A Journey Around Myself
An Archaeological Exploration of Identity

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‘She says to herself if she were able to write she could continue to live.’
Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictee*

*For my parents*

*Teresa Rose Chaves 1925-2006 and Norbert Peter Fonseca 1922-2009*

*who gave me a space to dwell in their story and the courage to write my own.*
Declaration by Candidate

I certify that this thesis, entitled ‘A Journey Around Myself: An Archaeological Exploration of Identity’, submitted for the degree of PhD contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma; to the best of my knowledge contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and is not based on joint research or publications.

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Date: Seventeenth day of August 2010
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This journey has been made possible by the involvement of a reliable infrastructure of friends and colleagues, some whose names appear on this page, and many whose voices are embedded in between the lines of this thesis. Their invaluable and generous contribution is both tangible and intangible and, in both forms, remains germane to my success and experience.

They have provided me with inspiration and challenge or practical day-to-day support and technical expertise. Some have shared their beautiful homes generously, opening up creative spaces where I have been able to reflect, feel safe and just ‘be’. Some have forced me past the edge of my own perceived limitations, while others have brought me back from the brink, encouraging me in times of despair. They believed in me when I had lost faith in myself. Some have engaged me in conversations that have expanded my knowledge and beliefs; and then, there are those whose calm brought stillness to a world spinning out of control. To all of these people – Thank You.

Believing as I do, that there is no such thing as an ‘original’ thought, I want to acknowledge all those who have contributed to my learning through their work, creativity, knowledge and interaction with me.

Critical to my success has been the input and encouragement of my supervisor/friends Adele Flood, Colleen Lindner and Kwanmena Kwansah-Aidoo (Aspa).
Abstract

*A Journey Around Myself: an Archaeological Exploration of Identity* is a study of self. It examines how a person with a fractured geography, dislocated and re-located in a foreign landscape, can structure a personal narrative and maintain an authentic voice. The thesis investigates the role of memory and narrative in unraveling a sense of identity and in doing so reveals how individuals bring a sense of linearity to the fragments of their existence by authoring a unifying narrative. In turn, this narrative (life-story) embodies a sense of identity that is actualised through narrative discourse (articulation of life-story).

Commencing with a model for *Constructing Personal Narratives* (Flood 2003), *A Journey Around Myself* explores the complex and stratified fragments of memoried experience to extend the Flood model. Using the metaphor of archaeology, the thesis introduces a new approach to narrative inquiry. The model of 'archaeological narrative inquiry' uses the concepts, tools, and modes of archaeology to explore the building blocks in the authoring of self. This method embraces the creative potential of an individual and shows how creativity can be used as an essential element to investigate and interrogate the multifarious elements of personal narrative.

The use of *archaeological narrative inquiry* reveals a unique way by which interrogation and reflection are used to tap into the creative self to generate data in the form of creative artefacts for examination and consideration. Through this process, data was generated and a number of artefacts were created. These include: (1) A Book of Photographic Collages: *The Hall of Mirrors*; (2) A Digital Story: *Argumentum e Silencio*; (3) A Digital Story: *A Journey Through Lost Time...* (4) A Digital Story: *Lost in Translation* (5) An Archive of Family Photographs: *Happy Memories*; (6) A Fable: *Satatantra: The Elephant and the Mirror* and (7) A Narrative Account of the Research Journey: *Charting the Journey*. These artefacts are an integral part of the thesis and can be read or viewed in any order. This method of archaeological narrative inquiry demonstrates the significance of, and the possibilities created by drawing on an individual’s creativity as part of an exploration of self. This distinctive data mechanism manifests in a PhD thesis that falls outside the traditional 'research' PhD or a 'PhD by artefact and exegesis'.

The thesis also demonstrates how various components interact to articulate a sense of self and preserve the authentic voice in a forum where the researcher and the researched are one and the same.
A Journey Around Myself: an archaeological exploration of identity is a thesis of seven chapters. It is constructed in narrative form with relevant literature from transdisciplinary sources that are interwoven throughout the text. The seven creative artefacts listed above emerge from data generated through the process of excavation, interrogation and reflection and are essential to the project as a whole. The research methodology of archaeological narrative inquiry presents data in a re-current and sometimes repetitious manner thus revealing how often the same memory can occur in different forms and narrative. This method demonstrates how triangulation of data enables the validity of the research occurs. The structure, language and creative compilation of the thesis reflect the cultural duality that resides within author.

A Journey Around Myself reveals the significance of memory, the self, and the value of story and narrative discourse in relation to how they work to unravel a sense of identity.

Through a novel approach to narrative inquiry, this thesis contributes new understandings about the idea of the dislocated self and an individuals’ search to arrive at a sense of identity and place of belonging. This new archaeological approach adds to the body of knowledge in qualitative research. Furthermore, it establishes a unique method of data construction in narrative form for interrogation and analysis that results in a new and innovative model for PhD research.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF FIGURES</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF ARTEFACTS</td>
<td>XI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</td>
<td>XII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER ONE: PROLOGUE</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background and Context of the Study</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methodology</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER TWO: NON-LINEAR PATH OF EXCAVATION</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape of Self</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructs and Context</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Narratives</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrogations</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artefacts</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Use of Metaphor</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cyclical Nature of the Methodology</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Approach</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodological Roots</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto/Ethnography</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Observation 1: Archaeological Narrative Inquiry**  
Summary  
60

**Observation 2: Constructed Data for Interrogation**  
Dissertation  
Artefact and Exegesis  
62

**CHAPTER THREE: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE**  
Introduction  
Artefact 1: The Hall of Mirrors  
Artefact 2: Argumentum e Silencio  
Artefact 3: A Journey through Lost Time ...  
Artefact 4: Lost in Translation  
Artefact 5: Happy Memories – Visual Memories of a Happy Childhood  
Artefact 6: Satatantra: The Elephant and the Mirror  
Background  
Structure  
Characters  
Language and Symbolism  
Narrative  
Artefact 7: Charting the Journey  
143

**CHAPTER FOUR: EXCAVATION A - MEMORY**  
Introduction  
Visual Memory  
Memory and Place  
Memory and Belonging  
189

**CHAPTER FIVE: EXCAVATION B – THE SELF**  
Introduction  
The Mirror  
Maps  
The Self  
The Hall of Mirrors  
233
CHAPTER SIX: STORY - THE MAKING OF IDENTITY 263
Introduction 265
Narrative 266
Masterplots 270
Micro-Narratives 276
Memory 278
Story and Storytelling 282
Identity 287

CHAPTER SEVEN: PUNAR - A HOMECOMING 291
Introduction 295
Beyond the Autobiographical ‘I’ 297
Memory 298
Self 300
Story 302
Archaeological Narrative Inquiry 305
New Model for PhD 308
New Knowledge: Key Findings 309
Memory 309
The Self 309
Story – The Making of Identity 310
Archaeological Narrative Inquiry 310
Bibliography 316
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chapter Overview</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Model by Adele Flood (2003)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Expansion of the Flood (2003) model</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Framework of exemplars showing 'inputs', key influences and interrogations</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Process of data generation and artefact creation</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Diagram showing Multiliteracies and multiple Ways of Knowing</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Recurrence of significant themes</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Process of Archaeological Narrative Inquiry in a Journey Around Myself</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Validity of Research Methodology based on Piantanida &amp; Garman (1999) criteria for judging a qualitative dissertation</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Guide to the Archaeological Site</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Memory and Narrative Formation</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Relationship between micro-narratives and a unifying narrative</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artefact No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Hall of Mirrors</td>
<td>A Book of Photographic Collages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Argumentum e Silencio</td>
<td>Digital Story (DVD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A Journey through Lost Time</td>
<td>Digital Story (DVD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lost in Translation</td>
<td>Digital Story (DVD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Happy Memories: Visual Fragments of a Happy Childhood</td>
<td>Photographs from the Family Archive (Book)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Satatantra: The Elephant and the Mirror</td>
<td>A Fable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Charting the Journey</td>
<td>A Narrative Account of the Research Journey (Book)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above list of artefacts comprises data generated on *A Journey Around Myself*. They are an integral part of the thesis. They can be read or viewed in any order. *Charting the Journey* (7) provides a chronological account of the narrative journey.
Glossary of Terms

Guna  Ancient Sanskrit philosophy
Punar  Sanskrit concept for eternal beginnings - homecoming
Anglo-Indian  Anglo-Indians are people who have mixed Indian and British ancestry
Tabula Rasa  Blank slate
Chai  Sweet spiced milk tea drunk in India
Piano  Italian meaning ‘slowly’
Marcrows  Large black ants
Jana Gana Mana  First lines of Indian National anthem
Sakhi  Female friend
Sakhiyani  Female friendship (lesbian)
Lift Van  Shipping container
Ammi  Hindi word for ‘mother’
Pigeon Pie  Crusted pie made from wild pigeon (Grandmother’s specialty)
Gurkha  Guard
Mali  Gardener
Tamasha  Circus - Tantrum
Watan  Homeland
Promised Land  Term used in fable Satatantra to reflect the new homeland of Australia
Brahmin  Highest caste in Hindu caste system
Figaldo/Susegad  Portuguese/Goan term for ‘never early, always on time’
Fado/Mando  Portuguese/Goan term to describe a form of soulful music
Briquette  A briquette is a block of flammable matter used as fuel to start and maintain a fire. A common type of briquettes is made of charcoal.
Tower of Silence  Place of the dead used by the Parsi community in India
Boong  Derogatory slang word for Indigenous person
Wog  Derogatory name for migrant person
Jamun Tree  Fruit tree with large sweet berries indigenous to India
Goan  Belonging to Goa, State of India
Chapter One:
Prologue
But I am the one
who always goes away.

The first time was the most –
silent.
I did not speak,
did not answer
those who stood waving
with the soft noise
of saris flapping in the wind.

To help the journey
coconuts were flung
from Juhu beach
into the Arabian Sea –
But I saw beggars jump in
after those coconuts – a good catch
for dinner. And in the end
who gets the true luck
from those the sacrificed coconuts?

I am the one
who always goes away.

Sometimes I’m asked if
I were searching for a place
that can keep my soul
from wandering
a place where I can stay
without wanting to leave.

Who knows.

Maybe the joy lies
in always being able to leave –

But I never left home.
I carried it away
with me – here in my darkness
in myself. If I go back, retrace my steps
I will not find
that first home anywhere outside
in that mother-land place.

We weren’t allowed
To take much
but I managed to hide
my home behind my heart.

Look at the deserted beach
now it’s dusk – no sun
to turn the waves gold,
no moon to catch
the waves in silver mesh –

Look – at the in-between darkness
when the sea is unmasked
she’s no beauty queen.
Now the wind stops
Beating around the bush –

While the earth calls
and the hearth calls
come back, come back –

I am the one
who always goes away.

Because I must –

With my home in tact
but always changing
so the windows don’t match
the doors anymore – the colours
clash in the garden –
And the ocean lives in the bedroom.

I am the one
who always goes
away with my home
which can only stay inside
in my blood – my home which does not fit
with any geography.

_Sujata Bhatt 1995: 3-5_
_The One Who Goes Away_
Background and Context of the Study

In his essay *Imaginary Homelands*, Salman Rushdie (1991) observed 'we are all immigrants from a far away land called the past. We all suffer loss; it is part of our common humanity' (p. 12) However, if your present is in a different place, and you experience a discontinuity with the past, then, as I have discovered, what can follow is a fragmentation of self through dis-location. This means that you may end up inhabiting a place which many writers in the diaspora have identified as being from 'elsewhere' (V.S.Naipaul 1987, Edward Said 2002, Jhumpa Lahiri 1999, Suketu Mehta 2004, Paul Carter 2007).

In 2007 I was introduced to the work of the Indian poet Sujata Bhatt. Only three pages into her collection entitled *The Stinking Rose*, I encountered her poem *The One Who Goes Away*. Inspired by a poem of Eleanor Wilner (1995) 'There are always, in each of us, these two: the one who stays, and the one who goes away …' (p. 3), Bhatt’s poem is a mesmerising ode to loss of place, loss of the familiar and loss of home. As I read, her words absorbed my tears of emotion like a soft linen handkerchief. I sobbed in relief at the realisation that someone else had been able to eloquently express what I had felt for so long. Having left my homeland of India in 1967 to migrate to Australia, I spent much of my adult life dislocated, lost and searching for a sense of identity. Over time, these feelings ebbed and flowed as my search for answers often raised more questions and my mind journeyed back and forth, traversing an inner and outer landscape of experiences. Time, memory and place wove a rich tapestry, a textured basket collecting each leitmotif of identity, each fragment of the self.

My loss of identity can be traced to a loss of a sense of place. For me, the two are intricately connected: my sense of belonging was disrupted through my experience of migration with my family that resulted in the separation from all that I cherished as the familiar. Since that event, I have, on many an occasion and circumstance, experienced a feeling of dis-location and dis-ease.

