how he had added to the landholding, built the sheds, made the garden and the orchard. The garden and buildings are no more; my story, 'Return to Arendal', tells how, when I visited the property in 1996, I could not recognise the place at first.^{ccccxix} The cottage we lived in was gone, and there was another house outside where the original garden had been; the hedge, the orchards, the cape lilac tree, were no more, the sheds had disappeared. It was only when I found, near the river bank, the rusted remnants of the vanes and the timber from the windmill that had pumped up water from the river for the house and garden, that I felt I had found the ghost of the lost dream of our life. It was in fragments, destroyed by time and by the violent swinging of my parents' BwO between the plane of desire and the plane of organisation.

My parents had constructed a shared field of organisation, a body *with* organs, made up of bourgeois marriage and life on the land; these were situated within the milieu of Australian middle class society in a rural setting. To put it another way, their origami of desire was folded in the shape of a monogamous couple at the centre of a family in a rural haven, a fragile space of order and fertility in an environment that had rare good seasons in a predominantly harsh and hostile climate. The forces from outside that particularly impacted on my parents' stratified body were the fierce and unrelenting droughts and the Great Depression. These forces destabilised the balance of their BwO, and produced a reactive movement of deterritorialisation in my father, who eventually took a line of flight in the form of an affair and the desertion of his family. This line of flight emerges from the institution of the bourgeois family and is predicted in the triangulation of desire that constructs the wife as passive and maternal, the guardian of the man's embodied archaic bond with the (castrated) mother, and the other woman as desirable, the representation of his potent pre-Oedipal desire.^{ccccxxx}

As Deleuze and Guattari remind us continually, great caution is needed when we dismantle the settled forms of our existence:

You don't reach the BwO, and its plane of consistency, by wildly destratifying.... [T]he BwO is always swinging between the surfaces that stratify it and the plane that sets it free. If you free it with too violent an action, if you blow apart the strata without taking precautions, then instead of drawing the plane you will be killed, plunged into a black hole, or even dragged toward catastrophe.^{ccccxxi}

My father's actions may have seemed to him inevitable at the time, but the consequences were destructive for him and for his family. In effect, he blew the stratum of our life apart when he left, and though my mother managed to hold it together for a few more years, her hold was tenuous, undermined by her status as a woman who did not hold title to the property, and her precarious and conditional place on the material plane of law and finance. He, on the other hand, suffered the consequences of an unhappy second marriage and the condemnation of his actions by his family, from whom he remained estranged, for the most part, until his death, much to his bitter regret and resentment, as he told me when I visited him.

As well as the forces from without that destabilised my parents' BwO, there were internal fault lines in the very structure of their conjugal relationship. As I explained in Chapter one, what gives the Body without Organs unity is the abstract machine which is encased in the BwO and functions as the ideal of the assemblage on the plane of organisation. Their relationship, folded in the pattern of the bourgeois family, was held together and given meaning by the abstract machine of heterosexual desire. This desire is fundamentally incestuous. Foucault tells us that the family, in modern times, has become 'an obligatory locus of affects, feelings, love,' and the privileged site of sexuality.^{ccccxxii} The discourse of reproductive sexuality is the abstract machine or unifying ideal of conjugal monogamy in modern times. Foucault analyses how sexuality has become confined within the parental bedroom of the conjugal family and absorbed into the central function of reproduction. The multiple, shifting forms of sexuality are concentrated and confined within the relationship of the monogamous couple. Behind the figure of the reproductive pair is the forbidden form of incestuous desire, which is incited by the isolation and affective intensification of family life. This forbidden desire is denied and projected by the parents, and those who interpret their relation, onto the children. In Freud's account of infant development and the formation of subjectivity and sexuality in modern Western society, heterosexual desire is formed

by the repression of the child's incestuous desire for its parents in ways that result in the adult's choice of partner bearing the imprint of parental type. Incestuous desire is the repressed term from which the bourgeois heterosexual couple is constructed, and its exclusion ensures its subversive influence on the bourgeois marriage.^{cccxiii}

How did this work in my family? My mother's and father's relationship was more than usually isolated and confined within the conjugal home, because of the circumstances of their life. My father's sexual experience before marriage was negligible, by his own account; my mother was a virgin when she married. I know little of their sexual life together, except that they had separate bedrooms, and I rarely saw them show physical affection or embrace. Anne says in her memoir that the arrangement of only two bedrooms, one for each parent, shared, for dressing, with the children of the same sex, suited her, as she couldn't have borne sharing either a bedroom or a bed. Sex would have been something to be rationed and kept to a minimum, for fear of further pregnancies. Anne had five pregnancies, the first two close together; I was born when she was 45. When I was born, they had been through drought, the Great Depression and more drought, and Anne had a severe vitamin B deficiency after the birth; she could not breast feed me, and could only walk on the sides of her feet. She had to wear a broken down pair of old slippers, and was not able to go into town, until she cured herself by grinding wheat (grown by my father, irrigated by water he pumped up from the river) and making her own bread. Each pregnancy, particularly the later ones, would have put a great strain on her health and on my parents' ability to provide the necessities of life.

Life was hard and exhausting physically, in seasons that swung between bitter cold and frost in the winter and extreme heat in the summer, in a small house where heating and cooking was done by burning wood, the floors were bare, washing done in a copper in an outside laundry, ironing with a flat iron heated on the wood stove. Anne's sexuality was problematised not only by the conditions of her life in an isolated rural setting but by its inevitable construction, biologically and culturally, through the abstract machine of reproductive sexuality in the bourgeois family. Part of this construction was that a woman was chaste, virgin till she married, and mother to the children of the marriage and, Freud tells us, to her husband, who is attracted to her as a

substitute for his original object of love.^{ccccxxiv} Her own desire is ‘annihilated’, as Irigaray tells us, by the Oedipal process,^{ccccxxv} and she lives through her husband and children.

In this atmosphere, my father’s sexuality was no doubt confined and repressed much of the time. When I visited him for the first time 40 years after his departure from the family, he told me that the reason he had left was that my mother had talked to the wife of the manager of a neighbouring station (the one where the cook lived with whom he had an affair) about him and their sexual relationship; she had told this woman that he was ‘slow to get started’ when they had sex, and that he had sexually interfered with (‘gone down on the floor with’) my older sister. I have found this story difficult to accept, because I have no other evidence that it happened; no-one else in the family, including my sister, who died twenty years ago, and my mother, who talked freely to me of my father’s failings and the difficulties of their life together, ever mentioned it to me. This does not mean, of course, that it did not happen; it may be that she kept it a secret from us, but felt she had to talk to someone about it, someone outside the family. She did send my sister away for long periods to stay with my maternal aunt in Wollongong; the reason given was to allow her to go to primary school with other children. This arrangement was an unhappy one for my sister, and my mother told me that she discovered, too late, that my sister was not getting on with my aunt, and had shown signs of disturbed behaviour — lying and stealing money. So she brought her home, and some time after that, I am not sure when, sent her to board at a hostel in Hay so she could go to high school there. My eldest brother also spent some of his primary school years away from home, staying with my paternal uncle and aunt in Blackheath, in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales. The other two brothers boarded in Hay for the later years of primary school. I was sent to stay with my Wollongong aunt and attend primary school, but not for such long periods as my sister; I think that the longest was a period of two or three months, during the time when my father was having the affair, and my parents were at war with each other. These molecular lines branching from the arborescent roots of the bourgeois family were chosen for us by my mother, probably with my father’s consent, to allow us to escape, for a while, the hardship of our isolated and spartan lifestyle, and to have schooling and the company of other children our own

age. Perhaps it was more than this; perhaps the home seemed to her an unsafe place for young children, not just in terms of material security, but emotionally, psychologically.

I find it strange that my father should tell me something that put him in a bad light. His take on the story of incest was that it was untrue, and that he felt betrayed by my mother's false accusation to an outsider about his behaviour in their intimate relationship. I do recall my mother speaking of conversations she had with the neighbour during the troubled period of their relationship. I got the impression this woman had been a confidante of sorts, but I knew no details of their talks. My father told me that the reason that he felt compelled to leave was that he could not bear to stay with someone who had betrayed and slandered him in this way. He also said that he did not have an affair with the cook; that he used to visit the neighbours because he had to have someone to talk to, and that he did not get together with her until after he had left. However, I know that this is untrue; not only because of my own childhood memories of arguments between him and my mother, and of her getting me to read the imprints on a writing pad of words he had written to the other woman, but because my older brothers have confirmed my mother's version. They witnessed his association with the cook; one of my brothers has a memory of being met at the railway station by my father accompanied by the woman, and having to hang around while they spent time together. My father, then, was an unreliable witness, who had reconstructed the events leading up to his departure in a story that he no doubt believed. He had cast himself as the wronged party, betrayed by my mother's false accusations, condemned in a kangaroo court by his family, and exiled for the rest of his life. If he reconstructed the circumstances of his relationship with the woman who became his second wife, he may have done the same regarding his relationship with my sister.

My mother was a more reliable witness, in that I never knew her to make up stories about any member of the family or someone she had had a close association with. She had a reverence for truth, for understanding people's characters with all their faults and virtues. However, once offended or mistreated, she did not forgive easily. Moreover, she was inclined to be puritanical about sexuality, and to see excess or immorality in others if they behaved in a way she thought improper. In other words, I think she could have misinterpreted my father's naturally affectionate behaviour with

his daughter. I also think her desire for truth would have led her to challenge him if she formed an impression he had stepped over the line, and no doubt this would have caused conflict between them, whether it was true or not. The point is that whether or not incestuous desire was expressed by my father, his story suggests that it became an issue that drove a rift in my parent's marriage and the family life.

In Guattari's words, my father's story of imputed incest is a 'rupture of sense' in the fabric of the family story, a fragmentation that generated, in his account, his line of flight from family life. The question is not so much 'was it true?' for this is undecidable, but 'what effect did this belief have?' By his account, it effected his deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation in a second marriage within the pattern of the bourgeois family. Its effect was not liberating, it threw him 'out of the frying pan into the fire', as my mother was fond of saying. My sister, who kept in touch with my father and visited him when she returned to Australia from England, told me that his second wife was a harridan, abusive and complaining. He confirmed this when I talked to him, and with the benefit of hindsight, he said that my mother was a wonderful woman: 'I always loved her the best'. The effect of the rupture of sense for his first family is obscure, since the story of incest is not based on any evidence other than his words to me. The effect was catalytic, but not in a liberating way; because the stain of incest is part of the fabric of the bourgeois family and because of the secrecy and lack of evidence surrounding it in this instance (as in many family stories) its only possible effect was a re-subjection within the exhausted and dysfunctional patterns of the bourgeois family. For Eric's family, his desertion was not liberating, for there was no schizoanalysis possible, no awareness that the failure arose from the construction of the family as much as from personal failings and external stresses such as drought and The Great Depression. So no mutation occurred, just a rearrangement of existing patterns, with my mother assuming the roles of provider and de facto head of family and myself assuming the roles (as best I could, and at the cost of my childhood) of working partner and confessor to her grief, anger and regret.

Eric also told me that he had returned to take possession of the property because he was informed by people in Hay that my mother was mismanaging and neglecting the property, and had been selling some fat lambs and other property clandestinely from

time to time. The latter I know to be true; she made no secret to me of her need to make some money in this way, because the allowance he paid (£16 a week, as I recall) was not enough to manage on. As for her mismanaging the property, I cannot judge; but I do know that, because the seasons turned good after he left, and we had a good wool crop for two successive seasons, sold for top prices (the price of fine wool reached £1 a pound toward the end of the 1940s), she was able to pay off a large debt. This debt had been engaged to restock the property after the loss of the flock through drought; the threat of foreclosure had been averted by the Rural Reconstruction Commission, who carried the debt until it was paid off. If she did neglect the property, it was not for want of trying to look after it; I remember well how hard she and I worked to keep things going, sometimes with help from my brothers, more often on our own when they were away at school or university, and finally by her alone when she sent me away to boarding school. She told me that my father had agreed to sign over the property to her if she brought up the children; but he went back on his word. So he is an unreliable witness, as we all are, but in his case, the witnessing of other members of my family corroborates my mother's story, at least in most respects. As for the story of incest, although he denied its truth, the very telling of it raises the speculation that it may have happened.

Freud would not be surprised by my father's story. He tells us how the little girl renounces her pre-Oedipal bond with her mother, transfers her desire to her father, and sees her mother as her rival.^{ccccxxvi} I remember my relationship with my parents as unequal. My mother, who, as I vaguely recall, cuddled and sang to me when I was little, became a severe and perfectionist parent as I grew older, and my relationship with her was ambivalent. This ambivalence increased when my father left and she had to assume many of his roles, including hard physical work in the paddocks and the infrastructure of the house, and I had to support her in carrying this burden. I was grieving for my father, and to some extent blamed her for his departure and my unhappiness and isolation.

My father I remember as affectionate and playful, though he had a hot temper and could be unpredictable. My bond with him was close, and I remember walking with him in the garden, playing and singing, and feeling intensely in love with him. I wanted

to marry him when I grew up. I have no memories of inappropriate sexual behaviour on his part, or of sexual feelings on my part towards him. But I have wondered whether it was me, and not my sister (or perhaps both) that my mother suspected him of having interfered with. It seems strange that his alleged sexual behaviour towards my sister should be raised as an issue so many years later; my sister was eleven years older than me, and I was seven when my father left. Perhaps my father changed the story when he told me of it, naming my sister rather than me, or leaving my name out of it (if there had been inappropriate behaviour with both female children) to avoid shame and embarrassment. This need not mean that he was guilty; it may have been a projection of my mother's own denied and repressed sexuality (which fits with Foucault's analysis of how incest is both forbidden and demanded in the bourgeois family).^{ccccxxvii} She seemed obsessed with the possibility of sexual misbehaviour by me and my brothers; she was quick to punish what she saw as inappropriate self-touching, and, as we will see in an excerpt from my memoir of childhood in Chapter five, she insisted at a certain time (when I was less than five years old) that I move from the bed on the veranda where my brothers slept to a little alcove off her own room; boys, she explained, were not to be trusted. Then again, this may have been a defensive response on her part to the infringement of the incest taboo that she had already witnessed in our family.

For my grandparents, conjugal monogamy in a rural setting had been the collectivity on the plane of organisation that they constructed and lived within in the milieu of the late Victorian/Edwardian era of colonial bourgeois society. Their marriage 'till death us do part' was closer to the traditional pattern, in that they remained together and, as far as I know, faithful to each other. My grandmother died after a heart attack at the age of 56; it seems her health had been worn down by her hard life childbearing (four sons in four years, followed by a girl) and housekeeping without modern conveniences or household help, except from the children and the occasional governesses. My grandfather had her tomb inscribed with an epitaph that spoke of his 'true love' for her, as referred to in the title of the memoir included in this chapter. Of course, the official story may not have been the true one. It may have been a marriage fraught with conflict and unsatisfied

desires, cut off by her death and idealised by her husband. But I have no evidence of this.

The pattern of a marriage for love was continued by my parents, but their marriage did not survive the stresses they were subjected to. The reasons for this are many and complex, but can be explained in part through the theories of Foucault, Freud, and Deleuze and Guattari. The latter have stringently criticised Freudian theory as a totalising and anthropomorphising discourse that interprets all our images and desires in terms of gendered sexuality, and reduces desire to the Oedipal triangle.^{cccxxxviii} The bourgeois family is a territorialisation of desire, fixing it, classifying it, regulating it, as Foucault would agree. In Deleuzian terms, the natural response to this sedimentation of desire on the plane of organisation is to seek a line of flight, to breach the wall so that flows can move.^{cccxxxix} In Deleuze and Guattari's later work, the revolutionary flavour of this analysis was tempered by an emphasis on the need for caution and patience in the destabilising process.

The irony of my father's story is that, in escaping from the prison that his marriage and life on the land had become, he reterritorialised — he married, had a second family, and lived a life of struggle as a small farmer. Moreover, as he and my half-brother told me when I visited him as an old man, he was unhappy in his marriage, for his wife (deceased when I saw him again) was a scold, aggressive and abusive to him, far more difficult to live with than my mother had been. As told in my story, 'Return to Arendal', he regretted that 'it all went bung' and wished it had not happened the way it did.^{cccxi} As for my mother, though she remained bitter towards him and intensely critical of his faults and failure, she continued to refer to him as 'Daddy' and was known as 'Mrs Anne Houen' till the day she died, and did not form a relationship with any other man.

A further irony of my family story is that I went on to repeat the pattern of my parent's marriage, but in reverse; I married young, for security, not for love as they had done, and after thirteen years, my search for love led me into the line of flight of adultery. Two affairs in fairly quick succession were the catalyst for my husband's pre-emptive actions in taking our children out of the country without my knowledge or consent, and so I became a 'deserting wife and abandoning mother', as he called me.

This story is told in my autobiographical novel, 'Desire's web', a work in progress. The territory of the conjugal family became for me, as it had for my father, a prison from which I sought to escape. Like him, my adultery precipitated a 'black hole' that nearly destroyed me and shattered the happiness, security and safety of my children's lives. The lesson has been hard, and my writing and research are an attempt both to understand the events that have shaped my life and to construct a BwO of desire that swings, not wildly but gently, between the two poles of existence, the 'surfaces of stratification into which it is recoiled, and the plane of consistency in which it unfurls and opens to experimentation'.^{cccxi}

The memoir that follows^{cccxlii} opens with a brief prelude about my visit to my father 40 years after his desertion of the family; his gift of a Chinese vase that had been his mother's is the talisman I use for a journey back in time to the beginnings of my family's life in the Hay district. There I find my grandmother's tombstone in an obscure corner of the Hay cemetery, with an inscription that encapsulates the romantic myth of love 'till death us do part.' My grandparents' marriage was, it seems, a happy and devoted one, despite their hard life. My parents' was not, and my own experience of marriage has been a broken song, twice repeated. But love and marriage are just part of the story of desire, and my story will open out from that graveyard scene of separation and forgetting to a wider drama of struggle and loss in the pursuit of desire, explored in the following chapters.

Love's last token: the desire for lost lives and origins

An unhappy family revisited

In 1988, I visited my father in the central Queensland town where he lived, forty years after the last time I had seen him. I desired reconciliation and the restoration of the relationship that had been both the source of my greatest happiness and the destroyer of my childhood. I asked him why he hadn't replied to the letters and gifts I had sent him in the first few months after he left. He was unable to answer me, except to say he hadn't received my messages. His justification for cutting off contact and repossessing the property was a rehash of the long, rambling complaints he'd written to me in the last few months, since I'd broken the silence by writing to him. His letters were written at first on an old typewriter, in erratic, uneven lines, with gaps where there shouldn't have been. When his typewriter gave out, he wrote by hand, in spidery ghosts of the strong, distinctive characters I remember from childhood. I listened, but I resisted his words. His recollection of the past had great gaps in it. He'd re-written the story to fit in with his desire for justice and reconciliation with his family, making out he was the only wronged one.

When I was leaving, he gave me a Chinese vase that had belonged to his mother. I wrapped it in clothes, and brought it back to Perth in my suitcase.

Behind the scenes

The vase stood on the polished German piano with walnut inlays, another relic of my father's family. Both pieces were incongruously beautiful, exotic in our white-ant-eaten cottage. As a small child, I studied the pictures painted on the vase's bulbous belly, and wondered about the richly costumed figures. Two men pose on one side, one on the other. Their costumes, in colours of red, ice blue and biscuit, are decorated with gold and black. The styles are flamboyant — gathered culottes with sleek lower legs encasing well-muscled calves, long sleeves generously puffed above the elbow, or billowing round the wrist, embossed sashes sculpting the waist. The pictures tell a story of power, conflict and wealth. As a child, I had no key to decode this tale, so I made up my own plots. Now, when I look at it, I notice that the vase is feminine in its shape, with a

generous bowl, like a pregnant goddess's belly, surmounted by a slender torso sloping out, cut off at the shoulders to open into the belly below and accept offerings of flowers. This shape and the colour — palest peach — represent, for me, the hidden lives of the women and men who served and supported the powerful figures celebrated by the artist.

Michel de Certeau theorises that marginal groups of people in society find ways or tactics of disguising or transforming their desires so that they can have a secret or inner life behind the dominant structures of power imposed by elite groups in society. Thus they can be 'other' within the colonisation that outwardly assimilates them.^{cccxl}

To the ordinary man.

To a common hero, an ubiquitous character, walking in countless thousands on the streets. In invoking here at the outset of my narratives the absent figure who provides both their beginning and their necessity, I inquire into the desire whose impossible object he represents....

This anonymous hero is very ancient. He is the murmuring voice of societies. In all ages, he comes before texts. He does not expect representations. He squats now at the center of our scientific stages. The floodlights have moved away from the actors who possess proper names and social blazons, turning first toward the chorus of secondary characters, then settling on the mass of the audience.... Slowly the representatives that formerly symbolized families, groups, and orders disappear from the stage they dominated....^{cccxli}

I take the 'impossible object' of desire represented by de Certeau's common man [sic] to have many faces, according to the gender, culture and time of the 'absent figure.' But all the faces have in common the desire for representation and recognition. The Cantonese vase is a coded representation of the desires of a dominant class. For my grandparents, whose ancestors were from the European middle classes, it may have been an exotic representation of their desires for the elegance, wealth and power of the ruling classes. Behind the scenes, and suggested in the vase's shape and colour, I imagine the hidden desires of the marginalised groups supporting the upper classes and dominant gender.

In this essay, I identify, not with the primary characters, but with the ordinary women and men who are invisible in this scene. The vase is the talisman that empowers me to revisit my mother's stories, told to me as a child and recorded in her memoir, my father's fragmented narrative, and other representations I have uncovered. My desire is to re-connect my life, which was abruptly exiled from happiness and the context that

had given it meaning, with the story of my family's pastoral life and inglorious endings in the Hay district.

The missing figures

So the books for the Englishman, as he listened intently or not, had gaps of plot like sections of a road washed out by storms, missing incidents as if locusts had consumed a section of tapestry, as if plaster loosened by the bombing had fallen away from a mural at night.

Michael Ondaatje, *The English patient*^{cccxliv}

None of my grandparents was alive when I was a child. It was as if they were only characters in one of my story books. My parents occupied the centre of my universe, and the space behind them was empty. I missed out on a whole dimension of family life, knowing only those two adults thrown into painful relief against the empty outback horizon, driven apart into greater loneliness by their inability to share each other's disappointments, accept each other's limitations. And then, one day, there were no longer two, only one, and the aching gap where the other had been.

When my mother Anne was in her eighties, I gave her a thick exercise book, and asked her to write down her memories of our life, of our grandparents' lives. She had such a rich store of stories — I couldn't bear the thought of them being forgotten when she died. A day would come when she could no longer tell them. We'd all try and remember what she'd told us, and all we'd have would be fragments, broken pieces of a rich and intricate mosaic she'd been part of, and we'd only glimpsed.

Now, writing this, I find it hard to separate what Anne wrote, in old age, from what she told me when I was a child. Most of the stories she later wrote down for us were ones she had told us when we were young. Many of these stories had been gathered from my Great-Aunt Mary (my paternal grandmother's sister) and other members of the family, as well as other folk she knew. Anne had a wonderful memory for facts about people, details of their daily lives, and could make it all come to life as she talked or wrote. In her memoir, she often diverges into lengthy accounts of local people and

events that mean little to me, but through it all, there is an Ariadne's thread, a precious golden filament of words that tell something of the story of our family in that district. I pick my way through the labyrinth of the narrative of forgotten lives and the deeds of men to find a sense of origins that has meaning to the person I am becoming. What Anne felt was meaningful and important to record is not necessarily so to me, and I must search for fragments hidden by another's preoccupations.

Anne was a highly literate and well-informed person, who, in her isolated life in the outback, kept her intellect alive in whatever way she could. She listened avidly to the ABC, read the newspapers delivered by train twice weekly and books from the circulating library, and discussed current events and politics with any intelligent adult who came her way. She used tactics, as defined by de Certeau, to create opportunities for herself and her children to have an inner life within the place of the 'other'.

The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. It has at its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances. The 'proper' is a victory of space over time. On the contrary, because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time—it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized 'on the wing.' Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into 'opportunities.' The weak must continually turn to their own ends forces alien to them.^{cccxlvi}

Anne's daily life was a constant round of housework and caring for her family of husband and five children. Yet, within the 'proper' place of patriarchal pastoral life, in which labour was segregated and hard, in a harsh climate, and without the conveniences we now take for granted, she seized opportunities for nourishing her inner life, and for educating her children. She supervised our Correspondence School lessons, discussed world events, past and present, with us, read stories to us at bedtime, and made sure we listened to the ABC rather than to commercial stations. These were the tactics by which she sustained her intellect and spirit and nurtured her children's developing minds.

In her passion for telling stories of family members and local people, she stands between the folk role of hereditary storyteller and the more formalised one of local historian/biographer. Her knowledge of history and current affairs was overlaid on her interest in the minutiae of people's daily lives and relationships. Her retentive memory

made her an ideal storyteller, not unlike the old nurse who was able to tell John Aubrey, the seventeenth-century biographer, ‘the History [of England] from the Conquest down to Carl I. in Ballad’.^{cccxlvii} Anne’s literary skills enabled her to turn these tales into the more sophisticated and durable format of a memoir. Unfortunately, it is unfinished. A series of strokes rendered her right hand progressively more useless, so the writing deteriorates from a delicate upright script to a large, childish one, and the story tails off in mid-sentence. The later years on the farm after my father left, and most of the circumstances of his leaving, are left out of the narrative.

I often get frustrated when I read her memoir, because she says so little about her personal feelings and the everyday life we led in that isolated place. It’s as if she only respected people who had a name, who’d achieved something, and our life was too ordinary and sometimes too painful to record. The challenge facing all autobiographers is — how can I tell my story without being untrue and unjust? If I tell my truth, am I denying theirs, am I breaching the privacy of my family and running the risk of offending and embarrassing its surviving members? Paul John Eakin reflects on this ethical problem:

What is right and fair for me to write about someone else? What is right and fair for someone else to write about me?

Children *may be* “episodes in someone else’s narrative,” as Carolyn Steedman proposes, whether they like it or not; when children turned adults become the authors of such a narrative, however, it is a different story, and the tables are turned.^{cccxlviii}

In seeking to fill in the gaps, to go behind the scenes, I am telling a different story, making my mother and other family members episodes in my narrative. I am going against her own wish to keep within the family any criticism (whether explicit or implicit) of the actions of my elders. People’s failures and mistakes were recorded if they were not intimately involved with our lives. But as for our own struggles and losses, little is said in her memoirs. The record of our life has many gaps, like those in my father’s story of his leaving, like the missing characters in his type-written letters, like the empty space behind the masculine figures on the Chinese vase. So I have to use my imagination to fill in the spaces.

Anne was the storyteller in our family, the one who wove the weft of the present into the warp of the past, who gave us a sense of continuity in our mundane lives. When we thought our life was a struggle, she'd tell us of our grandparents, and of the order and symmetry they'd created from nothing. The fragments of the story of my family that are woven into this essay are a compilation of my memory of her oral stories, passages adapted from her memoir, and my imaginative reconstruction of some of the scenes in which her stories were gathered or told. I stand inside the place created in her memoir to stake a claim within the territory of my family story. My family story is a palimpsest, on which I write over the partly legible records of my parents and others.^{cccxlix}

The leaseholder and his wife

Who knows whether the best of men be known? Or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot, then any that stand remembred in the known account of time?

Sir Thomas Browne, 'Hydriotaphia or urne buriall'^{cccl}

Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Sir Thomas Gray, 'Elegy written in a country churchyard'^{cccli}

I revisit Hay, seventy-two years after my grandmother's death, a year after my father's. I search for her grave in the cemetery without success. At last I find an old man limping around the graves. He is the first person I speak to who remembers my family. He leads me to the section where her grave is. It is marked by a stepped arrangement of marble slabs, with the epitaph:

In memory of Lillie Houen
Beloved wife of George Houen
Died Aug. 27 1924
'Love's Last Token'

Wordsworth's poem from which the epitaph is taken is an apology for the poet's inability to sing of flowers sketched by a lady who is an English emigrant living (and dying) in Majorca. He gracefully turns this into an imaginative comparison of the flowers with English ones. He imagines her choosing the sweetest flower and asking for it to be sent to her native land as 'true love's last token'.^{ccclii}

My grandfather, I believe, knew this poem, and chose the closing phrase as Lillie's epitaph because of its resonances with her name, with his image of her as an elegant cultivated flower that had bloomed and died in an environment unlike that of her British parents, and with his desire to create for her a memorial to their love. Sadly, they were separated, not only by her death, but by his later death and burial far from her.

I gaze at my grandmother's tombstone, wondering what sort of woman she was, so loved by her husband, separate from him in death. My grandfather's grave is not here. He died in Adelaide at the age of seventy-two, in 1933; he had gone there to live with his eldest son some time after his wife's death. The cause of his death was an attack of pneumonia, brought on by working all day on the roof of his son's house, installing an off-peak hot water system in a bitter wind.^{cccliii}

Antonio George Houen migrated to Australia when he was sixteen and worked as a jackeroo for a while on a large landholding named Illillawa, extending over 150 square miles, in the Hay district of New South Wales.^{cccliv} He arrived there in November 1877, on a day when it was 100 degrees fahrenheit (38 centigrade) in the shade.^{ccclv} The town site of Hay, at Lang's Crossing on the Murrumbidgee, had been surveyed in 1859.^{ccclvi}

Illillawa's manager had sent a band of station hands in an attempt to chase away the surveyors who came to mark out the site of the proposed town, which fell within the landholding of Illillawa.^{ccclvii} The resistance failed, and subsequently, Illillawa was cut up into many smaller leases.

The interior of New South Wales had been appropriated by squatters, who had no formal right to the land; but in 1840 a license fee of ten pounds sterling was introduced.

The Land Act of 1861, with various amendments, ... saw the democratic division of the massive early pastoral holdings to provide land for the increasing

number of aspiring land owners, many of whom had profited from the Gold rush in the 1850s, but who were unable to buy land.^{ccclviii}

In 1886, George took a lease on land in the Booligal district, and named it The Cubas.^{ccclix} In 1892, he married Lillie Nicholson, daughter of a pastoralist in the same district. Lillie's Scottish father was a renowned stud breeder, married to a spirited, lively Irish woman. My Great-Aunt Mary, Lillie's sister, told my mother and me many stories of the lifestyle their family had led, depicting it as farm life at its best. Their mother, Mary said, knew all the housewifely arts of preserving fruit and vegetables, curing meat, rendering fat to make soap and candles, sewing and needlework. In the afternoons, when all the housework was done, the girls and their mother would change and put on embroidered black satin aprons, intended to save their frocks from the threads of their sewing, in which they all excelled. I remember many beautiful embroideries Aunt Mary was working on when we called to see her on visits to town. Even in her eighties, she created exquisitely shaded roses and other garden flowers.

As her needle flew in and out of the linen, Aunt Mary described their kitchen.

'It was hung with bags of onions, bunches of herbs, flitches of bacon and hams. It was lined with bins. We kept flour and sugar in some of them. We'd fill the others with cakes and pastries we made on baking days. We had a dairy, a cream-house, fowl runs, kitchen gardens, an orchard. We had to produce nearly all our food on the place. We'd get stores of groceries out from Hay two or three times a year by bullock-wagon, but we produced all our own meat and dairy products, fruit and vegetables. We couldn't rely on the general store in Booligal. It was too far away, and transport was too slow. Besides, it wasn't refrigerated, and was poorly ventilated. It smelt like a dunny!' She wrinkled her nose in disgust, and laughed, her eyes creasing into dark slits behind her glasses.

'Mother and Father ordered household equipment in bulk from Anthony Hordern's catalogue three or four times a year. It was so exciting when the bullock tray arrived. It would be laden with supplies. Imagine it — there were baskets and barrels of goods, perhaps a clothes basket full of crockery, barrels full of sheets and other household linen. When I was small like you, Christina, the catalogue was my favourite

picture book. It was big, thick, and every page was covered with small pictures of the goods in stock. Even farm implements, harness, tools, barrows, sulkies....’

In my mother’s stories of my father’s colonial ancestors, she expressed admiration for their energy and enterprise, how they strove to reproduce the bountiful comforts of the life they’d known in their home country here, in this alien, harsh, intractable country.

‘They developed a style of house that suited the climate. The typical country home in the Booligal district wasn’t like ours. It had high ceilings, wide verandas and an arcade running through the centre.’

‘What’s an ah-cade, Mum?’ I said, only half-listening to her story, weaving pictures of her unfamiliar words into the drawing I was doing. She was a learned woman, who had no-one to talk to outside her family most of the time, and she talked to us as if we were grown up. Many of the words she used became part of my vocabulary long before I learned their proper meanings.

‘It’s a hall running through the centre of the house. It’s wide enough to live in. Cross draughts flow through it in the hot weather. There are wide doorways at each end, and the other rooms open onto it, so that cooler air from the shady verandas comes through. There’s gauze on all the doors and windows, to keep out insects—except for those tiny midges that cluster round the lamps at night.’

She paused to pour herself another cup of tea from the china pot. She made tea several times a day, and always drank two cups. ‘I longed to have a cellar underneath our house, like the big station homesteads did. When we first came here, I dreamed of us setting to work to dig one. I wanted a pisé house, too, like some of the ones I’d seen in the Booligal district.’

‘What’s pee-zay?’ I interrupted.

‘It’s like cement, only it’s made from mud that’s been dried in the sun. It makes a house that’s lovely and cool in summer, and warm in winter, and the walls are a soft earth colour.’ She stared into her cup, then put it down with a clatter on the saucer and picked up the sock she was darning.

‘Just think,’ she said, her needle moving in and out of the warp she’d woven: ‘the landscape round here—it must have looked eerie to a visitor from the coast. Imagine

how the first settlers must have felt, whether they first saw it in drought-time or when it was thickly covered with flowers and grass. They were used to green hills, woods, villages nestling in valleys, streams and rivers. Instead, they saw flat plain as far as the eye can reach, bare, except for the belt of trees following the river, spreading out to show how far the waters reach in flood-time. But they set to work to fence and build, dig and plant.

‘Think of the summers,’ she said, shaking her head. ‘They weren’t used to the heat and the dryness. The clothes they wore didn’t help. When I first came to Arendal in 1927, there were still old hands — fencers, shearers and the like — who wore flannel undershirts to sop up the perspiration. If they’d let the perspiration do its work, their bodies would have cooled down naturally, but they thought that would harm them.

‘Think of the women. Your great-grandmother and her sisters wore full cotton dresses, long and starched, covering the body up to the chin and down to the wrists and ankles. That’s how they dressed every day, while they did their work, cooking on hot wood-burning stoves, sweeping, scrubbing uncovered floors, washing in heavy galvanised iron tubs. The tubs had to be filled and emptied without running water. They boiled the white clothes in steaming coppers.’

‘Tell me more about Grandmother,’ I said, as I did pretend writing on the brown newspaper wrappers my mother had saved and cut open for me. I wanted to be literate, like her, to decode the mysteries of the written word, to have access to the world of books and writing. In this world where life was hard work, a daily struggle with the climate and the environment, reading and writing were the key to another world, a world of the imagination and the intellect and other more interesting ways of life. I was reared on a diet of fairy stories and tales of the imagination, and spun my own stories of magical worlds in my solitary play. I also observed how my mother was nourished by her reading, which connected her with the world beyond our empty horizon. Yet when I was quite small, I stood in front of her with hands on hips, and said: ‘I’m not going to University when I’m big!’ I resisted the hard work of education yet I longed for the fruits it would bring. Meantime, I filled endless scraps of paper with a spidery scrawl not unlike the one my father’s baroque hand turned into when he was old.

‘Well, Lillie’s parents were very sociable. They were hosts to many parties. People would come from all over the district, for picnics and tennis in the daytime. At night, they’d dance on the wide verandas and in the arcade. One of the daughters would play the piano; perhaps one of the men would play a mouth organ. Your grandfather used to exclaim over the burden of work for the women of the house, but I never heard Aunt Mary complain about that. She just spoke of the fun and romance of those times.’ She paused to break off a new piece of blue-grey darning wool, to finish the darn in my father’s sock.

‘I don’t know much about your grandparents’ life at The Cubas. Lillie died not long after I met her, so I didn’t have time to hear much from her, or get to know her very well. I know she and George didn’t keep open house like Lillie’s parents did, because George was reserved and aloof.’ She sighed, lay down her darning, and stared out the window at the cool umbrella of the cape lilac tree. Its new green leaves were mixed with fragrant clusters of lilac and white flowers.

‘Poor Lillie!’

‘Why, Mum?’ I paused in my scribbles. ‘What happened to her?’

‘Well, she bore four sons in four years, all in September or October. There was one more child after that, a girl — your Aunt Flora. Imagine so many young children to look after, in those conditions. I don’t think they had a servant. They had a succession of governesses, with gaps in between. The boys’ education got very behind, so Lillie persuaded George to buy a house in Hay so the boys could go to the local school. George kept The Cubas on for a few years. He used to ride a motor bike into town at the weekends, until his health got too bad.’ She put her darning down, stretched, took off her glasses and rubbed her eyes.

‘What about Grandmother?’

‘Lillie died in her fifty-sixth year. I think her heart was affected when her eldest son died of pneumonic influenza during the epidemic in 1919. He was an officer in the bank at Newcastle. He died alone at the weekend, and they found his body in his room, after he failed to turn up for work on Monday. Such a sad way to die! He was an extraordinarily handsome young man.’

My father, a young man of twenty-five, had come at dawn to the window of Anne's lodgings to tell her the sad news of his mother's death. The family's grief was intensified by the refusal of the Anglican rector to allow her to be buried in the Anglican cemetery, although she was a regular churchgoer and active helper. She had been baptised a Presbyterian, but after her marriage she'd supported, but not joined, her husband's church. So that's why I couldn't find her grave. I'd been looking in the Anglican section. Even in death, her place was ambiguous. As de Certeau says:

[T]he law of the 'proper' rules in the place.... It implies an indication of stability.... A *space* is composed of intersections of mobile elements.... In contradistinction to the place, it has thus none of the univocity or stability of a 'proper' place.^{ccclx}

Within the 'proper' place of the cemetery, marked out in denominations, she occupies an unofficial space, consigned to the Presbyterian section, though this was anomalous to the way her life had been lived. The institution of the Anglican church declared her an outsider.

Who was Lillie? A woman with the name of a flower, a mother of five children, wife of a pastoralist, an unofficial Anglican, who died at the same age that I was as I stood looking at her gravestone. She died, I think, worn out by her hard-working life in the outback, bearing and raising children without domestic help or modern conveniences. Almost forgotten, now, when all her children are dead. I can only know her as she is reflected through the lives of her husband and children, glimpsed fleetingly in the mirror of Anne's words, remembered in impersonal stone in an obscure corner of an outback churchyard.