For me, re-location caused loss. It was a loss of place, loss of the familiar, loss of the self and of identity. This experience created in me a longing for what was ‘before’ and a need to continue to re-locate to re-claim a sense of place, one in which I belonged, one in which I
could feel safe to be my self. However, it seems that the act of each re-location caused further disruption, further fragmentation and only served to further emphasise the dislocation. As I traversed the landscapes of geography, philosophy, politics, work, sexual identity and lifestyle in my attempts to re-create myself, the effort increased dis-location and, much of what I tried to achieve was for all intents and purposes, lost in translation.

This thesis addresses the issue of dislocation and its relationship to loss of a sense of self. It uses the experience of dislocation as a genesis for an exploration of the landscape of self in search for the connections between memory, place and narrative to unravel and articulate a sense of identity and belonging. In his book *Concepts of Self* Anthony Elliott (2001) suggests that 'as directors of our own self-narratives, we draw on psychic frames of memory and desire, as well as wider cultural and social resources in the fashioning of self' (p. 2) A *Journey Around Myself* is a spontaneous exploration of place, of memory, and subsequently is an emotional expression of identity. It reveals a journey of reconciliation between the past and the present, between lost and present time, between the remembered self and the explorer and between the many disparate and fractured selves and places that I inhabit.

In order to understand: who I am? where I am? and when I am? it has been essential that I investigate the following question: **What is the role of memory and narrative when unraveling archaeology of identity for an individual who has experienced dislocation and a loss of a sense of place?**

To further inform the research and to extend our understanding of the relationship between identity formation, memory and narrative through a process of excavation of the landscape of self, the following supplementary questions are considered. In doing so, I will reflect on the link between narrative, narrative discourse and the articulation of identity.

- In what way(s) can the creative potential of an individual be used to investigate the process of excavation of fragments of memory?
- What is the role of story and storytelling in the making of identity?

The thesis, *A Journey Around Myself*, is underpinned by my belief that humans are complex beings who are culturally and socially located. As such, our lived experience is stratified,
often fossilised in memory that can lie buried as fragments for excavation, interrogation and reflection in the present moment. It also reflects my belief that it is essential for an individual to explore this landscape of self so as to truly understand who we are, where we are and when we are. I believe that this is even more critical for a person who has experienced a sense of dislocation through loss of place.

A *Journey Around Myself* examines important issues about how an archaeological exploration of the landscape of self reveals fragments of memory for investigation. Italian feminist Adriana Cavarero (2000) tells us that ‘the narratable self finds its home, not simply in a conscious exercise of remembering, but in the spontaneous narrating structure of memory itself’ (p. 41). My thesis shows how by employing a spontaneous narrative structure and a cyclical process of interrogation, reflection and analysis, micro-narratives are produced. Furthermore, it reveals how these micro-narratives can reach deep into the creative self to produce imaginative data that, in turn, spawns additional narratives that feed into a unifying narrative to construct a sense of identity and belonging.

Gregoria Manzin (2007) observes that ‘rather than aiming at the identification of fragments, which compose the self, narration pursues the recognition of unity’ (p. 203) and, like Cavarero, she proposes that ‘unity can only be reached when the self is detached from the desire’ and the ‘who’ can be disclosed only by the story’ (p. 203). *A Journey Around Myself* reveals a mechanism by which personal identity and a sense of place can be articulated through narrative discourse.

The process of telling stories requires us to access memory in order to re-construct the experiences of the past and retranslate this experience in the present. This is a continuous process (Conway 1998, King 2000). However, time, particularly in relation to memory, cannot be seen as a linear process; it flows backwards and forwards; sometimes familiar, sometimes distant, elusive or real, creating a framework and forming a backdrop for recollection; a recollection that at all times is mediated by ‘what we know now’ (Benjamin 1932, Ricoeur 1990, Woolf 1939). In Carolyn Steedman’s (1986) words: ‘time catches together what we know and do not know’ (p. 41).

For Marcel Proust (1954), ‘Memory is not a constantly accessible copy of the different facts of our life, but an oblivion from which, at random moments present resemblances
enable us to resuscitate dead recollections’ (v.3: p.146). *A Journey Around Myself* explores memories in the form of these ‘random moments’, fragments located in records and contained within family photo archives. Adele Flood (2002) notes that ‘the place memory holds in the reconstruction of the life journey is crucial to the manner in which an individual records and em plots their personal narrative’ (p. 96). In linking memory to the re-construction of a life journey and recording of personal narrative, *A Journey Around Myself* illustrates how what we often remember are events that took place in what Nicola King (2000) refers to as a ‘time of innocence’. This paradoxical ‘knowing’ and not ‘knowing’, is the position of any autobiographical narrator. So it is then, that in the present moment of a person’s narration, it exposes how we possess knowledge that we did not have at the moment of our experience.

My thesis explores how identity is constructed by excavating and examining clues to memory. These are exposed through the uncovering of shards providing a visual and textual narrative of fragments to develop a sense of self in the present. *A Journey Around Myself* reveals the construction of my story. On this journey, the self is deemed an archaeological site for exploration. Traversing through the layers of lost time, the excavation reveals fragments and clues by which the story is created. Just as each journey folds into the next as it continues, so too my story contains stories within stories that reveal the self.

**Research Methodology**

Interested in my own feelings of dislocation and loss of sense of self, I turn to my own lived experience to find answers to the questions: who am I? where am I? and when am I? I excavate memory and engage in an investigation of the emergent fragments that are interrogated and reflected on, to generate narratives of the self. On this journey I am the researcher and the researched.

A narrative approach as methodology is my starting point. Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000) tell us that ‘one of the best ways to study human beings is to come to grips with the storied quality of human experience ...’ (p. 81). In saying so, they advocate the use of *narrative inquiry* as a research methodology for such endeavours. *A Journey Around Myself* has at its heart an exploration of human experience. It uses fragments of
memory to generate micro-narratives in a reflexive process for exploring lived experience. For this reason, narrative inquiry initially provided the most appropriate methodology.

I commence the research journey by employing a model for *Constructing Personal Narratives* developed by Adele Flood (2003). This model offers a framework within which I am able to place my lived experience to trace the interaction between internal and external forces in the construction of self. As the research progresses, the multifaceted and complex nature of emerging data prompts me to contemplate ways to extend the Flood model. I turn to the work of philosopher Walter Benjamin (2006) on memory, and re-read *A Berlin Chronicle*. I start to build on Benjamin’s idea of ‘digging through memory’ and explore the concept of the journey as an archaeological excavation of memory and an exploration of identity.

In due course, in order to deepen my understanding, I use relevant literature on narrative inquiry such as Peter Reason’s (1988) *languages*, Kalantzis and Cope’s (2004) *multiliteracies* and Rosi Braidotti’s (1994) *nomads*. These theorists inform us about how we can use these multiple ways of knowing to open up new associations and fresh landscapes in order to reveal elements that inform such an investigation. In considering the self to be a complex and stratified archaeological landscape for excavation, reflection and interrogation, I build on the Flood model (p. 19) and subsequently develop an innovative model (p. 54) of *Archaeological Narrative Inquiry*. *A Journey Around Myself* thus provides a methodology by which an individual can unravel the fragments that compose the self and reflect on them in the present moment (*Nachtraglichkeit*).

Using an interrogative and reflexive approach to examine experience, I apply Dilthey’s principle of *hermeneutic philosophy* that meaning can only be grasped by understanding the reciprocal relationship between the whole and its parts (Palmer 1969, p. 118). In *A Journey Around Myself*, the process of telling and re-telling, reflection and the interpretation and assimilation of awareness gained at each iteration, deepens self-knowledge and enriches the experience as I engage in the *circle of knowing* to generate a unifying narrative.

I develop a conceptual model based on the tools and concepts of archaeology: the past, a site, digging/excavation, fragments, clues, interrogation, piecing together, interpretation
and the generation of micro-narratives. In doing so, I implement a research model that employs the above concepts to excavate memories and engage in a reflexive process that reveals how this model offers a methodology by which the individual can unravel identity and author the self.

The research methodology of *archaeological narrative inquiry* employed in *A Journey Around Myself* uses the principles of the hermeneutics of self (Dilthey 1969). It relies on the cyclical process of interrogation, reflection and analysis. This practice manifests in two important ways. Firstly, it presents the data in a re-current and sometimes repetitious manner. This reveals the way that often the same memory can occur in different forms and narratives. Secondly, and more significantly, this method provides a way for triangulation of data thus enabling the validity of the research. It is this cyclical and repetitive process that reveals the value of the archaeological model of narrative inquiry.

**Significance of the Study**

*A Journey Around Myself* is concerned with new ways of investigating the landscape of self. If we accept that the self is a socially constructed (Mead 1958; Giddens 1991) and agree with Anthony Elliot (2001) that selfhood is flexible, fractured, fragmented, de-centred and brittle, then, this thesis offers a mechanism by which we can explore the complex topography of self and identity in relation to memory and narrative. For the socially located individual, my research also provides an exemplar of how we can interrogate the role and influence of significant others in the process of remembering the self.

Today's world of increased human population movement through migration, refugee status or socio-economic impetus, has resulted in greater dislocation and alienation for the individual (Chambers 1994). *A Journey Around Myself* shows how a person who has lost their sense of place and identity can excavate memory and lived experience in the present moment. This can serve to deepen their understanding of who they are? where they are and when they are in their new social and cultural landscape.

My research raises important insights into the value of personal narrative and how, in this mobile and disaffected world, the concept of personal narrative and story telling is both critical to a person’s sense of identity and more relevant than ever. In generating personal
narrative to articulate a unifying story, *A Journey Around Myself* reveals the value and significance of artefacts, photographic archives and associated family stories in triggering memory and contextualising ideas of self. In doing so, it reveals how, as part of the process, we are able to tap into our creative potential to generate data about who we are and our sense of place.

*A Journey Around Myself* is an investigation of my lived experience and I place myself at the centre of my research. Nevertheless, my thesis proposes a new approach to narrative inquiry and offers a methodology that can be applied far beyond the autobiographical ‘I’. In presenting my story to the reader, I accomplish what Jean Clandinin and Jerry Rosiek (2007) promote regarding the value of listening to the stories of others; that is, by sharing my story, I open up possibilities for others’ to generate their own stories.

**Form**

*A Journey Around Myself* is a study of self. It employs an archaeological approach to narrative inquiry to investigate the role of memory and narrative in unraveling a sense of identity and belonging. In doing so, it uncovers fragments of lived experience for interrogation and reflection. This reflexive process manifests in the generation of micro-narratives, revealing a unique way by which interrogation and reflection are used to tap into the creative self, to generate data as creative artefacts for examination and consideration.

Jerome Bruner (1991) believes that:

A text is a conceptually formulated narrative account of what a life has been about. That it is an essential account carried in memory or carried in memory in such a way as to be capable of generating shorter or longer versions of itself (p. 130).

As text, *A Journey Around Myself* uses a spontaneous and reflexive type of narration to provide an essential account of lived experience through excavation of memory. The data in my thesis is non-linear and emergent and results in diverse forms, as constructions of the narrated self. This includes written and visual texts in the shape of non-fiction, fiction, photographs, digital story and photographic collage. Some of these are embedded in the
Prologue - 12

text of the thesis, while others are included as stand-alone artefacts. In the spirit of the metaphor of archaeology, all components of A Journey Around Myself are packaged and presented layered in an archival box. While there are no specific instructions about how to read the text, Charting the Journey (Artefact 7) provides some guidance as it presents an overview of the journey in narrative form.

The study is transdisciplinary and is informed by literature from a diverse range of fields that include the social sciences, the arts and education. Literature is reviewed and embedded throughout the text.

A Journey Around Myself is an account of personal narrative and, as such, foregrounds the authentic voice. Even after forty-three years, having left my watan/homeland of India at fifteen to migrate to Australia, I still carry the cultural and emotional vestiges of my Indian heritage. However, in time, I have also absorbed and embraced the cultural and emotional characteristics of my adopted home. This has resulted in a duality that resides deep within my psyche and is reflected throughout my thesis as both symbolic and linguistic manifestations. The use of Indian language or the framing of the fable Satatantra within the ancient Sanskrit Guna philosophy (Artefact 6) is a deliberate act. In other instances the flow of sentence construction and choice of imagery represent nuances of how my duality materialises in more subtle ways.

The various components of A Journey Around Myself: an archaeological exploration of identity are linked by my voice. The chapters in the thesis investigate the role of memory and narrative in the unraveling of identity for a person who has experienced dislocation. The investigation recorded in the chapters engages with issues of methodology and relevant literature as I explore the central issues of memory, the self and narrative in relation to my lived experience and identity.

The Prologue serves as an introduction to A Journey Around Myself. In it, I reveal the genesis of this investigation into the landscape of the dislocated self and place myself at the centre of my research. I articulate my research question and draw attention to the concepts of memory and narrative in order to investigate their significance in the unraveling of identity. I elucidate the text and form of my thesis, providing some insight into the complexity and diversity of the data generated on the journey. This includes an account of the way in which I am able to express both the cultural duality that resides
within me, and the internal creative forces that continue to inspire my imagination. The chapter also provides an overview of the structure of the thesis. The remainder of the thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter Two, *The Non-linear Path of Excavation* employs the metaphor of archaeology and reveals the methodology developed and undertaken in the course of the research journey. Using a model (Flood 2003) for *constructing personal narratives*, I develop a method to investigate and interrogate the multifarious components involved in the ‘remembering of self’ and the construction of identity and sense of place. A new methodological approach is established placing it within the context of similar research models and demonstrating how, as a piece of qualitative research, it is rigorous and valid. In this chapter, I also unveil a unique method of emergent data collection. In doing so, I show how *A Journey Around Myself* sits in a new space; it is neither a traditional research PhD nor a PhD by artefact and exegesis.

In Chapter Three, *The Archaeological Site* leads us into the topography of the self. I excavate and reveal the fragments that emerged during the process of investigation. In this chapter, I demonstrate the value of fragments such as journals, photographs and stories as sources from the past that are excavated and explored. The fragments, which include creative pieces generated as data are explored to establish their relationship with who I am today.

In Chapter Four: *Excavation A: Memory*, I investigate the excavated fragments in the context of the nature and role of memory in unraveling archaeology of identity. The fragility and fallibility of memory is examined in relation to the elasticity of time and the role and significance of the senses and of visual memory in providing clues. Furthermore, I de-construct and explore the concept of memory and its relationship to identity and place and reveal how memory and imagination interplay in the generation of personal narrative.

Chapter Five: *Excavation B: The Self*, continues the excavation of the archaeological site of self. I examine and interrogate fragments of memory to reveal how memory interacts with lived experience and unravels a sense of self and identity. In this chapter, I investigate the complexity of the socially constructed and located self. Using the power of the symbolic
mirror, I examine the role of significant others by getting behind the mirror and employing my imagination to create narrative resulting in a *Hall of Mirrors*. The chapter also explores the experience of dislocation as a catalyst for a study of self.

Chapter Six: *Story: the making of identity*, is concerned with the storied self and the way that narrative is constructed. It examines the relationship between memory and narrative, focusing on the way in which narrative shapes memory and connects us to our identity through narrative discourse. The chapter continues to explore the link between memory and narrative and their significance in the articulation of a unifying narrative to establish a sense of identity and belonging.

Finally, Chapter Seven: *Punar: A Homecoming* demonstrates the value and application of my findings for others. Using the central concepts of memory, self, story/identity as reference points, I share my findings about what I discovered along the way. To conclude, I present a summative account of my findings and introduce new knowledge to the field of qualitative inquiry. In doing so, I convey my experience of a homecoming to self.

To commence the journey I invite the reader to engage in the account of how the research methodology for this archaeological exploration of self evolved. In Chapter Two, I explore the landscape of self by employing a non-linear path of excavation to show how fragments of memory are revealed for interrogation, reflection and construction of personal narrative.
Chapter Two: Non-Linear Path of Excavation
Language shows clearly that memory is not an instrument for exploring the past but its theatre. It is the medium of past experience, as the ground is the medium in which dead cities lie interred. He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging. This confers the tone and bearing of genuine reminiscences. He must not be afraid to return again and again to the same matter; to scatter it as one scatters earth, to turn it over as one turns over soil. For the matter itself is only a deposit, a stratum, which yields only to the most meticulous examination what constitutes the real hidden treasure within the earth: the images, severed from all earlier associations, that stand – like precious fragments or torsos in a collectors gallery – in the prosaic rooms of our later understanding.

True, for successful excavations a plan is needed. Yet no less indispensable is the cautious probing of the spade in the dark loam, and it is to cheat oneself of the richest prize to preserve as a record merely the inventory of one's discoveries, and not this dark joy of the place of the finding itself. Fruitless searching is as much a part of this as succeeding, and consequently remembrance must not proceed in the manner of a narrative or still that of a report, but must, in the strictest epic and rhapsodic manner, assay its spade in ever new places, and in the old ones delve to ever deeper layers.

**Walter Benjamin A Berlin Chronicle 2006:314**
Introduction

Over the past six years I have embarked on a research odyssey involving a search for belonging and identity. My research question has been evolving and developing as the Journey Around Myself has unfolded. In order to understand: Who I am? Where I am? And When I am? It has been essential that I investigate the following question: What is the role of memory and narrative when unraveling archaeology of identity for an individual who has experienced dislocation and a loss of a sense of place?

The metaphor of archaeology alluded to in the work of Walter Benjamin (2006) has both inspired and framed the Journey Around Myself. In seeking answers to the question ‘who am I?’ I found myself inevitably following his advice that: “he who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging” (p. 314).

This chapter reveals the methodology developed and undertaken in the course of the research journey. By employing the metaphor of archaeology, I introduce a new approach to narrative inquiry: an ‘archaeological narrative inquiry’ which uses the concepts, tools and modes of archaeology to explore the building blocks to author the self. I use this method to investigate and interrogate the multifarious components involved in the ‘remembering of self’ and the construction of identity and sense of place. In doing so, I present an investigative framework that is complex and non-linear, and like archaeology, relies on interpretations made from fragments of information illuminated by contextual knowledge (Renfrew & Bahn 2005). This process also involves a symbiotic interaction between the past and the present in the development of a narrative of identity and a re-presentation of self.
An overview of the structure for this chapter is provided in *Figure 1*.

| LANDSCAPE OF SELF | • I sketch a *landscape of self* providing brief insight into the background to the *Journey Around Myself*.  
|                  | • Using a model developed by Adele Flood (2003) on Personal Narrative Construction I document the 'influences' and subsequent process of emergent data (fragments) in the course of the research investigation. |
| CONSTRUCTS AND CONTEXT | • Fragments of emergent data generate a multitude of micro-narratives that feed the creative artefacts. I examine the use of a device such as metaphor that I used in this process.  
|                  | • I describe how interrogating these artefacts reveal the cyclical nature of the methodology contributing to a number of themes in the unraveling of archaeology of identity.  
|                  | • Giving examples I consider the commonalities that exist between the artefacts and various fragments (data) thereby demonstrating a triangulation of knowledge.  
|                  | • Drawing on the work of relevant theorists I offer a critical analysis showing how multiliteracies are exemplified in recurring incidents and multiple forms. |
| NEW APPROACH | • The new model is provided that demonstrates a new approach to narrative inquiry and shows how by using multiple ways of knowing and interrogating emergent data I unravel archaeology of identity.  
|                  | • I argue that the model using an *archaeological approach* can be employed by others in a variety of investigations concerning the 'self' with valid results. |
| SUMMARY | • A new methodological approach is established placing it within the context of similar research models. |

*Figure 1. Chapter Overview*
Landscape of Self

In the post-script of my M.Ed. completed in 2003 I wrote:

The discovery of my own personal voice and the acknowledgement of it, have led to my decision to follow this project with further research into the ‘subjugated’ voice.

This, then, is not an ending. Rather it is an exciting new exploration on my continuing journey (Fonseca 2003).

Having left my homeland of India in 1967 to migrate to Australia, I spent much of my adult life dislocated, lost and searching for a sense of identity. Over time these feelings ebbed and flowed as my search for answers often raised more questions and issues as they were triggered by critical incidents and key influences. The emergence of my authentic voice in the M.Ed. was one such critical incident that set me on a greater journey, a journey in this PhD to determine how dislocation had affected my sense of self and to learn how remembering the self contributes to unraveling an archaeology of identity.

The research journey relied on memory, creation of artefacts and the interrogation and interpretation of emergent data. As such, both the process and data uncovered on the journey remained non-linear and emergent. Often, the process was influenced by critical incidents and operated at various levels. Sometimes emergent data combined with aspects of the process, to inspire the construction of creative artefacts. At other times, data revealed or critical incidents remembered triggered new directions along the way.

Story and storytelling have been an integral part of my heritage, so it is not surprising that in this search for identity and a place to belong I intuitively turned to narrative as a form of data, as a form of articulation and a form of inquiry. As the research journey unfolded I found myself drawing on my journals, reflective pieces of writing, photographic archives to reflect on and gather data. Stories told to me by family also surfaced as fragments in storied form. In the process of interrogating the fragments that in turn led to the creation of artefacts and generated micro-narratives I realised how story and storytelling became part of the very methodology itself: the methodology being narrative inquiry.

For social scientists Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000) narrative inquiry is a research methodology that uses the form of stories to explore human experience. Believing that as humans we live out stories and are storytellers they say:

One of the best ways to study human beings is to come to grips with the storied quality of human experience ... (p.81).
In order to unravel archaeology of identity I excavate fragments of memory and use stories that contribute to and are generated by my own lived experience. Roland Barthes (1982) believes that narratives used in this way perform significant functions. He maintains that as individuals our personal narratives enable us to understand our place in the world and who we are, for the narratives themselves contain the seeds of possibility and of imagining (p. 237). In my research I use narrative to provide a source of data in the form of fragments to unravel my lived experience. In the process, the narrative has offered a meaningful structure within which I have generated, interrogated and analysed micro-narratives and creative artefacts thereby attributing significance to their individual influence on the whole.

Contemplating on the meaning of a life story in Finding New Landscapes of Creative Identity Adele Flood (2010) tells us that:

> Life's events and the way we undertake our life journeys along pathways can be planned or altered through encounters and choices or by the serendipitous nature of life, the unexpected and interwoven occurrences (p. 2).

It is difficult to categorise my research by one particular label, however the genres of life-story, auto-ethnography, autobiography and memoir can all be included. All these genres have as a central feature the study of self. In the Journey Around Myself, the researcher and subject and the story and storyteller are primarily in a dialogic and often symbiotic relationship.

In A Sketch of the Past Virginia Woolf (1976) observes:

> Here I come to one of the memoir writer's difficulties – one of the reasons why, though I read so many, so many failures. They leave out the person to whom things happened (p. 65).

In this research I place my lived experience and myself at the centre of the scheme. In doing so, I have continued the journey of the authentic voice that emerged in 2003. The use of personal materials such as journals and photographs and the language of 'I' can produce a position of vulnerability. Shari Benstock (1988) tells us that language in the context of this genre is “neither an external force nor a tool of expression, but the very symbolic system that both constructs and is constructed by the writing subject” (p. 9). I concur with this position, as often during this research I found that there was no defense against the multiplicity of emerging forms of 'I'. I simply had to be true to the authentic voice, and each emerging form contained the authentic voice.
A Journey Around Myself is clearly a study of self with the research contributing to the body of literature (Jill Ker Conway 1998; Richard Freadman 1991; Georges Gusdorf 1980; Liz Stanley 1992) about how we develop deeper understandings of the human condition through life-story and autobiography. Narrative research methodology helps us make sense of our world through our own lived experience and the experience of others. These experiences emerge through the process of remembering and through story making. As members of society we live, tell and modify through re-telling and re-living from each other's experience, stories that interact reflexively with each other. And to this end Clandinin and Connelly (1994) observe:

We imagine therefore that in the construction of narratives of experience, there is a reflexive relationship between living a life-story, telling a life story, re-telling a life-story and re-living a life-story (p. 418).

The process of remembering and story making both occur within a social context. As such they are shaped by influences that in turn trigger new experience and spawn further knowledge and narratives. In the model Constructing Personal Narratives Adele Flood (2003) shows how personal narratives are constructed.

![CONSTRUCTING PERSONAL NARRATIVES](image)

Figure 2. Model by Adele Flood (2003)
Flood (2003) describes her model *Constructing Personal Narratives* (*Figure 2*) as taking ‘the form of an input/output diagram’ (p. 3). Based on a model from the social sciences she combines theoretical contributions from art, education, identity and narrative knowledge to provide a new structure for ‘relating the subjective (interiority) with the exterior world of the individual research subject’ (p. 4).

At the commencement of this research to deconstruct the self and excavate memory, I employed the Flood model to frame and situate the data. From this model I began to examine how some of the key influences and critical incidents emerged in the unraveling archaeology of identity. In doing so the model revealed and brought to the fore how internal and external fragments excavated are linked to influences (inputs) and generate micro-narratives. *Figure 3* shows the association between the Flood model and my early explorations and points towards the evolving extension of the model. It also indicates the cyclical links between the past and the present.

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**Figure 3. Expansion of the Flood (2003) model**
Later in this chapter I reveal how I extend the Flood model to accommodate the complex, non-linear and multifarious narratives that emerged on my archaeological journey. In Figure 4 (below) I use examples from my *Journey Around Myself* to provide an explanatory focus for the inputs or key influences of my narrative construction. From this construction I can document the subsequent process of emergent data (fragments) in the course of the research investigation.

Flood's model reveals how key influences (inputs) and actions and re-actions to turning/anchoring points and experiences contribute to the sequences of events or fragments of a life story. In my lived experience there have been a number of key factors that are examples of these influences or inputs that have shaped my life story. Through the processes of interrogation employed in this thesis, these key influences have emerged as *critical incidents*, fragments of memory about people, places, and experiences that were stories related to and recorded by me. While some were written by remembering, others had their genesis in travel experiences or in photographic archives.

In Figure 4 I offer examples of these key influences in each of the categories in the Flood model of 'inputs'. In column three I identify various emergent fragments that surfaced in the process of excavation of the archaeological site and that are associated with these key influences. In column four I demonstrate the evolutionary process of links between the key influence, the fragment and the interrogation. Within the information in this table I have varied the font colour to indicate the *turning* and *anchoring points* that are of significance. *Turning points* are those events that cause or generate a change in direction of the life story and *anchoring points* are those elements that anchor the individuals' story and give it meaning that is significant (Flood 2010, p. 4).