The gifts

Though many of Anne's words didn't mean much to me as a child, I loved the sound of her voice, weaving a story of past times, people and places. That's why I wanted her to write them down, before they were lost forever. Her stories are a gift to me, as the Chinese vase is a gift from my father. His gift portrays an exotic scenario of male dominance and power, inscribed on a vase that, in function and shape, suggests the feminine body. His own life was the opposite, in most ways, of this representation; he died crippled and poor after a life of hard work and struggle and an unhappy second

marriage, always regretting, as he told me when I visited him for the second and last time, that his love for Anne and his children had gone wrong. 'It all went bung,' he said. When I look at the vase, I see, behind its seductive exotic beauty, the hidden story of my father's abandonment of his own heart's desires, and all the grief and regret that were the fruit of his and my mother's broken desires. I treasure the gift because, like the exercise book in which Anne wrote her memoirs, it connects me with my family history (herstory). Passing from Lillie's hands through his to mine, it carries me back in time to Lillie and her obscure life. It brings me back to Anne's delicate handwriting, which inscribes the daily lives and acts of Lillie and her husband, their children, the social world they inhabited. Though Anne's narrative emphasises the achievements of men, it has a sub-text of feminine strength, of the nurturing and civilising powers of women in difficult circumstances.

Though constrained and denied in this narrative of loss and disappointment, the hidden desires of women and children are expressed, as de Certeau reminds us, in disguised and secret ways. The inner lives of my grandmother and my mother and other women of their generations were not destroyed by their circumstances. Their love and strength transformed the lives of those around them, and without them, there would have been no property, no family, no inheritance of pride, strength, intelligence, love and endurance to be passed on to their children.

The spotlight moves to the anonymous supporting cast, and highlights the contribution they have made to the place that women occupy today, as well as the work still to be done.

Afterthoughts of a seeker

This memoir was at first written with little interpretation, and was rejected by a journal because, although it was deemed to have ‘great potential’, its theoretical insights were too latent for a scholarly journal. I did not want to make the theorising in it too overt; it was, after all, my story, and I wanted to tell it in a certain way. The form I chose was an elegiac memoir, with ironic undertones, and when I revised it, I added theoretical passages, in the voices of other scholars; in the published version, these voices are mostly confined to text boxes, so that there are two texts, the main text of the quest story, and the minor parallel text of the wider cultural meaning of this quest. In this version, I have chosen to integrate them more, to remove the visual disjunction of text boxes. The dialogue has become less formalised; in integrating the theoretical voices more with the personal voice, I have reduced the distance between myself and the theorists, and taken more responsibility for ventriloquising their voices. Thought, truth itself, is dialogic, as Socrates taught and Mikhail Bakhtin reminds us: ‘Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person; it is born *between people* collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction’.^{ccclxi}

My memoir is dialogic in its use of theory and histories of the Hay district and in its hybrid texture woven from several voices: my own (as an older woman searching for her origins, and as a child remembered), my father’s, my mother’s, my great-aunt’s, my grandfather’s, my cousin’s (in her cited papers on the history of my father’s family) and indirectly, my grandmother’s. I am not the first storyteller in my family. Many have written on the palimpsest of my family story that is recreated in part here. Much is unstated, as the long preface to this story reveals. There are many ways to tell a story, many stories hidden within a story. The theme of searching for my origins is presented as a weaving of memories, incidents and reflections that leaves many gaps and obscurities in the life narrative, as there are in my memory and the records I have of my family history.

When my mother wrote her memoir, she wrote her story of the failure of the dream she had shared with my father. They had seen ‘the good life’ as one of self-sufficiency on the land, of bringing up a healthy, well-educated family, and remaining in a monogamous relationship. Their ideas of identity were cast within the mould of

bourgeois society, as their parents' had been. The master narrative fragmented, and the identity that I began my life with had deep fracture lines in it. The origin of these fracture lines is in the narrative of my parents' and grandparents' lives.

My father's story, mostly elided here, is drawn from fragments, a bundle of letters I have kept, some typed, some handwritten, all difficult to read, and a few scrawled notes I made on my two visits to him. He tells the story of the failed head of the house, the exile who, at the end of his life, seeks to justify himself and repair his image. His focus is on his own achievements, the wrongs done to him, and his regrets. He is a latter day King Lear, old, poor, maimed and outcast, looking back on his life, reunited briefly with his daughter towards the end of it, but lacking Lear's ability to see how he has wrought his own ruin. His gift to me is the Chinese vase, which tells a different story, of the desires of his class, his ancestors, for elegance and wealth and power, and the hidden desires of the women and men who laboured to serve and support the dominant classes.

My mother's story is more extant than his, preserved in her memoir and her children's memories of her life and service as mother and de facto head of the family after my father left. She had nothing to apologise for when she reached the end of her life, though she always regretted she had not stood her ground when my father returned, by insisting on her right to stay on the property until he at least provided us with another home.

She is my mentor as a storyteller, in her clear-sighted observation of people and her compassionate, ironic voice, though her strong sense of privacy and fear of drawing the notice and censure of outsiders to family misfortune and failure sets a lock on her memoir, a lock which I have broken by my use of her writing to tell my story. This is an ethical problem faced by life writers who choose to tell the truth of their lives and of the others who have been part of them; telling too much can be as problematic as telling less than the truth, as Eakin argues.^{ccclxii} Nonetheless, my quest for meaning in my life and my family story leads me to make this breach of confidence, an ethical choice which I believe is justified by my own need to tell the truth as far as I can and to bear witness to the failure of a grand narrative, that of the bourgeois family held together by the abstract machine of reproductive sexuality.

My Great-Aunt Mary was a friend of my mother's; we used to visit her on our trips to town after my father left, and her storytelling of family life in her childhood was a highlight of the visits. She was seen by my mother as a reliable witness; often in her memoir Anne refers to her as an authority on details of the early lives of my father and his siblings and cousins. She was a model of a colonial pastoralist's wife and widow, a good mother and housekeeper, a skilled needlewoman, a person of strong moral character.

My grandfather, whom I did not know, was liked and respected by my mother for his strong, hard-working character, despite what she saw as his extravagance with money. She was also grateful to him for providing a subsidised rental apartment for her and her young children during the Depression. Anne had a great respect for my father's side of the family, and was in love with the romance of my great-grandfather, Anton Christian Houen, his fortune, his knighthood, his benevolence; he was a model of the Victorian patriarch, the wealthy and successful merchant who did much good with his money. Part of his estate was left to found a home for 'elderly retired gentlewomen of reduced circumstances' in Norway; large bequests were also left to the art gallery in Oslo, and scholarships endowed to send young Norwegian tradesmen to Europe for training as interior decorators. He also gave a large amount of money (the same amount as the King of Norway) to Fridtjof Nansen's expedition to the North Pole. All these stories, and more, were told many times by my mother. There is almost no information in her memoir about her own side of the family, though I know that she loved and revered her parents, but it seems she found her own family story less interesting than my father's. She is a daughter of patriarchy in her emphasis on the achievements of men, and she judged my father severely for his failure to live up to his father's and grandfather's examples.

My grandmother Lillie's story is almost wholly elided. I have a couple of copies of photos of her, and a photo I took of her tombstone. Other than that, I have only the Chinese vase, which was hers, and the few stories my mother was able to tell of her; she explains in her memoir that she did not know Lillie for long, as she died about a year after Anne arrived in Hay. Yet I felt very close to her when I wrote this story, and had a strong desire to know more about her.

For some of the historical material about the early colonial days of the Hay district, I am indebted to my cousin Pat Harvey, who has spent much of her retirement researching and writing up the history of my father's family. She has completed the mammoth task of translating from Norwegian my great-grandfather's travel diaries, and has travelled to Norway and visited people who knew of his life and the charities he endowed. She has, in a different way, carried on the tradition of the family historian.

For the theoretical passages in the memoir, I chose Michel de Certeau as the voice that speaks up for the 'the ordinary man' [sic] and hidden desires of those whose marginal lives are dominated by elite groups in society. De Certeau's concept of the tactics of the weak, who have no base of power, and manipulate time and events to win opportunities for self expression, enjoyment, pursuit of their desires, is one that I have found very apt for my study of desire.

As Eakin's citation of Carolyn Steedman reminds us, children are marginalised in their parent's narratives, but when they become adults, they can tell their own stories. My desire to learn to write, as narrated in the scene when I am listening to my mother's stories, was an early indication that I would take after my mother as storyteller and scholar. Though I have had far more opportunity than her to develop my education, my career as a scholar and writer has been interrupted by my own experiences of marriage and childbearing, and it is only now that I have won a space in which I can continue my storytelling. Yet I do not see that space as the 'place' that de Certeau describes, which is arranged with each element in its proper place, forming a stable whole — what Deleuze and Guattari describe as a stratification. A space, de Certeau tells us, is 'composed of intersections of mobile elements';^{ccclxiii} in Deleuzian words, it is formed on the run, along molecular or rhizomatous lines, branching and proliferating from the arborescent formation of the place. I do not see my life writing as conducted in a proper or organised place, as I said in the Introduction, because I am in enemy territory in writing of desire, which has traditionally been defined by men; I use language, which is arbitrary, and my existence is ephemeral, dependent on many circumstances I cannot control. I am a squatter on the plane of consistency, the plane of desire, staking a claim to a temporary lease of ground. I will have no perpetual lease, only a conditional one, but unlike my grandfather, who chose to ignore his provisional and limited lease of the territory and

improved the land to his heart's content, to his ultimate loss financially, I am aware mine is temporary and subject to loss and the erosion of time. I am both like and unlike my mother, whose tenure of the property and family home, her fragile occupation of the territory she and my father had staked out, was conditional on my father's tacit consent to her continuance there, and his withholding, for a time, his legal right to evict her. She knew our space was ephemeral, yet chose to live in the belief she could hold and secure it for us. I see how her loss of this dream was a tragedy from which she never recovered fully, and I live in the awareness of how the situations in which we live are haunted by the chaosmic immanence that underlies the complexity of our organised and subjectified lives.

The submersion in chaosmic immanence is always ready to exploit the slightest weaknesses. Its presence haunts, with more or less intensity, unstable situations — intolerable absence, bereavement, jealousy, organic fragilisation, cosmic vertigo.... The rituals of exorcism brought to bear on it can become refrains of fixation, reification, tenacious fidelity to pain or unhappiness.^{ccclxiv}

Or these rituals of exorcism, of which life writing is one, can become a schizoanalysis that re-enchants the plane of immanence, of desire, by performing an autopoietic 'pas de deux towards chaos' that captures 'the virtual lines of singularity, emergence and renewal' of subjectivity.^{ccclxv}

My father, who had perpetual lease, as good as ownership, of his land (and of his family) abdicated, but still claimed his patriarchal right to regain possession of the land and reap the profits. He did so, however, at the cost of his family; his last act of returning and evicting my mother was the nail in the coffin of his ex-wife's and children's respect and affection for him. It was this act that sealed my emotional rejection of his memory and my choice not to make any further attempt to contact him, until 40 years later when I had a change of heart.

The story of my father's desertion of his family and his alleged incestuous transgression of family bonds has been the hardest to make sense of. In fact there is no sense in it. Sense is ruptured, not by his adultery and desertion, which is predicted in the triangular construction of the bourgeois family, as I have indicated, using a Freudian-Foucauldian analysis, but by his story of the 'false' accusation of incest, though this, too, is predicted in the paradigm of conjugal monogamy. I use inverted commas because I

have no evidence that it was either true or false, apart from his word, which was unreliable, as shown in his fabrication of the story of his leaving in which he was innocent of adultery and unfairly judged and condemned by the family. The rupture of sense is not in the possibility that incest may have happened, but in the unknowability of it.

Ultimately, it does not matter whether it did or not, as far as my own life is concerned, but in another way, it matters greatly, for it would explain many things, including the rupture of my parents' love for each other, the failures of my own sexual relationships, the unhappiness and disappointment of my sister's life. Yet I must resist this explanation because I do not know if it is true or not, only that it was possible, even likely, given the construction of the family and the isolation and hardship of my parents' lives. The rupture of sense is welcomed by Guattari as an opportunity for new mutant subjectivities to emerge. And here I must look again for consolation to Deleuzian theory. Incestuous desire for the lost parent, repressed and projected onto the children in the bourgeois family, is the opaque, the obscure, the hidden term in the narrative. It is the 'off-stage or absent cause',^{ccclxvi} the empty square that paradoxically makes nonsense of sense and sense of nonsense, that circulates and sets the machine of the bourgeois family in motion by the elements that come to occupy it 'like the slipper or handkerchief passed around in certain games'; it is a non-signifying signifier, an active zero, a present absence.^{ccclxvii}

Alain Badiou, in his reading of Deleuze, concludes that the absent cause makes the structure (in this case the bourgeois family) to be 'only a simulacrum' that fabricates sense but does not contain it.^{ccclxviii} Badiou here is using the term simulacrum in the Platonic sense of a copy of a copy, whereas for Deleuze, 'the simulacrum is not degraded copy, rather it contains a positive power which *negates both original and copy, both model and reproduction*' (emphasis in original).^{ccclxix} In my reading of the family story, Deleuze's concept of the simulacrum is the one that helps me to make sense of non-sense, for the bourgeois family as my parents and my siblings and I lived it was both false and real. It was false (and nonsensical) in its hierarchical distribution of power and confinement of sexuality within a fundamentally incestuous structure, and it was

real in its effects of repression of desire and extinguishment of love and trust between parents and their children.

In telling me the secret of the ‘false’ secret my mother supposedly revealed to the neighbour, my father himself has perpetuated the secret and his story is trapped and forever framed by it. There is no freedom from it, except for me; in my narrative *décoverture* of it, I expose it as having neither content nor form, becoming-imperceptible, an empty square, a present absence. Deleuze and Guattari write of secrecy as one of the forms of becoming. Secrecy takes a binary form, its other term being discovery. Those who set out to disclose or penetrate the secret themselves can become a sustaining part of it and be trapped within it.^{ccclxx} In my case, since the only secret I can disclose is the absence of meaning, the unknowability of the cause of my father’s leaving, the rupture of sense, I free myself from it.

Absence and loss define heterosexual desire within the bourgeois family, just as, in my imagination, the territory of my grandfather’s patriarchy is defined by absence and decay, symbolised by the One Tree Inn and the treeless plain, and the territory of my father’s patriarchy is defined by absence and broken dreams, symbolised by the broken windmill on the river bank where my childhood home once stood. Just as the images of the One Tree Inn and the broken windmill conjure up for me the failed dreams of patriarchy in a rural setting, the memory of my father lying in a hospital bed, with a bandaged stump where his leg had been, is a poignant end to the story of our childhood family and my relationship with him, and his words ‘it all went bung ... I wish it had never happened ...’ are the only answer he could give to my questions. The real action in my story has taken place off stage; I and my readers cannot ever know what happened, only guess at it and try to make sense of it. Or not make sense of it. It is a game that can only be lost, and yet the losing is all. ‘Old endgame lost of old, play and lose and have done with losing’, as Hamm, Samuel Beckett’s character, says when practising for his last soliloquy.^{ccclxxi} I am consoled by de Certeau’s epitaph for the writer:

... the writer is also a dying man who is trying to speak. But in the death that his footsteps inscribe on a black (and not blank) page, he knows and he can express the desire that expects from the other the marvellous and ephemeral excess of surviving through an attention that it alters.^{ccclxxii}

It is in that survival, that excess, that freedom comes from loss.

My mother's identity was in part defined by her position as a deserted wife; she saw her marriage and loss of the property as a failure and continued to live her life in the shadow of her losses, though she had a second career as a schoolteacher and kept her central position in the family. But she did not question the dominant forces of patriarchy that had subjectified her. Her choices were ones never faced by my grandmother Lillie, who lived her life in the shadow of her husband and was buried in an unofficial space. She, Great-Aunt Mary and my mother were all daughters of patriarchy, and lived their lives within its territory, on its plane of organisation. I was born into the bourgeois family, and lived my childhood and early adulthood within it; but I sought to destratify it, and did so too violently, with destructive consequences. Now, I unfold it more gently and cautiously, and experiment with folding the origami of desire differently. I cannot make sense of my family story, but I can use its unfolding as an opportunity for autopoiesis, for a continuing process of becoming.

Chapter four: playing with time

The longing to tell one's story and the process of telling is symbolically a gesture of longing to recover the past in such a way that one experiences both a sense of reunion and a sense of release. It was the longing for release that compelled the writing but concurrently it was the joy of reunion that enabled me to see that the act of writing one's autobiography is a way to find again that aspect of self and experience that may no longer be an actual part of one's life but is a living memory shaping and informing the present.

'Writing autobiography', bell hooks^{ccclxxiii}

For bell hooks, writing her autobiography was a therapeutic process that enabled her to see her past differently and use that knowledge as a basis for change. Remembering was the process by which she created a narrative that joined the fragments of her heart together again. At the same time, she was aware that the truth of her memories was not literal, it was a truth in which myth, dream and reality merged.^{ccclxxiv} I can identify with both these insights. The desire to heal the self in the present takes me back in time, knowing that though I cannot change the past, I can change my understanding of it. At the same time I know that my memory of past selves and the events that happened, while it is my truth, is also partly fictional invention. Selfhood is a narrative that we both construct and is constructed for us as we perform and remember our selves, and is not essential, but situated in time and place.

As we have seen, Chapter two is an assemblage connecting my experimental unfolding and refolding of the desiring female self with the self-explorations of mediaeval Heian Japanese women who, despite or perhaps because of their subjection to strict codes of self-expression, represented by the many-layered robes, screens and curtains that cloistered them, produced fine poetic diaries and the world's first extant psychological novel. The art of origami takes an autobiographical turn in Chapter three, which frames a memoir about my self-folding within my grandparents' and parents' family stories with reflections on how my parents' desire for a stable, happy and productive family life in an Australian rural setting were shaped and fell apart within the

repressive milieus of the bourgeois family and the isolated place they chose to live, in an arid climate and environment; these conditions were intensified by the destructive force of the Great Depression. The chapter maps the lines of becoming that folded and unfolded the family assemblage within the BwO or plane of desire over two generations, as well as the lines of flight that deterritorialised individuals and ultimately the family assemblage.

In this chapter I go on to explore how the changing acculturated subject conceals a series of selves, layers of experience which can be accessed, as Bergson puts it, by pushing back the screen of the present to unmask the past.^{ccclxxv} Screens, masks, layers of memory — in the dimension of *aeon* time, I seek to uncover past selves, to unfold and refold the origami of selfhood, just as, behind their screens and folds of curtains and gowns, Heian women sought to express their imaginative and emotional life in their shared literature of poetic diaries and tales. The elaborate veiling that concealed selfhood for these women was constructed in space, but it is the survival of their literature through time that gives me access to their imaginary world, and allows me to share in it in my own imagining of selfhood. Memory, time and imagination are the key agents in the creative process of life writing. The origami of the self is unfolded and refolded through the agency of memory, which manipulates time, revisiting the past to recreate former selves and enable new patterns to emerge in the future. I will draw on Elizabeth Grosz's interpretations of time, informed by her readings of Nietzsche, Darwin and Bergson, and on Deleuze's rewriting of Nietzsche and Bergson in my search for new ways of imagining becoming and being. This prologue will be followed by three short pieces that write some past foldings of self, which in turn will be followed by further reflections on the re-membling of past selves and how life writing produces new ways of being-self.

Though self-awareness seems a natural development of consciousness, the self is not a universal concept. John Haiman argues that the presence of self-awareness may be a 'grammatical symptom of a quite culture-specific mind/body dualism, or even a divided or alienated self'.^{ccclxxvi} He supports his premise that self-awareness is a cultural, not a biological phenomenon with examples from several languages of non-representation of the speaker/subject, as well as with examples of self-reference in

varying degrees. His conclusion is that detachment from the self, and its extreme form of self-alienation, is far from universal and is specific to Anglophone culture:

All languages have means (simple intransitive verbs; middle voice; clitic pronouns) to indicate that some action is performed on oneself; relatively few of them have separate reflexive pronouns, and even the Indo-European languages came by them only recently.^{ccclxxvii}

He hesitates to draw conclusions about extra-linguistic cultural contexts on the basis of linguistic structure, despite his argument that the latter reflects social/psychological reality.^{ccclxxviii} For my purposes, I take it as given that concepts of the self in relation to others are culturally determined. I question, however, the exclusion of self-awareness from non-Anglophone cultures on the basis of the lack of reflexive pronouns; I am not a linguist, not qualified to argue this point, but I have found, from my reading of literature in other cultures in translation, such as Heian Japanese, a developed reflexivity shown in the personae's awareness of their inner thoughts and feelings which are often not consonant with their outer expression and behaviour. As a modern Anglophone woman, my reflexivity is more extreme, potentially both destructive and creative. I am a divided self, one who has experienced degrees of alienation from self and others, and who now chooses to use the power of self-reflexivity creatively to enquire into how female selves are constructed in patriarchal cultures, and to imagine ways of being one's self as a woman that, while culturally determined, will be freer and more creative than have been past selves.

Paul John Eakin, discussing registers of self, prefers to approach autobiography as would a cultural anthropologist, for whom the sense of self varies greatly across cultures. Autobiography, he points out, has proved very 'resistant to the various deconstructions of the subject proposed by Nietzsche, Jacques Lacan, and others'.^{ccclxxix} The coherent self has been exposed as an illusion, but the burgeoning field of life writing, with all its sub-genres, confirms that the self in all its multiplicity lives on. Following Eakin, I choose the word 'self' to talk of the autobiographical incarnations of identity, while acknowledging that all selves are subject to culture.

My use of imaginative time travel can be situated in the late twentieth/early twenty-first century tradition of feminist life writing. I recognise that life writing is performative; as Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson summarise it: 'A *performative* view of

life narrative theorizes autobiographical occasions as dynamic sites for the performance of identities constitutive of subjectivity' (emphasis in original).^{ccclxxx} Identity (selfhood) is provisional and unstable because it is enacted within culture, which in itself is a shifting field, differently expressed in different times and places. My earlier selves were shaped by the norms of middle class society in mid-century Australia. As I revisit and perform them in my writing, I produce a twenty-first century re-enactment of those selves, not as I was then, which I can never recapture, but as I now see myself as I was then. My vision of my past selves is always coloured by the shape and tint of the lenses I wear in my present life. My position in culture now is different from the positions that I took in the past; my relationship with power, particularly male power, has changed. For instance, in my life as a bourgeois 'deserting' wife and 'abandoning' mother, I felt powerless to change except by escaping from my marriage. That escape brought about, through my ex-husband's pre-emptive acts, the loss of my primary caring relationship with my children. This loss is the subject of the first two memoirs in this chapter, in which I write of that time, not to change what happened, but to change my relationship with my past selves and my memory of others, to recognise how those selves and those others were situated in a patriarchal power structure, and to claim a place in the present that allows a different future to emerge.

This use of memory and narrative goes beyond the desire to create an alternative reality, an imaginary or utopian world more real than the world one lives in. Julia Kristeva writes that Marcel Proust, writing at the end of the nineteenth century, in the social setting of salons and dandyism, used time travel as a way of escaping from the disappointing reality of the present and creating an alternative imaginative world.^{ccclxxxi} Drusilla Modjeska compares her habit of playing with time with Proust's; she follows André Aciman, who uses the word 'temporising' to describe the sort of memoirist who slips into other time frames to cope with the sadness and imperfection of the present, to create an alternative reality.^{ccclxxxii} Modjeska agrees with Aciman's suggestion that temporising is a strategy that is developed by children of a sensitive disposition, who feel unsafe in their environment, 'as a response to displacement, loss, the dread that comes with unexplained and unknowable events'.^{ccclxxxiii} She says that she is aware of how much she missed through her habit of temporising, by hiding behind her protective

screen of fantasy, and that now, if she is able to live more fully in the present, it is not through her writing or the practice of meditation, but through ‘unfolding conversation, and exchange, of friendship and a late love ...’.^{ccclxxxiv}

I too am a temporiser, and have always used my imagination to escape from or embellish the reality I have found myself in. In my childhood and early adulthood, I created secret worlds that no-one but I could enter, populated by imaginary selves and the simulacra of others; all celebrated and performed metamorphoses of an ‘I’ who was rich, powerful, beautiful, and beloved. As a child, I had the freedom to perform these stories with variations, creating *mise-en-abîmes*, imaginary worlds within worlds. My brothers had imaginary worlds they created, and sometimes they allowed me to take part in them, but mostly I preferred my own stories, for I could make the rules. My life was a *mise-en-abîme*; I believed I was dreaming and would wake up and find the ‘real’ world I lived in was not real. This fiction became harder to sustain as I grew older and was separated from the empty unpopulated spaces of my childhood, and forced to live amongst others in arborescent structures that subjectified me as student and middle-class girl becoming-wife-and-mother.

Now I choose writing about past time as a way, not just of escaping from reality, but of becoming different; my writing changes my life and my life changes my writing in a reciprocal relationship. I believe that temporising is a strategy that I can use to create the possibility of living more creatively, more joyfully; I can use it to regain past time so that I can affirm the losses I experienced, the cracks in my life, and let the light in through those cracks, so that I can live more fully in the present. My desire, as a feminist writer emerging from experiences of wifehood and motherhood, is to relive the past in order to create a different future. I believe that this is a method others can use to understand selfhood and to practice the origami of desire. To this end, I will briefly explore theories of how the conscious self is enacted in time and can become different.

The time of becoming

To become worthy of what happens to us, and thus to will and to release the event, to become the offspring of one's own events, and thereby to be reborn, to have one more birth, and to break with one's carnal birth

Gilles Deleuze, *The logic of sense*, pp. 149-50

In Western philosophy there are two concepts of time, *chronos* time and *aeon* time. *Chronos* time is separated into past, present and future and determines our experience as subjects, regulating, measuring and fixing us in space. *Aeon* time is all there at once, for past and future are two dimensions of the present.^{ccclxxxv} It is the time which Julia Kristeva calls women's time. She speaks of two types of temporality that are traditionally linked to female subjectivity: the cyclical time of nature and monumental time, which is all-encompassing and infinite. We have access to these two aspects of cosmic time, experienced as extrasubjective, in 'vertiginous visions and unnameable *jouissance*'.^{ccclxxxvi} Her language suggests that she is thinking here of the plane of existence that Deleuze calls immanence. She goes on to explain that the time of repetition and eternity, fundamental to numerous civilisations and experiences, is distinct from linear time, the time of history, of logic, of language and of death,^{ccclxxxvii} the time that Deleuze and Guattari call *chronos*. They conceive of *aeon* as the time of the desiring self, in which becoming different is possible. They describe *aeon* time as indefinite, fluid and simultaneous and *chronos* time as regulatory and subjectifying.^{ccclxxxviii} Subjecthood is a result of the coding imposed on us by society, which seeks to channel and regulate the flows of desire.^{ccclxxxix} Society has a limited array of masks a subject is expected to assume: one of these, in the twentieth century society I grew up in, is the bourgeois wife and mother, whose life is regulated in *chronos* time: marriage, childbirth, motherhood, old age and grandmotherhood. In reliving the past through writing it in my memoir and other pieces, I rewrite my self and move out of *chronos*, out of subjecthood that is fixed and regulatory, or molar, into *aeon*, into selfhood that is fluid and freeing, or molecular. I must live in *chronos* but I can escape it and reshape it through thinking, imagining, creating on the plane of desire.

Temporising accesses *aeon* time, in the creation and visiting of alternative realities. My ability to enter imaginary worlds in childhood became a liability as I grew older. I confused *aeon* and *chronos* times, believing that the life I imagined for myself could be realised if I could break free of the prison I felt myself to be in. I escaped, but my line of flight led me into a highly unstable state, where self-destruction and destruction of others was a danger.^{cccxc} This story is told in my autobiographical novel ‘Desire’s Web’ (unpublished), and I reflect on aspects of it in Chapters five and six.

In the context of female subjectivity and women’s time, Kristeva mentions intuition as problematic in the linear time of history and civilisation.^{cccxcii} Bergson reverses this perspective, seeing conceptual thought, dominant in the civilised world, as problematic when he speaks of the need to ‘arrive at a more intuitive philosophy.’^{cccxciii} In this spirit, he discourses on ‘the continuous creation of unforeseeable novelty which seems to be going on in the universe.’^{cccxciiii} He argues, as the translator of *Time and Free Will* puts it, that ‘the idea of homogeneous measurable time is shown to be an artificial concept formed by the intrusion of the idea of space into the realm of pure duration’.^{cccxcv} All life has duration, ‘because it is continuously elaborating what is new.’^{cccxcvi} Change is the very substance of things, and in duration, ‘the past becomes identical with the present and continuously creates with it—if only by the fact of being added to it—something absolutely new.’^{cccxcvii} In terms of everyday life, Bergson urges that we allow this vision of universal becoming to awaken us to the consciousness of living ‘in a present which is thick, and furthermore, elastic, which we can stretch indefinitely backward by pushing the screen which masks us from ourselves farther and farther away.’^{cccxcviii}

Bergson’s concept of duration is of time flowing, a constant state of becoming, ‘an absolute heterogeneity of elements which pass over into one another’.^{cccxcix} This is the field of Deleuze’s ‘event’, which exists on the virtual plane of *aeon* and is actualised ‘in some body or state’.^{cccxcix} Events carry no determinate outcome, they define particular things, constituting their ‘potential for change and rate of change’; thus every state or thing has behind it the ‘potential immanent within a particular confluence of forces’.^{cd} This vision is consonant with Bergson’s concept of life as a dynamic changing process of emerging unforeseeable novelty. The states of things are not determined, with fixed

identities and predictable existences, but all things are defined in their potential for change by the events that are immanent to them.^{cdi} Forces of all kinds, for Deleuze, have productive potential:

Events carry no determinate outcome, but only new possibilities, representing a moment at which new forces might be brought to bear.... [Deleuze's] general theory of the event provides a means for theorising the immanent creativity of thinking, challenging us to think differently and to consider things anew. This is not to say that he means to challenge us to think in *terms* of events, but rather to make thinking its own event by embracing the rich chaos of life and the uniqueness and potential of each moment.^{cdii}

Events carry new possibilities and challenge us to think differently, to create new forms and ways of being. It is in the realm of space that we perceive sameness rather than difference, determination rather than infinitude, but this is an illusion, for every sensation is altered by repetition; when we repeat a feeling, Bergson says, it becomes a new feeling.^{cdiii} Herein lies freedom, in the inner, changing self, but we rarely grasp it, for the external spatial projection or social representation of ourselves is the one we perceive as real:

The greater part of the time we live outside ourselves, hardly perceiving anything of ourselves but our own ghost, a colourless shadow which pure duration projects into homogeneous space. Hence our life unfolds in space rather than in time, we live for the external world rather than for ourselves; we speak rather than think; we 'are acted' rather than act ourselves. To act freely is to recover possession of oneself, and get back into pure duration.^{cdiv}

In different ways, then, Deleuze and Bergson are saying that we need to be aware of the unlimited potential for change and creativity in the universe we inhabit; to will and to release the event is to act ourselves, to think creatively, to break with our carnal births and bear our selves.

The inner self is reached by deep introspection. Grosz, explaining Bergson's concept of duration, speaks of perception as a faculty used to mediate the present reality and prepare for the future, and memory as the faculty of consciousness, the past, and duration.^{cdv} The present has two faces, actual and virtual, one oriented to action in space and the other to memory in duration.^{cdvi} 'The past, by its pre-existence, is the condition of the present', and the future 'erupts unexpectedly' from the present.^{cdvii} Deleuze, interpreting Bergson, says that the paradox of memory is that 'the past is

contemporaneous with the present that it *has been*'.^{cdviii} All presents must pass through the past, and all of our past coexists with each present.^{cdix} It is in duration that differences in kind exist, whereas in space there are only differences of degree.^{cdx} Nature is expressed in duration (differences in kind) and in space (differences in degree); this is multiplicity in unity, or monism, where a single Time (nature) exists in itself, in coexistent aspects. But the wholeness of Time (nature) is only virtual.^{cdxi}

What does this mean for the self/subject? I take it to mean that we can access the virtual realm of *aeon* time through intuition, memory and deep introspection (Bergson), through creative thinking (Deleuze), through imagination (Proust), or through visions (Kristeva). In everyday life, we are subject to the divisions and dichotomies of *chronos* time, but we can access duration or *aeon* time, we can construct the plane of desire, of immanence, of difference in kind, through our creative use of memory, thought, imagination, intuition and vision.

The creative potential of life, and in particular, of human conscious life, is supported by Grosz's reading of Darwin, whom she chooses as a 'strange ally' of feminist discourses because of his transformative, future-directed understanding of the indeterminacy of life.^{cdxii} Her reading of Darwin is that it is through oppression that transformation occurs; the effects on an individual of a milieu or environment force it to change. The struggle for existence produces 'ever more viable and successful strategies' that influence 'the criteria by which natural selection functions'.^{cdxiii} This positive interpretation of natural selection differs from that of Francisco Varela et al., who propose a view of evolution as 'natural drift'; the rule for selection is 'not that what is not allowed is forbidden, but that what is not forbidden is allowed'.^{cdxiv} Another metaphor to describe this process, they suggest, is *bricolage*, the putting together of parts in complex arrays, 'not because they fulfil some ideal design, but simply because they are possible'.^{cdxv} *Bricolage* is a concept developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss to express the process of creating improvised structures by using ready-made materials that are close to hand.^{cdxvi} A given organism's world is structured by its couplings with other organisms and with its environment: 'organism and environment are mutually enfolded in multiple ways'.^{cdxvii} This is codetermination, or codependent origination. This concept is close to Deleuze and Guattari's one of the process of becoming which creates

assemblages, and accords with their cautions about the complexity and uncertainty of becoming, the dangers of destruction of self and others in connecting with lines of flight. Transformation happens when force is exerted on a living organism, but it is not necessarily an improvement on what was. Grosz implies the possibility of unpredictable, even undesirable effects of natural selection when she says that life, post-Darwin, is now construed as ‘fundamental becoming, becoming without the definitive features of (Aristotelian) being, without a given (Platonic) form, without human direction or divine purpose’.^{cdxviii}

Another ‘strange ally’ Grosz enlists in feminist discourse is Nietzsche; in particular, his concept of Eternal Return, which she glosses as meaning that whereas matter conserves itself in the universe as a whole, time has an infinite span:

it squanders itself without loss. It follows that in the infinity of time past and time future, every combination of matter has already occurred, and will occur again, an infinite number of times.^{cdxix}

However, what returns is not the same, but ‘the synthesis of difference’.^{cdxx} She argues that because we cannot will backwards, the only genuine revenge is a revenge on time, and that this is only achieved by submission to the necessity of the past; by affirming our own past, we are able to affirm a future. Nietzsche’s concept of *amor fati*, the love of fate, is ‘to affirm as necessary, and choose again, everything one wills and does’.^{cdxxi} We cannot change the past, it has made us what we are, but rather than disowning, immersing or fixating ourselves in it (*ressentiment*), we need to see it and move beyond it.^{cdxxii}

True revenge ... can only be a revenge on time. But how can time be revenged, overcome? Only through a certain submission to its necessity, a certain reactive position that converts that necessity itself into will. The past is a series of events we do not make but inherit, or inherit even if we have made, which we must nonetheless affirm as our own in the sense that past events make us, and our overcoming, possible. To affirm a future, to affirm repetition of what will wills into the future, it is necessary equally to affirm all the accidents, events, humiliations that make willing itself the highest force.^{cdxxiii}

What does it mean to affirm one’s own humiliation? Not that we must accept that we were wrong, weak, deserving of mortification, as in the Christian framework of penitence and confession, but that we must accept what has happened as unchangeable

and constitutive of ourselves as we exist in the present and as we become in the future. However, this does not mean that our identities and future existence are determined by the past and that we can never be free of it. Rather, we are shaped by it, but in affirming and willing that it has happened, we become active, not passive, we can overcome the past and our past selves. And it is in duration, ‘the subsistence of the past in the present and the capacity of this reimbued present to generate an unexpected future beyond that of imminent action’ that we can become the offspring of our own events.^{cdxxiv} Another name for duration is the virtual.

The virtual is the resonance of potential that ladens the present as more than itself, that disrupts the continuity of the present, to open up a nick or crack, the untimely, the unexpected, that welcomes the new, whether a new organism, organ, or function, a new strategy, a new sensation, or a new technological invention.^{cdxxv}

Just as in the evolution of life at organic and material levels, the new and unexpected — chance — acts creatively to change matter and experience, so it is in the origami of selfhood. Origami is a highly disciplined art, where each fold is critical to the emerging shape and one fold that is different, experimental, can create a completely new form. It is in the nicks, the cracks, the new folds in the lived and folded present that is now past as I write that change comes into my life, that the unexpected erupts into the fabric of subjectivity and reshapes the self.

Deleuze has warned about the risks and pitfalls of the unstable trajectory of becoming. The dangers of following a line of flight, allowing desire to flow in one’s life, are illustrated in the first memoir I present below, ‘Into the void’, which is about a series of major panic attacks I suffered when I was completing my Master’s thesis. Each attack was an uncontrollable event that came from within my psyche and physical body, and felt like dying; but it was a price I paid for the freedom to begin to unfold the origami of subjecthood — a failed bourgeois wife and mother, a failed desiring woman — and refold a desiring/becoming female self. The Master’s degree was a gateway to the past and to the future for me. I used post-structuralist and feminist theory to interpret the cultural structures that had shaped my life, and wrote my story within that framework. Previous attempts to write my story, and indeed, to understand it, had been punctuated and interrupted by life’s demands. The external commitment of the thesis and the

guidance of my supervisors enabled me to stay focused and reach a new milestone. At the same time, the pressure of writing my story under supervision and of negotiating academic regulations and deadlines, added to the fear and pain aroused by reliving the past, contributed to what amounted to an episodic mental and physical collapse, which fortunately had a limited span.

The second memoir, 'The lost mother', goes back further in time, to the period after my children were taken to the USA by their father, when I had two access visits to them. I have very few memories of this time, which is an almost blank chapter in my story. The numbness and emptiness I felt, a defensive response to the trauma of loss, veiled and dulled my experience of reunion with my children and of a loving friendship with a man who gave me shelter in an alien environment. This piece recreates my feelings of being an outsider in a world where I had no permanent place, of being a mother who had lost her central part in her children's lives.

The third memoir, 'Seaweed dreams', is about a more recent time, and tells the story of a day with my partner, and the desire that I felt to revisit and heal a past, more painful period of our relationship.

In each of these pieces, the immediacy of the present is veiled or disrupted by the return of the past, and the test for the narrated persona is to retain a sense of self and to respond affirmatively and creatively to the shadows of the past, not to be overwhelmed by them. My response to this test is different in each story. In 'Into the void', my narrated self faces the challenge of continuing to bear witness to the past, despite the traumatic symptoms of the attacks that interrupt and threaten the process. In 'The lost mother', the company of my mother on the first visit to the children and a new friendship in that place anchor and sustain my narrated self in the effort to stay suspended in a space that was not safe for me, one where I had no voice or licence to act in accordance with my own desires, one I had to leave, thereby losing my children again. In 'Seaweed dreams', by watching the story of another bearing witness to his past failures in relationship, my narrated self is inspired to realise that the painful past I shared with my lover could be released, if not (as I subsequently realised) entirely overcome.