The examples of key influences are recorded and represented in this research as *critical incidents*. In the first instance they were written as 'stream of consciousness' narrative. This process is explained in *Charting the Journey* (Artefact 7) Such exercises in writing involved capturing the key emotional recollection of the essence of the experience and recording them in writing. Later, in each of these instances I reviewed the prose using a technique of internal and external *textscapes* applied by Adele Flood (2003) in her thesis *Common Threads*. Often, in my attempts to record these recollections into an enduring form by writing them, I found myself vacillating between things I had forgotten, things I
remembered and the spaces that I found myself embellishing in between. This phenomenon has been described by theorists who have written about the nature of memory (Freadman 1991; King 2000; Schacter 1996; Wolf 1983).

The lists of ‘inputs’ in the illustration that follows (Figure 4) taken from the framework provided by the Flood model is not exhaustive. They are significant examples of critical factors that influenced my life. In column three for each key influence I include one of the many occasions throughout this archaeological excavation of self when fragments of memory have emerged and have been drawn on as data for interrogation (Chapter Three). The link between the fragment and interrogation is revealed in column four.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flood (2003) Influences (Inputs)</th>
<th>Examples of my Key Influences</th>
<th>Fragments Example 1</th>
<th>Fragments Interrogation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal Education</strong></td>
<td>Academic Voice</td>
<td>Dislocation led to my feelings of powerlessness and the silencing of my voice. Through my formal education in the new homeland I developed and inadvertently used my academic voice as a survival strategy thus subjugating my ‘authentic voice’. <strong>The re-emergence of my authentic voice is documented as the genesis of this research.</strong></td>
<td>Evidence of silencing of my voice emerges in various journal fragments included in the archaeological site (Fragments 6, 8 and 10). The power of dislocation and loss of this voice has meant that to this day my ‘authentic’ voice is something that requires constant awareness. Writing this research has required me to maintain a balance between the ‘academic’ and ‘authentic’ voice. This has been challenging. Return visits to India also released a new voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship/s</td>
<td>My first ideas of, and most valued friendships have had their origins in formal education settings. This</td>
<td>While investigating the loss of identity and place I excavated memories of place and people central</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


aspect of self-development emerged as a key influence of the 'hidden curriculum' (Dewey 1966; Durkheim 1925) of formal education.

to my life. Through interrogation of my reflections I have identified a recurring contextual theme: My most significant friendships have been forged through connections made within the context of my formal education. In Collages 3, 6, 8, 16 and 20 of the *Hall of Mirrors* the represented relationships fall in to this category. This concept inspired the narrative accounts in the fable *Satatantra*. (The Dual)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio/Cultural</th>
<th>Migration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The act of migration was a key disruptive influence. Leaving my homeland of India left me dislocated and without a sense of identity. Fragments of memory in the form of journal entries and reflective writing emerge in the archaeological site.</td>
<td>This research journey is predicated on my belief that migration caused me to lose my sense of place and identity. Consequently, reflections on this experience suffuse narrative. These reflective fragments are found in the archaeological site as journal entries, and also as visual fragments in the digital stories <em>A Journey through Lost Time</em> and <em>Lost in Translation</em>. The experience of migration forms the basis of the storyline in Chapter Three (The Triad) in the fable <em>Satatantra</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nomadic status</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of dislocation and a search for a place to belong fuelled my interest in travel. Much of my life has been spent as a peripatetic immersing myself in a variety of social and cultural experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The peripatetic theme is also represented in the use of landscape as metaphor in *Lost in Translation* and as background canvases in the collages of the *Hall of Mirrors*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Family photographic archives</th>
<th>The family photographic archives were the source of visual fragments and associated stories related to me by various family members. This archive and the stories have been a key influence on my memories of place and places of memory. They also were fundamental in my development as a photographer and storyteller. Visual fragments from these archives are included and are accompanied by associated narrative.</th>
<th>Photography has played a major part in my life. It was both intuitive and natural that I turned to the family archives for clues to who I am. The artefact <em>Happy Memories</em> is an excerpt of visual memories of a happy childhood. As such, it generated numerous family narratives connecting people and places to who I was and the places of my homeland. I have used these images in the making of <em>A Journey Through Lost Time</em> and fragments are found embedded in Collages 1, 2 and 3 of the <em>Hall of Mirrors</em>. The archaeological site is also punctuated by images (Fragments 1, 2, 4 and 5) that often served as a touchstone to memory about poignant experiences in my life.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ascribed Status of Daughter</td>
<td>The status of female and a daughter has resulted in multifaceted influences on my</td>
<td>Being a first-born female in an Indian family left its imprint as a ‘dutiful’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 The terms ‘places of memory’ and ‘memory of places’ is attributed to Gregoria Manzin (2007)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentors</th>
<th>Significant Others</th>
<th>PhD Mentors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>sense of self.</strong> My early experiences of being born into a male-preferring culture in India impacted on my role and value in the family. In Chapter Six I describe how the role of daughter evolved and affected my life in two cultures underpinned by different ‘grand narratives’. daughter upon me. The validity of my personhood was forged by cultural values that imbued a sense of less worth, yet became the cornerstone of my rebellious nature and development of feminist politics. The critical incident recorded in fragment 1 and journal entries in fragment 7 both reflect aspects of the impact of this ascribed status. The relationship between being a daughter and matters of inheritance as depicted in fragment 2 and alluded to in <em>Lost in Translation</em> also exemplify the fallout of this form of discrimination.</td>
<td><strong>There have been people who have had a significant influence on my life. I have identified these as ‘significant others’ who have provided a mirror by which I have gained reflections of self. These reflections have helped me shape a sense of who I am. These significant others can be found in the creative construction the <em>Hall of Mirrors</em> and are also characterised in the fable <em>Satatantra.</em></strong></td>
<td><strong>The significance of a trusted mentor has been pivotal to the success of this research journey. Incidents of how the role of various mentor/s impacted in both positive and Two important signposts along this research journey have materialised as contributions from key mentors. At an early stage of the</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
negative ways are recorded in *Charting the Journey* (fragment 14).

exploration, lost and struggling for direction I was encouraged by a critical friend to engage in an exercise in creative writing. As a result I articulated seven ‘life-chapters’. These life chapters have remained as the framework for fable *Satatantra*, and as a guiding map that led me through the archaeological site. It is within the perimeters of each life-chapter that I ‘dug’ through journals, stories and photographs to excavate memories and remember the self.

In the second instance I had hit a stumbling block. I had a story to tell, I had unearthed fragments relating to my life. Feeling overwhelmed by the bits and pieces I found that I lost my ‘authentic’ voice. It was my supervisor who was able to ingeniously play the part of a muse and elicit my story through the voice of Bhudevi the elephant in the fable. Both these mentors have been critical guides on this *Journey Around Myself*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contingencies</th>
<th>Death of Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This incident had a critical impact on my <em>Journey Around Myself</em>. My mother was a significant other and the giver of the first ‘mirror’ reflections. There are many fragments of memory relating to my relationship with my mother excavated and included. They are found in reflective writing pieces and as visual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The death of my mother occurred half way through the authoring of the fable. The impact was so intense that my ability to continue the journey was abruptly halted. Fragment 2 expresses the depth of loss and impact on my sense of the world. This incident also led me back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
fragments. to the family photographic archives (fragment 12) and to the significance of my mother’s role in the creation of the archive. The momentous nature of the experience is also represented in the fable in the fable *Satatantra* in the ‘the Eight’.

**Sexual/Political Identity**

My identification as a lesbian and feminist has shaped both my personal and political view of the world. Subsequently, much of my lived experience has been affected by the associated beliefs and values of this position.

My identity as a lesbian in my new homeland of Australia had only a minor impact on my sense of self. My feminist politics were honed by political struggle and the influence of the work of significant others. These are found in Collages 5, 6, 9, 11, 19 and 21 of the *Hall of Mirrors* and are recorded in fragments as journal entries. However, issues relating to my identity as a lesbian in India unraveled in a very different and significant way. For it was this experience, this silencing of voice that first contributed to my search for meaning about the multiple layers of identity. The impact is recorded as a creative artefact in *Argumentum e Silencio*.

**Figure 4. Framework of exemplars showing ‘inputs’, key influences and interrogations**

**Turning Points:** While there are many turning points along the journey I have chosen the three of the most significant as examples.

**Anchoring Points:** *these can be negative or positive. For example the family photographic archive is considered to be a positive anchoring point while my status of being a daughter played out as a less positive and sometimes even negative anchoring point.*

In this section I have provided a *Landscape of Self*, thus situating myself at the heart of this research and research methodology.
French Renaissance writer and philosopher Michel de Montaigne (2003) is often viewed as self indulgent when on commenting on his own style of writing in *Essai* he declared: 'I am myself the matter of my book' (p. 1). Using the derivation of the word essay from the French word *essayer* to try or attempt, he set out to 'know himself' and therefore to understand or know humankind and believing that 'every man has within himself the entire human condition'. De Montaigne's approach to this clearly overwhelming project is to advocate and practice the exploration of the human condition through self-reflection. To do this he writes short personal essays, meditations and odd fragments of ideas. He uses everything he knows and recycles the information so as not to be careless.

The idea of writing in short bursts as personal essays and meditations in the form of journals, diaries and letters has been common practice, and used widely by writers. These include the writers Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), Lytton Strachey (1881-1932) and Roland Barthes (1915-80). More recently many writers such as Meena Alexander (1951-), and Robert Dessaix (1944-) have carried the tradition into the twenty-first century.

Walter Benjamin (2006) affirms the idea that those who seek to approach their own buried past must excavate fragments of genuine reminiscences, involve themselves in self-reflection and build an understanding of who they are in the present (p. 316). In this section I show how the excavation of fragments of memory have been both valuable and critical in this research to unravel archaeology of identity. I will now examine how these fragments generated micro-narratives that in turn fed the creation of the artefacts.

**Constructs and Context**

I liken my research to an archaeological odyssey to unravel identity and find a place of belonging. In doing so, I employ the conceptual tools of archaeology to excavate fragments of memory, places, objects, personal journals, stories and experience to generate micro-narratives. In turn, these micro-narratives feed a unifying narrative as the *Journey Around Myself* unfolds. In Chapter Six, *Figures 1 and 2*, I provide diagrams to illustrate how this occurs.

In the framework in *Figure 3* I refer to a number of forms of fragments that I excavated on this *Journey Around Myself*. These include excerpts from my personal journals, family narratives, photographs and interrogations of these fragments. Many of these fragments
are akin to mementos or cherished recollections (Davis 1979) that I discuss in Chapter Four: Excavation A: Memory. In order to contextualise and indicate the value of these fragments I consider their underpinning philosophy for inclusion and offer insight into how they emerged in the excavation.

**Fragments**

1. part broken off or detached. 2. a portion that is unfinished or incomplete

**Journals**

The journals or diaries I keep form an intermittent record of thoughts, emotions, ideas, dreams and other observations. As a woman and as a feminist, journal writing has been a way to explore and reflect on the philosophy and practice in keeping with ‘personal is political’. According to Adrienne Rich (1979) the journal is “that profoundly female, and feminist, genre” for it triggers questioning and making connections with separated parts of experience (p. 217).

Journal entries provide me with a reflective space to deliberate on matters of identity, offering a powerful outlet for my emotions and a way of connecting fractured elements of my experience and existence. Cynthia Huff (1989) also acknowledges this phenomenon when she says that: “the connections intrinsic to the diary genre are many, joining us to our past selves, our projected identities” (p. 6). In my experience, the significance of my journal extracts and diary entries are invaluable as a source of self-knowledge.

When I embarked on this research journey, I automatically reached for my journal to document relevant details. Without fail my journal has been a constant companion, accompanying me on my travels, on daily trips to work, and to various PhD related meetings with supervisors, friends and the like. At the end of the day, I often turn to my journal to engage in a few moments of self-reflexive writing. What I had not consciously realised until this research journey was the sheer volume of jottings that I had created over the years.

In his article *Virginia Woolf on Keeping a Journal* “Never mind the misses and the stumbles” Richard Nordquist (2010) tells us that:

2 These fragments and their corresponding interrogations are embedded in chapter three - the archaeological site.

3 Macquarie Dictionary 2006:700
In a journal, you can write about whatever you please—your thoughts, dreams, observations—and nobody can ever criticize you for bungling a sentence, misspelling a word, or leaving out a central idea. In addition to practicing your writing skills, you’ll also be creating a file of images and ideas. And who knows: some of your private jottings may eventually find their way—recast and revised—into a more public composition (p. 2).

As the journey in search of self and a place to belong unfolded, the archaeological excavations led me to these journals. In these journals I found a variety of entries; these range from ideas and thoughts to poetry and sketches. From them I was able to historically trace a self-reflective journey spanning some forty-four years to re-cast and revise extracts that I have included and consider as fragments of memory in this archaeological exploration of self. Paul Ricoeur (1992) discusses the mobility and flexibility of process of identity. He says:

Narrative identity is not that of an immutable substance or of a fixed structure, but rather the mobile identity issuing from the combination of the concordance of the story, taken as a structured totality, and the discordance imposed by the encountered events…it is possible to revise a recounted story which takes account of other events, or even which organizes the recounted events differently (p. 6).