The witness in each of these stories has a different position in relation to the story of loss. In 'Into the void', I as PhD student narrate and bear witness to a past self, 'I as Master's student', who witnesses the story of an earlier self, 'I as abandoning mother'. In the second story, I as PhD student narrate and bear witness to 'I as outcast/lost mother' visiting my children, bonded to them by birth and love, but separated by their father's expropriation of their lives from mine and establishment of their home in a country I could not live in. In the third story, I as PhD student narrate a day in my renewed relationship with my second husband, in which I witness our love and the return of the ghosts of our past, and am able to release past pain and remorse. There are layers of awareness in the narration of the day we spent together that were not conscious at the time I lived that day or the time I wrote the story of it; in the narrative that frames that story, I unfold some of these hidden spaces.

I believe that my ability to react affirmatively to events and to think creatively about what happens to me has increased with age and the working through of past traumas in my intimate relationships, and especially since I have taken the conscious direction of seeking to live in duration, as Bergson would say, or in becoming, as Deleuze and Guattari would say, or to practise *amor fati*, as Nietzsche would say.

Into the void

3 August 2001

The photocopier whirs and clicks. My head begins to feel strange, tight around the temples, and the room is unbearably stuffy. The shapes of things are wobbly, and there is a bright white light at the edges of my vision.

‘I think I’d better go and sit outside in the fresh air. I feel queer.’ Sally stops sorting her sheets of paper and turns to me.

‘You do look pale. I’ll come with you.’

We sit outside on a step in the shade. ‘I think it might be an attack like the one I had the other night. I’m scared I might pass out. But ... I think I should go to the toilet. Last time it happened I needed to ...’

‘Come on, I’ll help you.’

Sally takes my arm, but I have a strange feeling that it’s not *my* body that she’s touching. The light is weird, white and piercingly bright, like millions of stars joined together, and I cannot see the building in front of me.

I am lying on the floor. Someone is cradling my head. Sally is beside me, holding my hand. I cannot see her, but I know it is her, I can smell the perfume she always wears. Have I wet my pants? God, I hope not. I feel wet all over, but I think that is sweat.

‘Call the ambulance!’ A male voice behind me. I cannot stop shaking, my heart thumps so fast I am afraid it will burst. I cannot get enough air.

‘It’s OK.’ Sally’s voice, low and urgent. ‘I’m here. You’ll be OK. We’re getting the ambulance to take you to the Clinic.’

You are in an alien world where there is only light, no shadow. It slices your head open, lays out all the circuits of your brain, exposes your secrets. You wish you could turn the light off. Even when you close your eyes, you can see it.

‘Who’s that holding my head?’

‘Bruce. It’s OK. We’re getting a pillow. Where’s that bloody ambulance?’

Bruce! Someone in the Department with the name Bruce. No idea of the body attached to the voice. I wish I could see his face.

You are hot—unbearably hot; you would like to rip off your clothes. If you could find the words, you would curse those black satin trousers. You feel like a roasted chook wrapped in foil, waiting for the knife to slice open your steaming flesh.

‘Where am I?’

‘Near the lifts, on the way to the toilet,’ Sally says. ‘You passed out before we got there.’

It is not like the false sleep of anaesthesia, from which you wake muffled and dazed by drugs. It is a hole in your life, in your memory. Before is a blank. Now, though you are the centre of attention, you feel nothing but bewilderment and terror.

‘Christ, that ambulance is taking its time.’ Bruce’s voice again. ‘What the hell are they doing?’ Someone places a pillow under my head, and he withdraws his hands. I cannot stop shivering.

Though you are still sweating, steaming hot, you are also cold, an Arctic cold that is coming from inside, deeper than the heat. It feels like global warming speeded up, a sun that is out of control melting icebergs ocean-deep. This light has no soft tones. It is just white, absolute white, and it melts the world it once warmed.

Voices fade in and out.

‘The ambulance can’t get through. They have to move the bollards.’

‘What a bloody shambles!’ Sally’s voice. ‘I must remember not to get sick when I’m in here!’

‘Find a blanket from somewhere. She’s shivering.’

I fight for breath. Voices murmur.

You still cannot see properly. But instead of blinding white light, everything is dark. Shapes appear and disappear, shadows waver and re-form, only to fade again.

‘Can you climb onto this trolley?’ An unfamiliar female voice.

I try to sit up, but my body is so weak and heavy, it will not move. My head flops back onto the pillow.

‘You’ll have to lift her. Can’t you see she’s helpless?’ Sally’s voice is sharp with exasperation and anxiety.

I am carried out. I shut my eyes against the bright light, and can only sense the trolley being lifted and pushed into the back of a van. Sally climbs in beside me.

‘Sally ... you go to the seminar ... you’ll miss it.’

‘Don’t be silly. I’m coming with you.’

She was with me before this started. I remember now. We were in the photocopying room, talking about our theses.

So that is how I ended up in this bumpy van, flat out on a narrow trolley. I concentrate on my breathing, trying to slow it down.

At the Clinic, they do an ECG, and explain that there are some irregularities, so I will need to go to the Emergency department at the hospital to have some more tests.

5 August 2001

Armed with a letter from the Emergency Registrar on duty, I go to see my GP.

She puts the letter down and takes off her glasses. ‘Has there been much stress in your life recently?’

‘Well ... in a way. I’m doing my Masters at Uni and ...’

‘What subject?’

‘Master of Creative Arts. I’m writing a novel and a thesis.’

‘What’s it about?’

‘My life. My childhood and my first marriage, which ended disastrously.’ She nods her head, as if to say: go on. ‘I lost my children. My husband took them to America, and it was nearly two years before I saw them again.’

‘Did you get them back?’

‘Not when they were children. After I got access to them I saw them once a year, till they came to Melbourne to live, and then I saw them twice a year. But my youngest came to live with me when she turned fourteen.’

I start to cry. I cannot help it. Twenty-seven years later and I still cannot talk about it without crying.

She pushes a box of tissues towards me. What did they do before tissues were invented? Did they offer their hankies, pressed and clean, or part-used?

I take a deep breath and blow my nose. ‘I’m sorry. I guess I’ve never got over it. That’s why I’m writing my life. I just want to ... make sense of it.’

‘Is it helping?’

‘Yes. But there’s a lot of stress in doing it. My theory editor writes all over my drafts in red ink. I thought I’d be finished the theory part by now — I’ve been on it long enough; but she wants me to do yet another rewrite. And last week my creative supervisor asked me to rearrange the novel, mix up the different stages of the story, instead of having it sequential. I cried for two hours after I put the phone down.’ I pause, and swallow. My throat feels tight and dry. ‘Can I get a glass of water?’

She fills a paper cup from the water cooler near the door and hands it to me. ‘What was it about mixing it all up that upset you?’

‘I don’t know. It felt like losing my children all over again.’

‘Why? Is it like you’ve lost control of the story and it’s not your story any more?’

I take another gulp of water. ‘No, not really. I know it’s something I have to go through, if I want to tell my story. But ... sometimes I wish I could just close the book and let it lie.’

‘What made you start writing it?’

‘Well ... I started years ago, when Sophia, my eldest daughter begged me to. She said that I’m the one who inspired her to write, and I wasn’t using my own gift. She felt I needed to tell my story. So I started scribbling in an old exercise book at night when I went to bed, but I didn’t get further than a few fragments. Then I started a new job; it was very demanding, but I thought it was my chance for a late career. Anyway, I didn’t get permanency when I applied for it; they appointed an outsider. I felt

devastated, because everyone expected me to get it, including me. I got quite depressed. I was doing psychotherapy training at the time, and the director of training suggested I have a few private sessions. So I did, and that was when I realised I didn't want a career, I didn't want to be a psychotherapist, I wanted to write my life. So I found a theory supervisor and started the MCA about three years ago.'

'Well ...' she sits back in her chair and stares at the wall for a moment, as if she's looking for the right words; 'Clearly it's very stressful — not only re-living your story, but letting other people have a say in how you tell it. Yet I imagine it's therapeutic too.' She takes up the letter from the registrar and scans it again. 'The doctors in Casualty found no physical cause for your attack. Does it make sense to you that it was a panic attack?'

'I don't know. I felt like I was dying. But it wasn't the first time. That happened when I was watching TV. I was feeling quite relaxed at the time, eating a roast lamb dinner. I felt as though I wanted to go to the toilet, and my vision went funny. I collapsed halfway to the toilet, but I didn't pass out. I called my son, and he came and helped me first to the toilet and then into bed. I was shaking and shivering. My son called the locum doctor; he took my blood pressure, pulse and temperature, and said it was a fast virus. It took me hours to warm up. This last time I just got too hot.' The doctor looks unconvinced. 'I was in the photocopying room. It gets really stuffy in there.'

'OK, but the way the body works, you don't need to be feeling anxious when the attack happens. There's an overload of stress that builds up over time. Whatever triggers the attack might have happened some time before, and you think you've dealt with it. But the stress stays in the body, and has to be discharged somehow.'

'But ... I always thought panic attacks happen when you're feeling anxious — like women panicking in supermarkets or busy public places. And I don't *feel* anxious at the time — not until after the attack starts. *That's* when I start to panic, because I feel as though I'm dying.'

'I know, but regardless of what you're aware of, you must have a very high base level of anxiety for this to happen. All those symptoms you get are from a sudden discharge of stress hormones.'

I walk out of her office with a prescription for an anti-depressant to reduce my anxiety level; she says there will not be any side effects, once I am used to it. To my relief, she does not recommend counselling. I have had enough of baring my soul. This time I want to work through it myself. But I cannot afford to have more attacks. What if it happens while I'm driving a car? Or in a public place where no-one knows me? I just want to get my thesis finished and move on.

28 August 2001

Sophia suggests I stay at their time-share unit at Busselton for a couple of days. They're packing ready to move to their new house, and she wants me take my little grandson with me and wait for her, her husband and older boy to join us the next day. She says she needs twenty-four hours to get the last of the packing done without having to worry about Sammy. I hesitate, because I'm concerned I might have another attack, but I haven't had one for about two weeks, and I think by now the anti-depressant must be working. So I say yes.

Sammy sits in the safety seat behind me, and we sing nursery rhymes together until my voice starts to crack. He gets a bit restless, so we stop for a while at a lay-by, and I take him on a short ramble through the bush looking for wildflowers. After biscuits and milk for him, and coffee from the thermos for me, we get going. He drops off to sleep, and I have a peaceful hour.

Until an old Datsun swerves out of the inside lane and cuts in front of me to take a right turn. I slam on the brakes. No time to check the rear vision mirror. I hear an echoing squeal of brakes behind me. The lights turn red but the driver of the Datsun, a young male, keeps going. I wind down the window, stick my head out and scream: 'Fucking idiot!' I look in the mirror. Sammy is still sleeping, chin on chest, beads of sweat on his forehead.

Deep breaths, I tell myself. My head feels tight and my heart is pounding. The lights turn green, and I continue, moving into the left lane, dropping my speed to 80 ks. I push a tape — Mozart's piano concertos — into the player, and check the mirror again. Sammy sleeps on. I breathe down into my stomach, and out very slowly.

We arrive as the sun is setting. After unloading the car, I take Sammy down to the beach. He runs, chasing seagulls, and I follow his winding path, little footprints in the wet sand.

It's three a.m. by the clock. I've woken up with a start, feeling strange. It's starting again. I scramble out of bed to get to the toilet before it's too late.

I wake up on the bedroom carpet, shivering and shaking. I'm half way across the room, between the bed and the bathroom. I've shat myself. I lie for what seems like an hour, trying to breathe, my heart pounding. At last I can get up and struggle to the shower. I stand under the hot water, trying to warm up. After I've dried myself and changed my nightie, I clean the carpet and crawl back into bed. I'm so cold I can't get back to sleep. I just lie there watching the hours tick by, until Sammy calls me from his room after sunrise.

The rest of the day is hard to get through. My head feels strange after these attacks, and I feel weak and tired. I try to explain to Sammy that I'm not well, but he just looks at me as if I'm weird. At last, the rest of the family arrive.

Sophia suggests I phone Maggie, a psychologist who has experience working with people who suffer from panic attacks. I can't afford to go and see her professionally, but Sophia says she won't mind me ringing for a chat.

Maggie tells me she has treated a lot of people who have had attacks like mine, though she hasn't known many who have actually lost consciousness. She says she teaches them to relax when they feel the first symptoms, to flow towards the fear, rather than away from it. She says the more you resist and try to pull back from what's happening, the more stress you create in yourself, the worse the experience will be. Easier said than done, I think. But I will try.

14 September 2001

I'm sitting at my computer, retyping the last chapter of my novel; I hope this is the last draft. I'll send it off tomorrow, and if I get it back within the month, I'll be able to submit my thesis this year. My theory supervisor has at last agreed that the exegesis is ready to be examined.

My head begins to throb, and my temples tighten. Oh shit! Not again. I jump up from the chair and move towards the toilet. Hope I make it.

I'm lying face down on the kitchen floor. A wet nose pushes into my cheek. A doggy smell. Snuffles. My heart is an exploding bomb, my chest pumps against the floor as I struggle to breathe. I'll die this time. Alone.

You can get through this. Slow your breath. Feel the cold linoleum against your cheek. You won't die.

No idea how long I've been here. Feels like an hour. I can breathe deeper now. Cold. I feel so cold. And I have to get to the toilet. I pull myself up onto my hands and knees, crawl down the step, into the laundry, and hoist myself up onto the toilet. Relieved, I stand, holding onto the wall, and feel the way to my bedroom. I collapse on the bed and pull the doona over me. I curl up, hugging myself. My feet are freezing.

You didn't die. Your son will come home in a while and look after you, and tomorrow you will finish your novel and post it off.

22 September 2001

I'm helping Sophia unpack her kitchen stuff in their new house.

'Have you had any more panic attacks Mum?'

'Just that one on the kitchen floor I told you about. That was the worst. I really felt I would die.'

'Did you try what Maggie suggested?'

'I don't think so. It happened so suddenly.' As we speak, my temples start to feel tight, and the light shifts and whitens. 'Oh no, I think it's starting again.'

'Sit down, Mum. Try and relax.' She helps me into the living room. I sink onto the soft couch, and take some deep breaths. I hear Maggie's voice.

'Flow towards the fear, not away from it.'

I imagine myself floating towards the white light, allowing it to enfold me. After a few minutes, my breath quietens, and my heart slows down. But I am cold. I go to the bedroom and crawl under the doona. After a while, I feel almost normal again.

Ready for some more unpacking.

Afterthoughts of a survivor

The attack that happened in the heart of the academy where I was reading for my degree was one of a chain of similar episodes that punctuated the process of preparing to submit my thesis. I had to force myself to keep going to university, editing my thesis, conversing with my supervisors, and engaging in all the details of daily life. I hated the fact that visceral panic and helplessness could overwhelm me when I most needed to be in control of what I was doing, to bring closure to my studies, to finish telling my story. In part, I blamed my supervisors for putting pressure on me, and felt that if only they would stop wanting me to make changes, if only I could submit the thesis and get it all over, I would stop having the attacks. I did not fully accept that the attacks came from within me, and that they were not simply caused by external pressures or some physical abnormality or illness. It was only after they stopped, my thesis was submitted and I finally graduated, that I came to understand them better.

The past returns, but differently, as Nietzsche's theory of Eternal Return declares. I thought, when I began in earnest the process of writing my life, that I could master the past, put it behind me, as I progressed towards the completion of my Master's degree. The theoretical framework that I used for my exegesis was a critique of the Freudian theory of subjectivity, using Michel Foucault and Luce Irigaray as counter-theorists. All went well, comparatively speaking, while I was working on the exegesis. The crisis came towards the end of the last year when I was working more intensively on my autobiographical novel and revising my exegesis. I so desperately wanted to finish my story and complete the theoretical journey, I found the delays of constant revision and waiting for my supervisors' responses almost unbearable. It is interesting that the only panic attack I had in public was in the *waiting* area of the department in which I was enrolled. The difficulty that the people around me and the staff of the campus clinic had in responding adequately to my distress was no doubt disturbing for them, though was surely more easily forgotten. A couple of days after I had recovered, I went back to the department with a bunch of flowers and a thank you card; I was told that they had now a blanket and a pillow on hand for similar emergencies, and had reviewed the procedures for getting back-up from the clinic.

At first, I found it hard to connect the attacks with the process of completing my thesis. But this second one was so public, making me helpless in the very place where I most wanted to be in control, that I began to make the connection.

In the attacks I suffered, the present split apart, my self cracked open, and my awareness of time and place were lost. As my body fell to the floor, the conscious conditions of life fell away. *Who* I was, *where* I was, *when* I was ... all dissolved, and in the first moments of regaining consciousness, I had no memory of what had happened. Gradually I remembered the precedents, but the moments immediately before and the lapse into unconsciousness were lost. This was an incontrovertible reminder that the location of selfhood is in our consciousness, and that our consciousness, subject to physical as well as external conditions we cannot control, is easily lost, damaged or destroyed.

Paul Broks, a clinical neuropsychologist, discusses the evolutionary theory of consciousness espoused by psychologist Nicholas Humphrey, and admits to being half-persuaded by it. Humphrey argues that ‘consciousness is grounded in bodily sensation rather than thought’, and that its function is ‘to create in human beings a Self whose life is worth pursuing.’^{cdxxvi} Broks summarises Humphrey’s theory that the mysterious factor of consciousness is a function of what Deleuze and Guattari call *aeon* time. Our experience is a “‘thick moment” — an amalgam of past, present and future’, which is at odds with our concept of linear time.^{cdxxvii} Broks follows Humphrey in seeing the self, the secular version of the soul, as an illusion, but one that ‘creates and valorises us as conscious entities’, and a mystery that is accessible as much through art as through science.^{cdxxviii} A century ago, Henri Bergson formed similar intuitions about subjective experience being located in the thick moment of duration in which past, present and future exist at once.

In my loss of consciousness during the attacks, I temporarily lost my sense of autobiographical self that is experienced in the extended or thick moment that floats in past, present and future time. I lost the *thickness* of the present, and was left with what neuroscientists call the core self, the minimal, thin presence aware only of the present moment.^{cdxxix} The extended or autobiographical self is the illusion of ‘a unified, continuous being journeying from a remembered past to an anticipated future, with a

repertoire of skills, stores of knowledge and a disposition to act in certain ways'.^{cdxxx} It is the narrator in us that tells the story of our lives. But even my sense of minimal or core self was disturbed, weakened. Broks explains that the minimal self gives us 'our sense of location and boundary, and our intuitions of agency — the feeling that we exercise control over our actions.'^{cdxxxii} Both levels of selfhood are fragile and easily lost or damaged. At the same time, out of a temporary crisis of selfhood, new growth can come.

The literature of illness and disability is full of stories of the transformative opportunities that attend the process of recovery and adjustment to disability.^{cdxxxiii} Some experiences, however, are so traumatic that the individual may be trapped in a repetitive pathological process that re-enacts some aspects of the experience. The theory of trauma began to evolve in the first half of the twentieth century, when two world wars cost millions of lives, devastated the economic, social and cultural life of many nations, and left a lasting legacy of physical and mental disability. Sigmund Freud, listening to battlefield survivors tell of terrifying nightmares, reasoned that trauma repeats itself without the knowledge or will of the survivor, 'the unwitting reenactment of an event that one cannot simply leave behind'.^{cdxxxiiii} Cathy Caruth interprets Freud, in *Beyond the pleasure principle*, as suggesting that trauma, as a wound of the mind:

... is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that ... is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor.^{cdxxxv}

The truth is not knowable at the time of the event, and the wound in the psyche cries out 'in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available'.^{cdxxxvi} Dori Laub, a psychoanalyst and Holocaust survivor, extends this interpretation of the event; it is not just that it happens suddenly, when the subject is unprepared, but that it is incomplete, without closure or resolution:

Trauma survivors live not with memories of the past, but with an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion, has no ending, attained no closure, and therefore, as far as its survivors are concerned, continues into the present and is current in every respect.^{cdxxxvii}

I do not presume that my experience of having my children taken away from me and being separated from them for most of their childhood is of the same order of loss as

the death and suffering of the Holocaust victims. However, I see some parallels between my own experiences and the reports I read of theirs. Laub describes how his patients struggle with telling others of an event or series of events that are impossible to describe, because the sufferer was overwhelmed at the time the trauma occurred. I have experienced this struggle, even when I have an empathic listener, or the neutral blank screen of the computer is in front of me. Silence or tears are often an escape from the struggle to find ‘the words to say it’.^{cdxxxvii} *In extremis*, my panic attacks, when I suffered loss of consciousness, loss of control over bodily functions, near-death experiences of struggling to draw breath, to contain my bursting heart, were a traumatic re-enactment of the loss of control over my life and my heart’s desire I suffered when my children were taken from me. Not only was there no possible preparation for such an event, no literal knowledge of it until after it had irrevocably happened, there was no closure. The consequences of my flight from the marriage and my husband’s retaliation have been extreme and lifelong in my life and in my children’s. As for him, I cannot say; I cannot dialogue with the other party whose actions resulted in these losses, for there is no reconciliation between us, no acknowledgement on his part — so far as I am aware — of the damage he did intentionally to me, unintentionally to his children.

Caruth explains that the pathology of trauma consists in the structure of the experience or reception of the event: ‘the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it’.^{cdxxxviii} There is, Caruth says, a quality that seems common to all traumatic experience, and that is the inability fully to witness the event while it is happening. There is a gap or a void in the sufferer’s experience that ensures that the repressed experience returns, perhaps as dreams, perhaps as flashbacks, perhaps as repeated intrusive thoughts or behaviours, ‘along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event’.^{cdxxxix} This numbing, this sensitivity and avoidance, this forgetting that haunt the survivor, mean that she or he will tend to resist ‘touching the void’.

I borrow this metaphor from Joe Simpson, whose story of his traumatic climbing accident in Peru made a deep impression on me.^{cdxli} My introduction to the story was through the film, a documentary reconstruction of the climb and its aftermath. In the

second part of the story, Joe Simpson, or the actor playing him, hangs suspended by a rope above a deep crevasse, moments before his climbing partner, Simon Yates, makes the difficult decision to cut the rope in order to save his own life. Joe plunges into the crevasse. I sat in the semi-dark anonymity of the cinema transfixed and horrified, and became uncomfortably aware that my seat was moving. I looked at my movie buddy, and at the empty seats behind me, thinking that perhaps someone was unwittingly rocking or shaking my seat. Not so. I turned my attention to my own body, and realised that the movement came from my own thudding heart. This was a familiar sensation.

Breathe, I told myself. Flow towards the fear, not away from it. No one but I knew that I also was touching the void, on the brink of that complete loss of control that seemed like death.

The link between Joe Simpson's experience and my own was not clear to me at the time. Why did I, a witness to the reconstruction of his trauma, feel as though it was happening to me? When I read the book, in which Simpson quotes Yates's reflections on the moment of choice when he cut the rope, I understood. Yates says that when he remembered he had a knife in his rucksac, he made the decision to cut the rope intuitively, in a split second. In hindsight, he could see the build-up to that moment, the errors of judgment that had put them in such a perilous position, and the choice he had to make between what seemed like certain death for both of them and saving his own life. Paradoxically, his action precipitated Joe into the void from which he was able, eventually, to climb out and reach help.^{cdxli} I could identify with both men: with Joe, in his helplessness, his aloneness and fear of dying, and the refusal to give up that drove him on his long, tortured return; with Simon, in the impossible choice between his own life and Joe's. I, too, had chosen to survive by leaving my children without my care. I had cut the rope, though it is just as true to say that it was cut for me. I was Joe, plunging into the void, and I was Simon, trying desperately to hold his position on the side of the mountain, being pulled into the void by Joe's weight, reaching for a way to save himself.

When I tried to write the passage of my novel in which I describe the day that Anna, my fictional persona, learns that her children have been taken out of the country, I felt numb. I simply could not find words to convey my feelings at the time. I had memories, but they were empty of emotion. Then a curious thing happened. When I

returned my fingers to the keys, a figure appeared in the text unexpectedly. The figure is that of a Crone who, in the dream landscape of my fictional persona, Anna, inhabits the arid Hay plains, in the southwest of New South Wales, Australia, where Anna spent most of her childhood. In Chapter five I will present the Crone and interpret the figurative and aesthetic weight that she and the ravaged landscape carry in my fictional memoir. Here, it is enough to say that she represents the desire of the earth to heal itself as well as the desire of the author and Anna, her pseudonymous persona, to heal her psyche by narrating her life. The Crone works in the text as a witness and a healer. She is a witness to the trauma of the landscape and of the young woman who watches her work, though she does not engage in conversation, but is attuned to the ‘subtler music’, as Laub calls it, of the forgotten or repressed, the silent, the hidden voice of loss and suffering.^{cdxlii} In her impersonal way, she includes the silent watching woman in her restoration of living green to the earth. When I re-read the Crone passages, and write of what they mean in my story, I feel like Eva Hoffman in her autobiography, *Lost in translation*, who writes herself as a child, dreaming of a wizened Baba Yaga, ‘half grandmother, half witch’, who sits in the courtyard of the apartment building where Eva and her family lived in Cracow; the narrator wonders if *she* is Baba Yaga, if she is being dreamt by her and is ageless and all-knowing. Baba Yaga and the Crone could be seen as types of the triple-faced goddess Hecate, who, in some of her manifestations, works as a healer, a sorcerer and a witness to the age-old suffering of creatures of this earth. In the Crone passages, I become the seer and the dreamer, and my knowing is older than I am, older than my story.

Laub points out that the survival experience is ‘a very condensed version of what most life is all about; it contains a great many existential questions, that we manage to avoid in our daily living, often through preoccupation with trivia’.^{cdxliii} Death, the passage of time, the limits of our power, the loss of loved ones, the limits of love, the failures of responsibility for those who depend on us ... the Holocaust concentrates all these experiences. When my children and I were separated, it was the beginning of many years in which they and I suffered multiple and repeated wounds. These wounds were caused by my own powerlessness, my self-perception and the judgement of others that I had failed as a wife and a mother, and the shocking capacity of a man with whom

I'd lived for thirteen years to hurt and destroy me and to deny his children the love and care of the parent who had, till then, been their main carer. Added to this was the necessity that they grow up without me and suffer emotional privations and multiple abuses of their trust and dependency. I was unaware of the extent and nature of these abuses in the early years, and when I did become aware, I was unable to intervene effectively, as I narrate in Chapter 6.

Here, my purpose is not to tell this story, which is the subject of my autobiographical novel and of several essays, but to explore the links between the loss of my children and the panic attacks I suffered thirty years later. Why did I choose to tell my story as a fictional narrative and to interpret it in an academic dissertation, rather than continuing with psychotherapy? I had had several experiences of this kind of therapy, which had been beneficial, but limited by my own resistance to revisiting the past, and my financial circumstances. I also felt wary of giving someone else power to interpret my experience. I thought that if I could write my story, I would be able at last to make sense of it, and to free myself from the burden of grief and guilt that I felt.

Of course, in choosing to tell my story under the auspices of a formal system that involved supervision and examination, I was subjecting myself to another kind of authority. Perhaps this was part of the reason for my panic attacks. But in retrospect, the loss of control that I felt was far outweighed by the transforming experience of telling my story and making sense of events that had seemed unassimilable. The witnessing meant that I had to relive the trauma and the loss of agency that had marked the breakdown of my marriage. The panic attacks disabled me physically, but I survived them. I now see them as an externalisation of the emotional paralysis I had carried around inside me for thirty years. Though I could not transcend the trauma, I could re-enter it, work through it and move beyond it. I chose to do this without support apart from a visit or two to my GP and a short course of anti-depressants. I wanted to face it on my own, and the last full attack I had, although it felt the most extreme, was strengthening, because I was alone and came through it without lasting harm.

It is significant that this was my fourth attempt to complete a higher degree. I had a fear of failure, a fear that I was indeed, as a previous supervisor had implied, not Masters material. Forty years before I had withdrawn from a higher degree at my first

university, because I had a baby and my husband took a job in England. On the strength of my first class honours degree, I was offered a place at Oxford to read for an M.Phil, but I could not face leaving my baby with carers, and I withdrew once more. After I lost my children, I returned to Sydney University and was awarded a Commonwealth scholarship for the second time, this time for a Masters degree by course work. In the second year I began a thesis on Andrew Marvell's pastoral poetry, but the discouragement of a supervisor who suggested I had nothing new to say fed my depression and lack of belief in my self as a scholar, and I withdrew once more.

When I was driving to Busselton with Sammy, he was about the age that my youngest daughter had been when we parted. Perhaps the near miss in the car on the way to Busselton touched a chord — the fear of loss of a very young child. I think that my panic attacks had a double origin: the fear of failing again to complete a higher degree, and the deeper fear of facing the void caused by the loss of my children when they were little, which was entangled with the first fear.

When I had the panic attacks, I visited an alien world, unconscious, and entered a land without shadows, where the bright blinding white light exposed the absence of everything that I knew and could identify with. My loss of consciousness, of control over my body and interaction with my surroundings, my disorientation and panic, were a re-enactment, in concentrated and dramatised form, of the despair and loss of control that I had experienced thirty years earlier. In writing and theorising my losses, I externalised the trauma that had been a void at the centre of my psyche for so many years, and was able both to face it and to understand how it had happened, so that I was no longer entrapped by it. As Laub says, 'One has to know one's buried truth in order to be able to live one's life'.^{cdxlv} I was able to complete my Masters thesis successfully, and to continue my study of the themes of desire and loss; I will finish my novel and seek publication. I have touched the void and returned.

In Chapter one, I discussed Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the two planes of existence, the plane of immanence and the plane of organisation, and how the social field in which we live is criss-crossed by three types of lines, molar (the lines of the stratum, of organised forms), molecular (the lines of change and instability) and lines of flight (escape). Desire flows through us along all these lines, with the forces of

repression entangled in, resisting and being resisted by the impetus for change — a dance of creation and destruction. Deleuze cautions that on the molecular line lurks the danger of the ‘black hole’ phenomenon, sudden crossings of thresholds, dangerous intensities.^{cdxlv} This cryptic warning is open to interpretation. It seems to me that my panic attacks were ‘black holes’, which felt like physical death, and were temporary deaths of the self. They have not recurred since 2001, and I believe that in touching the void, I have moved beyond it.

The next piece is a memoir about my visits to my children when they were living in the USA.

The lost mother

Prologue

It was such a short interlude in my life. When I look back at it, searching for human figures in the picture, it is like looking into a broken mirror. There are bits missing, large bits, and some of the images I see are distorted by fracture lines. There is no order to the pictures; they are all jumbled up. How can I arrange them so that they make sense? How can I see myself?

Earth rainbow

The ploughed wheat field, lit by morning, is striped
with cinnamon, cocoa, maroon and indigo.

On the mountains
snow thaws on sharp-edged boulders,
twisted bushes are etched in black.

Above the snow line
aspens shiver, coated in white
and higher still, the firs are sharp and dark
above the blue- and grey-shadowed snow.

The first visit

The cab stops outside a gabled house in a street below the wall of mountains. The light stabs my eyes as it reflects off powdery snow covering the sidewalk and gardens. There they are, three small figures standing awkwardly in a row on the front doorstep. Sophia's long hair, parted in the middle, shows her pale, broad forehead; her hands pick at each other. Penelope, in the middle, clutches her white cardigan; her white blonde hair sticks out like a bush around her round face. Caitlin's hands are clasped, her knees turned in, her feet splayed, her mouth tucked into a half-smile.

They all look anxious and uncertain as they watch me open the cab door and climb out. I run up the path, leaving Mum to pay the cab and watch the driver unload our

bags. I drop my handbag as I kneel down and reach out my arms to hug all three of them. We cling together, our foreheads touching.

Do not speak, because if you do, you will scream or cry. What are they thinking, my little girls?

‘But mother — where have you been?’ Penelope pulls back. I meet her eyes, seaweed green.

I have no answer. I hug her closer to my breast.

Caitlin burrows her head into my neck, and makes a noise, something between a sob and a cry of joy.

Sophia strokes my face, and her tears spring onto my cheek.

My knees are turned to ice, I cannot move. We will become a statue, frozen at the threshold of his house, together but not living, because we cannot live together.

I make myself come back to life. I kiss each child on the eyes and cheeks to melt the frozen tears and straighten up, picking up my bag and its contents, which have spilled in the snow. After the driver brings our bags up the path, and Mum greets the girls, we climb the steps slowly. Penelope’s hand is tucked firmly into mine, Caitlin and Sophia are holding their nanna’s hands. We cross the threshold of the home that is theirs but not mine. I am their mother, but I do not belong here. I must wear the mother’s mask, act as normal as I can, calm, happy, loving, present, but inside, the mother that was me is shrunken, small like them, unsure of anything except this crushing pain of loss and longing. And to numb it, I must act, I must pretend that everything is all right, that we are a normal family, that I have never left them, that they are not lost to me.

I didn’t want Mum to come with me, yet I am glad she is here. She is a buffer between me and my ex-husband, who holds all the cards. I have no space of my own. Nor does Mum, but it doesn’t seem to worry her. She just gets on with life in her stoical way, as if we are back in Sydney, and the girls are on holiday with us. She doesn’t seem to mind moving between his house, where we stay during the week, and his girlfriend Kate’s house, where we spend the weekends while Kate and her children stay with him. Though she is in her late seventies, Mum doesn’t complain about being in no-man’s land. She

doesn't complain on the mornings we have to stand on the freezing sidewalk, stamping our feet to keep warm while we wait for the bus, turning our heads away from the icy wind that lashes our exposed flesh and slices through our clothes.

'America', says Mum, as we walk towards the bus stop after our first shopping excursion, 'is a decadent nation of people. Where else would you see women at the shops in slippers and curlers, with cigarettes hanging out of their mouths? Buying Coke and cigarettes and junk food?'

On the bus, she complains to me in a low voice about the bad manners of these people, who come up to you in the street, accost you, ask you questions about where you're from, comment on your clothes or your accent. Or the man sitting at the front of the bus who turns round and talks in a loud voice to the passenger behind him.

She speaks to shop assistants in polite 'standard English', with an undertone of condescension. If anyone accosts her, she replies in frosty tones. She gets on well with Kate, though, for she is English, and she enjoys conversations in passing with Robert about world politics and the vagaries of American culture.

'I think you should make more of an effort to be nice to Robert, Anna. It is his house, after all, and he's doing his best to make us welcome. Of course I don't condone what he has done to you and the girls. He had no right to take them so far away from you. But he is a good father, and he is doing his best to make a family life for them here.'

I have no answer to this. When I have to talk to Robert, empty words fall off my lips. I cannot be nice to this man who has taken my life away. Mum and Robert are alike in their respect for reason and social conventions, their fear of emotion. What he has done is not reasonable or moral, but he uses reason to justify his actions on moral grounds.

One week-night, he stays to have dinner with us; after a few glasses of wine, he asks me to come to his study for a chat. He asks me what my plans are, how I intend to provide for myself.

'You have a good mind; I hope that you'll finish your MA this time. Maybe you could get a job in the US once you have a higher degree. Then you could see the girls more often.'

‘Oh ... I don’t know. I have some problems with my supervisor. It’s not going well, and I don’t know if I’ll be able to finish.’

‘I’m sure you can if you put your mind to it. If you set yourself a goal, you can achieve it.’

Robert had been a schoolteacher in Queensland, and saved enough to go back to uni and do his PhD, supplementing his savings by running a coaching practice.

‘Robert ... do you think you will come back to Australia? Can you get a position at an Australian university?’

‘Maybe. But I’ve got to prove myself here first. I have to provide for my children’s future. I’m building a career as a leader in my field. That takes time and hard work. I’m not interested in a hack position at some second-rate university.’

‘But Robert ... it’s not enough for them to see their mother just once a year! They’re so young!’

‘Well, you should have considered that before you started carrying on like the town bike!’

His eyes are narrow, his upper lip stretched across his small white teeth. We’re back on old ground. I stand up, and push the chair in. ‘Well, Robert, I’m sorry for what happened, but I can’t change it. I don’t want my children to live on the other side of the world, and I never wanted to be separated from them.’

He snorts, and drains his brandy. ‘You are lucky that I’m allowing you access to them, paying your fare, letting you live in my house. Don’t push me.’

I retreat, go to the kitchen and pour myself a glass of wine. I take it to bed, and listen for the sound of the door closing as he leaves to go to Kate’s place.

Mum’s survival kit consists of back copies of English newspapers like *The Observer* and *The Guardian*, a couple of books about classical Greece and Rome and the latest volume of Joseph Campbell on ancient mythology. After dinner, when the children are in bed, and the washing up is done, she retires to bed and reads, and talks to me in the morning about what she has read. Her days are spent helping me with a few household chores, going on occasional shopping outings with me, reading, and when the children are home, reading to them and helping them with their homework.

I can't lose myself like she does in books. I try to read, but nothing holds my attention. I play with the idea of transferring to finish my Master's degree at the city's university, and am granted reading rights in the library. During the day when the girls are at school, I go and sit in the stacks, reading articles and books on my subject — the pastoral poetry of Andrew Marvell. I have a corner desk, with a small window that looks out on the mountains. The cold, hard steel of the desk and the chair and the anonymity of this grey corner comfort me. I look out at the icy mountains, glimpsed through smeared glass panes, a wild and unknown world.

An American friend in Sydney, who comes from this state, has asked me to contact a friend of hers: 'I think you'll like him. He's about your age. He's an earthy kind of guy. He might like to show you something of the outdoors, the mountains.'

I phone Bob and arrange to meet him at a tavern. I recognise him from the photo my friend gave me. He is nice-looking — ruddy cheeks, hazel eyes, curly brown beard and moustache, and a hooked nose. And he is friendly. One thing impresses me. After he rolls us each a cigarette, he leans over and casually strikes the match on the side of his boot. I have never seen anyone do this before, even when I was a child in the outback.

'Say', he says after our second Bourbon, 'Would ya like to go cross-country skiing with me?'

'I dunno. I've never skied before.'

'Well, cross-country is a lot easier and safer than downhill. And it's cheap to hire the skis, just four dollars a day.'

'OK. I'll be in it.'

We set off in the morning in his ute, after the girls have gone to school, and drive up one of the canyons. When we reach an area that is fairly flat, we head for the fir trees, following a trail. I keep falling over, and he laughs at me and helps me up. After an hour or so, I start to fall forwards instead of backwards on my bum.

'Hey, y're makin' progress!' He calls back over his shoulder, leaning on his skis while I scramble up again.

Around us, the fir trees stand, their stiff shapes iced with glossy snow. It is calm and still, and my breath and the swish of my skis on the snow are loud. When I fall, the sound reverberates through the listening forest. We go for miles, resting every now and then when we find a boulder to sit on. He has a little pocket camera, and takes a photo of me.

‘Dynamite!’ he exclaims, as he holds it up to frame me.

‘What do you mean?’

‘Your image, with y’r purple jumper and ski pants and y’r magenta hat, explodes against the white snow. I wish you could see y’rself.’

I’ve been feeling self-conscious and clumsy all morning, but that dissolves with his words. Perhaps we can be friends, lovers. Perhaps it will last, perhaps I can live here, maybe with him, and study, and see the girls more than once a year.