Through data that emerged in journals and reflective writing I was able to piece together and combine the ‘concordance’ of my life story by revising and recounting the story to include stories uncovered within the data.

During her life, author Virginia Woolf was a prolific letter and diary writer. These two mediums reflected a constructive force that underpinned her creative works and often brought order to her chaotic world. In her 1919 diary, Woolf ponders the form her diary might take. She says:

What sort of diary should I like mine to be? Something loose knit and yet not slovenly, so elastic that it will embrace anything, solemn, slight or beautiful that comes into my mind. I should like it to resemble some deep old desk, or capacious hold-all, in which one flings a mass of odds and ends without looking them through (I: p. 266).

My journal jottings certainly needed something ‘elastic and loose-knit’ to expand and contract with volume, for such a phrase is apt to describe the irregular nature of my reflection and writing. There are periods in my life when journal entries are profuse and then there are times when silence prevails for months. In retrospect, it appears that diary
or journal entries synchronise with times when the search for identity and belonging is most intense.

In the process of the research on the archaeological journey, when confronted with the task of choosing fragments to include and interrogate I found that I was faced with the dilemma of feast rather than famine. In the end the thirteen fragments chosen for inclusion were selected rather intuitively and randomly and covered the diverse range of my experience from birth to the present time.

**Family Narratives**

Family narratives have made a significant contribution to my excavation of memory and self. Throughout my life, I have had the good fortune to bask in the experience of a cultural heritage of storytellers. Family tales relating to everything from place, people, cultural heritage, food and music to specific stories about family members and ancestral homes and experiences have been a rich source. Over many years many of these tales have been related and re-told, each time the narrative has gained a new life and as a shared narrative has become part of the family and my own story.

In her research *Shared Narratives* Greer Honeywell (2006) tells us how an unwritten story in her family becomes so real that it had the power to control part of their family history (p. 99). Similarly my birth story, included as Fragment 1, has gained its own truth and life through the telling and retelling of it. This recurring story is an excellent example of a family narrative that has the power to become part of the family collective memory. This story deeply affected my sense of self and place in the world.

**Photographs**

As a photographer my visual acuity often dominates my perception of the world. Sight is my most important sense. Salman Rushdie (1984) in his essay *Home Front* tells us that:

> We live in ideas. Through images we seek to comprehend our world. And through images we sometimes seek to subjugate and dominate others. But picture making, imagining, can also be a process of celebration, even of liberation (pp. 146-47)

For me, picture making has been my liberation, my language and process of celebration. Visual records such as photographs and film have fascinated me from a very young age. In
I have deemed the photograph at *Lands End 1953* as a remembered moment that symbolises the happiest in my life (Fragment 2). As a photographic fragment and experience its significance is borne out by its regular recurrence throughout this archaeological inquiry into my identity. My experience at Lands End amounts to, in Gaston Bachelard’s language, my first ‘house of psychological protection as warm and comforting as any cozy hut’ (p. 33). This photo represents a moment that was the most emotionally secure in my life. The motif appears again in the digital story *A Journey through Lost Time* and inspires the *Unbearable Lightness of Being* in the fable *Satatantra*. Are these accounts true or not? In many ways it does not seem to matter. To this day, whenever I go to the seaside, especially at places where there may be granite rocks, I feel the breeze against my face, smell the sea air and that moment at Lands End fifty-seven years ago comes rushing back to me. These sensual experiences like the smell of honeysuckle discussed in Fragment 4 serve as triggers to memory (Flood 2003). The photograph is a touchstone to my sense of identity and to a place of significance now long gone.

**Interrogations**

The question of the reliability of memory is a vexed one. In Chapter Four, I explore the nature of memory and its capacity for authenticity. Some like David Gross (2000) claim that:

> Memory is not and cannot be as accurate as it was once assumed and thus cannot be relied upon neither for values, identity nor any other aim or end in the same way that it has in the past ... (p. 3).

While Gross’ position has some merit, I cannot accept that this premise is sufficient to dismiss any undertaking in a search of self, for it is memory that gives us some sense of continuity about who we are and where we have come from. For as Gross himself concedes it ‘provides some ontological security, some sense of who one has been in the past and still is in the present’ (p. 2). The unraveling of identity through an archaeological
approach to excavation relies on memory and in relation to this process I agree with Gross when he adds that:

Prevailing opinion now seems to be that in most acts of remembering there is as much material from the present that is projected backward as there is material that comes authentically and indisputably from the past itself (p. 3).

This is partially illustrated in my earlier example of how a current sensation of the sea breeze carries critical memories of childhood feelings of safety and love. Feelings of dislocation in the new homeland eroded feelings of ‘ontological security’ which has impacted on my need to create and preserve a physical space called home. The happiest and most secure home spaces have been at coastal locations.

Nicola King (2000) believes that memory serves as the mediator between past and present (p. 175). Following each fragment in Chapter Three: the Archaeological Site, I have interrogated the fragment/s of memory, acknowledging and applying Nachtraglichkeit or Jean Laplanche’s (1999) translation of the concept as afterwardness. The interrogations unravel the fragment of memory in the context of ‘I did not know then - what I know now’.

The relationship between the present moment and the past in the unraveling of identity through excavation and interpretation of fragments of memory is the cornerstone of this research. On this research journey, in the process of excavation I found that often even these fragments were only shards or splinters worn down by time. In constructing micro-narratives, the embellishment came through interrogating and interpreting them from the perspective of the present moment.

As in an archaeological dig, the route was non-linear and relied on clues dug up, decoded, interpreted, and in some instances generated into micro-narratives and collated as creative pieces or artefacts. Initially as I uncovered fragments in journals, in the photographic archive Happy Memories, listened to family stories and visited the places of memory, the process of the investigation was intuitive, and random. In this way, sometimes fragments were revealed unexpectedly, excavating memory and in turn providing clues to other events, people and places. Sometimes, following the clues that had triggered my memory meant that I consciously searched through my personal journals, photographic archives, sought conversations with significant others or travelled to places
of my childhood to contribute to the remembering of self. Over time, these fragments were interrogated using self-reflexive methods and these interrogations are found in Chapter Three. This process is consistent with the work of Fred Davis (1979) whose work regarding habit, recall and mementos in relation to the way memory bridges the past and present is discussed in Chapter Four. It is a self-reflexive practice.

Self-reflexivity in narrative is acknowledged as an important form of self-inquiry (Bochner & Ellis 1992; Flood 2003; Freeman 2007). Theorists (Clandinin 2000; Diamond 1993; Richardson & Lockridge 2004) in this genre believe that it is through self-reflexive writing that we are able to examine and make sense of our lives.

In studying the narratives of the new African Diaspora in Australia, Mapedzahama and Kwansah-Aidoo (2010) employ a self-reflexive narrative approach to unravel their everyday lived experiences and ‘complex layering of our Blackness’ (p. 1). This ‘layering’ is the stratification of lived experience that I have referred to as manifesting as an archaeology of self and identity. Embedded in these layers is what Jill Ker Conway (1998) refers to as inner scripts. Whether we are aware if it or not our culture gives us an inner script by which we live our lives and as I interrogated the fragments uncovered, I started to understand more fully the deeply inscribed cultural scripts in my life.

The unraveling of identity through this archaeological approach involving the interrogation of fragments generated micro-narratives (see Chapter Six). Conway (1998) tells us that:

*We should pay close attention to our stories. Polish their imagery. Search for the ways we experience life differently from the inherited version and edit the plot accordingly, keeping our eyes on the philosophical implications of the changes we make* (p. 177).

In keeping with this advice, I discovered that further examination of the micro-narratives through self-reflexive interrogations resulted in my interpreting and re-interpreting inherited stories, photographic fragments and memories of place in the present moment. This in turn generated the creation of a number of artefacts. Through this process I was able to ‘capture a sense of lived time’ (Bruner 2004). The process of excavation of fragments, interrogation through self-reflexive writing and creation of artefacts unraveled archaeology of identity and supported the claim by Gillie Bolton (2006) that our "lives are made sense of and ordered ...[by narratives] recounted; told and retold daily through
actions, memories and thoughts ...” (p. 206) (cited in Mapedzahama & Kwansah-Aidoo 2010, p. 6).
The process of artefact creation can be seen in the following example of how lived experience and associated fragments are uncovered.

Figure 5. Process of data generation and artefact creation
In *Figure 5* the interplay and interaction of emerging fragments and reflective processes that contribute to the creation of the various artefacts are easily seen.

**Artefacts**


Both words and images share the options of what Ricoeur (1981) called “narrative function”. Both are texts that can tell a story, including a story as complicated as that of one’s life. Moreover, one quality of the narrative textures of autobiographies, be it in linguistic or visual media, is to create a fabric of cohesion and plausibility that is usually taken to be the immediate reflection of a person’s life (p. 276).

I have used the fragments found to excavate memory and unravel archaeology of identity and I have embellished these shards to create a number of artefacts along the way. In turn, these artefacts have become fragments themselves. These creative pieces often emerged spontaneously, triggered by a variety of stimuli; sometimes they were quite impulsive responding to a minor or major incident or experience. While some, such as the digital stories or images in the *Hall of Mirrors* remained unchanged, others like the fable *Satatantra* were crafted over time and were shaped by attendant twists and turns along the way.

Along the way, it became clear that the form of written narrative alone would be not adequate to fully reflect the rich and complex process of the excavation and unraveling of self. As a creative and highly multi-sensorial individual, my lived experience is imbued with multiple ways of knowing. As photographs, film, stories, travel, literature, and art all contribute to and engage me, I need both pictures and words to tell my story. This led me to recognise clues and information in a variety of fragments revealed in the excavation. Through the interrogation of these clues and by using self-reflexive processes, I employ devices such as metaphor to augment the quality of the created artefacts. As Ricoeur (1990) and Brockmeier (2001) believe, I demonstrate the way that both words and imagery are essential to the function of my narrative journey.

The employment of multiple elements in narrative and artefact creation is best exemplified in my use of *Digital Storytelling*. Digital storytelling is dialogic and interactive
and relies on randomly selected, non-linear multimedia data. In many ways its organic characteristics return us to the non-linearity and interactivity of traditional forms of storytelling. For me, the art of digital storytelling serves as an important device to excavate memories and bring life to the stories behind family photos and film that may fade away in time. The process also generates micro narratives through revealing fragments of memory discovered along the way. For example the combination of spoken and visual narrative in each segment of *Lost in Translation* generates its own micro narrative about time, life experience, place and people. Each segment represents a chapter or critical incident in my life. The micro-narrative generated subsequently feeds forward into aspects of the fable and relates backwards to images in photographic archives.

In his thesis on *Self Perceptions and Social Connections: Empowerment through Digital Storytelling in Adult Education*, Caleb Paull (2002) tells us that:

> While in our daily lives we move between worlds in which our selves are different and even contradictory, in the authoring of self we make choices and negotiate between these selves that exist in different contexts and social worlds. From the reflective space of constructing story, in responding to and addressing the social worlds, roles and codes of our lives, we can begin to form a sense of self-control, and a basis for self-direction (p. 141).

Through digital storytelling I have found a powerful mechanism to tell my story and more importantly to engage people to reflect on and tell their personal stories.

The artefacts I have created as part of this research are critical in offering a reflection of my life, portraying a multi dimensional prism to view the landscape of the *Journey Around Myself*.

### The Use of Metaphor

The artefacts and thesis relating to the *Journey Around Myself* are framed by metaphor. A variety of metaphors punctuate, co-exist and interact with each other. These include written, visual, aural and kinesthetic components that are all elements of communication (*The Fable Satatantra*; the digital story *Lost in Translation*; the collages in the *Hall of Mirrors*). These elements are combined and used in the process of excavation of self as archaeological project.

Speaking about the value of metaphor in organisational research Clegg and Gray (1996) tell us that:
Metaphors are inevitable and useful. They are not embellishments. No pure space exists outside their spell. They are part of our craft. They form our life as researchers. Without them we would be nowhere that we could know (p. 91).

In my case, the use of metaphor in the excavation of self and the development of artefacts on the journey enables an embodiment of all my ways of knowing. These 'ways of knowing' are referred to as multiliteracies by Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope (2004).

There are now many examples of use of metaphor as applied in non-traditional or creative PhDs. Some of these being Dara Loi (RMIT 2005), Peter Burrows (RMIT 2004), Greer Honeywill (Monash 2003) and Enza Gandolfo (Victoria University) to name a few. The artefacts in this research vary in structure and form. They are multisensory and allegorical. As metaphor they use symbolism and analogy to create and communicate meaning but as Reason (1988) tells us they do this 'without directly indicating specific meanings: they demonstrate meanings by re-creating patterns in metaphorical shape and form' (p. 81)

In her essay: *Can this Suitcase be a PhD Thesis?* Dara Loi (2006) discusses her use of multisensorial reading and writing, which she describes as 'an unfolding process where readers access ideas through a range of creative and conceptual media, engaging with all their senses,' (p. 86). In my research, I utilise a range of creative forms such as photographs, digital media, collage, fable writing and self-reflexive narrative to unravel a sense of who I am. In doing so, I use a variety of forms of language such as visual and fabled metaphor to learn about my data. In doing so, I adopt Elliot Eisner’s (1997) ideas and through the process learn about myself in relation to that data, and about my skills and abilities to communicate that data in different ways (p. 259). Loi (2006) refers to the figure employed by Reason (1988) to explain the manner in which metaphors co-exist in a number of forms and at different levels in her research (p. 87).