In Kate’s house, after Mum goes to bed, I drift around the living room, looking at her books and record collection; I want to find out who she is, this woman who seems likely to take my place in the family. I read snatches of letters from her English mother, which I find in a drawer of the sideboard; long letters full of complaints and bitching about family members and acquaintances. I sip port from Kate’s decanter, replacing it with water so she won’t guess. The childhood sneak in me comes out; the child that stole chocolate from the mantelpiece in the living room when my parents weren’t there, that rifled through my mother’s wardrobe to find the Christmas presents she hadn’t wrapped yet. I want to steal something from Kate, to take away some of her power.

In Robert’s house, during the hours the girls are awake, I act like a normal mother, and keep busy when I’m not cooking or looking after them by doing crochet and embroidery. I am making a shawl for Mum, in creamy wool, with an elaborate border of flowers in purples, dark reds and pinks. The pattern is wrong, and as I sit un-pulling and reworking sections, I think of all the steps that have brought me to this place, all the choices I made without realising the consequences. I drop the crochet sometimes — will I ever finish it? — and creep into their bedrooms. I bend over them as they sleep, watching their faces, uncreased and innocent, and inhale their sweet breath.

When I tire of the wayward shawl and the repetition of the pattern, I turn to another piece of work, an embroidery for the girls. Under my fingers, slowly, a picture

grows of forest foliage with a faun's face peeping out, and words from *The Song of Solomon*: '... the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.'

One afternoon when the girls come home from school, Mum and I take them shopping and choose material for a dress for each of them, and for new curtains for Sophia's room, in bright greens, yellows and reds, with fauns leaping amongst tangled vines and trees. Mum helps me cut out the dresses and pin them, and when I have sewn them, she does the hand finishing, the hems and buttons, and helps me hem the curtains.

But when they are asleep and Mum has gone to bed, the numbness returns. I drink red wine and sit listening to music until at last sleep seems possible. In the morning, I look in the mirror and see my face, the face of a woman older than me, the lines under her eyes and round her mouth sharply etched by the dry mountain air, cold winds and lack of sleep. I can't stay here. I will dry up and wither away before I grow old.

The second visit

A year has passed, and I am back. Bob has invited me to stay with him, and I am glad not to have Mum with me, to be a little more independent, to be able to stay somewhere that does not belong to my ex-husband. Bob lives on a farm outside the city. He calls it Halcyon Farm.

'What is a halcyon?' I ask, as we pull up outside the little white farmhouse on a hill.

'The halcyon is a kingfisher. The ancients believed it breeds at the time of the winter solstice in a nest floating on the sea; it charms the wind and waves so that the sea stays calm.'

'So this is your safe place?'

'Yes. Welcome to my nest.'

In the kitchen is a fuel range, which he keeps banked down at night and during the day when he is out. A hallway leads to the living room, where indoor plants ramble over walls and door and window frames. Dusty bookshelves spill over with books, and

records are piled up round the hi-fi cabinet. Cushions are scattered over the old couch and armchair, and small leadlight windows look out to the Rockies. It is perfect, comfortable, forgiving, like an old woman who has lived in the one place all her life, whose silence holds the unspoken stories of all who have come and gone. I don't belong here, but I feel safe, I don't have to perform. Bob is easy-going, accepting me in his life like a migrant bird that has been left behind by the flock and is given shelter from the winter storms. We sit at night by the range in the kitchen, and he throws incense cones on it to perfume the soporific waves of warmth. His hi-fi plays a station that broadcasts jazz day and night, or he puts on some of his favourite records: Leo Sayer, *I Can Dance*, Bob Dylan, *Lay Lady Lay*, Joan Baez, *Diamonds and Rust*, Joni Mitchell, *Ladies of the Canyon*, Janis Ian, singing of seventeen-year-old love, pimples and pain ... We drink rough Californian red wine and smoke rollies and the occasional joint, and tell each other tales of our lives and loves. His wife left him and has gone to Alaska with another man. After her, he met a woman who had fled from an abusive marriage and took refuge with him. She stayed long enough for him to fall in love with her, and then she left him. He hopes for her return.

When we have emptied the bottle and smoked the last puff, we drift to his big brass bed, and make love in the moonlight that shines snow-brightened through the leadlight glass. It is enough, enough to help me forget for a while the aching void I am lost in.

Bob gives me a lift each day to the children's house on his way to work, and they come to visit sometimes at his cottage. They are on holiday, so we go on outings together to the shops, or to the park, and they have friends over to play. Sophia is very close to Kate's daughter, Julie; they are in the same class at school. She asks me if Julie can come for a sleepover. So I arrange with Robert to stay overnight at his place, while he stays at Kate's. Julie and Sophia sit next to each other at the dinner table, whispering and giggling. As soon as we have cleared up after dinner, they run off to Sophia's room. I have promised Caitlin and Penelope we will play a game together. While they go through the box of dress-ups, I go to Sophia's room and knock on the door. A pause, stifled giggles.

'Sophia?' I call.

‘Yes, Mum?’

‘Can I come in?’

When I walk in, they are sitting on the bed, a book lying between them. I resist the urge to pick it up and look at its title. I smile, making sure I include Julie in my glance. ‘We’re going to play a game of dress-ups. You know, making up a story to fit the clothes we put on. Do you want to join us?’

Sophia’s face lights up; she turns to Julie. ‘Want to?’

Julie shrugs, looks away. Sophia’s smile fades.

‘Oh ... no Mum. We have to do some reading for school.’

I smile and say OK, retreat and close the door. I go back to Caitlin and Penelope, and explain that the others want to read; we play the game without them.

Sophia has made a secret world with Julie that I cannot enter. I know she needs this. I feel invisible, moving through their daily lives like a ghost that materialises at times, but keeps fading. I have to force myself to enter their world where I feel excluded, and no matter how they cling to me, wanting me to stay, I know I have to leave again, and can not return except under the temporary licence of the one who keeps me away from them. I struggle to love them, to let my flesh meet theirs, because I know I will have to tear it apart again.

The last day comes. We have an hour to be together. Penelope sits on my knee, holding Happy Face, the cloth doll I gave her in Australia before we were separated. Caitlin leans against me, my arm round her. Sophia does headstands, her tight-clad winter legs poised trembling above her slender body, her skirt half-veiling her long fair hair and tear-wet face.

It helps stop the tears, she says in an upside-down voice.

Reprise

Evening has fallen; it is time to go.

I blow kisses through the cab window;
we turn the corner and they are lost again.

I fix my eyes on the mountains

casting dark shadows

over the painted fields —

Earth rainbow seen through frosted eyes.

Afterthoughts of a missing person

When I saw my children again for the first time, I had fought a legal battle for a year and a half to get access to them; I was very afraid of seeing them again on their father's territory. I was afraid of loving them too much, of them loving me too much, of inevitably having to separate from them again, of our time together being spied on by their father, his girlfriend and her children. I was in enemy territory, and had little say in how I could behave while I was there. All these conditions subjectified me as failed wife and mother, and came between me and the immediacy of my self as mother, the exchange of love, our reunion. As Bergson puts it, I was a ghost, a colourless shadow, acted rather than acting.^{cdxlv} They had conditions that limited their experience too, but the innocence of childhood, the lack of awareness of *chronos* time and its inevitable processes of regulation and measurement may have protected them from some of the fear and pain that I felt. But their pain of having been separated and having to separate again without understanding why would have been difficult or impossible for them to overcome at the time.

Because it was such a painful experience for me to see them again, I numbed myself a second time. This had happened before, when I separated from them, leaving them with their father in Queensland. Each time, he stood between me and them, but the first time, his stand was more precarious than I realised, and his awareness of that would have dictated his defensive actions in taking them out of the country without my knowledge or consent. He did not allow me to see them again until he had shored up his possession of them; first, by removing them from the jurisdiction of Australian courts; secondly, by securing custody of them and legal separation from me in an American court. I felt even more powerless when I saw them again than I had felt when I left them the first time. Then, I had allowed myself to believe I could somehow return to being their mother, if not his wife, and that he might agree to some form of joint custody. The second time I left them, I knew there was no hope of seeing them except on his terms until they had grown up. I had no control over how they would be brought up, no say in their family life, their education; I would always be in the background, unable to protect them. I was worried about the woman who seemed likely to become the children's stepmother, because she seemed bossy and preoccupied with her studies for a higher

degree, and her manner with them was sometimes peremptory and sharp. I had witnessed a scene when Penelope threw a tantrum and she shut her in a room on her own, refusing to let her come out until she stopped. I was worried about her children and their influence on my three young daughters. My worries about what became a blended family were well founded; but that is another story, their story, the aftershocks of which are still being felt in their lives, and reflected in mine.

Before I sat down to write this story, I searched for some fragments to connect me with those visits to my children. I have no photos, no mementoes, just a couple of letters from Bob, the man I met while I was there. At first I thought these letters were the key that would open the door to a part of my past that is forgotten. I wrote the story that way, but it didn't work. Now I know it is not him I am searching for, not even the lost children that I went there to visit; it is myself, my self as mother of three young daughters, from whom I had been separated for more than a year.

I have just some shreds of memory, linked by a feeling that has been a part of my life since childhood — a feeling of not being there, of not being present in the events happening around me. That feeling is not active in my life now, unless I am somewhere I don't want to be, but it comes back strongly whenever I look into the past. Who was that woman, who was seen in different ways by the people she visited, ways that did not match the emptiness she felt but could not express?

About a year after my second visit, their father brought them back to Australia, but to a city in another state. For the rest of their childhood, I saw them twice a year, until Penelope decided to come and live with me after she turned fourteen. They are all grown up now, with children of their own.

Last time Sophia came to visit me, she asked me if I had any letters written by her and her sisters when they were children. She is writing her own story. I got out my two cardboard filing boxes, and went through them. They are labelled 'Writing material' and contain a jumble of personal letters, family history and cuttings from magazines.

One day, I said to myself as I sat riffling through them, I will go through these, and sort them out properly. Like the box they sit on top of that is full of photos, some in albums, most in untidy stacks. I found two or three envelopes full of letters and passed them on to Sophia. With a sigh of relief, I closed the boxes and turned back to my

computer, to the chapter I was working on for my thesis. I am more comfortable when the letters are hidden away. It is years since I have read them.

Hey, Mum! Here's a couple of letters from Bob!

We had talked about him that morning, about my stay with him when I visited them, and I told her I had mislaid his letters, and the photo he had sent me.

She passed them to me. One was an air letter, dated April 1974. It must have been the first one he wrote me after my second visit. I realised as I read it how faded my memories are, how much less rich and layered than the experience was.

Before sitting down to write you I reread all of your letters: a thrill went through me that I guess I can only say is connected w/ knowing a very beautiful person ... Christina, you were very very good for me on so many levels that I have come to cherish the time I was with you, especially the last few days — it goes further than that; we were good for each other as friends (about the fastest friendship I've ever shared in), as lovers, as adults, as children (you could not see the smile, sun on my face, in among the pines, the warmth, the tenderness, as I hear you crashing along the snowy trail). Goddam it! There sure was something about you!! (Said after reliving a series of disconnected yet connected images all of which had the common thread of a smile in your eyes).

I sat and listened to the water splashing down on the stones in my little indoor fountain, and wondered why I felt cheated. I felt sad that he got so much more out of our friendship than I did, or than I remember getting. I was not fully alive; part of me was lost. I wanted what I could not have. I wanted my children back, I wanted their father not to be alive or have any power over our lives. I wanted to be in Sydney or England with them, somewhere where I felt at home, not a stranger, a visitor. No matter how lovely Bob was, how generous in sharing his home and his life with me, his body, his playfulness, his rich and intelligent mind, I could not have loved him wholeheartedly. He was happy, it seems, with the me that I gave him, all that I could. It was I that was not happy with myself.

The second letter is dated August 1974. It is a single sheet of paper with the stamp of a hotel in Dakar. It was not written at Halcyon, his mountain-foot home. He was homesick, alienated from the culture he was in.

The hotel and I do not get along — my room reeks of Halcyon, my heart is on the road. Yet I am happy, neutral and happy sort of recurved into the space it was when I met you — when you challenged me and I challenged you: the gauntlet a smile, the joust won by each of us in laughter and warmth, each receiving, discovering and owning new strengths. I think of you quite often, C.: your warmth in matters sexual, emotional, intellect-sensual. So bear w/ a little reverie — tell your lover (I hope you have one) an old friend you just met has written to say: he misses you and hopes you are happy.

I want some of what he had. I want that passion, that warmth and joy. I want to go back, to turn back time and live it again. But without the loss, the bar that was set on me by that man, who had been my husband, who was my children's father, and his pre-emptive actions in taking the children from me.

I want to revisit those Halcyon days, to live again for a while in the warm, peaceful nest of Bob's cottage, sheltered from the cold winds.

I have found him again. I lost contact with him for many years, and thought he must have moved from Halcyon. When Sophia found his letters for me, she suggested I google his name. I did, and after a couple of tries, found an entry that seemed to fit, and a photo of him. He is sitting in a swivel chair in front of a desk piled with papers, folders and tools of the office. Through the window are leafy trees, and he is wearing a T-shirt and shorts. His arms are crossed on his lap, and his smile is wide, warm. His hair is full and white. He looks lean and fit and alert.

I sent an email to the address, and had a reply back next day. We have exchanged a few emails since then, and we are friends again. He tells me he left Halcyon some years ago, but it is always in his heart. So he cannot go back either.

And I would not have been there, would not have met him, had I not lost the children.

My children. I want the unquestioning bond that I had with them before they were taken from me, the certainty of knowing that we are a circle of love, unbroken. I want to relive

their childhood with them, to have a second chance to give them the unconditional love that I had lost in my childhood.

I want the impossible.

Nothing can make up for what they and I lost, yet we have learned so much, suffered so much, and all that we are now, the love that we share, is given by life, mixed up with the pain and the grief we lived through, bitter sweet.

The memories of that place — the snow-softened peaks, the sharp winds, the earth colours, the grey steely stacks in the library, the ordinary houses Mum and I stayed in, Halcyon Farm — are vivid, but fragmented. In my yearning to revisit that time and that place, I have made it more real than the real world I visited. It is a world that never was, a world I never visited, and I am not that woman who was not there.

The hardest thing to accept is that one cannot change the past. I push back the screen to revisit the long separation we endured in their childhood, and the screen behind it, to revisit the first loss of the children, and I get stuck. All the words I have written become mere words, saying over and over again in different ways that it is too late, I can never change what happened to them, I can never repair the damage done by their father's and my actions, and by their stepfamily. Nor can I see how I, as I was then, *could have* changed what happened to them. As Grosz says, I inherit the events that I both made and did not make, and I must submit to the necessity of them. More than that, I must affirm the past, my children's past and mine, I must become worthy of it, as Deleuze counsels, so that I can will and release it, and thereby have one more birth. I return again and again to these words, because they give me comfort and hope and the courage to go on. Worthiness is not a constant state, a stable position, it is a becoming.

And in that becoming, the circle forms again, unbroken.

The next memoir is set in a more recent time, and explores the desire to heal the past in a relationship that has been rebuilt after a long separation.

Seaweed Dreams^{cdxlvii}

I wade through the green jelly water—wobbly, like someone didn't put in enough gelatine. It sways and swells over white angel cake sand. The shallow shelf stretches far out, and the water pales to a lighter shade of green, then darkens. I turn round before I get to the darker part, afraid of sharks. If one comes, will I see it in time? Will I make it back to shore? Will he see or hear in time to help me if I am attacked?

I'm bored with safe, shallow water, but I'm afraid of the deep.

He launches himself backwards in the shallower water, a skinny white seal, letting the water lap over his stiff, aching arms and legs. He's more at home in the water than I am. But he's cautious about going out too far because his legs are weak.

They're far enough away not to take offence, he'd said as he stripped off. The group of adults, children and dogs are splashing in the shallows further along the long thin curve of white sand. If they notice his nakedness, they may see him as just an eccentric old man taking a health cure. If this were a Perth beach, he wouldn't get away with it. We've come here looking for informality and freedom to do as we like. Suburbia lurks in the ordered streets of the crayfishing town; where once there were shacks and simple cottages, now there are kit homes interspersed with solid brick residences and the occasional crayfisher's mansion. But here, on the beach beyond the town limits, we are nomads escaping from the great sprawl of the city and the long street of respectable houses that is this town. Escaping from our escape.

I breast-stroke towards him, helped by the gentle swell of waves. This is perfect. I hate swimming out of my depth, in water I can't see the bottom through. I can't bear putting my head under water, ever since I nearly drowned as a child.

His penis and balls sway as he floats. Soft, plump sea creatures against his white thighs and groin that is fuzzed with fine dark hair like seaweed strands. He turns his lanky body and moves languidly through the wobbly green jelly water. He lets the water carry him, swelling and ebbing in a gentle rhythm.

I love him more than ever. More than I did when he and I were young, when he wanted me and I left him. I feared love then.

The wet sand is edged by a shelf of dry powdery sand, tossed with bundles of seaweed. A tangle of broad flat olive-brown *lasagne*, curly edged bronze *pappardelle*, messes of fine russet *capella d'angelo*, laced with strings of tiny acid-green beads.

Back at the house, the day is long and hot. I am lethargic. He sleeps, curled on his side, his silver hair and brown face exotic against royal purple bed linen. A beached Neptune. And I, his consort, once Medusa to his Poseidon; now, we are older and more at home with fresh water than with the unruly depths of the sea. I lie down beside him, not because I am tired, but for the closeness of his body. I twist and turn, settling on my back, waiting for thoughts of everyday life to fade. I hardly ever sleep during the day, but if I relax enough, a conversation begins in my head. Voices speak of other lives, other selves.

After lunch, I prepare a lamb shank casserole for dinner: shanks seared in olive oil, bedded on garlic, celery and root vegetables, splashed with red wine, fish sauce and balsamic vinegar and seasoned with mustard, marjoram and black pepper. I add ruby red whole tomatoes in thick juice to sweeten the sauce, and barley to give a nutty texture.

He washes up two days' dishes, and we laugh together at the Goon Show on CD. Crazy nomadic humour, that makes fun of the conventions of English class society. We both lived there, separately, at the same time, so we share a loving nostalgic view of it, peppered with down-under mockery of their stuffier ways. It brings us close again. The waves sway and swell, ebb and flow, and we float with them.

After dinner, we watch a documentary about a white man who lives for a while with a central African tribe of forest people. He is to be initiated, a gruelling process of eating bark that contains a powerful hallucinogen. He is apprehensive because he knows the drug will activate sites in the brain that hold memories of past relationships, in particular ones in which he has behaved without kindness or concern for the other person. The men of the tribe are not sure what dose to give him, as they have not initiated a white man before. He signs a paper absolving them of responsibility if it should go amiss.

He vomits in spasms until he is possessed by visions. The film does not disclose the visions he has, for they are secret men's business, but he says that he has visited

some painful and guilty memories, made even more uncomfortable by the fact that he experienced how it felt to be the other person he had wronged. As he leaves the village, he tells how his life has been changed by the love shown him there, by reliving his past and realising his lack of care for others. He desires reconciliation with those he has wronged.

We sit out on the balcony, sipping the last glass of wine for the day; we are cooled by a light wind from the sea. The intense heat of the day has gone, and the darkening sky is beaded with mackerel clouds.

We talk of the man's initiation. I compare it with Western psychoanalysis. But the depth of the experience, the intensity and specificity of it seem much more powerful.

'What I found fascinating was ... the man was able to relive the past with hallucinatory intensity, not just remember and talk about it.'

'He was very brave,' he says.

'Would you do it?'

'No, I don't think so. I'd be afraid of taking the wrong dose, of losing control ...'

I wonder — if he could do it, if he could relive some times in our relationship, see it from my point of view, would it change the present? Would it deepen our understanding of each other? If he could really enter into my feelings, not just guess at them. How much does he know of my inner thoughts and feelings? Can he ever know how it is or was to be me?

He is an island I trawl around, making a landing sometimes, camping for a while, meeting his body, joining, then separating.

I remind myself that the same applies to me — the times I have rejected him, withheld my love, left him, taking our son with me. It's much easier to see things from my point of view than from his.

I don't say any of this to him.

We can't relive that time. But it keeps coming back, and right now I wish that we could eat or drink something that would let us relive the past, so that we understand it better from each other's point of view, then let go of it. It's because we can never go there again that it haunts us. How would it be if we could go back, if we could choose differently? Perhaps it would be so painful it would destroy us. We wouldn't be able to

measure the dose of remembering, we would be sucked into the other's experience, living it otherwise, unable to step back and say 'it's not me.' But I am him, he is me. We have hurt each other, we can't change that. Perhaps, without the hallucinogenic bark, we can only live in the present. We hurt ourselves, now we can be happy again. We can have one more birth.

There is no cause and effect. There is only now.

We don't speak. He sits for a while, then gets up from his chair, and goes downstairs. I sit on, finishing my wine. I make a desultory effort to finish the crossword and word puzzle. I wonder if he is upset about something, or just tired. His moods aren't sharp, but he has times when he is remote and shut off. He's always been like this. He is much more passionate than me, but he switches on and off. I used to take it personally, felt it was me he was rejecting. Now I know it's a protective thing; he is a sea creature that floats with the tide, that pulses and opens to the caress of shallow water suffused by sunlight, retreats with the dark and the deepening tide, closes, then opens again.

In bed, after I've showered and turned off the main light, he puts down his book and reaches for me.

We begin to kiss, and suddenly, I am overtaken by a wild playfulness. Is it him, or is it me, growling like a jungle creature? I echo him, he echoes me in a chorus of animal calls. I am possessed as I roll on top of him, and he enters me at once. Mimicry gives way to screams of ecstatic surrender as he thrusts, again and again and again. We roll over. A moment of quiet, then he begins again. Another crescendo. Can that be me, caterwauling?

We lie still for a few moments, then stir, and we are animal again. He shouts and groans like one dying in agony.

Beyond the shallows, the water is deep and dark, and I reach down with my toes and touch a soft, spongy reef, ancient rocks covered with a thick quilting of seaweed, inhabited by many tiny creatures of the sea. My toes curl, my body softens and relaxes, sways and drifts with the swell of the waves.

Now, we drift together.

Afterthoughts of a dreamer

In dreams, people we have known, familiar scenes, return to us, but differently. Dream time is *aeon* time. Dreams are more jumbled and fragmented than our daytime narrations of self. Some days have a dreamlike quality, when everything we experience is translucent and stays in our memories more vividly than usual.

‘Seaweed dreams’ tells the story of such a day. It was a few months after my reunion with a man who became my second husband a few years after the loss of my children. We had been separated for about 15 years after two earlier separations and reunions, when he asked me if I would consider getting back together again. Our earlier relationship had been stormy and haunted for both of us by past losses. Our present relationship is the same and yet different. It is the same in many aspects of our personalities, our interests, our ways of thinking; it is different in the way we relate to each other and communicate.

The story within the story, of the man who revisited the past by eating hallucinogenic bark, shows the power and the boundaries of memory and of narrative. The man’s hallucinatory reliving of past relationships, not retold in the documentary because it is *tabu*, gives us a glimpse of one way that the past can be relived. His journey into the past is secret men’s business, the story that should not be told, because it would lose its power if it were. Its secrecy drives the narrative, and casts its spell over the listener by not being told. Its truth may be quite mundane, in reality, but we can never know, and not knowing makes it powerful, leaves us always wondering. His journey is a line of flight that takes him into very dangerous territory, a ‘black hole’ where he risks not returning, being destroyed mentally by the intensity of the experience, or physically by an overdose of hallucinogen. Psychoanalysis offers a safer, albeit less immediate and powerful way of revisiting the past; hypnosis is one step closer to the bark journey. Both deal with the secrets of the past, the secrets that need to be penetrated so that they lose their power over our present and future lives. The psychoanalyst and the hypnotherapist sit before, beside or behind us as mediators of the past, helping us to push back the screens of the thick moment and look within at what we have been afraid of.

The narrator in my story considers the use of some artificial or external stimulant to allow remembering and empathic experience of the other’s point of view,

and asks him if he could take such a journey. She yearns to enter his skin, for him to enter hers, so that they can understand each other better and release resentment and remorse. He resists this idea, sees it as a loss of control. She concludes that it is too dangerous, that they might be sucked into the other's experience, unable to step back, to recover the self. They would run the risk of being dragged down into the black hole where memory and identity disintegrate. Then she realises that they can only live in the present, a present informed by the awareness that they have hurt each other in the past, but they can live differently now. Each has their secrets, past memories that resurface in dreams or times of intensity, and each must choose whether to allow those secrets to frame their present life and relationship, or whether to let them sink into imperceptibility, back into the plane of immanence from whence they arose, driven by chance events. The narrator, in telling the story of this day and the secrets that surface, performs a *décoverture*, albeit a partial one, of her past, so that she can live more fully in the present moment.

The act of union that closes the story repeats the theme of moving from the shallows (the everyday of linear time) into the depths (where intuition, imagination, passion, are freed in *aeon* time) and suggests that sexual union is another way of joining with the other, using the natural chemistry of our bodies to allow us to cross the boundaries of self and push back the thick membrane of the present moment, to enter *aeon* time. Throughout the story we only see the narrator's point of view, and we can only guess, as she does, at her lover's thoughts and desires. We see his physical presence and movements, but we (and she) are given little of his inner self, which remain secret. The act of union has a significance in her consciousness that he probably does not share. The gap between the two is closed, but the imagery of the ebb and flow of the waves and the tide suggests the closeness is ephemeral. I, the writer, did not see this when I wrote the story. My writing, my becoming-sorcerer, was wiser and more knowing than I was. I saw it as a turning point in the narrative of our relationship. I as PhD student writing this framing narrative now see that it was a joyful moment in the dance of desire, but not one that refolded the relationship in a different, more intimate shape.

Intimacy is a constant negotiation with registers of selfhood in time. We are constrained to live in *chronos* time, the time of everyday life, but we can choose to shift

in and out of it, to access the more fluid and free plane of desire. Intimacy with our inner selves and with those of others is enacted in *aeon* time or duration, through the faculties of memory, intuition, introspection, imagination, empathy. In the present moment, we remember past times, shared moments with the other, or moments of self-awareness, of emotional significance. This remembrance gives the present moment its thickness and intensity, and if we choose, we can express our selfhood creatively in self-oriented ways, such as writing, singing, painting, dancing, walking, shaping new material forms, or we can reach out to the other and communicate verbally or non-verbally, connecting our experience of duration with theirs (if they are willing to push back the screen) and live more intensely in a shared thick present.

Since I wrote 'Seaweed dreams' I have shed another layer of illusion through my enactment of intimacy in *aeon* time. I had the illusion that he and I had found each other as we had always meant to be together, in a romantic and committed relationship. I have come to realise that our ideas of a relationship are different and that we cannot reclaim the past in a romantic sense. That is, we cannot 'make our dreams come true'. Our dreams are different. We are now close and intimate friends but not lovers. The difference from past deterritorialisations of our relationship is that we have both separately, through different affective processes, come to this realisation and when we did, we felt freed of pain and frustration at the refusal of the other to fit into our dream. We have released the past and become worthy of the event, not by thinking about what we want and seeking to create the present according to our romantic ideals, but by accepting and flowing with the potential of the emerging unique moment.

Chapter five: becoming-child, becoming-sorcerer

In Chapter four, layers or folds of selfhood are narrated in three memoirs and interpreted in terms of the concept of *aeon* time or duration as the time of becoming, the thick present in which we can push back the screens of memory and revisit the past, enabling different selves to unfold in the present and future. Temporising, we have seen, is a way of playing with time to create alternative realities; it is not merely a way of ‘escaping without leaving’, but is a dialogic practice that can enable the writer to affirm and release the past, imagine different futures and live more joyfully and creatively.

This chapter experiments further with the Deleuzian concept of becoming, a complex process that is the movement of desire, and frames a memoir extract and an essay with theoretical interpretations. Deleuze and Guattari approach the definition of becoming by eliminating what it is not. It is not a ‘correspondence between relations’, nor ‘a resemblance, an imitation, or, at the limit, an identification.’^{cdxlviii} Becoming is not an evolution, in terms of descent and filiation; it is a relation of alliance, an involutory process without regression or progression, a rhizomatous connection between heterogeneous populations or individuals that does not follow classificatory or genealogical rules.^{cdxlix} Becomings are haecceities, ‘molecular collectivities, ... not molar subjects, objects, or forms that we know from the outside and recognize from experience, through science, or by habit.’^{cdl} This is true for humans as it is for animals, plants and inanimate things. It occurs, not in the imagination, but in reality. But which reality? It has its own reality:

What is real is the becoming itself, the block of becoming, not the supposedly fixed terms through which that becoming passes.... The becoming-animal of the human is real, even if the animal the human being becomes is not: and the becoming-other of the animal is real, even if that something other it becomes is not.^{cdli}

All becoming is ‘minoritarian’, that is, not of the majority or dominant order. ‘[T]he majority in the universe assumes as pre-given the right and power of man. In this sense women, children, but also animals, plants, and molecules, are minoritarian.’^{cdlii} This leads into the rationale for the controversial claim that ‘all becomings begin with and pass through becoming-woman. It is the key to all other becomings.’^{cdliii} Deleuze and

Guattari assert the privilege of woman and child in relation to becomings. A woman, as defined by her form, endowed with organs and functions, and assigned subjectivity, is a molar entity; becoming-woman is not a question of imitating or being transformed into this entity. It is a process that takes place on the molecular level, ‘emitting particles that enter the relation of movement and rest, or the zone of proximity, of a microfemininity, in other words, that produce in us a molecular woman, create the molecular woman’.^{cdliv} They do not say that this kind of creation is the prerogative of the man, but — and this is what many feminists have objected to — that ‘the woman as a molar entity has to become-woman *in order that* the man also becomes — or can become-woman’ (emphasis in original).^{cdlv}

I take Deleuze and Guattari to mean by this that, because man is historically majoritarian, dominant, he cannot become-molecular except through contagious alliances with becomings-woman. I do not see this, as some feminists do, as placing woman in a subordinate position again.^{cdlvi} What I do see is that the privileging of the woman/girl on the plane of immanence, at first sight in contradiction to the principle of univocity, may be, like the privileging of difference, in reaction to the hierarchical and phallographic order of subjectivity that has dominated Western philosophy since Plato. And, as with the privileging of difference, I accept this paradox as a necessary one in the quest to go beyond dualism. To give priority to difference and to become-woman is to move towards redressing the age-old imbalance.

Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge the necessity for women to engage in molar politics, to win back their own ground in being, but they caution against the danger of stopping the flow of creativity, the flow of life, if we confine ourselves to that subjectivity. Equally, they eschew the politics that says that ‘each sex contains the other and must develop the opposite pole in itself.’^{cdlvii} The only way, they say, to escape dualism is ‘to be-between, to pass between, the intermezzo ...’.^{cdlviii} I take this to mean that we become-woman between the sexes, outside of sexuality (which is on the plane of organisation and subjectivity) on the immanent plane of haecceities, of desire. Desire does not come from within, from the subject folded in a man’s or woman’s body, it comes from the Outside of immanent creativity.^{cdlix} Of course, one of its expressions is in sexual desire, which is shaped and repressed by our subjectivity on the molar level, in

the realm of dualism. But it is, in Deleuzian terms, ‘badly explained by the binary organization of the sexes, and just as badly by a bisexual organization within each sex.’^{cdlx} Sex, love itself

is a war machine with strange and somewhat terrifying powers. Sexuality is the production of a thousand sexes, which are so many uncontrollable becomings. Sexuality proceeds by way of the becoming-woman of the man and the becoming-animal of the human: an emission of particles. [emphasis in original]^{cdlxi}

They are talking here of how sexuality is produced asocially, outside of the dualistic molar organisation of Western heterosexuality. Of course we are all socialised and our desire is repressed, but through schizoanalysis, they hold that desire can become productive of difference that is not binary and stereotyped. They hasten to add that becoming-animal is not a question of bestialism (though this can occur) nor one of imitation, domestication or correspondence, but of another power which sweeps us up and makes us become something different, that shares an element with the animal.^{cdlxii}

‘The imperceptible is the immanent end of becoming, its cosmic formula.’^{cdlxiii}

This, they say, means many things, the first being to be like everybody else, to be unnoticed. In being like everybody else we can become everybody and everything, *tout le monde*. This is the path of asceticism and sobriety, the shedding of ‘complaint and grievance, unsatisfied desire, defense or pleading, everything that roots each of us (everybody) in ourselves, in our molarity’.^{cdlxiv} To become imperceptible is to become nothing more than an abstract line, a piece in an abstract puzzle. They name Jack Kerouac and Virginia Woolf as examples of writers who sought to write ‘like the line of a Chinese poem-drawing’; they quote Woolf’s observation that to achieve this it is necessary to eliminate all that exceeds the moment, and include all that is part of it; thus, they say, one seeks

[t]o be present at the dawn of the world. Such is the link between imperceptibility, indiscernibility, and impersonality — the three virtues. To reduce oneself to an abstract line, a trait, in order to find one’s zone of indiscernibility with other traits, and in this way enter the haecceity and impersonality of the creator.^{cdlxv}

In losing (even momentarily) our subjectivity, our personal existence on the plane of organisation, we can enter the plane of immanence, the cosmic level of creation and

reduce ourselves to haecceities. This is a process that can happen in moments of passion, of creation, of meditation, of altered states of consciousness, of giving birth, of dying, when there is no more, no after or before, just the present moment and all that it includes and excludes. This becoming is one that I have tried to capture in the climax of the story ‘Seaweed dreaming’ in Chapter four. It is also one that I approach in my unfolding of the family story and the ‘absent cause’ of incest in Chapter three, through the paradoxical awareness of nonsense in sense, of the power of the empty square to produce subjectivities within the assemblage of the bourgeois family; the only line of flight from this subjectification that does not lead to reterritorialisation can be into imperceptibility, to escape from meaning, from judgement, from what might be and to surrender to what is and is not. And yet, in insisting on describing and reducing it to words, I lose it. Old endgame lost of old. Material beings, we cannot live on the plane of immanence — whenever we approach or intersect with it through lines of deterritorialisation or lines of flight, we are swung back to the plane of organisation.

We are contained by categories, of what we are and can be, divided as humans from the animal, the vegetable and the mineral, and within humanity, divided by race, gender, class and subjectivity. Becoming is about going beyond these categories established by our need to know, to control and to possess our lives and our environment, and becoming different, the immanent end of which is becoming-imperceptible. This is the realm of ‘*a life*’, the plane of immanence, which is the subject of Deleuze’s last work, *Pure immanence: essays on a life*. *A life* is outside of experience (the empirical), ‘a pre-reflexive field of impersonal consciousness, a qualitative duration of consciousness without a self’; ‘[i]t is made up of virtualities, events, singularities’.^{cdlxvi} The level on which we live is that of the empirical and subjective, where events are actualised in a state of things, and in objects and subjects; but in becoming-imperceptible, we move into the plane of the virtual and the impersonal. Such a state is fleeting, glimpsed in altered states of consciousness, in artistic vision, in near-death experiences. Deleuze uses the example of Charles Dicken’s dying man in *Our mutual friend*. The dying man is a rogue, held in contempt by everyone, but as he lies in a coma, and those around him try to save him, ‘something soft and sweet’ seems to penetrate him and transform his wickedness; however, as he comes back to life, he

reverts to his meanness, and his carers to their contempt: '[b]etween his life and death, there is a moment that is only that of a life playing with death'.^{cdlxvii} Deleuze gives very young children as another example of immanent life; in their relatively unformed subjectivity, they resemble each other, and are close to 'an immanent life that is pure power and even bliss'.^{cdlxviii}

The little girl is the first victim of the majoritarian expropriation of desire in the name of subjectivity, so that she becomes a woman in the molar or organic sense, but loses the becoming-woman, haecceity. This is what must be restored, claimed back, so that the girl can be

the becoming-woman of each sex, just as the child is the becoming-young of every age. Knowing how to age does not mean remaining young; it means extracting from one's age the particles, the speeds and slownesses, the flows that constitute the youth of that age. Knowing how to love does not mean remaining a man or a woman; it means extracting from one's sex the particles, the speeds and slownesses, the flows, the *n* sexes that constitute the girl of that sexuality.^{cdlxix}

In this chapter I include an excerpt from my memoir of childhood, 'The smell of rain', which illustrates how, as a young girl-child, I was subjected to the majoritarian expropriation of desire and sexuality into the bourgeois family, where the girl-child must grow up to become a mother to the man and to her children and sacrifice her own desire. In affirming this loss, I reclaim my becoming-child.

Becoming creates multiplicities, 'unnatural participations' between species, kingdoms, heterogeneous terms, beyond 'filiative production or hereditary reproduction, in which the only differences retained are a simple duality between sexes within the same species, and small modifications across generations'.^{cdlxx} Becomings-animal enter assemblages that Deleuze and Guattari call packs, multiplicities of heterogeneous beings; this is the realm of the exceptional individual, the anomalous, the sorcerer.^{cdlxxi} In every pack, there is an exceptional individual, 'and it is with that individual that an alliance must be made in order to become-animal'.^{cdlxxii} The exceptional individual is anomalous, without 'familiar or subjectified feelings, ... specific or significant characteristics. Human tenderness is as foreign to it as human classifications'.^{cdlxxiii} It is on the borderline, the outside edge of the pack. Sometimes the exceptional individual

may be the leader of the pack that occupies the borderline, sometimes it may be a being of another order, an outsider.

Sorcerers have always held the anomalous position, at the edge of the fields or woods. They haunt the fringes. They are at the borderline of the village, or between villages. The important thing is their affinity with alliance, with the pact, which gives them a status opposed to that of filiation. The relation with the anomalous is one of alliance. The sorcerer has a relation of alliance with the demon as the power of the anomalous.^{cdlxxiv}

The sorcerer is anomalous because s/he straddles two zones or planes, the plane of organised forms and subjectivity (the pack) and the plane of the Outside, of immanence. S/he is demonic in the ability to transport ‘humors, affects, or even bodies’; Deleuze and Guattari refer to the Inquisition’s interrogation of demonic becomings, and insist that humans cannot become animal, that is, cannot transform their essential forms, but the demonic (manifested as the Devil in that period of time) can assume real animal bodies.^{cdlxxv} It is not clear that Deleuze and Guattari assert the reality of the Devil in the same way that theology does, but their point is that at certain times in history, ‘there is ... a demonic reality of the becoming-animal of the human being’.^{cdlxxvi} But the effects of the demonic transport ‘cross neither the barrier of essential forms nor that of substances or subjects’.^{cdlxxvii} Their thinking here, as so often, is paradoxical and obscure; suffice it to say that the reality of the demonic-becoming is on the level of ‘haecceities, degrees, intensities, events, and accidents that compose individuations totally different from those of the well-formed subjects that receive them’.^{cdlxxviii} As Hamlet said, ‘There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in our philosophy’.^{cdlxxix} The ghost is a demonic reality that shocks Hamlet out of the territoriality of the Kingdom of Denmark into an in-between state, an intermezzo, from which he is incapable of acting effectively on the plane of subjectivity.

Writing is a becoming, in which the writer enters into alliances with the animal, the elemental, the demonic, and in doing so, becomes-sorcerer. It is on the cosmic level that a writer becomes-sorcerer.