Using the Reason model as a starting point I extend the model to illustrate how, in my research, the process and the product of unraveling archaeology of identity, has manifested in the use of these various languages. This has invariably occurred through the use of metaphor.

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4 The term multiliteracies was coined by the New London Group (1996) to highlight two related aspects of the increasing complexity of texts: (a) the proliferation of multimodal ways of making meaning where the written word is increasingly part and parcel of visual, audio, and spatial patterns; (b) the increasing salience of cultural and linguistic diversity characterized by local diversity and global connectedness. (Multiliteracy Project Vancouver, Canada)
Figure 6. Diagram showing Multiliteracies and multiple Ways of Knowing

Peter Reason 1988:81 – Many Languages

Multiliteracies employed on the Journey Around Myself in the archaeological excavation of fragments and creation of artefacts using metaphor. Fonseca 2010
The use of *multisensorial* modes as seen in *Figure 6* paves the way for enhanced engagement with a wider and more diverse audience as it promotes a range of ways in which others may interact, interpret and use the feelings conveyed by the research. As Eisner (1991) tells us:

> For feeling to be conveyed, the “language” of the arts must be used, because it is through the form a symbol displays that feeling is given virtual life (p. 4).

As I have recorded in Artefact 7, *Charting the Journey*, this has been borne out by audience response to screenings of my digital stories.

The multiple layering of metaphor facilitates a form of ‘critical disengagement’ with the story. The Brechtian notion of *critical disengagement* is discussed by Fredric Jameson (1998) who believes that Brecht's method as a multilayered process of reflection and self-reflection, reference and self-reference tears open a gap for individuals to situate themselves historically, to think about themselves in the third person, and to use that self-projection in history as a basis for judgment (p. 6).

He reminds us that in creating forms that we feel to be actual:

> It is also crucial to understand that for Brecht, these qualities which we have been enumerating – dissonance, *Trennung*, distance, separation … and so on – also have a meaning (p. 76).

The concept of critical disengagement is also used by feminist researchers to develop a *passionate detachment* (Milech 2006). Researchers are encouraged to step back, create distance but maintain the strength of their own voice. Other researchers such as anthropologist Ruth Behar (1996) and sociologist Laurel Richardson (1997) also support employing this method.

On this research journey, often it is the use of metaphor that enables me to dig through the layers of memory and lived experience (for example the use of my protagonist *Bhudevi* in the fable *Satatantra*). It is the distance and separation generated by use of metaphor that allows me to critically disengage. In doing so I am able to pause, to catch breath and develop a deeper understanding of my world. Often, as the narrative in Artefact 7 *Charting the Journey* indicates, finding myself stuck at difficult emotional crossroads I find that it is
metaphor that provides the ambiguity and latitude to create a safe space and unshackle my voice.

In the process of excavating, interrogating and exploring the emergent data and common themes associated with my original research endeavour become apparent. Two of the most significant of these are the experience of dislocation and that of the silencing of voice. The entire research, in all its forms, is permeated with incidents that represent these two experiences. This phenomenon validates my multiple ways of knowing and in Figure 7 I show examples of this thematic recurrence throughout the journey. The significance of these examples is borne out by their inclusion in Figure 4 and supports a triangulation of knowledge.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Theme</strong></th>
<th><strong>Occurrence</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dislocation</strong></td>
<td>The act of migration described in the Fable <em>Satatantra</em> depicts the elephant Bhudevi lost and dislocated on arrival in her new homeland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fragment 3 contains journal entries relating to dislocation experienced whilst travelling.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fragment 6 and Artefact 2 <em>Argumentum e Silencio</em> depicts the dislocation felt in relation to sexual identity as lesbian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The experience of dislocation and loss underpins the allegoric digital story <em>Lost in Translation</em> telling of loss of place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the <em>Hall of Mirrors</em> Collage 16 contains narrative relating to the search for a place to belong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photographs from the family archive <em>Happy Memories</em> portray events such as the departure from my homeland. These images generated memories and stories of dislocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silencing of Voice</strong></td>
<td>In the Fable <em>Satatantra</em> Bhudevi the elephant tells of her powerlessness and silencing in her parents’ decision to migrate (Chapter 3 Unwilling Acts).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the digital story <em>Lost in Translation</em> the silencing of voice in relation to experiences at school and in ‘love’ relationships is metaphorically portrayed and spoken of in the narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The silencing of the authentic voice and adoption of an academic voice as survival strategy in the new homeland is included in Fragment 6 and in Collage 20 in the <em>Hall of Mirrors</em>. This phenomenon is also discussed in Artefact 7 <em>Charting the Journey</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In Fragment 6 and in two digital stories the silencing of the lesbian voice emerges as a dominant theme. In Fragment 7 and in <em>Lost in Translation</em> the act of silencing is manifest in relation to the experience of marriage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fragment 8 shows how the voice can be silenced when forced to exist in a ‘third space’. This phenomenon is also explored in the spoken narrative of the digital story <em>A Journey through Lost Time</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the fable <em>Satatantra</em> (p. 93), in Fragment 10 and in <em>Lost in Translation</em> there are examples of the experience of silencing within socio-political contexts. In these cases the context was a ‘feminist’ environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 7 Recurrence of significant themes**
The nature of my research question investigated from a transdisciplinary perspective and using a new archaeological approach to narrative inquiry as methodology gave me the freedom to investigate the research question in more than one modality. Peter Reason’s (1988) languages, Kalantzis and Cope’s (2004) multiliteracies and Rosi Braidotti’s (1994) nomads all tell us how we can use these multiple ways of knowing to open up new associations and fresh landscapes to reveal elements that may have been hidden or silent.

For Norman Denzin (1978), data triangulation involves time, space, and persons. In the Handbook of Qualitative Research, Denzin (2005) tells us that varied forms of data including visual data such as photographs that I use in my research provide knowledge that can be cross validated. In such a case a photo may corroborate evidence found in other forms of data such as stories. He says:

Visual documentation becomes part of the research triangulation, confirming theories using different forms of data. In these instances, the photos argue that the visual traces of the world adequately describe the phenomenon under question. (p. 748)

In Figure 7 I have clearly shown how the phenomena of dislocation and of silencing of voice emerge in different forms. From each single incidence and perspective they speak to each other, often in complex and symbiotic ways to validate their authenticity. In the process they significantly contribute to the unraveling of an archaeology of identity.

The Cyclical Nature of the Methodology

Through the process of identification and reflection on the key influences in my life I excavate fragments of memory, place, people and lived experience. These generated micro-narratives offer clues for interrogation by self-reflexive practices. The self-reflexive narratives emerge in multiple forms: both visual and written narratives that finally lead to the creation of artefacts. Regular interrogation of the emergent data means that, rather than accounts of events and critical incidents, I am able to unravel, articulate and present a deeper understanding of who I am in the present moment.

Adele Flood (2003) indicates that ‘the artistic self is mediated by influences impacting upon the individual’ (p. 135). Her model Constructing Personal Narratives (see Figure 2) shows us how this lived experience can be interrupted and steered by elements she calls turning or anchoring points, events that cause or generate change in the direction of or
give significant meaning to the life story (2010, p. 6). In my research the excavation, identification and interrogation of fragments of my lived experience including these turning and anchoring points means that the information is interpreted and re-interpreted, told and re-told and each stage of the interrogative and reflexive process brings new insights and understanding. This process elucidates a sharper focus on answers to the questions: Who am I? Where am I? And When am I?

In accordance with Wilhelm Dilthey's (1996) concept of the hermeneutic circle, it is in the telling and re-telling, the interpretation and assimilation as seen in the Flood (2003) model that we are able to perceive the whole in relation to the individual parts. In this way the ever changing and fluid notion of identity is understood in a cultural, social and textual context. Paul Ricoeur (1992) also speaks about this fluidity of identity in relation to narration and contextualisation. He says:

Narrative identity is not that of an immutable substance or of a fixed structure, but rather the mobile identity issuing from the combination of the concordance of the story, taken as a structured totality, and the discordance imposed by the encountered events...it is possible to revise a recounted story which takes account of other events, or even which organizes the recounted events differently (p. 6).

The idea of revisions of narrative through the reflexive process of interrogation and re-interpretation in relation to unraveling identity are critical to my methodology. Morny Joy (1997) discusses this idea in her introduction to Ricoeur and Narrative: Context and Contestation. She says:

Ricoeur's approach is hermeneutical in that it accepts that we are constantly part of a process of interpretation and reinterpretation. We are involved in a constant evolution whereby the past is being integrated into the present, and the present refining its perceptions of the past and of its own definitions (p. xxvi).

In this way the methodological process of investigating such complex and rich data becomes cyclical through interrogative practice. Each step increases the validity and legitimacy of the data by a triangulation of knowledge and verification of data. This results in the revelation of new understandings about such concepts as migration, identity, memory, place and belonging and the way that these elements interact to affect a sense of self and belonging. Ultimately, I am able to unravel a sense of identity and belonging through this cyclical, self-reflexive process of investigation of non-linear and emergent data. From a chronological point of view, ultimately the recounting of my life story evolves
as synchronous to the narration of the story, a story that will keep on evolving with time and reflection. As Ricoeur (2005) tells us ‘Learning to narrate oneself is also learning how to narrate oneself in other ways’ (p. 101). The conclusion to each of the three digital stories and the Fable *Satatantra* all end with the words: *the journey continues* ...On this *Journey Around Myself* I leave my life-story open ended, for in time it will be narrated and re-narrated in the light of my experience.

In this section I have examined how fragments of excavated data emerge generating a plethora of micro-narratives that are transformed to create multi-layered artefacts. This has been possible by employing a cyclical methodological practice of interrogation and self-reflexivity to produce a deeper understanding of self. I have identified and explored some of the common themes arising through the process and drawing on the work of relevant theorists I have critically analysed how multiple ways of knowing are exemplified in the recurring incidents and multiple forms in my research.

**New Approach**

*A Journey Around Myself* explores fragments of memory and produces a number of artefacts generated from an exploration of self. My study is concerned with how the dislocated self evolves to develop a sense of identity in a new landscape by using memory and narrative in all its forms as triggers to remember the self. By using the tools of archaeology I excavate, explore and interpret fragments of a life remembered. This multifarious and non-linear approach is a new rich mechanism employed to uncover, piece together and make sense of the present self.

Two methodological observations can be made: the first is concerned with a new ‘archaeological’ approach to narrative inquiry; the second relates to the unique method of construction of data in narrative form. I will now briefly explore some of the methodological roots from which this archaeological approach is derived and I will present my new model and summarise how it builds on the work of Flood (2003) and Reason (1988).

I will then examine how data is constructed as narrative for interrogation that leads to a research model that broadens the scope of University models for PhD research and extends the *research question model* for creative theses developed by Barbara Milech and Anne Schilo (2004).
Finally, using a framework to judge a qualitative dissertation developed by Maria Piantanida and Noreen Garman (2006) I validate my research methodology.

Methodological Roots

Phenomenology

In his book *Oneself as Another*, Paul Ricoeur (1992) reawakens discussions and debates about the 'philosophies of the self' put forward by Edmund Husserl on phenomenology at the turn of the twentieth century. The Husserlian viewpoint, which primarily focuses on the reflection of self and consciousness in relation to phenomena as contributing to the construction of knowledge, was later adapted and extended by Martin Heidegger (1962) in his book *Being and Time*. Heidegger elevates the importance of ontology over epistemology, emphasising the importance of *dasein* or 'being there'.

This research is about 'being there'; about subjectivity and about understanding the self and lived experience in relation to the social phenomena. It is about the unraveling of identity through the excavation of the past and interrogation, interpretation, re-interpretation and re-appropriation of fragments of evidence to narrate the self.

Ricoeur (1992) reminds us that 'the past remains open to reinterpretations and re-appropriations' and that these must be liberated from systems that tend 'to stifle and conceal' or no innovation would be possible (p. 298). Ricoeur is referring to the significance of subjectivity and intentionality and to the connections between the self and its relationship to the social world. In *A Journey Around Myself* I adopt a phenomenological approach to unraveling archaeology of identity. I place my self at the centre of the research. I interrogate fragments of lived experience by excavating the memoried past to unravel a sense of who I am today. Memory and formation of narrative were critical components of the process. As such, the non-linear and emergent nature of the data and the subjective weighting of memories and incidents as critical reflected the phenomenological concept of the unevenness of lived time and the way that some experiences are more meaningful, more significant and more dramatic than others (Dilthey, 1989; Gadamer, 1982; Ricoeur 1990).
**Auto/Ethnography**

The study of the researcher self as a subject of investigation has become acceptable in a variety of research disciplines such as anthropology (Reed-Danahay, 1997), sociology (Denzin, 1997, 2006), communications (Ellis, 1992, 2003; Ellis & Bochner, 2006) and education (Romo, 2004) to name a few. Heewon Chang (2008) tells us that auto ethnography is concerned with an ethno methodological approach that is cultural in its interpretive capacity and autobiographical in its content (p. 48). My thesis draws heavily on the underlying principles of auto ethnography. *A Journey Around Myself* is a journey; a journey that has at its centre the ethnographic ‘I’ that resonates with the belief that ethnography is a journey and not a destination. It is a place where I have been able to ‘dwell in the flux of lived experience’ (Bochner and Ellis 2006, p. 431).

In his book *After the Fact* cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1995) tells us that:

> What we can construct if we keep notes and survive, are hindsight accounts of the connectedness of things that seem to have happened, pieced together happenings: after the fact (p. 2).

Consistent with this idea, a *Journey Around Myself* draws on excavated fragments and engages in a process of meaning making to establish connectedness in the light of the present moment but ‘after the fact’. In keeping with an auto/ethnographic approach, in my research I use personal experience as primary data and interpret the self as a cultural and social being in relation to others. In doing so I explore the relationship between my self and others. While the data is non-linear and emergent, the investigative process used occurs through a systematic process of interrogation, analysis and interpretation (see Figure 7). The methodology employed manifests as both process and product in a *Journey Around Myself* (Artefact 7 Charting the Journey).

**Narrative Inquiry**

The starting point of this research journey has as its genesis the discovery of my authentic voice; a voice silenced through the experience of migration that left me with feelings of dislocation and loss of identity. Who am I? Where am I? When am I? were questions that have haunted my existence since I fell into the ‘third space’ (Bhabha 1994). Inhabiting a new landscape that Gloria Anzaldua (1999) calls the ‘borderlands’ I was lost; caught between the landscape of my new homeland and the one I still carried around in my heart;
a place where everything had made sense; a place that I had left behind. Anzaldúa (1999) tells us that borderlands are:

... a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary ... a constant state of transition (p. 3).

To investigate this dislocation and loss of identity, to unravel the emotional residue and to understand my lived experience, I embarked on this *Journey Around Myself* and turned to narrative as the means and method of researching the questions at hand. Narrative is the most suitable choice as it is about lived experience, interaction, how people shape and are shaped by the social context (Dewey 1938). It presents me with the potential to articulate uniqueness. As a form of inquiry it is reflexive and flexible and allows me to excavate the past through the uncovering and interrogation of fragments of memory. The journey unfolds and the story emerges as an autobiographical endeavour. As it unravels my sense of identity, both the process and the emergent data revealed along the way generate diverse forms of narrative for interrogation and investigation (Figure 5).

Mark Freeman (2007) tells us that ‘autobiography is the inroad par excellence into exploring the dynamic features – as well as profound challenges – of narrative inquiry’ (p. 120), and in my research I have used the underpinning elements of narrative inquiry as my methodology. Later in this chapter I introduce a new approach to narrative inquiry that extends and enriches the potential of this methodology for understanding human experience.

Clandinin and Connelly (2007) observe that ‘narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience ... narrative inquiry is stories lived and told (p. 20). They define narrative inquiry and tell us that:

Arguments for the development and use of narrative inquiry come out of a view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives. People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Viewed this way, narrative is the phenomenon studied in inquiry. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt
At its very core this research reflects a desire to understand lived experience. I am the researcher and the researched, the person whose lived experience I am narrating. However, I have heeded the advice of Jens Brockmeier (2001) to think beyond the monological 'I' also noting the caution expressed by Jerome Bruner (1991). I have been careful not to consider the self as “solo, locked up inside one person’s subjectivity, as hermetically sealed off” (p. 76). Consequently I present a form of narrative inquiry that is multidimensional, socially and culturally interactive, diverse, complex yet accessible. In Chapter Seven I discuss how others will be able to use this model on their own journeys of knowing.

The idea of ‘narrative’ or the ‘relation of a series of events’ is not new (Pinnegar and Daynes; 2007) and narrative researchers usually hold that ‘the story is the most fundamental unit that accounts for human experience’ (p. 4). My research journey consists of countless stories that reside within a unifying story; fragments of memory excavated, interrogated, embellished and interpreted. In my research I consider the narrative to be both method and phenomena (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, p. 3). Along with the inquiry itself they all have experiential starting points. In due course theoretical literature informs both the methodology and an understanding of the experience from which I began.

**Observation 1: Archaeological Narrative Inquiry**

Many years ago, I came across the work of the philosopher Walter Benjamin. As a person who has always been interested in reading and learning about the lives of others, I was particularly drawn to his childhood memoir written as The Berlin Chronicle (*Berliner Chronik*) and *Berlin Childhood Around 1900*. In them, Benjamin attempts to reconstruct his own past life and the life of an era, as they were shaped by the city of Berlin. The city Benjamin reconstructs is a city of memory of two kinds for it is not only a memoir of his own life and that of the city of Berlin, but also, and in both cases, the traces of the past interpreted and preserved in the present moment. It is an account of the fragmentary nature of memory; it is about autobiography and about the processes of remembering.

As a person feeling dislocated and lost in terms of a sense of identity, my own research journey to investigate the role of memory and narrative in unraveling identity drew me back to the work of Benjamin. I was particularly fascinated by his metaphor of
archaeology applied to the process of remembering the self. For Benjamin (2006) this ‘digging up’ of memories constituted a goldmine of ‘matter’ or data from the past revealed for examination in the present. He observes:

> For the matter itself is only a deposit, a stratum, which yields only to the most meticulous examination what constitutes the real hidden treasure within the earth: the images, severed from all earlier associations, that stand – like precious fragments or torsos in a collectors gallery – in the prosaic rooms of our later understanding (p. 314).

As discussed earlier in this chapter I employed the model developed by Adele Flood (2003) to construct personal narratives as the first stage for data exploration. It served an excellent starting point as a process of recording inputs/outputs affected by turning points and anchoring points that produced data for interrogation and assimilation. In turn, these generated personal narratives. However, the point of departure in my research was that the process generated multifarious and diverse narratives and included fragments of memory too complex in content, form and structure to be represented by a single personal narrative. The process of digging had uncovered a ‘real hidden treasure’ a cache of visual memory – precious fragments in this research.

As a photographer with a photographic heritage my experience resonated with that of Alice In Wonderland. Lewis Carroll (1982) writes:

> Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures and conversations in it, "and what is the use of a book" thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations?" (p. 3).

Images and story have always been part of my world and an integral part of my lived experience. I agree with photographer Hedy Bach (2007) when she says that: “seeing is a way of being in relation with people, nature and self. Being a visual narrative inquirer involves an active process of photographing my life…” (p. 281). As a photographer and visual narrative inquirer this is what I have done for most of my life. From the evidence contained in Artefact (5) Happy Memories one can see that photographing life has been part of my family heritage too.
I could see that visual fragments were a significant part of my data and my constructions of the narrated self. However, if I were to use visual fragments that I had unearthed and created, how was I to foreground and include their significance? Visual narrative inquiry facilitated another layer of meaning, and the process required a spontaneous non-linear approach to make these multiple ways of knowing possible. The process I was engaged in required something that reflected this complexity and that reached beyond the construction of a singular personal narrative.

One day as I reflected on my research journey to date (Artefact 7 *Charting the Journey*), I started to consciously see the connections between my own research process and the archaeological metaphor alluded to by Benjamin (2006). This was an epiphanous moment as I could now see that I had inadvertently employed the concepts and tools of archaeology in my approach. I was able to effectively re-frame and situate my research method to date within this archaeological paradigm. The topography of my study is the landscape of self (the study of self and lived experience) – the *Archaeological Site*. The site contained the past as buried fragments (tangible and intangible) for excavation and interpretation and included complex clues and triggers stratified in the layers of time.

As my research developed, I started to recognise the temporally erratic and non-linear way in which my memory worked on this journey to remember the self. Data emerged unexpectedly and without warning. Fragments of memory were stimulated by experiences emanating from a plethora of sources. Each fragment of memory generated data as micro-narratives. These were interrogated and interpreted in the light of present experience. Creative artefacts that emerged as part of the process enhanced my experience in search of self.

The process of excavation, interrogation and interpretation metaphorically unfolded as an archaeological site. The *Landscape of Self* constituted my past and included the key influences of family, formal education, socio-cultural factors, significant others and contingencies such as the critical incident of my leaving my homeland of India (Figure 7).

This self reflexive investigation is the process I employ to understand the dynamics of my individual experience and contexts that shape that experience – *Narrative Inquiry*. Whilst my methodology that included phenomenology, auto/ethnography and narrative inquiry were important starting points, I found that due to the non-linearity of time, the nature of the emergent data and the overall diversity and complexity of the research, my
methodological approach needed re-framing to reflect the true nature of my research processes.

My first task was to explore the research landscape for exemplars conducive to the complexity of my data; perhaps an archaeological approach? Perhaps I would find examples of something that included a conceptual or methodological framework akin to my extension of the Flood (2003) model or my application of Reason's (1988) ‘languages’. The exploration involved an extensive literature search that contained web based databases and key texts in qualitative research. These included the key collections: *The Handbook of Narrative Inquiry*, Clandinin and Connelly (2007); *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) and key journals: *Journal of Narrative & Life History*; and *Narrative Inquiry*, but in the main my search was fruitless.

Given the insight of Walter Benjamin's (2006) writing in the 1930's, and the reference to the partial nature of memories as fragments observed by Salman Rushdie (1991) who draws parallels with archaeology regarding the process of remembering (p. 12), I was somewhat surprised at the paucity; almost non-existence of relevant literature. Whilst there were examples of research involving narrative in the discipline of archaeology, and archaeological narratives only one reference to an archaeological approach was found. Based on a two-year narrative study with an inner-city schoolteacher, Joann Phillion's (2002) *Narrative Inquiry in a Multicultural Landscape* provides an alternative way of thinking about multicultural education that she calls narrative multiculturalism.

In her first chapter *Excavating the Autobiographical Roots of the Inquiry Landscape* Phillion refers to archaeology in relation to her autobiographical links to her research. As researcher she claims to ‘dig into connections between my autobiography and my inquiry’ (p. 3) and refers to ‘fragments of lives’ (p. 5). While she uses her own experience gained by excavating her autobiographical roots in the course of the inquiry, her study primarily remains an exploration of narrative multiculturalism (p. 19); the concept of an archaeological approach to her inquiry, as either metaphor or a study of self is not forthcoming. The point of difference in my research in relation to an archaeological approach to inquiry is twofold:

1. I have *developed* a conceptual model based on the tools and concepts of archaeology: the past; a site; digging/excavation; fragments; clues; interrogation, piecing together; interpretation and the generation of narratives.
2. I have *implemented* a research model that employs the above concepts to excavate memories revealing a plethora of rich, varied and complex fragments and clues of the past self for interpretation in the present. I have shown through a cyclical process of interrogation, reflection, interpretation and generation of micro-narratives how this model presents a methodology by which the individual can unravel identity and author the self.

This is an archaeological approach that examines lived experience and the narrated self.
Figure 8 offers a diagrammatic view of the imbricated and complex way in which the process emerged.

**Figure 8. Process of Archaeological Narrative Inquiry in a Journey Around Myself**

Figure 8 represents the archaeological construct of this *Journey Around Myself*. Its main components are the *Landscape of Self* that incorporates my lived experience and includes the articulation of my ‘key influences’ based on the Flood (2003) model. Investigation and reflection on these key influences drew the parameters and established the topography of the *archaeological site for excavation*.

The excavation reveals fragments of the past and memories contained within Photographs and Film, Places of Memory, Memory of places, Family Narratives and reflections recorded in my personal Journals.

Over time these were interrogated, reflected upon, interpreted and generated a variety of complex and diverse forms of micro-narratives

These were assimilated (Flood 2003) and fed the generation of further narratives forming creative constructions of the narrated self. These include the Fable: Satatantra; the digital stories: Argumentum e Silencio; A Journey through Lost Time; and Lost in translation; Happy Memories and The Hall of Mirrors.

The journey is charted and recorded in narrative form as *Charting the Journey*.

The red background represents the ever-present landscape of inquiry throughout the process. This involves contingencies, turning and anchoring points, and a cycle of continuous interrogation and reflection.
**Summary**

I have drawn on the methodological traditions of phenomenology, auto/ethnography and narrative inquiry to explore, reflect and narrate the self. In doing so, I have built on the model for *Constructing Personal Narratives* developed by Adele Flood (2003). Inspired by the archaeological metaphor first alluded to by philosopher Walter Benjamin in *A Berlin Chronicle* (2006) I have acted like a ‘man digging’ and have not been ‘afraid to return again and again to the same matter’ (p. 314). The result has manifested in an archaeological excavation of self that generated data for interrogation and interpretation in the present.

Utilising the full potential of the archaeological metaphor I have developed the promise of ‘autobiographical excavation’ suggested in Joann Phillion’s (2002) study of narrative multiculturalism. The model (Figure 8) shows a rich and complex process; a process that involves a hermeneutic circle of knowing (Heidegger 1962) that in its course produces a triangulation of knowledge revealing common and recurrent themes about dislocation, migration, identity and voice. The data uncovered generated multiple micro-narratives and creative artefacts to produce diverse forms of constructions of the narrated self. Both the method and phenomena were considered as narrative. Consistent with Peter Reason’s (1988) model of multiple *Languages* and the idea of *multiliteracies* developed by Kalantzis and Cope (2004) I have engaged in multiple ways of knowing.