In a later work, *What is philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari describe philosophy as a constructivism which creates concepts and lays out a plane. Each philosophical

period constructs its plane of immanence, on which concepts are created and form a skeletal frame, like a spinal column, along which the separate parts are suffused by the breath of the plane.^{cdlxxx} Behind the plane is chaos.^{cdlxxx} Concepts are concrete assemblages or the working parts of the abstract machine of a philosophy, the plane that holds them together.

Art also confronts chaos and constructs a plane of immanence, which is populated by aesthetic figures, which are ‘the powers of affects and percepts’ in literature, art and music.^{cdlxxxii} A work of art ‘is a *bloc of sensations, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects*’ (emphasis in original).^{cdlxxxiii} Percepts and affects go beyond perceptions and affections, which are dependent on those who experience them; like sensations, they ‘are *beings* whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived’ (emphasis in original).^{cdlxxxiv} They are what give a work of art its own independent existence and power to bring the cosmic into the everyday. In writing, the materials from which the writer creates percepts and affects are words and syntax.^{cdlxxxv} Deleuze and Guattari argue that memory plays a small part in art, and the chief creative agent is fabulation; by this they mean, not simply storytelling, but a becoming which ‘goes beyond the perceptual states and affective transitions of the lived. The artist is a seer, a becomer.’^{cdlxxxvi} What is created has a reality that is different from our lived reality, and in it, the mediocre becomes extraordinary, ‘too alive to be livable or lived’, and ‘moments of the world are rendered durable and made to exist by themselves.’^{cdlxxxvii} To achieve this, a writer must, like Virginia Woolf, “‘saturate every atom,” and “eliminate all waste, deadness, superfluity,”” which are the marks of mediocrity in art.^{cdlxxxviii}

The writer, then, like the philosopher, constructs a plane of immanence, or a Body without Organs, and is a seer who works on the borderline of the planes of subjectivity and of immanence. Writing is itself a becoming, using words and syntax in the act of fabulation to create new assemblages on the BwO of literature. In the memoir extract and essay that follow, I as writer seek to create, from the story of my life, a BwO that re-enchants the exhausted terrain of my past, my childhood, my first marriage and motherhood.^{cdlxxxix} I aspire to bring the Universal into the everyday, to

use the blocs of becoming-child, becoming-sorcerer, becoming-imperceptible, to create a reality that allows 'the incorporeal eternal return of infinitude'.^{cdxc}

Boys are different

The grass is hazed with white and crackles when I step on it to wash out my chamber pot at the tap. I turn the tap on but no water comes out.

Mum has been up since dawn. She has cleaned and polished the stove with blacking, collected wood and kindling to start the fire, and cooked breakfast for Dad, the boys and the shearing team — porridge, scrambled eggs, chops and stewed tomatoes with toast. While I eat my porridge and toast Mum clears the table.

She stands at the big green sink washing the dishes in soapy water. She has a little wire cage on a handle she keeps a cake of yellow soap in — Sunlight, it's called — and shakes it in the hot water to make suds that clean the plates and things. I climb on a fruit box so I can reach the top of the bench. As she hands each dish to me I dip it in a bowl of rinsing water then dry it. I pile the dishes up on the bench and while she's scrubbing the pots I put the crockery away in the cupboard. Then I take the cutlery in to the dresser in the dining room. I put some more logs on the fire from the pile on the hearth. Mum always cleans out the ashes and whitewashes the bricks in the morning before she sets the fire and lights it.

I love this long room. The dining table and chairs are up the kitchen end, and there's a sideboard against the wall that opens out to the front veranda. Down the other end there are a couple of old velvet armchairs and a piano. No one plays it but it's beautiful, shiny dark red and brown with glints of gold. When you look at it you can see your face. The keys are yellow and some of the wood is peeling off. It comes from the house where Dad lived when he was a little boy. On top of it there's a Chinese vase. It has a big round belly and a narrow neck. It's pale pale pink like the sky in the early morning. There are men painted on it. They wear strange clothes, pants with puffy legs above the knee and tight above their feet and jackets with long billowy sleeves, crimson inside and gold black and red on the outside. Where the neck of the vase joins the belly there are two strange creatures, one on each side. They are curled over so their tails almost reach their heads, like a dragon's head, and they look as if they are in pain. I often look at the vase and wonder what the men are doing, why they wear such rich clothes, and where the women and children are.

Above the fireplace there's a mantel-piece with some brass ornaments that have lots of strange figures and letters carved on them. Mum says they came from India.

The floor-boards are bare except for a rug or two and most of the dark varnish has worn off. Mum sweeps the whole floor every day and mops it a couple of times a week, and once a month she spreads polish over it then ties some rags to our shoes so we can scoot up and down and make it shine.

Mum keeps her books above the fireplace on the mantelshelf near the kitchen. I stand on a chair and spell out the titles. *Letters of an Indian Judge to an English Gentlewoman*. I wonder why he wrote to her? Did she write back? What is a gentlewoman? Was he in love with her?

'Anna!'

'Yes Mum?'

'While you're in there sweep the floor round the table and the fireplace please. Then you can do the kitchen floor while I make a cake and some scones for the men's smoko.'

I hate sweeping the kitchen floor. It's rough and most of the dirt doesn't come off.

I'm Cinderella and Mum's the wicked stepmother who makes me do all the hard work. Oh fairy godmother come and help me find my prince! She appears in a shower of stars and waves her wand. My old skirt and jumper turn into a ball gown of white organdy with layers and layers of petticoats and a soft feather wrap around my neck. The straw broom becomes the coachman wearing gold livery and a white curly wig. He leads me to the gate where the old sulky has turned into a shiny new coach with red velvet seats and curtains. Bess the old bay mare is a prancing white steed wearing a gold bridle and harness studded with precious jewels.

'Don't stand there dreaming Anna,' Mum says dropping the wooden spoon she is beating the cake with. 'You've left half the dirt behind. Here, give me the broom. I'll give it a thorough sweep later.' She takes it from me and stands it in the corner near the stove. 'Just get the dustpan and sweep up the dust. Then get your book. I haven't time to correct your lessons while the shearing's on, so you can use the time to read.'

The fire is crackling in the stove, the hob shines, and the warm air smells of smoke and gum leaves. I settle in the wicker chair to read my favourite book, *The sunflower fairies*. It has no colour pictures, just a few line drawings at the beginning of each story. I've read it over and over again and I know most of the stories by heart. I turn to 'The Snow Queen'.

Kay and Gerda are playing among the roses in their window-box garden when a splinter of the troll-mirror pierces Kay's eye and enters his heart. I know what will happen next. He gets cross and nasty and teases Gerda all the time instead of playing with her. Just like Simon and Malcolm. Malcolm isn't nasty to me on his own, but when he's with Simon they gang up and make me do things I don't want to or don't let me join in their games. David is my favourite in the family after Dad, but he's nearly grown up, and is away in the city studying. When he comes home he plays with me sometimes and reads me stories. Last time he was home he read me *Alice in Wonderland*. I love it how Alice goes down the rabbit hole and meets the white rabbit and goes through a magic door and meets all those crazy people and animals. I wanted to keep sitting on his knee and listening to her adventures. I felt really sad when he shut the book and said 'And that's the end of the book, Pook!'

One day Kay hitches his sled to the Snow Queen's sleigh and follows her to the North Pole and poor sad Gerda sets off to find him in the land of ice and snow. I've never seen snow. If the plains were all covered with snow and the sun stayed under the earth it would be like the North Pole, and Bess would be a reindeer and the sulky a sled and I'd set out to find Kay and rescue him from the wicked Queen.

Mum opens the oven door and puts the cake and a tray of scones in. She picks up the poker and opens the firebox to stoke the fire. She pulls up a chair near the stove. 'Anna, come here.'

I climb down and put a twig from the floor in front of the stove between the pages of my book, then put the book on my chair. I go to Mum and climb on her knee.

'Darling, I want you to move into the little room off my bedroom to sleep. You're getting too big to sleep on the veranda.'

'Why Mum? Why can't I sleep out there like the boys do?'

‘Because they’re boys.’

‘But they’re bigger than me!’

Mum takes a big breath. Her chest pushes against my head. She breathes out with a sigh. ‘Yes, but boys are different. You’re five years old now, getting to be a big girl. You shouldn’t be letting them see you when you’re not dressed.’

‘Why not?’

‘When you’re older you’ll understand. For now you’ll just have to take my word for it. Now, I want to tell you a story.’ She leans back in the chair.

‘What about?’

‘How babies are made. When a man and a woman love each other and get married they want to have children.’

‘How do they?’ Simon and Malcolm told me Mum and Dad rescued me from under a gumtree. A crow had stolen me from another family who lived on the other side of the plains and when Dad shot at him with his twenty-two rifle the crow dropped me and flew away.

She uses some words I haven’t heard before. I won’t let anyone do that to me when I’m big. My cheeks are burning and my tummy feels sick. I want to run outside but her arms are tight around me.

How can babies be made where you do wee and poo? How do they get out? Does the wee and poo change into a baby before it comes out?

‘Doesn’t it hurt?’

‘Not if the man and woman love each other because they want it to happen.’ She drops her arms and pushes some hair off her face. Her cheeks are pink. She looks up at the clock. ‘Heavens! I’d better check the scones.’

‘Can I go and play?’

‘Yes Darling.’

I slide from her lap and run outside.

I hide in my favourite winter spot at the edge of the kitchen garden. On the kitchen side are herbs, nasturtiums, and big old grape vines growing on trellises. They’re bare now but in summer they’re loaded with sweet green muscatels and purple lady’s fingers. In

the rich damp soil there are many earthworms. At the end of the kitchen garden is a big juniper bush and between it and the rose trees is a secret space just big enough for me to crawl into and hide when I need to get away from Mum or my brothers. I sit on the ground covered with soft needles from the juniper. It's cold but snug.

Some mornings when there is no work for the boys to do in the paddocks and I've finished my chores in the house, I help them dig up spadefuls of worms, fat, shiny pink and wriggling. I go down to the river and watch while they stick hooks into them and throw lines in and wait for bites. I think about the cod and perch swimming round deep down where we can't see them and wonder if some of them know that the wriggly thing dangling above them is a trick. If that is why they do not bite very often. Maybe the only ones that bite are the silly ones or the young ones.

'There're old man cod swimming round down there that are bigger than you Holly', Dad tells me. Holly is one of his pet names for me. I'm Holly Polly Shorty Stumpy Hook Pook ... when he's in a bad mood he calls me Anna. Once he caught a huge cod in a net. He cut it into fillets and we ate some fresh. He salted the rest. We all got tired of eating salt fish.

I like fresh cod. The flesh is sweet and firm. Mum makes us eat bread or potato if we accidentally swallow one of the fine, small bones; she says it will wrap around the sharp point and stop it sticking into your stomach wall.

Mum and Dad sleep in separate rooms and I never see them together except when they're dressed. They don't touch each other much. But once I saw Dad pick Mum up and swing her round like he does to me sometimes. He said he had some good news to tell her. But she never lets anyone see her naked. How could they possibly do it? It must be something that they only do secretly when no one is looking. How can she let him touch her there? She always scolds me if she sees me touching myself. She must have let him sometimes because they've had five kids.

I know what a penis looks like. One day I walked into the bathroom when David was home from high school. He was having a shower, singing at the top of his voice. He has rolls of fat around his middle. Mum told me that he was teased at school by the other

boys, and some of them tied him up and stuck his tummy rolls together with sap from the fig tree. Hanging between his legs I saw a big reddish-purple thing.

Sometimes the sheep dogs try to mount each other or one of them hangs onto my leg and sticks out a slimy red thing that looks like a piece of raw meat and rubs it against my leg. When I'm lonely I go and sit in their kennel. I wear big cotton bloomers Mum made for me and sometimes I wet myself. I like the hot tingly feeling when the wee comes out. I hide the bloomers somewhere so she won't find them and smack me.

I think making babies must feel like when I wet my pants. Maybe having a baby feels like when you have to do a big poo and it won't come out until you push really hard.

I can smell the juniper bush. It feels soft and springy and ticklish, a bit like an old toothbrush. There are lots of knobbly shiny nuts on it. I try to open them to find out what is inside. I nibble one and spit out the bitter taste.

The rose bushes are bare but in spring and summer one has white flowers and the other has red but the bees get them mixed up so that white flowers are streaked with pink and red with white. Next to the roses is a lilac bush. In spring it has masses of purple flowers with white centres and a musky smell. At the end of the bed is a crepe myrtle. It is my favourite bush of all with pink and mauve blossoms all crumpled up like crushed silk.

Mum's voice calls me from the kitchen and I can smell freshly baked scones. A finger of sunlight pokes through a hole in the clouds and a magpie carols in the silver gum at the bottom of the garden. I jump up and brush the juniper needles off my skirt and run up the path to the house.

Afterthoughts of a becoming-child

This excerpt recreates a time in my life when I was at the threshold of early childhood and pre-puberty, and began to be initiated by my mother into my identity as a chaste middle-class girl who was to grow up and become a mother. My early childhood before my father left was happy, though I had no one my own age to play with, and often no companions other than the farm animals, the wild creatures that inhabited the plains and the bends of the river, and the imaginary personae of my stories, the ones I read and the ones I acted out in my play. I was the youngest in a family of five; my eldest brother was 13 years older than me, my sister 11 years older, another brother was five years older and another three years older. My older brother and sister were mostly away from home, and the other two brothers, who did Correspondence lessons in early primary school, went away to school before my father left, when I was seven years old.

My mother was a private and reserved person, and believed in control of the emotions and the importance of being — and being seen to be — a respectable, hard-working and upright citizen, governed by reason and duty. Sexuality was a force she feared and sought to control, though I believe she had a sensual and passionate nature. In an age when contraception was rudimentary, she lived in circumstances of poverty and isolation, in a marriage that lasted twenty-five years and was plagued by successive droughts and the Great Depression. The fear of pregnancy — she had five children in thirteen years, the last at the age of 45 — would have been a powerful force inhibiting her sexual desire. She believed that the human body (except of a very young child) should be modestly covered, not revealing the natural curves of breast, buttocks, genitals. I never saw her naked in my whole life, and she would not leave the house without wearing a waist-length brassiere and boned corset until she was too old to do up the hooks. In her memoir, she describes the layout of the house, with two bedrooms, one for each parent, shared with the children of the same sex, and two wide verandas on which the children slept. She confesses that she could not have borne sharing a bedroom or a bed, and ‘I’ve sometimes wondered how much that peculiarity of mine had to do with the whole set-up’. These words are engraved on my mind, and I often wonder what she meant by them: did she mean the architecture suited her natural modesty and

reserve, or was it a reflection of something deeper, the rift that developed between her and my father, the line of flight he took from the marriage?

The strongest memory I have of the scene when she told me ‘the facts of life’ is of a feeling of acute embarrassment and shame. I do not think this is a natural feeling for a young child of about five years, and I suspect it was a reflection of her own suppressed feelings; I think that if she had not already begun to teach me to be ashamed of my body and to hide it, I would have felt curiosity and interest. These are the feelings I have noticed in my own small children and others when bodily functions have been the subject of attention.

Her hints that boys are ‘other’, not like girls, not to be trusted, perhaps the agents of hurtful, shameful, violating experiences, were juxtaposed with her story of how babies are made. And so sexuality and reproduction were associated with fear and shame, in contradiction to her claim that sexual intercourse is pleasurable if the man and woman love each other. Sexuality, in her story, is confined to reproduction within marriage. There is no acknowledgement that it can happen outside of these boundaries or that it has other purposes. Her story is the bourgeois story of conjugal monogamy which I have critiqued elsewhere.^{cdxci} In Freud’s account of infant development, the little girl, to develop into a ‘normal woman’, to fulfil her biological destiny, must turn away from her mother as primary love object (whom she must nevertheless identify with), recognising that her mother, like herself, is castrated, and transfer her desire to her father; she dwells in her attachment to him, which she eventually must relinquish, so that she may choose a man ‘according to the paternal type’.^{cdxcii} A woman never adequately surmounts the Oedipal and pre-Oedipal strata of her sexuality in this narrative; she is forced into a feminine position that is ambivalent and conflicted, and must relinquish her own desire in order to fulfil her destiny and become mother substitute to her husband and mother to his children.

What are little girls made of?
 What are little girls made of?
 Sugar and spice and all things nice —
 That’s what little girls are made of!

This nursery rhyme was often repeated to me when I was a child; I couldn’t relate to the idea of being made of sugar and spice, though I was inclined to

agree that the only boys I knew, my brothers, were made of less tempting ingredients, such as ‘snips and snails and puppy dog’s tails’ — or worse. I didn’t know what it meant to be a woman, other than someone like my mother, who seemed severe, self-sacrificing and hard-working, or my older sister, who was preoccupied with her appearance and determined to become an actress. I thought the two brothers who were closer to me in age were generally nasty; I didn’t want to be like them. The people in my family whom I most loved and admired were my father and my older brother, already a young man as I remember him. My father left me and my older brother went away to university, so I was bereft of an other whom I could love. Thus, I grew up to follow the pattern set for me, becoming a wife when I was twenty and a mother five years later.^{cdxciii}

A very young child is a Body without Organs, close, as Deleuze says, to immanence, to that blissful state of pre-subjective existence we can only glimpse as adults. My story illustrates that the process of growing up in a twentieth-century Western family was one of being mapped by adults and older siblings, having one’s body marked into zones by the molar lines of heterosexual reproduction and the shame, fear and guilt that accompany its interpretation in the bourgeois family. Desire, in this story, is captured within the Oedipal triangle, and a woman’s identity is defined by her position as wife and mother, a process that begins in early childhood.

Deleuze and Guattari tell us that before and outside the programmed body, the body with organs, of the child and the adult, there is room for other becomings, creative involutions and connections with animal, vegetable, mineral forms of life. In my early childhood, my reality was multi-layered and rhizomatic, not as regimented as it became as I grew older, especially after my father left. I was captured and socialised within the family, but I was also able to spend much of my time wandering in the garden and the bends of the river, communing with the creatures and the vegetable life around me, open to the elements, and creating an imaginary world peopled by fairy-tale characters as well as spirits and non-human entities. Some of this other reality is suggested in ‘Boys are different’; Anna escapes into the garden, where she becomes-worm, becomes-fish, becomes-dog, becomes-rosebush, becomes-juniper-earth, becomes-magpie. Her imaginary world is already shaped by the adult stories she is surrounded by, reflected in the Chinese vase, the piano, the Indian brass ornaments, her mother’s books above the fireplace, her brothers’ story of her origin, her mother’s story of sexuality and her own temporising in the worlds created from ancient folktales and legends by Hans Christian

Andersen, the Brothers Grimm and Lewis Carroll. Of these fictional worlds, the first two are closer to the 'civilised' world but are invested also by the animal, the elemental and the demonic.

Cinderella, in her line of flight from the hard work of a young woman who is subjugated as a servant, is transformed into a princess and finds her prince. The agent of her transformation is a fairy godmother, a sorcerer, and the vehicles for her line of flight, the horse and the carriage, are metamorphosed from humble domestic creatures and objects. The middle-class moral of this story is that you can escape the world of domestic slavery and have beauty, love and riches if you are good and honest, like Cinderella, unlike her ugly sisters, who are mean and selfish. I saw my mother work hard with her hands and body every day, and my father and brothers work hard outside in the garden and the paddocks. I saw that I was to become like my mother, and I desired to escape from that destiny.

The middle-class world of 'The Snow Queen' is more complex, peopled by ambivalent figures. Kay's transformation into a cruel, sexualised boy obsessed with order and mathematical precision and enslaved to the Snow Queen is an allegory of the Oedipal transition from boyhood to manhood. Gerda's search for him, her desire to redeem him and bring him back as a warm, living, happy and loving playmate, is a fantasy of return to a lost edenic childhood, and a line of flight from the bourgeois marriage (for Kay and Gerda are like a married couple and the Snow Queen is the other woman) where the man lives in the outside world of commerce, industry, intellectual achievement, and the woman tends the domestic hearth and nurtures the children and her husband. In 'Boys are different', Anna compares Kay to her brother Simon, who is often mean to her and excludes her from games. My brothers' world was outside, a different outside than the one I had access to, and though our play and work intersected at times, mostly I felt unwelcome in their world and preferred to create my own. This pattern of separation, introversion and emotional isolation was continued in my marriage. For thirteen years I lived with a man who pursued his career in computer science; I gave up my studies for a higher degree and became a mother, and as he developed his reputation as a world leader in his field, working long hours and often away attending conferences, I became more isolated and lonely. This story, and the consequences when I tried to

leave him, is told in my fictional memoir, 'Desire's web' and reprised in the essay that follows, and in Chapter six. I played the part of bourgeois wife, chaste and maternal, and became like the Snow Queen in my emotional and sexual being, though I lacked her power; sexuality is frozen in this latitude of desire.

Carroll's creatures and characters inhabit a world which inverts and parodies the 'adult' 'civilised' middle- and upper-class world of Victorian society; this is a world of strange becomings, where animals behave like people, a baby becomes-pig, people are simulacra — cards become-courtiers, become-gardeners — and nothing is what it seems. My memory of the details of the story as my brother read it to me is lost, but I do recall how enchanted I was by the experience of sitting on his knee and listening to the story unfold as he read it to me each evening, and how disappointed I was when it ended and Alice returned to the ordinary world. I became-Alice, and the fact that it was my eldest brother, my second-favourite person in the world, who read it to me, intensified the spell. When he closed the book, it was as if a chapter of my childhood closed. The next scene I recall with him in it happened after my father had left, and nothing was the same. In fairy story worlds, adults tend to be remote, whether benign or malignant, but in Carroll's world they are present and powerful— cruel, lazy, selfish, chaotic, irrational, autocratic, unpredictable and badly behaved. This subversive picture may have helped me to tolerate the topsy-turvy world created by my father's messy departure and abandonment of his family and my mother's grief, anger and struggle with the responsibility of doing 'a man's job' and becoming the head of the household and chief provider.

My mother's story of sexuality was an initiation into becoming a woman, a body with organs. My escape from it into the garden was temporary. In the collage of my memories, it precedes my father's departure and the loss of my childhood. Yet I still have that child, that BwO of childhood, which is not the same as the memories of my childhood:

The BwO is a childhood block, a becoming, the opposite of a childhood memory. It is not the child "before" the adult, or the mother "before" the child: it is the strict contemporaneousness of the adult, of the adult and the child, their map of comparative densities and intensities, and all the variations on that map.... It is an involution, but always a contemporary, creative involution.^{cdxciv}

My childhood is contemporary with me now, and in writing it, I affirm the loss of my child and the presence of the becoming-child, the BwO I carry with me though it is not mine, a milieu on which I continually construct a self.

The essay that follows explores the creative power of writing a life through becoming-sorcerer.^{cdxv}

The Crone: a figure of desire for revenge and healing in the writing of a life

An abandoning mother

Who is I? It is always a third person.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, p. 65

It's 1972, a public holiday in late spring in Sydney, Australia, when Anna, a young woman in her early thirties, receives a phone call from her husband. He tells her he is in Los Angeles, on the way to Colorado: 'You're a deserting wife and an abandoning mother, and you'll never see your children again!' A few months before, she had left him and her three young daughters, aged seven, five and two and a half, in a North Queensland town. She left because he threatened her that he would kill her, kill himself and kill the children if she tried to take them from him.

I speak of myself in the third person, because it was another 'I' that experienced these losses, an I who is part of me but is not me now. I can connect with this younger self through writing the story of how I found myself in this cul de sac, and of how I returned from it. I have fictionalised my story and revised it many times; it is now called 'Desire's web: a fictional memoir'. The parts of the story that I will explore in this essay present a different persona, one counterpoint to that of the fictional Anna, the deserting wife and abandoning mother of 'Desire's web'. The persona is that of a Crone who, in Anna's dream landscape, inhabits the arid Hay plains, in the southwest of New South Wales, Australia, where Anna spent most of her childhood. The Crone's nocturnal task is to weave a saltbush cover for the bare red earth, ravaged by the early settlers' practice of clearing and fencing the land, by the grazing and cloven hooves of the sheep, and by years of drought and harsh winds.

Why am I revisiting the Crone? Five years after completing the first draft of my memoir, why am I still rewriting the story? What is this strange attraction, this need to return again and again to the ravaged earth of the Hay plains?

This essay explores my attraction to the Crone as well as to her dream landscape and reflects on the affective and aesthetic weight these figures carry in the narrative of

'Desire's web'. My purpose is to explore the transformative part that the Crone and her task of healing the landscape plays in my life as I live, relive, write, and rewrite it.

I interpret the Crone as a personification of desire on two levels. She is the desire of the earth to heal itself as well as the desire of the author and Anna, her pseudonymous persona, to heal her psyche by narrating her life. The imaginary landscape is an aesthetic figure for the damaged psyche of Anna, as well as being a 'more real' world than the real world of loss and emotional and physical exhaustion which she inhabits. The Crone is an aesthetic figure for the regenerative power of the earth.

In being expected to conform to a male idea of what a woman should be, the origami of women's selves has been folded by male hands. As a twentieth-century woman created from centuries of such foldings in my culture, I performed the parts expected of me in the drama of bourgeois family life but failed to live them successfully and became, for a period of my life, a deserting wife and mother, a scarlet woman, a mistress, the other woman. Coming out of the late twentieth into the twenty-first century, I now feel able to create for myself ways of being in the world more fluid and allowing for more freedom of expression, and I see other women on a similar quest. I have discovered that I can consciously and creatively refold the origami of selfhood.

In mythology and folklore, the Crone is one of the personifications of the desiring woman, and her appearance in 'Desire's web' is the beginning of a restorative journey for Anna, my pseudonymous younger self, and a marker for my rewriting of my own desiring self in life. The Crone appears in the text as an outsider, unconnected, it seems at first, to the story of Anna's separation from and loss of her children. About halfway through the narrative, Anna receives the phone call labelling her 'a deserting wife and abandoning mother' and condemning her to a separation from her children that would last, with brief respites, for the rest of their childhoods. It was a defining moment in her life and mine, a moment from which she and I could never return to being a mother without the shadows of grief, remorse, anger and unsatisfiable desire for what we had lost. Only now, when my children are mature women, with children of their own, and have made their own journeys of healing and reconciliation, am I less shadowed by those acute and painful feelings. Now that my daughters see their father without

illusions, I am free of the haunting feeling that I alone was responsible for the break-up of my family and the painful and difficult paths their lives and mine have taken.

A few months before the phone call, Anna had left her husband Robert and their three daughters in his home town in North Queensland after she revealed to him that she was having an affair with a man there. The family had been staying in that town after their return from England, where they had lived for the past eight years while Robert pursued his career. In England, she had had an affair with a man in their village. Robert decided to sell their house and return to Australia, because he was afraid that she would continue to see her lover. Before they left England, he had persuaded her to allow him to apply for separate passports for the children, because he said it wasn't fair that they should be on her passport. After he took the children to America, she realised that he had expected she would default on their marriage again, and by making it possible for the children to travel without her, he was preparing to take the children as far away from her as possible once she gave him an excuse.

The two affairs were the last scenes in the drama of her marriage to a man whom she had married for security rather than love. When she told him that she did not love him and was unable to continue a sexual relationship with him, his response was to demand that she leave the children with him and return to Sydney to stay with her mother. These events occurred in the early 1970s, before the Whitlam Labor government established Supporting Mothers Benefit in 1973, and before the Family Law Act brought in 'No Fault' divorce in 1975.^{cdxcvi} Prior to these changes, there was no support from the government for a single parent, typically a woman who had given up work to bring up her children. Hence many women stayed in abusive or unhappy marriages for the sake of their children. Divorce was possible only if the suing party could prove adultery, cruelty, desertion, insanity, habitual alcoholism, or if there had been a five year separation. After the new Act, fault or guilt was no longer a consideration in deciding custody and maintenance of the children. In Anna's case, it would have been easy for Robert to prove that she had committed adultery. Moreover, with the proceeds from the sale of their English house in his bank account and professional qualifications at an advanced level, he was in a good position to provide for the children, whereas she had given up career training to bear and raise their children and had no money in her own name. She had

little hope of winning a contested court case for custody and maintenance of the children.

In Sydney, after leaving her family, Anna saw a lawyer who was a family friend and gave her his help *pro bono*; he advised her to try and persuade Robert to share custody of the children with her, and to grant her a share of the proceeds from the sale of their house, so that she could retrain for a career. Robert visited Sydney and met with Anna and her lawyer. He agreed to let the children visit her for a couple of weeks during the school holidays, and Anna was hopeful that he would find a job in Australia and agree to shared custody. She found a job as a waitress, and waited for the spring holidays and her children's visit.

When the fateful phone call comes, the news that he has taken the girls to America with him is a complete shock. Her despair and sense of isolation and powerlessness are compounded by yet another triangular relationship, this time with her lawyer. She breaks down emotionally and physically, and is hospitalised for an autoimmune disorder. After two weeks of strict bed rest she convalesces at her mother's house.

After I wrote the scene when Anna learns that her children are lost to her, I felt blocked, frustrated, locked out from my remembered self. How to write such loss? How to describe in words the remembered shock, disbelief and despair that were the effects of Robert's taking from her the human beings she loved most? I sat staring at the computer screen, numb again. I was unable to continue with a realistic reconstruction of the past. When I put my fingers to the keys, the Crone appeared unbidden. She simply popped up in the midst of an unfillable void, and once there, although the narrative of Anna's descent into illness continued, she reappeared at certain moments of intense awareness of loss and unfulfillable desire in the story. The Crone's appearance becomes a refrain in the narrative that creates a place of re-growth in the soil of the plains and in Anna's psyche.

Enter the Crone

If you were to visit the Hay plains at night, when people and the animals they tend are asleep, you would, if you walked far enough, come across a curious

sight. An old woman, wrinkled and skinny, sits on a patch of red earth, her head bent, intent on a patient and silent task. Her fingers, though knotted and twisted, move nimbly back and forth. It is not wool she is shaping into a simple chained fabric that gleams silvery-grey in the moonlight, but vegetable matter that she unwinds from a large irregular ball lying on the bare earth beside her. Her fingers twist in and out, and the soft, earthy smelling fabric falls on the red soil, spreading over it, cloaking it with a damp, springy, resilient cover. Soon the bare patch is clothed, and she winds up the ball and pokes it into a string bag she slings over her shoulder. She scrambles up and walks with the help of a knotted stick to another bare patch, and squats, muttering a few sounds in a guttural tongue and laying her stick and bag beside her. She begins again her endless task of restoring a moist, living cover to the plains ravaged by harsh sun and wind and many cloven hooves.

At the time I wrote this passage, I did not understand why the Crone suddenly appeared, though I was happy to allow her to do so and to disturb the flow of the narrative. When I reflected on her, I saw her as a mythological dream figure, wearing one of the three faces of the triple goddess Hecate, the ancient earth-goddess, who has many personae: Demeter, Hecate, Minerva, Persephone and Artemis in Greek mythology, and, as Joseph Campbell argues, many other names and faces in other mythologies, including that of the Virgin Mary in the Christian legend.^{cdxcvii} The many personae of the goddess together represent three ages of woman — virgin, mother, and crone.

The Crone is allied with the figure of the sorcerer, but is not the sorcerer. For the sorcerer, Deleuze and Guattari make clear, is a deterritorialising force, an Outsider of the borderline, allied with the demonic. The Crone, on the other hand, is a reterritorialising force. In her work of re-covering the ravaged earth, she makes it habitable once more for the animals that graze off it and the people that tend them and make their living from them. She works as a refrain.^{cdxcviii} For Deleuze and Guattari, the refrain is not just a musical composition, it is the song of the earth, the sea and the wind, the Cosmos.^{cdxcix} It is distinct from music, which unfolds, uproots the refrain from its territoriality, ‘[w]hereas the refrain is essentially territorial, territorialising or reterritorializing’.^d Thus

the child in the dark sings under her breath to comfort her fear; she seeks to create a calm centre at the heart of chaos.^{di} Elizabeth Grosz explains the refrain as ‘a kind of rhythmic regularity that brings a minimum of livable order to a situation in which chaos beckons’.^{dii} The Crone makes the soil livable again, organising a limited space by drawing a circle round a fragile patch of bare earth and covering it with her woven salt-bush, then moving on to another bare patch. She reconstructs from wasted ground a home, a safe space for insects, plants and animals.

This involves an activity of selection, elimination and extraction, in order to prevent the interior forces of the earth from being submerged, to enable them to resist, or even to take something from chaos across the filter or sieve of the space that has been drawn.^{diii}

In writing the Crone, I draw a circle on the page, in the effort to bring calm and safety out of chaos. I am thus allied with the Crone, but also with the sorcerer, in my unfolding of the terrain of the bourgeois family, and my creation of a plane of immanence with strange becomings, using fabulation and aesthetic figures. The personae of the sorcerer and the Crone work in my psyche and my writing in transformative ways.

Anna will encounter the Crone and enter her refrain, and in doing so, have the chance to refold her life after her lines of flight from her marriage have plunged her into a black hole. She had become stratified in a bourgeois marriage to a man she didn’t love. She had three children whom she loved, but she felt trapped living with a man who expected her to have sex with him and be faithful to him although she did not desire him and he had had several affairs himself, some of which he had told her of. She loved her children and wanted to be with them, but she felt unable to fight him for them and had no money to do so. She felt guilty, a failure as a wife and a mother. Her desire for change, for intensity, had led her to follow a line of flight to by taking a lover; and when that failed, forcing her back to the stratum of her marriage, she took a lover again, with similar results. But this time, it was worse. She had played into her husband’s hands by having an affair on his home territory, under his surveillance. She had acted in a way that gave him the power to expel her and to take her children from her. Both acts of deterritorialisation were, in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, negative because they were compensatory reterritorialisations. She was exchanging the stratum of the bourgeois wife

and mother for that of ‘the other woman’, aka ‘the scarlet woman’, another aspect of the triple goddess Hecate. The lovers she chose were themselves bourgeois husbands looking for a line of flight to relieve the sameness and emptiness of their marriages. Like her, none was able to make a positive deterritorialisation, to move out of the stratum of the bourgeois family. The bourgeois or nuclear family is a stratification of life within capitalist society in which the flow of desire is confined, organised and codified. Anna experienced desire as a destructive and uncontrollable force that made a mockery of the codes of reproductive sexuality in the family. It broke her family apart (as it had done in her childhood when her father had an affair and left his family) and threw her into the black hole of annihilation and self-destruction that Deleuze and Guattari say is a danger of the line of flight.^{div}

Becoming-earth, becoming-elemental

In her next encounter with the Crone in ‘Desire’s web’, Anna lies gripped by fever and is soothed by the Crone’s healing touch. It is over a year since she left Robert, who is refusing to divorce her or to allow her access to the children. Her only contact with the children is by letter. She has been working as a psychiatric nurse when she falls ill, her legs erupting in red lumps that gradually spread to her torso and arms. Her doctor has diagnosed *erythema nodosum*, a disorder characterised by raised, red, tender nodules accompanied by pain and fever.

Her fevered nightmare takes her back to the plains of her childhood, where she crawls over the drought-stricken earth, seeking water:

Scorpions and bulldog ants crawl over her legs, piercing the tight-stretched skin with stabs of fiery pain. Wasps and hornets swarm, quarrelling over rights to the biggest lump. Wild cat’s piss scalds her scorched flesh, where snakes slither with steely scales. An owl perches on the branch of a dead tree, and hoots every time she slips into unconsciousness. She crawls across bare plains, seeking a water trough, some green grass or saltbush she can suck.

I will survive, I will survive, she whispers through fossil teeth. Her lips, her fingers are becoming tree, her eyelids are sealed with gum, her nostrils are

clay, her hair is matted with desiccated leaves and red dust. She mouths the scarred earth in search of moisture. Her heart, though still beating, is withered, irrigated only by dark, sludgy trickles of blood. She is becoming one with the empty sky, the red dust, the dry stalks of grass, yet she is burning, burning.

Dry, woody fingers touch her forehead and withdraw. The fingers return, placing something cool and soft on her brow. A smell of salty, succulent leaves and earthy roots drifts over her face. She falls asleep and dreams of the river, deep green under overhanging gum trees.

In hospital, she is subjected to numerous tests and confined to bed rest. She feels isolated, abandoned and dehumanised in her single room. But the medical treatment, focusing on her body, is the stage for a healing journey that takes place in her dreams and reflections, while her body rests.

Her dream-encounter with the earth of her childhood is both a death and a transformation. The self she has rehearsed and lived since childhood, the persona of a failed wife and mother who tried to be a desiring woman, dies. In the text quoted above, the erasure of the persona of a bourgeois wife and mother is figured by the feverish illness, exaggerated in nightmare, and reflected in the scarred and eroded landscape. In dreaming that she is becoming part of the earth and its starved vegetation, Anna experiences the metamorphosis of her body into something non-human, elemental; she yields to an earth change that is both the death of and a liberation from the failed human life she has lived so far. The reality of this becoming is not a transformation of her essential form and subjectivity, but is on the plane of haecceities and events, of desire. The possibility of refolding her desiring self, if not of restoration of the 'original' self/landscape, is suggested in the gesture of the Crone, who touches the fevered forehead of the young woman, then places some saltbush on it, which soothes the fever with its salty smell and succulent moisture, as well as bringing healing images of the river that is the lifeblood of the Hay plains. Here, the Crone

opens the circle a crack, opens it all the way, lets someone in ... not on the side where the old forces of chaos press against it but in another region, one created by the circle itself.^{dv}

Improvisation is part of the refrain, a territorial assemblage that can have many functions, but ‘always carries earth with it’.^{dvi} The Crone improvises in creating a contagious alliance between Anna’s body and the saltbush. There can be healing, if not restoration, which is not possible in the case of the landscape, because it has been changed forever by clearance, fencing, and the grazing of stock. It is not possible in the case of the desiring self, because she has lost her children, her life as their mother, and there is no way of returning to the innocent polymorphous amoral desires of the young child. We are all coded, subjected to the shaping influences of the culture we are born into and live within. But within the narrative of desire and loss, there are limited possibilities that follow two trajectories: repetition of the pattern of failure, or recognition of the futility of this pattern, which allows one to search for different ways of becoming-woman.

For Deleuze and Guattari, there is no absolute liberty or escape from one's situation since it is shaped by the events and circumstances of one's past, but there may be a way out of it that changes that situation. Anna’s way out, her line of flight, is to become ill, and in becoming ill, she yields to the event and becomes earth, elemental. The illness immobilises her so that, in the period of recovery, she is able to take stock, to revisit the past, to see the patterns of desire and loss that have led her to her present impasse. From that vanishing point on the edge of the drawing that has been her life, she can begin again; she can have, as Deleuze puts it, ‘one more birth’:

To become worthy of what happens to us, and thus to will and to release the event, to become the offspring of one’s own events, and thereby to be reborn, to have one more birth, and to break with one’s carnal birth....^{dvii}

The Crone belongs to the early archaic period of mythology, which Joseph Campbell identifies as encompassing a lunar, mythic view of life, where dark and light interact in one sphere, as distinct from the patriarchal, solar point of view, where life is seen in terms of binary opposites.^{dviii} In myths, she was associated with fertility, healing, night and the moon.^{dx} Campbell emphasises that ‘the pre-Semitic, pre-Aryan mystic-emotional religion of the agrarian Neolithic and Bronze Age populations’ contrasts markedly with the warrior-like patriarchal religions of the Semitic and Aryan folk who have ruled the history of civilization ever since.^{dx}

In my Crone passages, the images of old woman/witch/healer/crone/earth mother, the parched grazing land, the sustaining and moisturising saltbush, the night, the moonlight, the attendant owl and other natural creatures and vegetation all mark my imaginary landscape as archaic, mystical, emotional, and female. It is a landscape of female desire that has been ravaged, all but destroyed, but can, as Deleuze puts it, have one more birth.

Becoming-child, becoming-murderer

We write not with childhood memories but through blocs of childhood that are the becoming-child of the present.

Deleuze and Guattari, *What is philosophy?* 1994, p. 168

The next return of the Crone on the plains occurs when Anna, immobilised in her hospital bed, relives some of her childhood memories. Her memories before this interlude are of the time after her father left the family, when she and her mother Martha struggled to run the property together. Anna remembers one day when Martha went into town on business and left Anna at home. The child has occupied the morning with chores, eaten lunch, and is waiting for her mother's return. She climbs the large cape lilac tree that shelters the house and perches in forked branches, watching the road for her mother's return. She closes her eyes and, in a reverie, imagines that her mother fails to take a bend as she drives home, is thrown out of the car, and breaks her neck. Anna sees herself following the coffin at her mother's funeral. Then, eyes still closed, she sees a figure trudging across the paddock from the main road. She imagines it is the murderer who had recently escaped from a prison southeast of the Hay district. When the figure draws near, she sees it is her father, thin and tired. They throw their arms around each other and sob. She wakes from her reverie:

Fat blobs of rain were falling, leaving watermarks on the dusty leaves. Tonight the murderer would come, for sure. He'd walk stealthily through the black dark

of the stormy night, slash the throats of the barking dogs, shoot Martha in her sleep and carry Anna off, bundled over his shoulder ...

The child Anna's apocalyptic fantasies of her mother's death, her loved father's return, and the violent intrusion of the murderer/father are relived by the older Anna, now the failed mother, wife and desiring woman, and recreated by the author when approaching old age. This failed, desiring self is narrated by the author, who is at once the child, the young woman, and the older woman. The time of the desiring self is the time of *aeon*, not *chronos*, as explained in Chapter four. In *aeon* time, becoming is possible, for past and future are two dimensions of the present.

From a psychological perspective, it is clear that, in the child Anna's unconscious mind, reunion with her father Henry can only take place if her mother dies — since Henry left the family in part because of his failed relationship with Martha. In addition, the child conflates Henry and the murderer/abductor; she both longs for and fears him. This fantasy scene in 'Desire's web' is true to my experience insofar as I did imagine my mother's death many times, particularly when she left me alone on the property. I also fantasised living with my father in a distant place where there was no room for her. I did dream — perhaps as a child, perhaps as an adult — that my father returned to our house on foot, thin and tired, and we embraced and cried. The murderer is a personification, not just of my father, but also of the child Anna in her desire for revenge on her mother for driving her father away and being the parent she was stuck with, the one that she loved less.

The ambivalence of the child's feelings for both mother and father would be no surprise to a psychoanalyst. My childhood love for my father was intense, as was the pain of abandonment when he left, and my rival for his affection, as well as the apparent cause of his leaving, was my mother.

The figure of the murderer is a vestigial memory that, rather like the Crone, just popped up as I was writing the scene where Anna fantasises her mother's death and father's return, but he does not reappear in the narrative. The desire for revenge, the fear of male sexuality, of death and destruction that he represents are minor themes compared to the desire for healing that the Crone represents.

As she reflects on her childhood experiences, Anna falls asleep, and is drawn further into the circle of the refrain.

The young woman dreams again of a grey-green pattern, crocheted by the wrinkled old woman, who learned the pattern long ago, before she can remember, and spends her life repeating it, compelled to turn the red into green. She works all night, when the blinding sun has set, winding her skein of saltbush green, then twisting and turning it with knotted fingers into a secret design that binds the dusty red soil, and provides the sheep with feed when all else fails. The young woman lies on the red ground, her eyes burning. She watches the crone work, and gradually, her flesh, her red and angry flesh, is soothed as this cool grey-green blanket falls from flying fingers and creeps over her.

The Crone's patient work creates a provisional home in the dream landscape where Anna can feel safe and rest, and the sorcerer-writer unfolds the past and creates an assemblage —Crone-earth-woman-animal-vegetable — an organised totality, on the edge of chaos, out of territory and bodies.

The next return of the Crone comes after a section in which Anna, still in hospital, relives being sent to boarding school by Martha because she has fallen behind with her correspondence lessons in her first year of high school, and Martha wants her to have a good education (as she herself did, being a graduate from Sydney University in the early 1920s, when few women had the chance of a higher education). Anna is unhappy at school, feeling uprooted and doubly exiled — from her childhood, lost when her father left, and from the wide open plains and beloved Murrumbidgee River, which have romanced her family's hard-working days. One day in Anna's second year at school, Martha unexpectedly arrives to tell her that she has had to leave the property because Henry has returned and resumed possession of it. Martha stays for a while with her sister in Wollongong and returns to teaching towards the end of that school year. The next year, she comes to teach at Anna's school:

They'd been without a teacher for a term, and Miss Matthews begged her to come. It was the year of the Intermediate exam, and Martha felt she owed it to Anna to fill the gap. She taught Latin and her daughter's favourite subject, English. Anna was now not only a beastly swot — she was the teacher's pet.

Her feeling of homelessness wasn't assuaged by her mother's presence. She felt more of an outsider than ever.

Anna, towards the end of her stay in hospital, remembers how she had felt an outsider in her childhood when she lost her father and was exiled from her home. The refrain of the Crone is repeated.

The old woman is growing tired of her endless task. There are so many bare patches of soil. She remembers a time when the ground was covered with vegetation: a mixture of trefoil clover and tussocky wild grass, round prickly bush, and woody old man saltbush. In spring, there were pink and purple vetches, yellow bachelor's buttons, white and pink everlasting daisies, scarlet and purple desert peas. Weeping myall trees once graced the space above the embroidered plain, with their long, pointed grey-green leaves, yellow puffball flowers in summer and autumn, and wood that smelled of violets. The early settlers cut down most of the myall for posts to fence in their herds, and the cloven hooves of the sheep worked with the wind and the drought to erode the groundcover.

She must do what she can. The creeping silvery saltbush that falls from her fingers stores water in its small round fleshy leaves, and the sheep love it. She works on, with rhythmic movements of her hands, humming a monotonous tune.

The images in this Crone passage tell of lost fertility and the Crone's desire to cover and heal the scarred earth. In imagining the plains as they once were, I had to search through printed material that reconstructed a picture of the plains, as I had only known it bare of

trees, except for the occasional eucalypt, and eroded of vegetation in many parts. I did recall springtime flowers and grass after a good winter, but knew little of the original vegetation. There was perennial saltbush, the seeds of which had been brought by the giant dust storms that darkened the skies in the early years of my childhood. There were no myall trees that I can recall.

The significance of this appearance of the Crone is that she holds a memory of the Hay plains before they were changed irreparably by the actions of the early settlers and their animals. The Crone is unable to restore the plains to what they were, but she does the best she can to heal the earth. Through her vision of the Crone, Anna (and her author) mourn the loss of the landscape's fertility and abundance both for its own sake and for its personification of the promise of her childhood, lost when her father left, lost again when she was sent away to boarding school and her father returned to expel her mother, and lost when her children were taken from her. The Crone plays a transformative part in Anna's journey of healing, by refolding the origami of the plains; she acts as a medium for Anna's return to the beloved landscape. Through her, Anna becomes-earth, and from this metamorphosis, is able to begin a new phase of her life, to have one more birth.

The smell of rain

True revenge ... can only be a revenge on time. But how can time be revenged, overcome? Only through a certain submission to its necessity, a certain reactive position that converts that necessity itself into will. The past is a series of events we do not make but inherit, or inherit even if we have made, which we must nonetheless affirm as our own in the sense that past events make us, and our overcoming, possible. To affirm a future, to affirm repetition of what will wills into the future, it is necessary equally to affirm all the accidents, events, humiliations that make willing itself the highest force.

Elizabeth Grosz, *The nick of time: politics, evolution and the untimely*, p. 151

The story of Anna's school days ends her reliving of her childhood while she is a patient. She is nearing the end of her hospital stay and bed rest, almost ready for

discharge to her mother's care for a period of convalescence. She has to face life without her children, without love. A theme in the narrative of her life that emerges after her loss of the children and runs parallel to her descent into illness is that of 'the other woman'. The two affairs she had at the end of her marriage were precipitated by her search for love and coloured by her desire to escape from a marriage in which she felt trapped. A third affair with her lawyer is another attempt to find a man who will love her for herself. She has once again fallen in love with a man who is married and unable or unwilling to commit himself fully to the relationship. She is now alone, without financial security, children, and a structure to her life other than what she can create for herself. She is free to create a life for herself when she embarks on the affair with her lawyer, but she is still trapped in the old spirals of desire and loss since she chooses a man who, like her father, is unavailable.

As she has lain in bed, Anna has had time to review her relationship with her lover. She now sees that, like the first two men she became involved with, he will not make more room for her in his life than he has thus far. He has abandoned her when she most needed him, not visiting her or trying to contact her while she has been ill. She has begun to be aware of the pattern of desire and loss that began with her father and has been repeated in her life so far. She faces the reality that she can never be 'the one' with the lawyer, or any man like him.

She realised she'd been waiting all her life for a man to rescue her. Ever since she'd lost her father, she'd had a romantic idea of love as a transforming power that would make her life meaningful and happy. Even before Henry left, she used to fantasise about the ideal lover, and since there was no-one outside her family to project her dreams onto, she made it all up in the stories she created.

The Crone's slow progress in covering the rusty red soil figures Anna's painful growth of awareness of how her life has reached an impasse. Because of this awareness, once she leaves hospital, she can begin to change the pattern of her life, to refold her self.

The last section of the main narrative tells of Anna's return home and her serendipitous meeting at a friend's party with the American consul, who promises to

help her get a visa so that she can visit her children in the United States. Until this meeting, she had been frustrated by the refusal of the U.S. consulate to give her a visa because she is not divorced from Robert, but is not intending to return to being his wife. The consul official had told her that if they gave her a visa, she might enter the country and attempt to stay there illegally so she could be near her children. Apparently they considered her less likely to stay if she were divorced and had legal access to her children for a limited time. Through his lawyer, Robert has refused to divorce her and grant her access, stating that he wants her to return to the family. Anna knows this is a strategic position, not a genuine desire on his part. It is part of a pattern in his behaviour, that of manipulating her into a 'fault' or no-win position, as he had done when he persuaded her to allow the children to have separate passports before they left England, because he had secretly expected that she would fail to stay in the marriage and he was determined to keep the children with him.

After the party, Anna writes to her lawyer to tell him the good news about the visa, and he phones the next day to ask if he can visit her. When he does, he acts as if nothing has changed and wants to make love. She hesitates, caught once more in her desire for him. But she remembers her children and has a vision of visiting them. She refuses him, saying it's over, but asks him nonetheless to help her get access to her children. He agrees and leaves. With this, the narrative ends. Anna has moved beyond the failed bourgeois persona of the other woman and is on the threshold of becoming new, allowing the flow of desire to take her into new pathways, along lines of change and new growth.

The passage that follows is the Epilogue, which gives the Crone the last word.

There's an easterly wind blowing across the plains. It smells of rain. The old woman shivers, and draws her shawl of saltbush green around her thin shoulders. She's finished covering this stretch of rusty-red, just in time. There'll be a big rain tonight, breaking the long drought. She twists her hook through some threads of the last ball, and drops it in her bag. She moves towards the river bend, taking shelter.

The 'smell of rain' images the promise of renewal of the landscape, of new life for the pasture and the creatures that graze on it, as well as for the humans who make their livelihood from it. It also images the promise of a rebirth for Anna, a departure from the exhausted patterns of childhood and young womanhood and the possibility of at least a temporary reunion with her children.

In real life, I have experienced a long and painful pathway from that point in Anna's narrative, which is my narrative in many ways. Separation from my children was punctuated by brief reunions throughout their childhood. I struggled to create a meaningful life as an independent woman; my lingering love for the lawyer kept haunting me; after a series of unsatisfactory relationships, I entered a second marriage that promised great happiness but failed; I endured a long period of single parenthood with the son of that marriage. Now, having returned to study and writing after half a lifetime, my life is much freer of these old patterns of desire. The children of both marriages are my closest friends, and I am happily reconciled in friendship with the man who was my second husband.

Elizabeth Grosz, in the passage quoted at the beginning of this concluding section, glosses Nietzsche's concept of the Eternal Return, which was embraced by Deleuze. She explains that will creates the future by willing it, though this can only be by accepting the necessity of time's past action in a series of events, and uniting our will with those events, so that, as Deleuze says, we can become worthy of what happens to us and by accepting the event, release it. I have found that it is only through conscious affirmation of the past in a reactive (fictional) reconstruction of it, an affirmation of the loss and destruction that I experienced, that I am becoming able to take my revenge on time and the past, to release the event of the loss of my children, and have one more birth. The desire for revenge has not left me, but it is taking a positive turn.

I am no longer 'the other woman' to myself, and I am refolding the desiring female self. I am not in a time of peace and stability; I have not yet had a homecoming; I am not attached to a particular stratum, such as that of postgraduate student, independent older woman, or creative writer and editor. I cannot settle for long, for fear of becoming fixed. These strata attract me, and I am drawn towards them, but I am also drawn to lines

of flight, new territories. I am not the Crone, but I am becoming-Crone, becoming-Sorcerer, becoming a creative and desiring woman.

Afterthoughts of an outsider

The becoming-woman of Anna begins in her encounter with the Crone. The Crone has a memory of the earth of the Hay plains as it was before it was ravaged by men and their animals. Implicit in that memory is all becoming, becoming-woman, becoming-child, becoming-animal, becoming-sorcerer, becoming-music, becoming-imperceptible, the immanent end of all becomings on the edge of chaos. Anna thought she knew herself, thought she knew what would fix her life and make it better; she thought she needed the love of a good man, one like the father she had lost, and whom she lost again — and again — and again. She needed to be stripped of this knowing, to unfold the desiring subject shaped in childhood by her mother's teaching of sexuality, by her brothers' appropriation of power over her and exclusion of her from their games, by the cultural artefacts and influences surrounding her, by her father's withdrawal into another life which had no place for her, which made him an absent, lost figure in her memories. As she lies on the bare ground and watches the Crone working, the young woman becomes-earth and moves towards becoming-imperceptible, a kind of death. She begins to lose a sense of her subjectivity as a deserting wife and abandoning mother, and moves towards impersonality, indiscernibility, letting go of her fevered mental activity, going into a kind of hibernation, from which she will emerge different, with the chance to become worthy of what has happened to her.

As writer of my life I am an outsider, one who lives on the borderlines of life, a becoming-sorcerer. The becoming of my sorcery, my writing, is real, though the sorcerer I become is not real. In creating the landscape of the Hay plains and the Crone who inhabits them, I make a Body without Organs, the abstract machine of which is the elemental life force, the self-preserving existence of the earth; on this constructed plane of immanence, the assemblages of the Crone weaving the saltbush cover, the animals and insects who inhabit the earth and are sustained by it, the fevered woman who watches, all move and form rhizomatic connections and alliances. I use my human consciousness to take a line of flight from subjugated forms of being and create a becoming-woman.

Consciousness is a development of human life, which has separated us from the rest of organic and inorganic matter; this separation has placed us in a dualistic universe.

We cannot live without consciousness —our selves are divided — but we can use our consciousness to respond to the sound of the Universe, as Guattari puts it, knocking at the window 'like a magic bird'.^{dx}

Chapter six: a many-folded self: changing the subject through the origami of desire

. . . [W]hat always matters is folding, unfolding, refolding.

Gilles Deleuze, *The fold: Leibniz and the baroque*, p. 137

In this chapter I will argue that life writing is a creative, future-oriented production that changes the subject; in recreating the past, we change the present, we can become worthy of what happens to us, and in ‘becoming the offspring of our own events’, in affirming and releasing them, we can enable a different future to emerge. Deleuzian concepts of desire and becoming and of the subject as a piece of origami that can be unfolded and refolded are applied to the narration of three episodes in my life story, one of childhood, two of the more recent past. The dialogic narration of selfhood in formal and informal autobiographical acts is a transformative process that may have emancipatory (autopoietic) or repressive (subjectifying) effects. The third episode in this chapter explores how this process can become delusory and destructive in certain extreme forms of temporising, and how emancipation from death-dealing patterns can begin through a positive dialogue with others.

In Chapter five, we saw how the becoming-child of young children is expropriated into cultural constructions of sexuality and family life, and desire is captured within the Oedipal triangle. Other forms of becoming are explored in the story of the Crone, who acts in my autobiographical novel as a refrain, reterritorialising a circle of safety on the edge of chaos, a place of regeneration for the earth and its creatures and for the wounded narrator. The becoming of the writer connects with the sorcerer, the anomalous being who is on the outside of society and deterritorialises the rigid forms and subjectivities that make up its assemblages. These two figures, the Crone and the sorcerer, enact the two processes, folding and unfolding, that are found in all life processes, and that can be actively and creatively used to overcome the past and enable new forms and subjectivities to emerge, some of which may be more affirmative and joyful than past ones have been.

The double process of unfolding and refolding can be observed in the gap between self and other that develops in infancy. In this gap, silences, misunderstandings and dissonances find fertile ground in which to flourish. At the same time, it is the gap bridged by empathy, the affective energetic force that produces connectedness and is engaged in autobiography, a representation of the self which can be a mirror to others, in which they look for similarities and differences.^{dxii} It is in the gap that creativity works; all art, literature, indeed, all cultural and social forms and institutions grow out of the creative desire to bridge the gap between self and other that has its origins in the pre-verbal and verbal translative dialogue between the infant and young child and its nurturing others.

There is no essential, given, integrated self that comes into the world. Rather, as Daniel Stern has shown, selfhood emerges from birth through the interaction of experience and innate or learned capacities.^{dxiii} With the beginning of the ability at around nine months to relate to others verbally there emerges a more complex sense of self which gives us access to a wider cultural world and the ability to share our experience, but also introduces a gap between lived experience and its representation. While language allows shared meanings and an increase in the ability to think in complex ways, it also fragments our experience of self. Stern argues that it is within and across this space between self and other that neurotic behaviour develops. He further argues that these emerging selves are not just developmental stages we grow out of, they are multiple levels of subjectivity that are maintained in parallel throughout our lives. Which is not to say we do not learn and develop, but that we are many-folded, multiple in our selfhood and carry our childhood selves within us.

As Maxine Anderson, a psychoanalyst, says, 'language used by authoritative grownups can become a narrow *official* version of how things should be experienced'.^{dxiv} The struggle that begins in infancy continues as we develop and are subjected to wider circles of cultural influences through the media, peer groups, educational institutions, commercial forces and work environments. In our late capitalist Western society the commodification of desire through the forces of consumerism infiltrates every aspect of our daily lives and unconscious selves.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, in *Anti-Oedipus*, the first collaborative work they wrote, tackle the question posed by Baruch Spinoza and Friedrich Nietzsche and echoed by Wilhelm Reich: why does desire desire its own repression?^{dxv} Their answer is book length. In a nutshell, as Deleuze explains in a later work, ‘the powers which crush desire, or which subjugate it, themselves already form part of assemblages of desire’.^{dxvi} The desire for repression grows in infancy, when the small vulnerable and dependent being is shaped or folded and taught by authoritative others what she should think and feel and how she should behave, if she is to gain approval, affection and other rewards. The repression of desire that inevitably accompanies its satisfaction in early childhood continues in more complex and diverse ways as the child’s circle widens.

Given that we are folded into certain culturally acceptable patterns by the hegemonic voices of our childhood and taught to desire our own repression, given that our selves are divided by the gap between our personal experience and the tools we have to express it and by the gap between our selves and others, given that life is a process of translation, how can we have agency in the ways we translate ourselves and receive the translations of others, how can we discover new ways of folding our selves without becoming lost in the folds made by others?

As we have seen in Chapter two, the figure of origami is used by Deleuze to express Leibniz’s model of the universe: ‘[t]he model for the sciences of matter is the “origami,” as the Japanese philosopher might say, or the art of folding paper’.^{dxvii} The immanent or virtual (in Leibnizian terms, the soul) folds infinitely into the empirical or material (organic and inorganic). The human subject re-enacts its own embryonic development as a play of folds, endo-, meso- and ecto-dermal, rather than, as Tom Conley, the translator of *The fold*, puts it, as a battleground in a Cartesian world where ‘the material world is mapped out from the axis of the thinking subject, in rectilinear fashion, and can be divided into discrete units’.^{dxviii} Simon O’Sullivan explains the concept of the fold as, on one level, a critique of typical accounts of subjectivity, that:

presume a simple interiority and exteriority (appearance and essence, or surface and depth)... For the fold announces that the inside is nothing more than a fold of the outside.^{dxix}

Conley, in 'Folds and folding', says that in Deleuze's rhapsody of folds and folding '... a new relation with being is born. An inside and an outside — a past (memory) and a present (subjectivity) — are two sides of a single surface'.^{dxx} Our present selves are fluid and dynamic, containing our past selves or memories, and evolving into our future becomings.

Origami, as we have seen, is a highly disciplined and precise art of repetitive patterns, and one fold that is different from the usual can change the whole shape of the object. This chapter is a further exploration of some of the ways we can translate our selves into new foldings that are different, fluid, experimental, creative, rather than homogenised, static, repetitive, imitative; it also looks at some of the dangers of self-folding that deny or ignore the lines on which we are stratified. The dialogue that is our life begins in infancy and continues in formal and informal ways throughout our lives. It is a fluid, dynamic process of bridging the gap between self and other, and is a site of both repression and creativity. Life writing, the rewriting of memories through the filter of the reflexive self, is a creative and productive way of changing the subject and enabling new selves to emerge.

We are folded by others, from infancy on, but by thinking about the forces that shape us and about our responses to them we can become-different and live creatively. We have agency because we think. Deleuze, in his study of Foucault, says that thinking means 'folding, doubling the outside with its co-extensive inside'.^{dxxi} Conley interprets Deleuze's reading of Leibniz in *The fold* in the context of his radical ontology of selfhood, in which

the upper room [of Baroque architecture] and its folded furnishings become the imaginary space where subjectivation can be realized. The Baroque room, a space in which thinking takes place, is the site where new folds and folding (the forces and products of thinking) can be felt and harmonized.^{dxxii}

The closed, dark, upper or inner baroque room that Deleuze explores is a metaphor for the imagination, the soul, the interior of the self. Within it, we fold the world inward and fold ourselves outward. The outer of the forces that shape us is brought into dynamic contact with the inner of the self-in-process in a space where we unfold and refold ourselves.

I will begin my enquiry with an excerpt from my memoir of childhood, sketching how I, as a child, translated between the hegemonic voices of my parents and the outside world and my personal desires, and lived an imaginary life within the house of my family and the place of an isolated rural farm. I will then look at my life now and the challenge to use the gap between my desires and the voices of others to live creatively, to fold myself in shapes that are not entirely commodified and repressed. I use gossip in the workplace as an example of informal auto/biographical unfoldings and refoldings of selfhood that have both creative and repressive potential. I will conclude with an episode about the destructive force of addiction in my family; this leads into a reflection on the concept of the Eternal Return and the challenge to become worthy of the event, and how the secret world we enter through addictive substances can be disclosed and its power overcome through dialogic acts, including the confessional process of Alcoholics Anonymous.

In the house of childhood

The first house sits in the hollow of the heart, it will never go away. It is the house of childhood become myth, inhabited by characters larger than life whose murmured conversations whisper and tug at the mind.

Dorothy Hewett, *Wild card: an autobiography 1923-1958*, p. 3

‘Boys and girls come out to play, the moon is shining bright as day!’ I’m sitting on the rug in front of the wireless, singing along with the music. *Kindergarten of the air* comes on every morning except Sunday. I sing along to the words, ‘tap tap shake shake, I play on my tambourine’. I jump up and run round the room, pretending I have a tambourine in my hands, shaking it and making it rattle in time to the music. Then it’s story time. Digit Dick is a thumb-sized boy who lives on the Great Barrier Reef, and has adventures under the water with the fish, the crabs, the nautilus and other creatures. I close my eyes and swim with him in the deep green ocean, exploring the world of the coral reefs.

‘Grrck grrrck grrrck!’ Simon’s voice drowns the story. I open my eyes. Behind the wireless my brother stands, hands on hips, wriggling his body from side to side and screwing up his face as the noises come out. I jump up and try to pull him out, but he pushes me back, sending me bump down onto the floor. I start to cry.

‘Simon!’ Mum comes in, her hands covered in flour. ‘Stop that! Go outside and finish cleaning the dogs’ kennels like Daddy told you to do!’

Simon pulls a face at me when Mum turns her back and leaves the room. ‘Sissy! Stupid stories! Mum’s little baby!’

‘And when you’ve done that I want you to bring me more firewood. Quickly now!’ Mum calls.

I look behind the wireless. I want to see where the voices are coming from. There are glass pointy tubes with four thin metal stalks inside like bare twigs; they light up when the voices talk. There’s a big metal box with slits and holes. I can’t see what’s inside this box. There’s dust and cobwebs on the bottom and in the corners.

Where do the voices come from? From hundreds of miles away, Mum says, from real people in a studio talking into a microphone. But how do the sounds get here through the air? Do they fly on the wind like birds and dust storms and grasshoppers? What if there are clouds? How do the noises get through when it's raining and thundering? How do they know where to come? And why do they only talk when we turn on the knob?

The story goes on to tell how my sister, who was working in Sydney, 580 miles away from our small farm on the Murrumbidgee River east of Hay, New South Wales, brought home a gramophone as a Christmas present. With the wind-up machine came records, including one of Danny Kaye and another of Spike Jones. These machines, the wireless and the gramophone, connected us with the outside world. When we needed to get about, for a while we had an old Chevrolet utility that often broke down. Other than that, to make the twenty-five mile journey to town, we drove a horse and sulky. We had no telephone and no electricity. The gramophone was a wonder that came into our lives after the wireless, and the pleasure it gave was limited by the small number of records we owned. The wireless, on the other hand, allowed daily inputs of new information and entertainment. For me, it was a magic box that had no material power source; it was a marvel no less mysterious than the natural world I lived in. I have no memory of batteries, though my brother tells me it had two.^{dxxiii} It was a time machine that transported us to other worlds, some of which I felt at home in, others I did not understand or take much notice of. My mother may have had a more realistic view of it, but it was her lifeline. She allowed us only to listen to programs she approved of — the ABC stations that played classical music, news and current affairs, children's programs like *Kindergarten of the air* and *The Argonauts*, serialised dramas (*The Lawsons* and *Blue Hills*) and cricket and tennis matches. If we interrupted when she was listening to the news, she would frown and point sternly at the radio — 'Ssssssh!' We were not allowed to listen to popular music or commercials, and she looked askance at the records my sister had chosen for us.

Even books were scarce. The few I possessed were well-loved and had been read many times. Through them, the wireless and my own fantasies of alternative lives, I

escaped into imaginary worlds. The habit of temporising, explored in Chapter four, began in response to loneliness; as the youngest in the family, with no playmates my own age, just two older brothers who usually excluded me from their games (especially once I learned to spell) and a much older sister and brother who were away at school and university throughout my childhood, I had to create my own companions. Modjeska agrees with André Aciman's suggestion that temporising is a strategy that is developed by children of a sensitive disposition, who feel unsafe in their environment, 'as a response to displacement, loss, the dread that comes with unexplained and unknowable events'.^{dxxiv} I agree with this, but for me the feelings of loss and dread came later in my childhood; I remember my early childhood as happy, not lonely or fearful. The fertile garden my father had created and the landscape and its flora and fauna offered me companionship, adventure and a theatre for my imaginary life. The Hay plains are notorious for their emptiness, flatness and aridity, but they have a severe beauty, softened by the river that winds through them, with its belt of trees that spread out over low-lying land to mark the passage of the water in flood-times. The river and the creatures that inhabited it and the surrounding open plains and sky were my familiar and loved world. This world, as I discovered when I revisited it twelve years ago, is changing with the widespread practice of irrigation that is degrading the ecology of the river and the flood plains.

The ability to create alternative worlds in a free and joyful play of the imagination in early childhood became a neurotic defence against the reality of loss and grief when my world changed catastrophically. My father left when I was eight years old, and I lost contact with him until I wrote to him forty years later. My life on the farm became even more solitary, as my brothers were away at school or university and my sister had gone to England. My mother kept the farm going with my help until she sent me away to boarding school at the age of thirteen. When I was fifteen my father returned and evicted my mother in order to sell the property; my mother arrived at my school with two suitcases and the news. My father's abandonment of us and my mother's reliance on me as a sounding board for her grief and anger and worry and for help with running the farm made deep folds in my self, folds of grief, loneliness and desire for the

lost love of childhood. My life kept repeating these folds until quite recently, but I must leave that as an untold story for now.

My ability to fold and refold my self through imaginative play and the media of the wireless, the gramophone and books was a creative response to the gap between self and other in early childhood. When events widened the gap to a chasm, I was unable to use my imagination and the cultural tools available in such positive ways. During the uncertain and troubled time before my father left, I had a dream in which the world split in half:

The sky is green, a lurid green like rotten lettuce. Orange darts of flame shoot across it. The earth shudders and the ground in front of me cracks open. Mum is standing on my side of the crack, holding out her arms to me. Dad is standing at the other side calling me — ‘Holly! Holly!’ I want to be with him, but I know Mum will die alone if I do. I step back from the crack to be close to her and as I do, the earth splits apart. A huge chasm opens up and swallows the ground where Dad is standing. He falls, a little stick figure, his arms waving like insects’ feelers, and as he falls, a tiny shrill chirping cry like a cricket’s calls ‘Holly! Holly!’

This apocalyptic dream has overtones of the Day of Judgement prophesied in the Old and New Testaments, when the righteous are taken into Heaven and the damned are cast into Hell.^{dxxv} In my dream, there is no divine judge, but my father is on the wrong side of the crack in the earth because of the line of flight he has taken, and my mother is the one who remains connected to the family assemblage, trying to preserve it. For the narrator, this judgement is a two-edged sword, for she is condemned to lose her beloved father and live on as child of her mother, the single parent to whom she becomes a caretaker. This damned salvation is the theme of Samuel Beckett’s meditation on the two thieves on the cross, a refrain in *Waiting for Godot* and other of his writings. He was fascinated by the shape of a sentence from St Augustine: ‘do not despair; one of the thieves was saved. Do not presume; one of the thieves was damned’.^{dxxvi}

In the face of this cataclysmic rupture of my known and safe world, my ability to escape from the reality of the loss of my father and the consequent loss of my childhood home and loved familiar landscape became a neurotic defence. Modjeska describes how temporising, for her, can veil the reality of the present, creating

... a feeling of not always being altogether there, an obliqueness to what is going on around you as if you can only afford to look at it out of the corner of your eye until you have time to retreat and consider it. At its worst it can become a depressive condition....^{dxxvii}

For long periods in my life, temporising has worked repressively, keeping me folded in subject positions determined by the negative paradigm of loss, abandonment and unsatisfiable desire. Now, I am able to temporise in creative ways that allow new foldings and metamorphoses of the self, rather than repetition of past patterns. One of the ways in which I do this is writing my life. Another is in observing and engaging in informal autobiographical and dialogical acts that are part of the rhizomatic matrix of life. The rhizome is an open network of connections between organic and non-organic entities, with multiple inter-relational movements and lines of becoming.^{dxxviii}

I have, until recently, been working at weekends as a housekeeper in a respite house for intellectually and physically disabled children. The pressures on the staff (in the period I worked there) were considerable: a constantly changing population of children with a broad range of disabilities, from mild to severe; inadequate numbers of permanent staff supplemented by casual staff; management which was often absent and sometimes lacking in understanding of staff problems and challenges; low rates of pay; and many more. The staff consisted predominantly of females, many of whom were young. I was the oldest member by several years; the average age was thirty.

One of the dialogic ways the staff coped with the repressive conditions was through gossip. Gossip is contagious, rampant, intense, raw, often crude and bitchy. It focuses on relationships, work rivalries and discontents, and the minutiae of daily life. Opinions, secrets, judgements, insults, funny stories circulate at speed, subvert hierarchies, relieve tension, undo knots of resentment and pain, betray confidences, enable new connections and translations to take place between the subjective experience of each participant and that of others.

Gossip, which translates between self and other, is both creative and destructive in its effects. As Patricia Meyer Spacks says, it is ‘relentlessly ambiguous, [and] evades easy ethical distinctions’.^{dxxxix} Gossip is both white and black magic, and though, etymologically, it means ‘god-related’, originally designating a godparent of either sex, its meaning has been degraded to that of trivial talk, with overtones of malice and falsehood.^{dxxxx} Spacks argues, drawing on examples from biography, letters and fiction, that gossip is not only irrepressible, but in its liminal position between public and private, it has a powerful function as both ‘enemy and agent of desire’.^{dxxxxi} Here I am interested in its action in a workplace where women, predominantly, are working under pressure to provide respite and nurturing to disabled children and, indirectly, their parents, in a safe environment. It is both a safety valve and a volcanic focus of discontent and desire. Patty Sotirin argues that the becoming-woman of women’s small talk:

opens possibilities for a ‘contagious micro-feminism’ that does not ‘take a stand’ on any particular identity or issue so much as open radical alternatives for living a ‘political’ life by creating wild lines of resonance and intensity through and beyond the binary relations of domination and oppression that structure the molar positions of conventional gender politics.^{dxxxxii}

Gossip also subverts binary lines of control and hegemonic discourse in the workplace by creating rhizomatic, subterranean, subversive connections and disruptions of more formal hierarchical lines of relationship. In the Children’s House, the wild lines of resonance and intensity created a radical rhizomatic culture that evaded, challenged and undermined the authority of the political hierarchy of social welfare and disabilities services and the particular institution with its managers and favoured middle managers. And the children, though not agents in the gossip network, were yet connected with it, symbiotically sustaining it and sustained by it and by all their interactions with the carers. They were ‘the other’ we were there to care for — often silent, sometimes disrupting the dialogue with their own, different words and actions, sometimes witnessing and absorbing, sometimes contributing to the exchange. Gossip challenges the rule of confidentiality in the helping profession; carers and sometimes parents and children frequently cross this boundary, talking about each other, ventilating secrets, resentments and desires. Management seeks to control and contain this process, but the

more it does so, the more it is resisted. A postscript to this episode of my life is that there has been a mass exodus of trained and experienced staff in response to management's actions that were perceived as uncaring and unsupportive of staff concerns and children's safety and other needs.

I was rarely bored in this place. I was tired when I went home but was constantly renewed, sometimes irritated, always stimulated by the intensities and resonances of dialogue amongst the women who worked there and the children who stayed there. Although I was on the fringes of the circle, busy in the kitchen, I was part of the network of gossip, of micro-feminism, in that microcosm of society.

I now have to say 'that', not 'this', 'was', not 'is', as do, I imagine, the others who have left, or whose positions have been 'rationalised' in the interests of 'efficiency' and 'economy'. That time has become the stuff of memory, which I rewrite and through which I re-invent myself.

The feeling of being an outsider/insider, observer and participant, contrasts with my childhood, when there was no network of support and small chat for my mother and my self. My mother had no one to talk to, to share her worries and trouble with, to confide the secret and conflicted depths of her self and her relationship with my father. Hence she spent a great deal of time in silent worry, which disturbed her sleep and caused headaches, high blood pressure and later, after my father left, a severe skin infection. My father, on the other hand, was able to come and go as he wished to visit neighbours, to find relief and escape in his affair with the cook on a nearby station. When I visited him for the first time forty years after he had left the family, he told me: 'Your mother didn't want to go out. I had to talk to someone.' My mother didn't drive a car or horse and sulky, and was of a more reserved and introverted nature. During the time her relationship with my father was disintegrating, and after he left, she confided in me. I understood why she did this, but it had a repressive effect, forcing me to think and feel as an adult and destroying my sense of safety and the freedom to live in my imagination.

When I went to boarding school I found it difficult to relate to other children, to play and gossip. I felt an outsider, and this is a position with which I am still familiar. It is a position of strength in solitude but can be uncomfortable in groups unless one has a

purpose, a focus of activity, like my kitchen work in the Children's House. The outsider/insider position is one that writers use creatively, to observe, record and translate between their subjective world and the world they inhabit. In Chapter two, I have explored how Murasaki Shikibu used her position as outsider in the Heian court to create a mirror world that reflected and critiqued the reality she observed.

These three places I have remembered and recreated in my writing, are each, in different ways, a Children's House: my childhood on the farm, my boarding school (described in more detail in my memoir), and the respite house for children with disabilities. Each was set up within the framework of hierarchical arborescent systems of thought; each, in its way, failed to live up to the ideals by which it was informed. Each failed, despite the best intentions, to give support and safety to the vulnerable children who inhabited it. In each the adults, in different ways, were repressed and unable to live creative and fulfilling lives. Yet within each institution set up to bridge the gap between self and other, there were possibilities of escape, of creativity, of alternative worlds. By thinking about the forces that shape us, by listening to each other and to the vulnerable subjects we care for, we can live more creatively and empower others to do likewise. We can create houses for ourselves and each other which are less hierarchical and repressive, more open to change and experimentation, to the infinite folding of the outside or immanent into the inside or material being.

The last series of events that I want to talk about in terms of the forces of repression that act on the self and the ways that we can use our creative thinking to resist those forces and become worthy of the event is difficult to theorise because the wounds are still raw, but it looms above everything else in my recent life and cannot be ignored. It is about a force that, in the last few months, has threatened to destroy the life of one of my daughters, to damage irretrievably the lives of her children, and to disrupt and derail my own life, as well as severely affecting the lives of many others in her circle of family and friends.

The long night

The children are in bed, and the washing up is done. The two younger boys are asleep, and Sol is reading. It's been a long day. I tuck into bed, drawing the doona up around my chin; it's a cold south-western spring night, and the wind whistles through the gaps in the boards. I read for a while, then turn the light out. Tomorrow morning early, Caitlin has an appointment with her GP, and I must make sure I get her there, so her doctor is aware of how bad things are.

I wake at 2.30 and get up for a pee. On the way back, I step into Caitlin's room to see if she is OK. There's just enough light from the open door to the hallway to show me her bed is empty. Where can she be? I check that both cars are still there, parked in the driveway. I hid the keys last night when we got home, after I'd poured the rest of her gin out of the water bottle onto the grass, and put her to bed. My heart is thumping fast. It's a cold night, she surely can't have walked into town? Perhaps she's lying unconscious somewhere. I check all round the house, under the house, calling her name, but not too loud, in case I wake the children; I open the door of the caravan, and peer in. It's empty. Back in the house, I find her purse on the desk, and go through it. There's no money there, and her bankcard is still there. I get the phone and dial the police. I get through to the nearest regional centre; the local police station isn't manned at night. The policeman I speak to takes her details, but says they can't do anything till morning, and asks me to let them know if I find her.

I'd better ring Simon, her ex. I try his mobile number, and he answers. I say that I think she may have walked into town last night after I'd gone to bed, to get more alcohol. He says he will drive around and look for her. I get my doona and sit outside on the veranda, waiting. An hour goes past. I see his old car driving past slowly, rattling and wheezing. It cruises down to the end of the street, then turns and goes back. At last he drives up and tells me he has looked in all the likely places and can't see her. I tell him I'll phone him if she turns up.

After he's gone, I go back to bed, closing my burning eyes. What if we find her body in the morning? What if she has overdosed? How will I tell the children? I picture them at her funeral, white faced and silent.

In this long night, I review all the steps that have brought us to this point. Her childhood before I left — the little girl with the broad face and bright blue eyes, the head that seemed too big for her body, the floss of red-gold curls and radiant smile. Then, all the painful partings, watching her and her sisters trail across the tarmac to the plane in the wake of the air hostess, turning to wave to me before they climbed the stairs. The time she was twelve years old, and told me she didn't want to go back to Melbourne, how her stepmother hit and abused her and Penelope. She hinted at problems with her stepbrother, too.

'If I stay with you, Penelope and Sophia can go back; Penelope will be all right, Dad will look after her, and Kate won't pick on her so much if I'm not there'.

I talked to my brother, who is a lawyer, and to my own lawyer, and both advised me that I must send her back, as her father had custody, and go through a legal process. Caitlin would have to testify in court, and unless she was willing to give evidence of serious ill treatment, it was unlikely a judge would award me custody:

'He has a good income, a house, a career, and you have nothing; how can you provide for her?'

So I had to send her back. She cried and cried that day at the airport, clinging to me, and I felt like a murderer. I was about to pack up all my belongings and come to live in Perth, to be with the man who became my second husband. I told her we would drive down to Melbourne and I would visit her and her sisters and talk to her father about what she had told me.

When we drove up to the beach house where they were staying, she ran out to greet us and said breathlessly:

'Mum, don't say anything! I told Dad about it, and he's talked to Kate, and it's all alright now.' She didn't have time to say any more before the others came over. I did talk to her father, but he said that Kate had promised it wouldn't happen again, and he would make sure they were happy and well cared for. I told him I was not reassured and would be closely monitoring how things went.

But what could I do, from three thousand miles away? I continued to see them twice a year, and Caitlin became more withdrawn and sullen. One time, after she had gone home, I found an opened packet in the rubbish bin; it had contained a needle for a

syringe. She had visited me at the hospital where I worked in the Psychiatric Outpatients' Unit. I phoned her and told her what I'd found. She said she'd just been curious, that she hadn't used the needle. I told her she could come and live with me if she wanted to, that I would do whatever it took to bring her over. She said she was alright, that she knew she would be a better person if she lived with me, but she didn't want to leave her Dad and her sisters.

Eventually she went to England, and I found out after she had been living there for a couple of years that she was a street prostitute and a heroin addict. I was powerless to help, again. What saved her was her arrest for dealing and possession, and her father's intervention through a lawyer, who got her released on a bond, on condition she returned to Perth to live with me, as she requested.

When she arrived in Perth, she was on a reducing dose of Methadone, which she had obtained illegally. I took her to my GP, who prescribed codeine over a few days to see her through withdrawals, and she admitted herself to a rehabilitation clinic.

Her life till recently seemed, on visits and phone conversations, to be happy and successful; but her relationship fell apart a few months ago, and her business has been staggering for the last couple of years. Her descent into alcoholism has taken us all by surprise. She says she has been drinking heavily for years, but I was not aware of this, nor were her sisters. I have been on several rescue missions in the last six months, to support her after brief hospital admissions to detox. This last time, she had spent two weeks at a Buddhist retreat, where she did really well, and came home, with my support, but collapsed again when I drove to Perth overnight to get some things I needed for a longer stay. The few days since then, she has been on a bender, with brief sober patches in the mornings.

I toss and turn, counting the hours as the clock ticks beside my bed. It's getting light; I'd better get up and see if she's come home. A voice startles me; it's Simon.

'Sorry — she's back. I just checked; she's on her bed. She says she's been walking round for a few hours.' He stands in the doorway, running his fingers through his hair, staring at the floor. His hair is wild, his eyes red.

As he drives off, I walk into her room. She lies on the bed, in her tatty old track suit pants and windcheater, her hair tousled, bits of grass stuck in it. Her eyes are shut. I touch her shoulder.

‘Caitlin — where have you been?’

‘Walking’, she mutters.

I pull the doona up around her chin and leave her to sleep. Soon the children will be waking; I’ll phone her sister and ask her to take them to school, so I can take Caitlin to the doctor.

The long night is over, and I’ll never know where she’s been, what happened; she probably doesn’t know herself. At least she came back.

The search for help

Between that night and now, some weeks later, has been a difficult journey. Caitlin was admitted to the local hospital for a couple of nights, and an emergency admission to a detox unit in Perth arranged, but this fell through, because I took her home from hospital to pack her things and say goodbye to her children. When we phoned the detox unit to say we would be a little late, they said that an emergency admission meant a hospital-to-hospital transfer, and because I had taken her home first, they couldn’t accept her. I hadn’t been informed of this rule. I tried to contact her doctor; it was her day off. I tried to speak to her partner in the medical practice, and was told he couldn’t speak to me, and I should take her to the nearest regional hospital. In the end, we drove to Perth (a six hour drive) and went to the Emergency Centre of the central hospital, where she was eventually seen by a doctor and given a few Valium tablets to tide her over. We were told the best option was for her to detox in the community. I took her home; we faced a holiday weekend before we could go to the detox centre and try to get her in. Over the next three days, she managed to get alcohol and drink secretly, until, on the third evening, I found her unconscious on her bed. I got an ambulance to take her to hospital, and they arranged her admission to the detox unit next morning.

She has now accepted that she is an alcoholic, and embraced the Alcoholics Anonymous philosophy that she is powerless over her addiction; she has travelled to Queensland with Sophia and is staying with Penelope and her family, after a week in a

Buddhist retreat, and is doing well. The experience of abandonment and abuse in childhood has forged very strong bonds between the three sisters. I am relieved that Sophia was able to go with her; we didn't feel safe to let her go on her own, and I was exhausted and starting to panic about finishing my thesis. I am content that she is staying with Penelope in a happy, healthy, drug- and alcohol-free environment, with access to all sorts of community support.

I am picking up the pieces of my life, thankful that at last, she has been able to accept help.

Last night I went to an Italian restaurant with my son, his wife and father. While we sat waiting for the others to arrive, a young man left the table behind us with his girlfriend. He paused beside my chair, rubbed me gently on the back and told me he hoped my cough would get better. He suggested I boil lemon peel in water and drink the water with honey. His touch was gentle and loving; I was moved by this random act of kindness and love from a complete stranger, his innocence and openness in bridging the usual rigid gap between strangers. I became intensely aware of the loneliness of the last few weeks, the struggle to get help from those who were supposed to help, the difficulties and the silences, the covering up and the evasions, the refusal of her doctors to speak to me and include me in the treatment plan, the awful yawning gaps in the structure of society that can allow someone who needs and wants help to fall through and be lost, the waiting period of weeks between detox (if you can get in) and rehab in a safe place. How many people fall through the gaps? How many don't have anyone who is prepared or able to stand by them through the darkest time, to rescue them from themselves when they are helpless?

'I need to get her out of the family system', her GP had said on the phone to the hospital staff when she was requesting a bed for her, after that long night when she went missing. I sat in the surgery next to Caitlin, who was hunched over, her head in her hands, her eyes half shut. What does she mean, I thought? Does she think I am part of the problem, because I've been trying to save her, trying to protect her children, to stop her driving with them in the car when she can't see which side of the road she's driving on? Does she think I've caused this?

I suppose I did, all those years ago, when I left her and her sisters with a father who failed to protect her, who married an abusive woman with two children who bullied my daughters, a son who abused each of them sexually. Perhaps she is right. I am part of the problem. But I also seem to be the only one who has been able to go to the end of the road with her. Some of her friends have washed their hands of her, many have tried to help and failed, and I am the only family member who's been in a position to stay with her at some of the worst times and try and keep her and her children safe. And perhaps it's poetic justice that it was just me and her in those dark days. I had to do what I'd been unable to do so many years before.

I am grateful that this time, after all these years, I have been able to be here for her, to reach out and pull her from the black hole that was destroying her.

Becoming worthy of what happens to us

The submersion in chaosmic immanence is always ready to exploit the slightest weaknesses. Its presence haunts, with more or less intensity, unstable situations — intolerable absence, bereavement, jealousy, organic fragilisation, cosmic vertigo.... The rituals of exorcism brought to bear on it can become refrains of fixation, reification, tenacious fidelity to pain or unhappiness.

Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm*, p. 75

Guattari, in his radical schizoanalytic practice, sought to free his patients from the dualist negativity of Western interpretations of life, death, subjectivity and language, to undo the petrifying paradigm of desire forever trapped in the symbolic order, subject to loss and lack. He sought, with Deleuze, to awaken us to our freedom as conscious, thinking, speaking beings, to the gift of 'unforeseen Universes of the possible, with incalculable, virtual repercussions'.^{dxxxiii} He suggests in the epigraph above that submersion in the immanent plane can be a destructive process, presumably because we lose the grounding on the plane of organisation that he and Deleuze constantly remind us we need. Further, he suggests that the very rituals intended to free us from this lost state — Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis are the ones he especially targets — can lock

us into a deathly repetition of our pain. Similarly, the power of alcohol and drugs is in their seductive ability to give pleasure, to make us forget the pain and anxiety of living, but the price of this seduction is that it is a temporary escape, and the addictive repetition of the experience has destructive effects on all levels of being. The enchantment of addiction is false and death-dealing. Against this and other disempowering ways of being, Deleuze and Guattari invite us to rediscover the poetry, mystery and enchantment of existence by rupturing sense, making our Bodies without Organs, opening ourselves to the dance of chaos and complexity, unfolding and refolding, difference and repetition. This is not an escape from existence, it is an acceptance of all that has happened to us and a creative welcoming of the unknown, emerging future.

What does Deleuze mean, that we need to become worthy of what happens to us? I began this thesis with these words, and I am ending with them. They resonate in my mind, in my senses, and I return to them again and again. '[T]o become worthy of what happens to us, and thus to will and to release the event ...'^{dxxxiv} Events arise on the plane of immanence, and become evident when actualised in some body or state.^{dxxxv} An event is not a state or happening itself, 'but something made actual in the State or happening'.^{dxxxvi} Events bring about transformations in things — becomings — having no 'fixed structure, position, temporality or property, and without beginning or ending'.^{dxxxvii} Becoming moves through events, and the event is a 'momentary productive intensity'.^{dxxxviii} What does this mean in terms of living an ethical life? Following Stagoll, I read it as meaning that each moment has its unique potential for change, in which new forces of chaos and chance bear on our circumstances, and that if we embrace 'the rich chaos of life and the uniqueness and potential of each moment', we can think creatively and change the subject. Thus, by affirming reality, we can create it. It is not enough just to endure the event, we need to meet it with eyes wide open and use its transformative power to have one more birth.

When I was a child and my father left, my life changed irrevocably and I was powerless to resist or to influence the course of events; so I survived as best I could, and found some escape in the alternative reality of imaginary worlds. If I had had access to drugs, as Caitlin had when she was a teenager, I probably would have used them as an

escape. The choices that shaped my life as a young adult were made in a state of illusion, the search for a panacea to my sense of loss and emptiness — the drug of love, which led me into a black hole. When my ex-husband took our children to the United States and I was faced with the loss of them and the reality of being powerless to influence the course of their lives, I was unable to rise to the challenges I faced. The best I could do was to survive, to go on living so that I could fight to gain access to my children, to at least continue to have a relationship with them.

They, as children, were even more powerless, more at the mercy of the events that changed their lives forever. When Caitlin told me at age 12 of her unhappiness and desire to live with me, again, I was powerless to change what was happening in her life. I tried, after that, to save her, but it was too late, and she began to make choices, to take a line of flight that took her into the black hole of sex work and drug addiction.

Deleuze and Guattari reflect on drugs as a line of flight that becomes trapped in the rigidity of ‘dependency, the hit and the dose, the dealer’.^{dxix} The deterritorialisation from the straight world turns into ‘the most abject reterritorializations’.^{dxl} The line of flight turns into a black hole, a line of death. Drug addicts, alcoholics,

continually fall back into what they wanted to escape: a segmentarity all the more rigid for being marginal, a territorialization all the more artificial for being based on chemical substances, hallucinatory forms, and phantasy subjectifications.^{dxli}

The rigidity and artificiality of the world of substances has an illusory quality of escape into a plane of immanence where the ‘normal’ world of subjectivities and codes of behaviour is destabilised and suspended. But that world always returns, and when it does the addict is ‘down’, thrown back onto the segmentarity of post-hallucinatory reality. The real world seems heavier, more rigid, more oppressive, and all the pressures that vanished from consciousness in the hallucinatory state are intensified. There is no escape, only a choice between a descent into a hallucinatory underworld, such as that fictionalised in Malcolm Lowry’s *Under the volcano*, or sobriety. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that drug addicts are experimenters who blaze new paths of life, but the plane of drugs is always aborted, their attempt to construct a plane of consistency always a failure. They suggest that we need to succeed in getting drunk on pure water, to get high by abstention.^{dxlii} What does this mean? I take it to mean that we must learn how to

construct a plane of consistency, not by the use of artificial mental intoxicants, but by using our creative powers of thought, ‘so that nonusers can succeed in passing through the holes in the world and following the lines of flight at the very place where means other than drugs become necessary’.^{dxliii} We need to practice becoming-imperceptible, releasing the event so that we can become the offspring of our own events, rather than of our actions; that is, we need to allow the plane of immanence to act through us, to affirm, as Elizabeth Grosz says, the necessity of the past, of what has happened to us, to accept that it has made us what we are, and thereby to make possible our own overcoming — the overcoming of our past — and enable a different future.^{dxliiv} This is the Eternal Return: what has happened in the past will happen again, but differently, and when it does, we can revenge ourselves on time by submitting to the necessity of the past and thus affirming the possibility of a different future. Rather than disowning the past, immersing ourselves in it (as Caitlin did when she was intoxicated, yielding to grief, regret, blame, self-pity and the desire for oblivion), we need to see it for what it is and move beyond it.^{dxliv} We need to enter that interior room, the baroque space of the inner self, of the imagination, where our selves are folded from the exterior forces that surround us, and actively engage in the process of folding, unfolding and refolding ourselves.

And so, in my own life, the past has returned; once again, I was confronted with a helpless child, a daughter close to destroying her own life, with trying to rescue her, and to protect her children from having their own lives damaged beyond repair, as hers had been. Each time I tried to rescue her by supporting her emotionally, providing domestic support and stability for her and her children, I was stymied by her stubborn insistence that she could control her addiction, by her relapse into intoxication, and by the refusal of her therapists to include me in the loop, to take into account the reality of her powerlessness; they kept treating her as if she were a rational being, as she usually presented herself to them, and as if she were able to control her addiction. Finally, it was only when I had brought her away from her home and community, and it was just me and her and the bottles of wine she kept drinking to the point of unconsciousness, that I was able to get effective help for her, and she was able to surrender control.

She has joined Alcoholics Anonymous, and is gaining great support and inspiration from the meetings, from sharing her story and listening to the stories of others, of all the losses they experienced through their drinking, of the transformation in their lives since they have stopped. This is a dialogic process in which change and healing happens through the sharing of stories. The secret world of the addict is maintained by covering up, by evading the attempts of others to control their addiction. Every recovered alcoholic I have met has stories of how they concealed the extent of their addiction, of the empty bottles hidden in neighbours' recycling bins, of stashes of alcohol in secret places, of ruses like filling water bottles with gin, of the use of cough mixtures, mouth wash and other proprietary fluids containing alcohol as a last resort. They have stories of lost businesses, failed marriages, children removed from their care, ruined health. These stories are always leavened by the tales of transformation, of the relief of acknowledging the worst, of the love and support that has come into their lives through dis-covering their secret and disowning it, letting go of the past and emerging into a sober present and future. The confessional narratives of Alcoholics Anonymous are a *décoverture* of the secrecy of addiction, and this autobiographical performance of failed selves takes away the power of the secret self and allows new, more creative and loving selves to unfold. Some people object to the revivalist spirit of AA, the step that avows the powerlessness of the individual and their surrender to a higher power. Yet AA is not an evangelising organisation, and does not solicit members; attendance is entirely voluntary and anonymous.

The use of mind-altering substances is a near-universal cultural pursuit, but in contemporary society it has become an enormous social, economic and legal problem. Many people are able to control their use of addictive substances and keep them as a temporary escape, but for some this is not possible. For years I had thought my daughter was like me, a controlled drinker. She successfully concealed the extent of her addiction until a traumatic accident disclosed how bad it had become; and so began the long process of bargaining, of attempted detoxification and recovery, which kept failing. It is only since she has acknowledged she is unable to stop drinking by her own willpower, and has surrendered to a higher power, that she has recovered her sense of integrity and the desire to become well and strong and heal her life. So I have no quarrel with this

philosophy. For me, a higher power does not mean a divine being, it means an immanent chaotic creative plane that infuses our existence and from which the events that shape our lives emerge; we can access the creative power of this process through our ability to think, and use it to live more creatively, more lovingly, more worthily. In telling the story of my struggle to unfold the addictive underworld my daughter entered and which, in past selves, I had shared, I affirm and release the suffering and isolation of the past few months and the anguish of the more distant failures to help her. My past has returned, but differently, and this time, I have been able to help her save herself. And in this, for me, is a great healing, a release of the past and another birth of the self.

The gap between self and other that develops in infancy widens into a chasm if a child is subjected to abuse and abandonment. If children survive such experiences, they develop, as Stern says, neurotic patterns of feeling and thinking. Such patterns recur, as we carry our past selves with us, and are repeated in generational cycles, as seen in my family story. Becoming aware of how our own behaviour and our reactions to the events that happen to us repress our ability to live ethically and joyfully is the first step to becoming different, to unfolding those patterns and creating new ones. Life writing is one way in which we can actively and creatively practise the origami of selfhood, unravelling the threads of old stories, allowing new patterns to emerge in the material of our lives.

Conclusion: Becoming worthy of what happens to us

Thus is man that great and true Amphibium, whose nature is disposed to live not onely like other creatures in divers elements, but in divided and distinguished worlds, for though there bee but one world to sense, there are two to reason; the one visible, the other invisible

Sir Thomas Browne, 'Religio medici', section 34^{dxlvi}

Sir Thomas Browne, writing in the seventeenth century in a Christian framework, expressed in memorable words an awareness that has inspired thought and creativity since human beings learned to communicate in speech and writing. He suggests that man [sic] is unique in [his] amphibious ability to move in two worlds, the seen and the unseen. This is the gift of consciousness, which we now know we share to some extent with some other creatures, but which is developed to a high degree in us. Our divided natures are both a gift and a curse, a site of creativity and of repression, as we have seen in Chapter six. Deleuze and Guattari have created a radical experimental ontology that sees these (apparently) divided worlds as two sides of reality, the plane of organised forms and subjectivity and the plane of immanence or desire. From this paradoxical union of forces that are both repressive and creative they forge an ethico-aesthetic paradigm, a practice of living the ordinary life in a non-ordinary way, of moving creatively between the invisible and visible worlds. I have embraced this paradigm and applied it to stories of my own life and to the autobiographical and fictional literature of Heian Japanese women.

This thesis, as I suggested in the Introduction, is an assemblage with two sides, one facing the visible strata of organised forms and subjects, the other facing the invisible plane of becoming, of desire. It moves between the two, with the object of creating a smooth space, a Body without Organs where desire, especially women's desire, can unfold and refold in new and different forms and where we can live in ways that exceed the endless daily grind, extracting something gay and loving from what happens to us. Or as Deleuze and Guattari put it, we can swim like a striped fish over the rocks and

sand, merging in with our surroundings yet different from them, seeing the immanent plane of multiplicity spread over the material world like a transparency.^{dxlvii}

As a writer, I aspire to becomings allied with the sorcerer and the seer, creative entities (not identities) whose heightened awareness of the invisible world overlaid on and interfused with the visible unfolds the ‘real’ or ordinary world we inhabit and folds ‘more real’ worlds we can enter as through a looking glass, seeing a multiplicity of lives that are similar to those of our everyday life yet different. This autopoietic practice participates in the creation of the new, the emerging unforeseeable novelty of life, helping us to construct desire as we live it in ways that are ethical and joyful, to increase our power to act and be in the world, rather than merely suffering events to happen to us in passive and repressive ways. We are still and always subject to repressive forces of chance and circumstance that inform the lines constructing our lives, but in thinking about these forces and choosing how we react to them, we have agency and can contribute to more open, loving and democratic ways of being.

It is easier for us to do this now, in a time when democracies are becoming more open to difference and multiplicity, than it was for me as a twentieth-century middle-class woman, than it has been and still is for many individuals and populations caught up in rigid, repressive hierarchical family and social formations. And yet, as we have seen in the discussion of Heian women’s literature in Chapter two, even a prison can open up, as Hamlet puts it, to infinite space, if we can release our bad dreams rather than immersing ourselves in them and use our powers of thinking to shape ourselves in response to events.^{dxlviii}

In Chapter two, we saw how Heian women writers created narratives that both reflected and critiqued their world, and, in particular, how Murasaki Shikibu, the author of *The tale of Genji*, created a multi-faceted, intricately-wrought imaginary world that challenges us to think differently about what it means to desire and be desired. She has immortalised for us a world in which women live cloistered and confined lives, constructed as aesthetically pleasing objects of desire with little freedom to move and to choose the shapes in which their lives are folded. Yet within this baroque prison, they live intensely, often joyfully and creatively. The literature of these women still, after 1,000 years,^{dxlix} has great power to alter our attention and make us think about what it

means to live imprisoned in a closed world. The freedom of movement and choice I can exercise over the material conditions of my life would be unimaginable for a Heian woman. Yet I see much in their narrated experiences that I can relate to: the longing to have one's lover with one, not intermittently when he chooses, but 'thirty days and thirty nights a month';^{dl} the jealousy and insecurity of knowing one is not the only woman in a man's life; the desire for more freedom of choice and self-expression; the delight of sharing stories with others, of entering imaginary worlds; the pain of being judged and criticised by others; the fear of loneliness and the inevitable loss of beauty and youth; and more.

Narratives, whether autobiographical or fictional, move in both *aeon* (of duration, rhizomatic) and *chronos* (linear, arborescent) times. In the imagining of alternative worlds of multiplicity and difference, they are in *aeon*; in the repetition of the familiar and the ordinary, they are in *chronos*. Divided and distinguished worlds are united in 'more real' worlds than the worlds we inhabit, on a plane of immanence or Body without Organs on which literary assemblages are constructed. *Aeon* time is the time of becoming-secret. Secrets live on, long after their becoming, and are perpetuated from generation to generation. They begin life as rhizomes, proliferating and spreading beyond their initial containing walls, forming chance connections and surprising linkages, but they move into *chronos* and become arborescent. They develop roots and branches and become entrenched.

Narratives are often driven by the secret that cannot be told; we saw this in my father's story, in which the secret of why he left, whether real or false, had framed his life and continued to overshadow it until his death. Chapter three explores the contested secret reason for my father's abandonment of his family — a secret abuse he says my mother fictionalised and falsely disclosed, forcing him to protect his honour by leaving. In my family story, my father's story contained within my story and my mother's story present a mirror image in which he becomes the abused, the victim of a false rumour and a betrayal, rather than the one who (perhaps?) abused his daughter and subsequently left his family. In such a *mise-en-abîme*, it becomes impossible to tell truth from fiction; the reflection in the mirror distorts the reality and the reality distorts the reflection, so that neither is more real than the other. In telling me the secret of the 'false' secret my

mother supposedly revealed, he himself has perpetuated the secret and his story is trapped and forever framed by it.

Deleuze and Guattari write of secrecy as one of the forms of becoming. Secrecy takes a binary form, its other term being discovery. Those who set out to disclose or penetrate the secret themselves can become a sustaining part of it and be trapped within it, as we have seen in Chapter two, when Heian men, in their creation and *coverture* of their women's secret lives, are themselves narrativised and their motivation and behaviour anatomised in the *mise-en-abîme* of poetic diaries and monogatari. The secret lives of women and the men who seek to penetrate them are discovered in the *mise-en-abîme* of a world whose reflected reality outlasts the simulacrum that was its origin and becomes a more real world than the real world that engendered it.

And what of the men who subjugate and abandon their women as objects of desire, who seek to conceal the secret that their power is based on an illusion? Deleuze and Guattari say:

The news travel fast that the secret of men is nothing, in truth nothing at all. Oedipus, the phallus, castration, 'the splinter in the flesh' — that was the secret? It is enough to make women, children, lunatics, and molecules laugh.^{dii}

The secret of the patriarchal construction of women's desire as a passive reflection of men's potent desire is that there is nothing there. The image disappears in its multiple reflections, becoming-imperceptible. What drives a story is the secret that cannot be told, the refusal to tell the secret.^{diii} A secret that is told loses its power, becomes just another story, whereas one that is concealed perpetuates the story and creates further stories within stories. So as long as the secret of men's illusory power is concealed and protected, it is perpetuated, but its *décoverture* in this and other feminist narratives (including *The tale of Genji* and Heian women's poetic diaries) reveals it as a story within a story, a *mise-en-abîme* that vanishes as it is repeated, becoming-imperceptible, a nothing-much masquerading as the real thing, that is revealed as 'in truth nothing at all'. Deleuze and Guattari say that the more the secret is structured and organised, the more it becomes-molecular and dissolves: 'it really wasn't much, as Jocasta says'.^{diiii} So patriarchy, in its perpetual stories of organised and structured male power, dissolves itself into the abyss of myth and dreams that fade with the light of day. In my narrative

décoverture of the family secret that encapsulates in miniature the greater secret of patriarchal power, I expose and release it as having neither content nor form, becoming-imperceptible.

In other chapters I have narrated aspects of my story framed within the story of my family in an exploration of ways of becoming that undo the *mise-en-abîme* of desire as loss, unfold the tired shapes of former selves and create a smooth space in which new foldings can be made. I have used my cultural and family heritage, my mother's gift of storytelling, to re-enchant the exhausted terrain of childhood, motherhood, wifhood, grandmotherhood, in a reterritorialisation that includes the Crone as healer and wise woman, and behind her, on the threshold of the plane of chaosmic immanence, the sorcerer as creator. I have narrated past events that have come close to destroying my life and those of my children, and have affirmed and released those becomings. I eschew the summary of each of these unfoldings in an assemblage that is open-ended and becoming; formal closure is not appropriate for such an endeavour. I choose instead to return to the refrain of my desire to live the ordinary life in a non-ordinary way, and to become worthy of whatever happens to me.

Endnotes

Abstract

ⁱ Françoise Lionnet, 'The politics and aesthetics of *métissage*', in Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, eds, *Women, autobiography, theory: a reader*, Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press, 1998, p. 326.

ⁱⁱ Timothy S. Murphy, 'Quantum ontology: a virtual mechanics of becoming', in *Deleuze and Guattari: new mappings in politics, philosophy and culture*, eds Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin Jon Heller, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p. 226.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Décoverture* is a concept used by Karma Lochrie in *Covert operations: the medieval uses of secrecy*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999, pp. 139-40. *Femmes coverts* is a French legal term borrowed by English common law to refer to married women, and Lochrie explores Geoffrey Chaucer's technology of literary conversion in creating and revealing the secret world of women for the reader's entertainment. In Chapter two I compare this masculine recuperation of women's hidden lives with Heian women writers' literary *décoverture* of women's subjection and resistance to the men's penetration, use and circulation of their 'secret' lives.

^{iv} Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual subversions: three French feminists*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1989, p. 179.

^v Gilles Deleuze, *The logic of sense*, trans. M Lester and C Stivale, ed. C Boundas, New York, Columbia University Press, 1990, p. 150.

Acknowledgements

^{vi} Brain Massumi, Translator's foreword, in Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. xv.

Introduction: to live the ordinary life in a non-ordinary way

^{vii} Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, 'On the superiority of Anglo-American literature', in *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, London, Athlone Press, 1987, p. 66.

^{viii} A S Byatt, *Scribbling*, ABC TV, April 1 2005.

^{ix} Françoise Lionnet, 'The politics and aesthetics of *métissage*', in *Women, autobiography, theory: a reader*, eds Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press, 1998, p. 334.

^x *ibid.*, p. 326.

^{xi} *ibid.*, p. 328.

^{xii} Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 5.

^{xiii} *ibid.*, pp. 7-9.

^{xiv} *ibid.*, p. 9.

^{xv} See Christina Houen, 'Becoming-nomad: beyond the bourgeois family' in *Liveable communities*, eds Janis Haswell and Diana MacCallum, Perth, Black Swan Press, 2003, pp. 201-212; also *Hidden desires: Australian women writing*, eds Christina Houen and Jena Woodhouse, Canberra, Ginninderra Press, 2006.

^{xvi} Michel de Certeau, *The practice of everyday life*, trans. Steven Rendall, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988, pp. 174, 134-6.

^{xvii} *ibid.*, p. 134.

^{xviii} *ibid.*, p. 136.

^{xix} *ibid.*, p. 194.

^{xx} *ibid.*, p. 198.

^{xxi} *A thousand plateaus*, p. 380.

^{xxii} *ibid.*

^{xxiii} *ibid.*, p. 381.

^{xxiv} Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, 'Conversation: what is it? What is it for?', in *Dialogues*, p. 13.

^{xxv} Throughout this dissertation ‘Deleuzian’ thought and philosophy refers sometimes to writings by Gilles Deleuze alone, sometimes to texts written collaboratively with Félix Guattari. This is in keeping with the convention generally observed in secondary literature based on the work of these authors.

^{xxvi} Timothy S. Murphy, ‘Quantum ontology: a virtual mechanics of becoming’, in Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin Jon Heller, eds, *Deleuze and Guattari: new mappings in politics, philosophy and culture*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p. 226.

^{xxvii} *A thousand plateaus*, p. 262.

^{xxviii} *ibid.*, p. 272.

^{xxix} *ibid.*, p. 280.

^{xxx} John Rajchman, ‘Introduction’, in Gilles Deleuze, *Pure immanence: essays on a life*, trans. Anne Boyman, New York, Urzone, 2001, p. 8.

^{xxxi} Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford companion to philosophy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 226, 878.

^{xxxii} Deleuze, *Pure immanence: essays on a life*, trans. Anne Boyman, New York, Urzone, 2001, p. 25.

^{xxxiii} Todd May, ‘The ontology and politics of Gilles Deleuze’, review, *Theory and Event* vol. 5, no. 3, 2001, viewed 8 July 2008, <http://muse.jhu.edu/>.

^{xxxiv} Todd May, ‘Difference and unity in Gilles Deleuze’, in Constantin V Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski, eds, *Gilles Deleuze and the theater of philosophy*, New York, Routledge, 1994, p. 40.

^{xxxv} *ibid.*, p. 44.

^{xxxvi} Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: the clamor of being*, trans. Louise Burchill, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 25. I am relying on Todd May’s summary of Badiou’s argument here.

^{xxxvii} *ibid.*

^{xxxviii} *ibid.*

^{xxxix} *ibid.*, p. 32

^{xl} Deleuze, *The logic of sense*, p. 180, cited Badiou p. 33.

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- ^{xli} Liza Dalby, *East wind meets the ice: a memoir through the seasons*, Berkely, LA, University of California Press, 2007, pp. xxii-xxiii.
- ^{xlii} *ibid.*, pp. 97-8, 99.
- ^{xliii} *ibid.*
- ^{xliv} Todd May, 'The ontology and politics of Gilles Deleuze'.
- ^{xlv} *ibid.*
- ^{xlvi} *ibid.*
- ^{xlvii} Guattari, *Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis, Sydney, Power Publication, 1995, p. 29.
- ^{xlviii} *ibid.*, pp. 30-31.
- ^{xlix} *ibid.*, pp. 110-11.
- ¹ Henri Bergson, *The creative mind: an introduction to metaphysics*, trans. Mabelle L Andison, Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 1992, p. 109.

Chapter one: a rough guide to a Deleuzian philosophy of desire

- ^{li} Brian Massumi, 'Translator's foreword', in *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. xv.
- ^{lii} Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, p. 24.
- ^{liii} Deleuze and Claire Parnet, 'Dead psychoanalysis: analyse'. in *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, London, Athlone Press, 1987, p. 95.
- ^{liv} Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and repetition*, trans. Paul Patton, London, Athlone Press, 1994, p. 269.
- ^{lv} Claire Colebrook, 'Introduction', in Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook, eds, *Deleuze and feminist theory*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2000, p. 2.
- ^{lvi} Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: an apprenticeship in philosophy*, London, UCL Press, 1993, p. xviii.
- ^{lvii} *ibid.*
- ^{lviii} Judith Butler, *Subjects of desire: Hegelian reflections in twentieth-century France*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1987, p. 204.
- ^{lix} *ibid.*, p. 217.

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- ^{lx} Hardt, p. 23.
- ^{lxi} Paul Patton, 'Deleuze and Guattari: ethics and post-modernity', in *Deleuze and Guattari: critical assessments of leading philosophies*, ed. Gary Genosko, vol. 2, *Guattari*, London, Routledge, 2001, p. 1150.
- ^{lxii} Ian Buchanan, 'Deleuze and cultural studies', in *Deleuze and Guattari: critical assessments of leading philosophies*, vol. 1, *Deleuze*, ed. Gary Genosko, London, Routledge, 2001, p. 23.
- ^{lxiii} Brian Massumi, 'Translator's foreword' in *A thousand plateaus*, p. xv.
- ^{lxiv} Peter Hallward, *Out of this world: Deleuze and the philosophy of creation*, London, Verso, 2006, p. 1.
- ^{lxv} *ibid.*, p. 2.
- ^{lxvi} Deleuze and Parnet, 'On the superiority of Anglo-American literature', in *Dialogues*, p. 65.
- ^{lxvii} Deleuze and Guattari, *What is philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 41.
- ^{lxviii} Hallward, p. 3.
- ^{lxix} *ibid.*, p. 4.
- ^{lxx} *ibid.*, p. 5.
- ^{lxxi} *ibid.*, p. 6.
- ^{lxxii} John Rajchman, 'Introduction', in Gilles Deleuze, *Pure immanence: essays on a life*, trans. Anne Boyman, New York, Urzone, 2001, p. 8.
- ^{lxxiii} *ibid.*, p. 13.
- ^{lxxiv} Deleuze in *ibid.*, p. 25.
- ^{lxxv} *ibid.*, p. 26.
- ^{lxxvi} Deleuze and Guattari, *What is philosophy?*, p. 48.
- ^{lxxvii} Deleuze and Parnet, in 'A conversation: what is it? What is it for?', in *Dialogues*, p. 2.
- ^{lxxviii} Ian Buchanan, *Deleuzism: a metacommentary*, Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2000, p. 83.
- ^{lxxix} *ibid.*

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- ^{lxxx} *ibid.*, pp. 86-7.
- ^{lxxx} ‘They [the Indians colonised by the Spaniards] escaped ... [the dominant social order] without leaving it’. See Michel de Certeau, *The practice of everyday life*, trans. Steven Rendall, Berkely, University of California Press, 1988, p. xiii.
- ^{lxxxii} Todd May, ‘Difference and unity in Gilles Deleuze’, in *Gilles Deleuze and the theater of philosophy*, eds Constantin V Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski, New York, Routledge, 1994, p. 40.
- ^{lxxxiii} *ibid.*, p. 43.
- ^{lxxxiv} Dianne Currier, ‘Feminist technological futures: Deleuze and body/technology assemblages’, *Feminist Theory*, vol. 4 no. 3, 2003, pp. 321-338.
- ^{lxxxv} *ibid.*, p. 2.
- ^{lxxxvi} *ibid.*, p. 11.
- ^{lxxxvii} *ibid.*
- ^{lxxxviii} *ibid.*, p. 13.
- ^{lxxxix} *ibid.*
- ^{xc} *ibid.*, p. 14.
- ^{xc} *ibid.*, p. 17.
- ^{xcii} *ibid.*
- ^{xciii} May, in Boundas and Olkowski, p. 45.
- ^{xciv} Deleuze, *Difference and repetition*, p. 265.
- ^{xcv} *ibid.*, p. 278.
- ^{xcvi} *ibid.*, p. 287.
- ^{xcvii} Deleuze, *Pure immanence*, pp. 216-7.
- ^{xcviii} Brian Massumi, *A thousand plateaus*, p. xiii.
- ^{xcix} Deleuze and Guattari, *What is philosophy?*, p. 36.
- ^c Deleuze, *Pure immanence*, p. 29.
- ^{ci} *ibid.*, p. 31.
- ^{cii} Rajchman in *ibid.*, p. 11.
- ^{ciii} Elizabeth Grosz, ‘A thousand tiny sexes: feminism and rhizomatics’, in Constantin V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski, eds, p. 192.

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- ^{civ} Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1983, p. 5. They later dropped this term because of the mechanistic associations.
- ^{cv} Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari*, London, Routledge, 1989, p. 3.
- ^{cvi} Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, p. 504.
- ^{cvii} Deleuze and Guattari, *What is philosophy?*, p. 7.
- ^{cviii} *ibid.*, p. 19.
- ^{cix} *ibid.*, p. 35.
- ^{cx} *ibid.*, p. 36.
- ^{cxii} *ibid.*, p. 37.
- ^{cxiii} Claire Colebrook, 'Introduction', in Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook, eds, p. 2.
- ^{cxiiii} Hallward, p. 8.
- ^{cxv} Deleuze and Parnet, 'Dead psychoanalysis: analyse', in *Dialogues*, p. 92.
- ^{cxvi} *ibid.*, note, p. 151.
- ^{cxvii} *ibid.*, p. 92.
- ^{cxviii} *ibid.*, p. 95.
- ^{cxix} *ibid.*, p. 96.
- ^{cxx} *ibid.*
- ^{cxxi} *ibid.*
- ^{cxxii} *ibid.*
- ^{cxxiii} *ibid.*, p. 98.
- ^{cxxiv} Manuel DeLanda, 'Immanence and transcendence in the genesis of form', in Ian Buchanan, ed., *A Deleuzian century?*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1999, p. 132.
- ^{cxxv} John Mullarkey, 'Deleuze and materialism: one or several matters?', in *ibid.*, p. 68.
- ^{cxxvi} Paul Patton, in Gary Genosko, ed., vol. 2, p. 1160.

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- ^{cxxvii} Timothy S. Murphy, 'Quantum ontology: a virtual mechanics of becoming', in Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin Jon Heller, eds, *Deleuze and Guattari: new mappings in politics, philosophy and culture*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p. 226.
- ^{cxxviii} Deleuze, *The fold: Leibniz and the baroque*, trans. Tom Conley, London, Athlone Press, 1993, p. 6.
- ^{cxxix} Tom Conley, 'Translator's foreword: a plea for Leibniz', in *ibid.*, pp. ix-x.
- ^{cxx} Deleuze in *ibid.*, p. 4.
- ^{cxxxi} *ibid.*, p. 35.
- ^{cxxxii} Deleuze and Parnet, pp. 100-01.
- ^{cxxxiii} These terms are associated with the organisational plane, and describe features of matter in a hierarchical system. See Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, p. 505. Also see Patton, in Genosko, ed., vol. 2, p. 1152, for glosses on the terms 'molar' and 'molecular'.
- ^{cxxxiv} Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, p. 506.
- ^{cxxxv} *ibid.*
- ^{cxxxvi} Patton, *op. cit.*, p. 1153.
- ^{cxxxvii} Deleuze and Parnet, 'Many politics', in *Dialogues*, p. 125.
- ^{cxxxviii} Deleuze and Guattari would probably describe this trajectory as a negative reterritorialisation, for the two nurses left one hierarchical, segmented line and ended up joining another one. See *A thousand plateaus*, p. 508.
- ^{cxxxix} *ibid.*
- ^{cxl} *ibid.*, p. 15.
- ^{cxli} Hardt in *Gilles Deleuze*, p. 91.
- ^{cxlii} *ibid.*, pp. 117-9.
- ^{cxliii} *ibid.*, pp. 119-22.
- ^{cxliv} Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, p. 161.
- ^{cxlv} Deleuze and Parnet, 'Many politics', in *Dialogues*, p. 132.
- ^{cxlvi} Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, p. 133.
- ^{cxlvii} *ibid.*, p. 21.

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- cxlviii Currier, 'Feminist technological futures', p. 13.
- cxlix Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, p. 18.
- cl *ibid.*, p. 20.
- cli Deleuze and Parnet, 'Many politics', p. 135.
- clii *ibid.*, p. 139.
- cliii *ibid.*, p. 138.
- cliv *ibid.*
- clv *ibid.*, p. 140.
- clvi *ibid.*, pp. 144-5.
- clvii *ibid.*, p. 147.
- clviii Hallward, p. 34.
- clix Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, p. 507.
- clx *ibid.*
- clxi *ibid.*
- clxii *ibid.*, p. 149.
- clxiii *ibid.*, p. 161.
- clxiv *ibid.*
- clxv Since I find references to the abstract machine in Deleuze and Guattari and their commentators obscure and indirect, I am relying here on notes taken during a Masterclass, 'Negotiating Deleuze', conducted by Ian Buchanan at Curtin University on October 3-4 2005.
- clxvi Heian Japan drew much of the forms and codes of its culture from classical China, and the Chinese worldview was aesthetic, that is, the shaping of a life was a process of education and refinement according to *tao*, the patterns of order that are both observed and created in the natural world. See *World philosophy: a text with readings*, eds Robert C Solomon and Kathleen M Higgins, Boston Ma, McGraw-Hill. 1995, pp. 32-33.
- clxvii Deleuze and Guattari. *A thousand plateaus*, p. 162. They are referring to Carlos Castaneda's *Tales of power*, which is about the *tonal* and the *nagual*, which they see as synonymous with the plane of organisation and the plane of immanence.

clxviii Hallward, pp. 162-4.

clxix Hardt, pp. 117-122.

clxx Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, p. 161.

Chapter two: when caged birds sing

clxxi An earlier draft of this paper was presented at a conference in Canberra in 2005 and has been rewritten and extended for this chapter. The earlier draft is published under the title 'Surrogacy and the simulacra of desire in Heian Japanese women's life writing', in *Telling Pacific lives: prisms of process*, eds Brij J Lal and Vicki Luker, Canberra, ANU E Press, 2008, pp. 69-84.

clxxii Ian Buchanan, *Deleuzism: a metacommentary*, Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 200, p. 83.

clxxiii Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, 'Many politics', in *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, London, Athlone Press, 1987, p. 138.

clxxiv Ramirez-Christensen, 'Introduction', in *The father-daughter plot: Japanese literary women and the law of the father*, eds Rebecca L Copeland and Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen, Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2001, p. 1.

clxxv Ramirez-Christensen, 'Self-representation and the patriarchy in Heian female memoirs', in Copeland and Ramirez-Christensen, p. 51.

clxxvi Royall Tyler, trans. *The tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu, 2 vols, New York, Viking, 2001, vol. 1, p. xiii.

clxxvii Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, territory, art: Deleuze and the framing of the earth*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2008, p. 101.

clxxviii Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 266.

clxxix *ibid.*, p. 506.

clxxx Tyler, vol. 1, p. 3.

clxxxi *ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

clxxxii *ibid.*, p. xiii.

clxxxiii *ibid.*

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- clxxxiv Deleuze, Gilles and Claire Parnet, 'Many politics', p. 133.
- clxxxv Timothy Murphy, 'Quantum ontology: a virtual mechanics of becoming', in *Deleuze and Guattari: new mappings in politics, philosophy and culture*, eds Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin Jon Heller, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p. 212.
- clxxxvi *ibid.*, pp. 222, 226.
- clxxxvii Deleuze, *The fold: Leibniz and the baroque*, trans. Tom Conley, London, Athlone, 1993, p. 6.
- clxxxviii My information on the art of origami and its meaning is derived primarily from conversations with Kosuke Araki, a maker of Japanese TV documentaries, now living in Australia. His special area of research is the lesser-known history of early Japan. I have supplemented this with information from a website, <<http://www.yoshinoantiques.com/Hist-Origami.html>>, viewed 15 July 2008.
- clxxxix Conley, 'Introduction', in Deleuze, *The fold*, ix-x.
- cx^c Deleuze, *ibid.*, p. 4.
- cx^{ci} *ibid.*, p. 35.
- cx^{cii} J Macgregor Wise, 'Assemblage', in Charles J Stivale, ed., *Gilles Deleuze: key concepts*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005, p. 77.
- cx^{ciii} *ibid.*, p. 78.
- cx^{civ} Robert C Solomon and Kathleen M Higgins, eds, *World philosophy: a text with readings*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1995, pp. 32-33.
- cx^{cv} Grosz, *Chaos, territory, art*, p. 101.
- cx^{cv}i Grosz, 'The creative impulse', Interview, ABC Radio National, 14 Aug. 2005, viewed 18 March 2008, <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/arts/sunmorn/stories/s1435592.htm>.
- cx^{cv}ii Grosz, *Chaos*, ix.
- cx^{cv}iii Grosz, 'The creative impulse'.
- cx^{cix} Ivan Morris, *The world of the shining prince: court life in ancient Japan*, Harmondsworth, England, Penguin, 1979, p. 12.
- cc *ibid.*, p. 20.

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- ^{cc}_i Ramirez-Christensen, 'Self-representation', p. 51.
- ^{cc}_{ii} Edward Seidensticker, trans., *The gossamer years (kagero nikki): the diary of a noblewoman of Heian Japan*, Tokyo, Tuttle, 1973, p. 19.
- ^{cc}_{iii} Ramirez-Christensen, 'Self-representation', p. 52.
- ^{cc}_{iv} *ibid.*, p. 53.
- ^{cc}_v *ibid.*
- ^{cc}_{vi} Morris, p. 65.
- ^{cc}_{vii} *ibid.*, pp. 78-81.
- ^{cc}_{viii} Richard H Okada, *Figures of resistance: language, poetry and narrating in The tale of Genji and other mid-Heian texts*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1991, p. 171.
- ^{cc}_{ix} Itoh Moriyuki, 'The role of gender and education in the works of Heian women writers', in *Across time and genre: reading and writing women's texts*, eds Janice Brown and Sonja Arntzen, Conference proceedings, Alberta, University of Alberta 2001, p. 244.
- ^{cc}_x Morris, p. 156.
- ^{cc}_{xi} *ibid.*, pp. 215-6.
- ^{cc}_{xii} Murasaki Shikibu, trans. Richard Bowring, *The diary of Lady Murasaki*, London, Penguin, 1996, p. 145.
- ^{cc}_{xiii} Tyler, vol. I, pp. xix-xx.
- ^{cc}_{xiv} *ibid.*, p. 86.
- ^{cc}_{xv} *ibid.*, p. 87.
- ^{cc}_{xvi} *ibid.*, p. xix.
- ^{cc}_{xvii} *ibid.*, p. 156.
- ^{cc}_{xviii} Ramirez-Christensen, 'Self-representation', p. 50.
- ^{cc}_{xix} Thomas LaMarre, *Uncovering Heian Japan: an archaeology of sensation and inscription*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2000, p. 111.
- ^{cc}_{xx} Tyler, vol. I, p. xxiii.
- ^{cc}_{xxi} Ramirez-Christensen, 'Self-representation', p. 50.
- ^{cc}_{xxii} Tyler, vol. 1, p. 210.

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- ccxxiii *ibid.*, pp. xxiii-xxiv.
- ccxxiv Ramirez-Christensen, 'Self-representation', p. 50.
- ccxxv Seidensticker, pp. 37-41.
- ccxxvi Sonja Arntzen, 'Of love and bondage in the *Kagero diary*: Michitsuna's mother and her father', in Copeland and Ramirez-Christensen, p. 25.
- ccxxvii Siedensticker, p. 71.
- ccxxviii *ibid.*, p. 167.
- ccxxix Sei Shonagon, *The pillow book*, trans. Meredith McKinney, London, Penguin, 2006, pp. 55-60.
- ccxxx Murasaki, *The diary*, p. 54.
- ccxxxi Richard Bowring, in Murasaki, *The diary*, pp. xxvi-xvii.
- ccxxxii Tyler, vol. I, p. 194.
- ccxxxiii Deleuze, *The fold*, p. 121.
- ccxxxiv *ibid.*, p. 3.
- ccxxxv *ibid.*, p. 35.
- ccxxxvi Tom Conley, 'Folds and folding', in *Gilles Deleuze: key concepts*, ed. Charles J Stivale, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005, p. 176.
- ccxxxvii Drusilla Modjeska, 'Writing Poppy', *Timepieces*, Sydney, Pan Macmillan, 2002, p. 75.
- ccxxxviii Takeo Doi, *The anatomy of self: the individual against society*, trans. M A Harbison, Tokyo, Kodansha, 1986, pp. 23-4.
- ccxxxix *ibid.*, p. 11.
- ccxl *ibid.*, p. 23.
- ccxli *ibid.*, p. 26.
- ccxlii *ibid.*, p. 152.
- ccxliii Simon O'Sullivan, 'Fold' in *The Deleuze dictionary*, p. 103.
- ccxliv Tyler, vol. I, p. 450.
- ccxlv *ibid.*, p. 451.
- ccxlvii Sei, *The pillow book*, p. 234.
- ccxlviii Tyler, vol. I, p. 168.

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- ccxlvi *ibid.*, p. 433.
- ccxlix Norma Field, *The splendor of longing in The tale of Genji*, Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1987, p. 168.
- ccl Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, p. 25.
- ccli Tyler, vol. I, p. 447.
- cclii *ibid.*, p. 449.
- ccliii *ibid.*, p. 460.
- ccliv *ibid.*, p. 462.
- cclv *ibid.*
- cclvi Field, *The splendor*, p. 159.
- cclvii Tyler, vol. II, p. 645.
- cclviii *ibid.*, pp. 645-6.
- cclix Field, *The splendor*, p. 189.
- cclx *ibid.*, p. 190.
- cclxi Tyler, vol. II, p. 647.
- cclxii *ibid.*
- cclxiii *ibid.*, p. 760.
- cclxiv Field, *The splendor*, p. 173.
- cclxv Okada, *Figures of resistance*, p. 256.
- cclxvi In 'Surrogacy and the simulacra of desire in Heian Japanese women's life writing', in *Telling Pacific lives: prisms of process*, eds Brij V Lal and Vicki Luker, Canberra, ANU E Press, I argued that the machinery of desire in Heian Japan was driven by surrogacy, and I did not distinguish clearly between the concepts of surrogacy and of simulacra.
- cclxvii Jonathon Roffe, 'Simulacrum', in Parr, ed., p. 250.
- cclxviii Tom Conley, 'Singularity', in Parr, ed., p. 252.
- cclxix Field, pp. 191, 198.
- cclxx Tyler, vol. I, p. xxii.
- cclxxi Tyler, vol. II, p. 768.
- cclxxii Tyler, vol. I, pp. xviii-xix.

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- cclxxiii Tyler, vol. II, p. 785.
- cclxxiv Haruo Shirane. *The bridge of dreams: a poetics of The tale of Genji*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1987, p. 151.
- cclxxv *ibid*, p. 152.
- cclxxvi Seidensticker, *The gossamer years*, p. 33.
- cclxxvii Murasaki, *The diary*, pp. 57-8.
- cclxxviii A S Omori & K Doi, trans. and eds, 'The Sarashina diary', in *Diaries of court ladies of old Japan*, New York, MS Press, 1970, p. 20.
- cclxxix Ramirez-Christensen, 'Self-representation', p. 83.
- cclxxx Murasaki, *The diary*, p. 33.
- cclxxxi *ibid.*, pp. 33-34.
- cclxxxii Ivan Morris, p. 275.
- cclxxxiii Murasaki, *The diary*, p. 34.
- cclxxxiv *ibid*.
- cclxxxv *ibid*.
- cclxxxvi *ibid.*, p. 56.
- cclxxxvii *ibid*.
- cclxxxviii Conley, 'Singularity', in *A Deleuze dictionary*, p. 252.
- cclxxxix Ramirez-Christensen, 'Self-representation', p. 53.
- ccxc Karma Lochrie, *Covert operations: the medieval uses of secrecy*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999, pp.139-40.
- ccxci *ibid.*, pp. 168-9.
- ccxcii *ibid.*, p. 169.
- ccxciii Michel de Certeau, *The practice of everyday life*, trans. Steven Rendall, Berkely, University of California Press, 1988, p. xiii.
- ccxciv Okada, p. 28.

Chapter three: A schizoanalysis of monogamy and 'true love' in my family story

- ccxcv Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis, Sydney, Power Publications, Sydney, 1995, p. 21.

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- ^{ccxcvi} *ibid.*, p. 20.
- ^{ccxcvii} *ibid.*, p. 2.
- ^{ccxcviii} *ibid.*, p. 18.
- ^{ccxcix} *ibid.*
- ^{ccc} *ibid.*, p. 20.
- ^{ccci} Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 154.
- ^{cccii} Kylie Message, 'Body without organs', in *The Deleuze dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr, New York, Columbia University Press, 2005, p. 33.
- ^{ccciii} *ibid.*
- ^{ccciv} Published in *Antipodes: a North American journal of Australian literature*, June 2005, pp. 76-82.
- ^{cccv} Ollie Japp, *Hay and its people since 1900*, Hay, 1980.
- ^{cccvii} 'Booligal', the Hay Tourist and Amenities Centre, n.d.
- ^{cccviii} Cited in *A glimpse of Booligal*, comp. Ethel Booth with assistance of Alison Crossley, *Riverine grazier*, Hay, 1982.
- ^{cccix} Anne Houen, 'Our family', ms, c. 1980, p. 36, in possession of Christina Houen, Perth.
- ^{cccix} *ibid.*, p. 58.
- ^{cccix} *ibid.*, p. 49.
- ^{cccxi} Anne Christina Houen, 'A deserting wife: the construction of female desire in the bourgeois family', dissertation, Curtin University of Technology, 2002, p. 20.
- ^{cccxi} *ibid.*, p. i.
- ^{cccxi} See Irigaray, *An ethics of sexual difference*, trans. Carolyn Burke and C. Gill, London, Athlone Press, 1993, and *The way of love*, trans. Heidi Bostic and Stephen Pluháček, London, Continuum, 2002, amongst others.
- ^{cccxi} Irigaray, 'Divine women', trans. Stephen Muecke, Sydney, Local Consumption Press, 1986.

^{ccccv} The profile of my grandfather's life in Australia is based on unpublished biographical essays by my cousin, Pat Harvey, and on Antonio George Houen's journal kept during his passage from Plymouth to Melbourne, and for part of the following year.

^{ccccvi} Anne Houen, 'Our family', p. 15.

^{ccccvii} *ibid.*, pp. 45-6.

^{ccccviii} A C Houen, 'A deserting wife', p. i.

^{ccccix} *ibid.*, p. 12.

^{ccccx} Anne Houen, 'Our family', pp. 59-60.

^{ccccxi} *ibid.*, p. 8a.

^{ccccxii} On the traditional family in the European tradition, see Wally Seccombe, *A millennium of family change: feudalism to capitalism in Northwestern Europe*, London, Verso, 1992, and *Weathering the storm: working-class families from the industrial revolution to the fertility decline*, London, Verso, 1993; on Australian family and working life, see Michael Gilding, 'Gender roles in contemporary Australia', in *Contemporary Australian feminism*, ed. Kate Pritchard Hughes Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1994; on gender roles in general, see Michèle Barrett, *Women's oppression today: problems in Marxist feminist analysis*, Verso, London, 1980.

^{ccccxiii} Seccombe, *Weathering the storm*, p. 203.

^{ccccxiv} 'Our family', p. 42.

^{ccccxv} Dorothy Hewett, *Wild card: an autobiography 1923-1958*, Ringwood, Vic., McPhee Gribble, 1990 p. 3.

^{ccccxvi} Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, Minneapolis, Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 161.

^{ccccxvii} Message, 'Body without organs', p. 33.

^{ccccxviii} *ibid.*

^{ccccxix} in *Hidden desires: Australian women writing*, Christina Houen and Jena Woodhouse, eds, Ginninderra Press, 2006.

^{ccccxx} A C Houen, 'A deserting wife', p. 44.

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- ^{ccccxxxi} *ibid.*, p. 160-1.
- ^{ccccxxxii} Michel Foucault, *The will to knowledge: the history of sexuality, volume one*, trans. Robert Hurley, London, Penguin, 1984, p. 108.
- ^{ccccxxxiii} A C Houen, 'A deserting wife', p. 28.
- ^{ccccxxxiv} See Freud, 'Femininity', in vol. 22 of the *Standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, London, Hogarth, 1964, pp. 133-4.
- ^{ccccxxxv} Luce Irigaray, 'the bodily encounter with the mother', trans. David Macey, in *The Irigaray reader*, ed. Margaret Whitford, Oxford, Blackwell, 1991, p. 43.
- ^{ccccxxxvi} See Freud, 'Female sexuality', in vol. 21 of the *Standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud*, and 'Femininity', in vol. 22 of *SE*.
- ^{ccccxxxvii} Foucault, p. 109.
- ^{ccccxxxviii} See Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R Lane, New York, Viking, 1977.
- ^{ccccxxxix} *ibid.*, p. 277.
- ^{ccccxl} Christina Houen, 'Return to Arendal', in Houen and Woodhouse, eds.
- ^{ccccxli} Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, p. 159.
- ^{ccccxlii} This memoir appeared in a slightly different format, using text boxes for theoretical quotes, in *Antipodes: a North American Journal of Australian Literature*, June 2005. I have removed some passages which repeat parts of the family story and history of the Hay district already covered in this chapter.
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- ^{ccccxliv} *ibid.*, p. v.
- ^{ccccxlv} Michael Ondaatje, *The English patient*, London: Macmillan, 1992, p. 54.
- ^{ccccxlvi} *ibid.*, p. xix.
- ^{ccccxlvii} John Aubrey, *Aubrey's brief lives*, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick, London, Penguin 1972, p. 22.
- ^{ccccxlviii} Paul John Eakin, *How our lives become stories: making selves*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1999, p. 160

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- ^{cccclix} Where possible, I have verified times and events of my family story from other written records.
- ^{ccccl} Sir Thomas Browne, 'Hydriotaphia or urne buriall', in *The prose of Sir Thomas Browne*, ed. Norman J Endicott, New York, Doubleday, 1967, pp. 242-286.
- ^{ccccli} Thomas Gray, 'Elegy written in a country churchyard', in *The Oxford book of English verse: 1250-1918*, ed. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953, pp. 531-536.
- ^{cccclii} William Wordsworth, 'To a lady', in *Poetical works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, London, Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 130.
- ^{ccccliii} Anne Houen, 'Our family', p. 20.
- ^{ccccliv} Pat Harvey, 'the sons of Anton Christian Houen', ms in possession of Christina Houen, Perth, 2001, p. 6.
- ^{cccclv} Antonio George Houen, 'Journal', ms in possession of Christina Houen, Perth, p. 20.
- ^{cccclvi} Hay Historical society, 'Proceedings no. 5', Hay, *The riverine grazier*, 1985, p. 6.
- ^{cccclvii} Ann Houen, 'Our family', p. 5a.
- ^{cccclviii} Pat Harvey, 'the sons', pp. 3, 6.
- ^{cccclix} Pat Harvey, 'Descendants of Anton Christian Houen', ms in possession of Christina Houen, Perth, pp. 1-2.
- ^{cccclx} de Certeau, p. 117.
- ^{cccclxi} Mikhail Bakhtin, cited in Lee Honeycutt, 'What hath Bakhtin wrought? Toward a unified theory of literature and composition', dissertation, University of California, 1994, viewed 13 December 2007,
<http://www.public.iastate.edu/honeyl/bakhtin.thesis.html>.
- ^{cccclxii} Paul John Eakin, 'Introduction: mapping the ethics of life writing', in *The ethics of life writing*, ed. Eakin, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2004, pp. 1-16.
- ^{cccclxiii} de Certeau, p. 117.
- ^{cccclxiv} Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, p. 75.
- ^{cccclxv} *ibid.*, p. 77.

^{ccclxvi} Deleuze, *The Logic of sense*, p. 72, cited in Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: the clamor of being*, trans. Louise Burchill, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 37.

^{ccclxvii} Badiou, *Deleuze*, p. 37.

^{ccclxviii} *ibid.*, p. 38.

^{ccclxix} Deleuze, 'Plato and the simulacrum', trans. Rosalind Krauss, *October* vol. 27, p. 53.

^{ccclxx} *A thousand plateaus*, p. 287.

^{ccclxxi} Samuel Beckett, *Endgame, a play in one act*, viewed 26 August 2005, <http://samuel-beckett.net/Endgame.html>.

^{ccclxxii} de Certeau, p. 198.

Chapter four: playing with time

^{ccclxxiii} bell hooks, 'Writing autobiography', in *Women, autobiography, theory: a reader*, eds Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, Wisconsin, University of Minnesota Press, 1998. p. 431.

^{ccclxxiv} *ibid.*, pp. 432, 430.

^{ccclxxv} Henri Bergson, *Time and free will: an essay on the immediate data of consciousness*, trans. F L Pogson, New York, Harper, 1960, p. 152.

^{ccclxxvi} John Haiman, 'Grammatical signs of the divided self', in *Discourse grammar and typology: papers in honor of John W M Verhaar*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 1995, p. 214.

^{ccclxxvii} *ibid.*, p. 224.

^{ccclxxviii} *ibid.*, p. 230.

^{ccclxxix} Paul John Eakin, *How our lives become stories: making selves*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1999, p. 3.

^{ccclxxx} Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading autobiography: a guide for interpreting life narratives*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2001, p. 145.

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- ^{ccclxxxii} Julia Kristeva, *A la recherche du temps perdu* in *Proust and the sense of time*, trans. Stephen Bann, New York, Columbia University Press, 1993, pp. 7-8.
- ^{ccclxxxiii} Drusilla Modjeska, 'Writing Poppy', in *Timepieces*, Sydney, Pan Macmillan, 2002, p. 75.
- ^{ccclxxxiiii} *ibid.*, pp. 75-6.
- ^{ccclxxxv} *ibid.*, p. 86.
- ^{ccclxxxvi} Ian Buchanan first drew my attention to this way of conceptualising time, in a lecture at a 2005 postgraduate workshop at Curtin University, on the theme 'Negotiating Deleuze'.
- ^{ccclxxxvii} Julia Kristeva, 'Women's time', trans. Alice Jardine and Harry Blake, *Signs*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Autumn 1981, p. 16, viewed May 21 2007, <http://www.jstor.org>.
- ^{ccclxxxviii} *ibid.*, p. 17.
- ^{ccclxxxix} Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 262.
- ^{ccclxxx} Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R Lane, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1983, p. 33.
- ^{cccxci} Deleuze and Claire Parnet, 'Many politics', in *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, London, Athlone Press, 1987, p. 132.
- ^{cccxcii} Kristeva, p. 18.
- ^{cccxciii} Henri Bergson, *The creative mind*, trans. M L Andison, Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, p. 71.
- ^{cccxciiii} *ibid.*, p. 107.
- ^{cccxcv} *ibid.*, p. vii.
- ^{cccxcvi} *ibid.*, p. 109.
- ^{cccxcvii} *ibid.*, p. 185.
- ^{cccxcviii} *ibid.*, p. 152.
- ^{cccxcix} *ibid.*, p. 229.

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- cccxcix Cliff Stagoll, 'Event', in *The Deleuze dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr, New York, Columbia University Press, 2005, p. 87.
- cd *ibid.*, pp. 88, 87.
- cdi *ibid.*
- cdii *ibid.*, p. 88.
- cdiii Bergson, *Time and free will*, p. 200.
- cdiv *ibid.*, pp. 231-2.
- cdv Elizabeth Grosz, *Time travels: feminism, nature, power*, Crows Nest, NSW, Allen and Unwin, 2005, p. 97.
- cdvi *ibid.*, p. 103.
- cdvii *ibid.*, p. 110.
- cdviii Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, New York, Zone, 1988, p. 58.
- cdix *ibid.*, pp. 59-60.
- cdx *ibid.*, p. 31.
- cdxi *ibid.*, p. 93.
- cdxii Grosz, p.179.
- cdxiii *ibid.*, p. 28.
- cdxiv Francisco J Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, *The embodied mind: cognitive science and human experience*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1991, p. 195.
- cdxv *ibid.*, p. 196.
- cdxvi Daniel Chandler, 'Semiotics for beginners', viewed 21 January 2007, <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem09.html>.
- cdxvii Varela, Thompson and Rosch, p. 202.
- cdxviii *ibid.*, p. 37.
- cdxix Grosz, *The nick of time: politics, evolution and the untimely*, Crows Nest, NSW, Allen and Unwin, 2004, p. 143.
- cdxx *ibid.*, p. 145.
- cdxxi *ibid.*, pp. 150-1.

^{cdxxii} *ibid.*, p. 125.

^{cdxxiii} *ibid.*, p. 151.

^{cdxxiv} *ibid.*, p. 186.

^{cdxxv} *ibid.*, p. 252.

^{cdxxvi} Paul Broks, 'The mystery of consciousness', *Prospect Magazine*, Issue 133, April 2007, viewed 26 May 2007, <http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/printarticle.php?id=8612>.

^{cdxxvii} *ibid.*

^{cdxxviii} *ibid.*

^{cdxxix} Antonio Damasio defines the core self as 'the transient protagonist of consciousness, ... [which is] continuously generated and thus appears continuous in time.' See *The feeling of what happens: body and emotion in the making of consciousness*, Florida. Harcourt, 1999, pp. 168-194. Damasio hypothesises that the core self, which is nonverbal, is formed in response to objects that the organism interacts with. The brain generates an 'imaged, nonverbal account of how the organism's own state is affected by the organism's processing of an object' (p. 169). In complex organisms, memory enables a learning process that generates the autobiographical self (what Brok calls the thick self) which is articulated in language. The autobiographical self, which other theorists have described as the extended self (Neisser) or higher consciousness (Edelman), is founded on core consciousness, and is 'connected to the lived past and anticipated future that are part of your autobiographical record.' (Damasio, *The feeling*, p. 196).

^{cdxxx} Paul Brok, 'The big questions: what is consciousness?', *NewScientist.com*, 18 November 2006, viewed 26 May 2007, <http://www.newscientist.com/channel/being-human/mg19225780.073-the-big-questions-what-is-consciousness.html>.

^{cdxxxi} *ibid.*

^{cdxxxii} See Arthur W Frank, *The wounded storyteller: body, illness and ethics*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1995.

^{cdxxxiii} Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed experience: trauma, narrative and history*, Baltimore, Ma, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, p. 2.

cdxxxiv *ibid.*, p. 4.

cdxxxv *ibid.*

cdxxxvi Dori Laub, 'Bearing witness, or the vicissitudes of listening', in, *Testimony: crises of witnessing literature, psychoanalysis, and history*, eds Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, New York, Routledge, 1992, p. 69.

cdxxxvii Maria Cardinal, in her autobiographical novel, *The words to say it*, tells of her struggle, over many years, to reclaim her physical and mental health and understand the roots of her trauma through psychoanalysis. Trans. Pat Goodheart, London, The Women's Press, 1993.

cdxxxviii Caruth, *Unclaimed experience*. p. 4.

cdxxxix *ibid.*

cdxl Joe Simpson, *Touching the void*, London, Vintage, 1997.

cdxli *ibid.*, pp. 203-4.

cdxlii Laub, 'Bearing witness', p. 63.

cdxliii *ibid.*, p. 72.

cdxliv Dori Laub, 'An event without a witness: truth, testimony and survival', in *Testimony*, p. 78.

cdxlv Deleuze and Claire Parnet, 'Many politics' in *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, London, Athlone Press, 1987, p. 138.

cdxlvi Bergson, *Time and free will*, p. 200.

cdxlvii 'Seaweed dreams' is published in *Antipodes: a North American Journal of Australian Literature*, vol. 21 no. 1, June 2007, pp. 42-3.

Chapter five: becoming-child, becoming-sorcerer

cdxlviii Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 237.

cdxlix *ibid.*, pp. 238-9.

cdl *ibid.*, p. 275.

cdli *ibid.*, p. 238.

cdlii *ibid.*, p. 291.

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- cdliii *ibid.*, p. 277.
- cdliv *ibid.*, p. 275.
- cdlv *ibid.*, pp. 275-6.
- cdlvi For a résumé of the debate, see Patty Sotirin's account of the controversy in 'Becoming-woman', in Charles J Stivale ed., *Gilles Deleuze: key concepts*, Montreal, McGill-Queens University Press, 2005, pp. 98-109.
- cdlvii *ibid.*
- cdlviii *ibid.*, p. 276.
- cdlix Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, 'Dead psychoanalysis: analyse', in *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, London, Athlone Press, 1987, p. 92.
- cdlx *A thousand plateaus*, p. 278.
- cdlxi *ibid.*, pp. 278-9.
- cdlxii *ibid.*, p. 279.
- cdlxiii *ibid.*, p. 279.
- cdlxiv *ibid.*
- cdlxv *ibid.*, p. 280
- cdlxvi Deleuze, *Pure immanence: essays on a life*, trans. Aanny Boyman, New York, Urzone, 2001, pp. 25, 31.
- cdlxvii *ibid.*, p. 28
- cdlxviii *ibid.*, p. 30.
- cdlxix *ibid.*, p. 277.
- cdlxx *ibid.*, p. 242.
- cdlxxi *ibid.*, pp. 243-4.
- cdlxxii *ibid.*, p. 243.
- cdlxxiii *ibid.*, pp. 244-5.
- cdlxxiv *ibid.*, p. 246.
- cdlxxv *ibid.*, p. 253-3.
- cdlxxvi *ibid.*, p. 253.
- cdlxxvii *ibid.*
- cdlxxviii *ibid.*

cdlxxx William Shakespeare, *The tragedy of Hamlet, prince of Denmark*, Act 2 Scene 1, in *The complete works*, eds Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988, p. 662.

cdlxxx Deleuze and Guattari, *What is philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 36.

cdlxxxii *ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

cdlxxxiii *ibid.*, p. 65.

cdlxxxiiii *ibid.*, p. 164.

cdlxxxv *ibid.*

cdlxxxvi *ibid.*, p. 167.

cdlxxxvii *ibid.*, p. 171.

cdlxxxviii *ibid.*, pp. 171, 172.

cdlxxxix *ibid.*, p. 172.

cdlxxxix 'Boys are different' is from my childhood memoir, 'The smell of rain: a fractured fairytale', which I am writing with the help of a mentorship from the Varuna Writer's Centre in NSW.

cdxc Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis, Sydney, Power Publications, 1995, p. 113.

cdxcii Anne Christina Houen, 'A deserting wife: the construction of female desire in the bourgeois family', dissertation, Curtin University of Technology, 2002.

cdxciii Sigmund Freud, 'Femininity', in *New introductory lectures on psychoanalysis and other works*, London, Hogarth, 1964, p. 133.

cdxciv Houen, p. 26.

cdxcv Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, p. 164.

cdxcvi This is a rewriting of an essay that is published in *Lifewriting Annual: Biographical and Autobiographical Studies*, Vol. 2, 2008, and is included here with the permission of AMS press. Some interpretations in it have been revised in this version, in particular those of the Crone and the sorcerer.

cdxcvii Stephen Parker, Patrick Parkinson and Juliet Behrens, *Australian family law in context: commentary and materials*, LBC Casebooks, Sydney, Law Press, 1994.

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- ^{cdxcvii} Joseph Campbell, *The masks of God: occidental mythology*, New York, Viking, 1970, pp. 9-41.
- ^{cdxcviii} I am indebted to Dr Ron Blaber for this insight. In the essay in *Lifewriting Annual*, I had identified the Crone with the sorcerer.
- ^{cdxcix} Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus*, p. 347.
- ^d *ibid.*, p. 300.
- ^{di} *ibid.*, p. 311.
- ^{dii} Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, territory, art: Deleuze and the framing of the earth*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2008, p. 52.
- ^{diii} *ibid.*, p. 311.
- ^{div} *ibid.*, p. 250.
- ^{dv} *ibid.*, p. 311.
- ^{dvi} *ibid.*, p. 312.
- ^{dvii} Deleuze, *The logic of sense*, trans. Mark Lester, New York, Columbia University Press, 1990, pp. 149-50.
- ^{dviii} Campbell, p. 27.
- ^{dix} M Cary et al., eds, *The Oxford classical dictionary*, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1949, p. 407.
- ^{dx} Campbell, *ibid.*, p. 84.
- ^{dxii} Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, p.68.

Chapter six: a many-folded self

- ^{dxii} I am indebted for the concept of empathy as one of the forces that work to bridge the gap between self and other in autobiography to Elisabeth Hanscombe, who argues this in a paper presented at the 6th IABA conference in Hawai'i in June 2008.
- ^{dxiii} Daniel Stern, *The interpersonal world of the infant*, New York, Basic Books, 1985.
- ^{dxiv} Maxine K Anderson, 'Should we be stern with Daniel Stern: a personal appraisal of Daniel Stern's book *The interpersonal world of the infant*', *British Journal of Psychotherapy* vol. 9, no. 1, 1992, p. 36.

^{dxv} Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, trans. R. Hurley, M Seem & H R Lane, Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press, 1983.

^{dxvi} Deleuze and Claire Parnet, 'Many politics', in *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, London, Athlone Press, p. 133.

^{dxvii} Deleuze, *The fold: Leibniz and the baroque*, trans. Tom Conley, London, Athlone, 1993, p. 6.

^{dxviii} *ibid.*, p. xviii.

^{dxix} Simon O'Sullivan, 'Fold', *The Deleuze dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2005, p. 103.

^{dxix} Tom Conley, 'Folds and folding', in *Gilles Deleuze: key concepts*, ed. Charles J Stivale, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005, p. 172.

^{dxxi} Deleuze, qtd. in Conley, 'Folds and folding', p. 174.

^{dxvii} *ibid.*, p. 176.

^{dxviii} Charles Houen, in an email of 30 March 2008, says: 'As far as I remember, it was a big old Stromberg Carlson, in a chest-high dark wooden cabinet with the row of knobs about 2/3rds of the way up, beneath the circular station dial, and with the fret holes below backed by cloth behind which the speaker lived. It used two batteries: a big lead-acid battery, the size of 1/3 or 1/2 a car battery, and another big rectangular dry battery. It did have valves, as you say. The technical details of how they work wouldn't be very interesting, but essentially radio stations each broadcast on a given frequency, and the radio has a tuner which tunes the radio's circuits to the frequency of the station you want, and then the rest of the radio's circuits amplify the wave form which represents the sounds and feeds them to the speaker, where they cause the speaker diaphragm to vibrate in sync with the wave form and reproduce the sound — voices, music, etc. Pretty amazing, really.'

^{dxxiv} Deleuze, qtd. in Conley, pp. 75-6.

^{dxv} I am indebted for this observation to Dr Ron Blaber, my supervisor.

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- ^{dxxvi} In a conversation with Harold Hobson, qtd. in James Olney, *Memory and narrative: the weave of life-writing*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1998, p. 13.
- ^{dxxvii} *ibid.*, pp. 76-7.
- ^{dxxviii} Felicity J Colman, 'Rhizome', in Parr, ed., pp. 231-2.
- ^{dxxix} Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Gossip*, New York, Knopf, 1985, p. 239.
- ^{dxxx} *ibid.*, pp. 48, 25-6.
- ^{dxxxi} *ibid.*, p. 262.
- ^{dxxxii} Patty Sotirin, 'Becoming-woman', in *Deleuze: key concepts*, Charles J Stivale, ed., p. 105.
- ^{dxxxiii} Guattari, *Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis, Sydney, Power Publications, 1995, p. 74.
- ^{dxxxiv} *The logic of sense*, p. 149.
- ^{dxxxv} Cliff Stagoll, 'Event', in Parr, ed., p. 83.
- ^{dxxxvi} *ibid.*
- ^{dxxxvii} *ibid.*, p. 88.
- ^{dxxxviii} *ibid.*
- ^{dxxxix} Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 284.
- ^{dxl} *ibid.*
- ^{dxli} *ibid.*, p. 285.
- ^{dxlii} *ibid.*, pp. 285-6.
- ^{dxliii} *ibid.*, p. 286.
- ^{dxliv} Grosz, *The nick of time: politics and the untimely*, Crow's Nest NSW, Allen & Unwin 2004, p. 143.
- ^{dxlv} *ibid.*, pp. 150-1, 125.

Conclusion: becoming worthy of what happens to us

- ^{dxlvi} Sir Thomas Browne, 'Religio medici', in Norman J Endicott, ed., *The prose of Sir Thomas Browne*, New York, Anchor, 1967, p. 42.

^{dxlvii} Deleuze and Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 280.

^{dxlviii} William Shakespeare: ‘Oh God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams’, Act 2 scene 2, *The tragedy of Hamlet, prince of Denmark*, in *The complete works*, eds Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988, p. 666.

^{dxlix} On November 1 2008, Japan is celebrating the thousandth anniversary of the first appearance of *The tale of Genji*; this date is based on Murasaki Shikibu’s record of a historical event, the celebration of the birth of a grandson to Fujiwara Michinaga; this child of the empress Akiko, whom Murasaki served, was to become emperor. See Peter Alford, ‘Affairs of state’, in *The weekend Australian review*, October 25-26, 2008, p. 7.

^{dli} Edward Seidensticker, trans., *The gossamer years (kagero nikki): the diary of a noblewoman of Heian Japan*, Tokyo, Tuttle, 1973, p. 19.

^{dlii} *ibid.*, p. 289.

^{dliii} I am indebted to Dr Ron Blaber, my supervisor, for this insight.

^{dliiii} *ibid.*

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