Along the way the journey has been informed by a variety of sources. Some of these include Mark Freeman (2002) and Jens Brockmeier (2001) on selfhood; Salman Rushdie (1991) and Audre Lorde (1982) on identity; Virginia Woolf (1976), Christa Wolf (1983) and May Sarton (1959) on writing a life; Jill Ker Conway (1998) and Liz Stanley (1992) on the autobiographical ‘I’; Nicola King (2000) and Hannah Arendt (1978) on memory; Jean Lyotard (1984); Adriana Cavarero (2000) and Karen Blixen-Dinesen (1972) on story; Annette Kuhn (2002) and John Berger (1972) on ways of seeing and Marcel Proust (1992) and Paul Ricoeur (1990) on the concept of time and narrative. These are just a few of the many sources that have inspired me and underpinned the formation of my theoretical position.

The approach I have named: an *archaeological approach to narrative inquiry* has extended and developed *narrative inquiry methodology*
Observation 2: Constructed Data for Interrogation

Throughout this research journey, one of the most frustrating yet illuminating experiences has been to try and describe or explain my research process to members of the academy. As I described my investigation and process some people called what they termed an ‘arts based thesis’ a ‘soft option’. Others politely alluded to the concept of writing the self as an act of self-indulgence. I was frustrated because on almost each occasion, the listener would either immediately want to understand my work as either a ‘dissertation’ (research thesis) or a PhD by ‘artefact and exegesis’ (creative PhD). However, I also found the response illuminating, because at each such experience I became more aware that I was engaged in a non-traditional and exciting new approach.

A Journey Around Myself challenges the conventional examinable outcome for a PhD as it is not a traditional research thesis of new dimensions and not a creative thesis (artefact and exegesis). For example the Swinburne University guidelines for a PhD require either a dissertation or “or an artefact, product or creative work plus dissertation. The artefact may take the form of a performance, exhibition, writing (poetry, fiction, script or other written literary form), design, film, video, multimedia or other new media technologies and modes of presentation” (SUT 2009, p. 1).

In fact, my research can be likened to an investigation involving the generation of data for examination and analysis as found in the process of scientific research. In this case data is often generated from experimentation, is emergent, can be non-linear and becomes part of the research method itself.

In this section I will establish why, as a piece of qualitative PhD research my thesis occupies a new ‘third space’ or space ‘in-between’.

Dissertation

dissertation (noun) a lengthy formal written treatment of a subject, especially a long paper submitted as a requirement for a degree (Oxford Dictionary 2001).

In an online essay on How to write a Dissertation\(^5\) we are advised that ‘A PhD dissertation is a lengthy, formal document that argues in defense of a particular thesis’ and that while

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\(^5\) www.cs.purdue.edu/homes/dec/essay.dissertation.html
the discussion needs to be both ‘original’ and ‘substantial’ ‘The essence of a dissertation is critical thinking, not experimental data. Analysis and concepts form the heart of the work’ (p. 1).

The Swinburne University guidelines for a PhD by research (2009) state that “The dissertation will differ according to the study and discipline but should demonstrate clearly the contribution to new knowledge or mastery of a research area that is required as part of the requirements for the degree” (p. 2). This also applies for the dissertation component of a PhD by artefact and exegesis.

My research is transdisciplinary in nature and is underpinned by a range of theoretical and methodological approaches, written and visual texts and forms. This wide and diverse approach informs my work and in due course, as ideas and concepts resonate with the investigation they feed my process of excavation, interrogation, reflection and production of data. In doing so, the data and the analysis are both original and substantial. However, the point of difference in my research is that while analysis and concepts are embedded and are central to the process, the data production is experimental; the data was generated along the way and is inextricably linked to the analysis itself. As a result, the dissertation itself is infused with and contains data in multifarious forms as part of the narrative.

**Artefact and Exegesis**

Exploring the subject of creative production research and the validity of such research by artefact and exegesis, Barbara Milech (2006) discusses the current models of exegeses in Australian universities today. The *Context* model is perceived of as a ‘discussion of the context for the creative work’ (p. 7). The *Commentary* model is seen as either a "brief explanatory annotation" (p. 8), or “a research report that describes the research process and elaborates, elucidates and contextualises the [...] creative work” (p. 9).

Dismissing both of these models as inadequate, Milech refers to a third model developed by herself and Ann Schilo which they call the *Research Question Model* (2004). For Milech and Schilo the *Research Question Model* "attempts to rethink the relationship between the creative production and the exegetical components of a research thesis" (p. 10). This process opens up a space for the exploration and reflection of the relationship and reciprocity of the created product and the exegesis.
A Journey Around Myself is underpinned by a fundamental research question and in this way it is consistent with the model proposed by Milech and Schilo. However, the point of departure is that de-lineation between the creative pieces and the narrative of the thesis becomes blurred.

The research question was refined and reiterated at various stages of the journey and through this reflective practice it opens up creative and multimodal ways to investigate the subject of inquiry. This cyclical methodology, a process of reflective and archaeological narrative inquiry renders the creative pieces an inherent part of both the inquiry and the resulting narrative; an inquiry framed by theoretical and methodological practices.

In summary, a PhD by artefact and exegesis normally involves the production of a creative piece followed by either a narrative elaboration of the context; a commentary about the creative piece in the form of a research report; or an exploration of the interplay between the creative piece and the exegetical component based on a research question. While my research involves aspects of all these three models there is a fundamental but significant difference. The difference is found at two levels:

Firstly, no creative piece is produced as a stand-alone piece of artwork to be commented on or contextualised. The creative pieces or artefacts emerge as part of the investigation into the research question: What is the role of memory and narrative when unraveling archaeology of identity for an individual who has experienced dislocation and a loss of a sense of place? The creative pieces not only became data for interrogation, reflection and analysis, but at the same time are an integral part of the research findings.

Secondly, and of greater significance is the uniqueness of the method of construction of data in narrative form for interrogation, reflection and analysis. Fragments of memory are excavated, interrogated and reflected upon. It is this self-reflexive practice that generates narratives in multiple forms for further interrogation and reflection. Creative pieces or artefacts form part of this non-linear and emergent data. In due course, this data, resulting from an archaeological approach to narrative inquiry, involves its own inherent form of reciprocity. This generates a rich and complex unifying narrative manifesting in A Journey Around Myself.
My research as a PhD sits in a new space: it is neither a traditional research PhD nor a PhD by artefact and exegesis. I suggest this because I evidence the unique method of emergent data collection that is generated in diverse narrative forms for interrogation and analysis. Revealed through a process of archaeo logical narrative inquiry, the method, the data, and the resulting narratives are intertwined. They speak to each other in creative ways and together have the capacity to speak in myriad forms to a diverse and multifaceted audience.

I will now apply a framework of seven criteria to judge a qualitative dissertation developed by Maria Piantanida and Noreen Garman (1999) to further support the validity of my research methodology.

Having to defend qualitative research against the norms of a different paradigm, i.e. the scientific or positivist viewpoint, is still an ongoing issue for qualitative researchers today and is reflected in the responses to my work as documented earlier. Piantanida & Garman (1999) present a theory to expand the notion of qualitative inquiry—as traditionally understood in the field of management—to present it as a method and a logic of justification for the research. Their theory makes explicit the role of the researcher as ‘research instrument’ (Janesick 2003, p. 47; Meloy 2002, p. 61; Piantanida & Garman 2006, p. 139) to present a much deeper and richer context for the study.

Believing in the value of approaches used in qualitative research, and appreciating that qualitative researchers are often required to ‘defend’ their methodology, Piantanida and Garman (1999) offer seven criteria for judging a qualitative dissertation. Using these criteria I will briefly establish why the research methodology employed in A Journey Around Myself: an archaeological exploration of identity is appropriate, systematic, rigorous and can be followed and used by others.
### INTEGRITY (as architecture)

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<td>Is the work structurally sound? Does it hang together? Is the research rationale logical, appropriate, and identifiable within an inquiry tradition? Is the proper personal (or voice) used for the other(s) and other participants?</td>
<td>Despite the emergent and non-linear nature of the data and subsequent innovative means of construction of data as narrative, my research clearly follows a systematic structure. Models developed by others (Flood 2003; Reason 1988) are used and extended to place my research within a narrative inquiry tradition. Personal voice is used extensively and appropriately to reflect the self-reflexive nature of study.</td>
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### VERITE

| Does the work ring true? Is it consistent with accepted knowledge in the field? Or, if it departs, does it address why? Does it fit within the discourse in the appropriate literature? Is it intellectually honest and authentic? | The work in a Journey Around Myself is consistent with the fields of phenomenology, auto/ethnography and narrative inquiry. The research is transdisciplinary and draws upon texts from diverse fields such as literature, film, history, philosophy, sociology, psychology and education. As a study of self it is both intellectually honest and authentic. |

### RIGOR

| Is there sufficient depth of intellect, rather than superficial or simplistic reasoning? Are the conclusions carefully crafted from sufficiently thick and rich data? Was reflection done in a careful/systematic rather than haphazard fashion? Has the analysis/interpretation of the core portrayal been thorough/exhaustive? | The literature is embedded throughout the thesis. It reflects the depth, breadth of the research in a rich and complex examination of the methodology, and key concepts of memory, the self/identity, and story. Research involved an innovative process of exploration named as a new approach: archaeological narrative inquiry. This new approach is underpinned by an interrogative/reflective cycle consistent with the 'hermeneutic circle of knowledge' that triangulates the data. In the process common themes have been identified thus validating the mode and findings of the inquiry. |

### UTILITY

| Is the inquiry useful and professionally relevant? Does it make a contribution to a recognized field of study or established bodies of discourse? Does the piece have a clearly recognizable professional and/or scholarly audience? Is it educative? | My model (Figure 8) shows a clear and interconnected structure as guidance for others seeking to explore their autobiographical 'I'. The model offers a valid process by which key elements of lived experience can be revealed, interrogated and reflected upon in a cyclical form. Through this, others will be able to release the potential of multiple ways of knowing to excavate their memories and generate self narratives in multifarious |
**VITALITY**
Is the inquiry important, meaningful, and nontrivial? Does it have a sense of vibrancy, intensity, and excitement of discovery? Do metaphors and images communicate powerfully?

The research is an important and meaningful exploration of the self and is presented in multifarious forms of narrative. This has resulted in an engaging, vibrant and powerful form of communication between my research, a diverse audience and myself. The use of metaphors, images, stories, digital stories and visual artefacts enhance the potential to engage audiences at different levels and evoke reflection on their own life-story.

**AESTHETICS**
Is it enriching and pleasing to anticipate and experience? Are connections between the particular and the universal revealed in powerful, provocative, evocative, and moving ways? Does the work challenge, disturb, unsettle? Does it touch the spirit?

The artefacts produced from my research provide a platform from which people with similar experiences (e.g., migrants and others who have experienced dislocation) may be encouraged to share their own stories. The work is both provocative and evocative thus helps people to better understand the emotions and personal processes associated with dislocation. Audience responses at screenings of the digital stories confirm power of story to touch the spirit and evoke others' stories.

**ETHICS**
Is there evidence that privacy and dignity have been afforded all participants? Has the inquiry been conducted in a careful and honest way? Has every effort been made to represent the views of others accurately and in the spirit with which they were shared/intended? Has the researcher recognized and acknowledged his or her preconceptions/biases/assumptions and considered how these might distort understanding? Does the language of the dissertation adhere to the principles of non-discrimination? Does the inquiry have an ethical sensibility?

The research does not involve ‘participants’ per se. No people were ‘interviewed’ and no data was collected via any formal approach. People in my life are depicted in the Fable Satatantra appear either as composites or in the form of fictitious characters. The Hall of Mirrors uses photographs taken in public places and with permission.

As a study of self, data generated was primarily based on my own experience. The research is unashamedly subjective and does not claim otherwise. In this way, the data and findings are presented to intentionally trigger others to tell their story and apply the methodology developed as a process. A University ethics clearance has been obtained for the research.

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Figure 9. Validity of Research Methodology based on Piantanida & Garman (1999) criteria for judging a qualitative dissertation.
In this chapter I have sketched a landscape of self and based on a model developed by Adele Flood (2003), I have explored the construction of personal narratives. Inspired by the work of Walter Benjamin (2006) I have shown how I have extended the Flood model. Also, by using ‘many languages’ in accordance with the work of Peter Reason (1988) I have revealed a new approach to narrative inquiry: *Archaeological narrative inquiry*. In doing so I have demonstrated a unique way in which data is generated in the course of the research for interrogation and reflection. This distinctive data mechanism manifests in a thesis that falls outside the traditional ‘research’ PhD and ‘PhD by artefact and exegesis’.

I have established how the research goes beyond the ‘autobiographical I’, and how as a piece of qualitative research it is rigorous, valid and evocative for others.

In the next chapter I enter the archaeological site. The site, which consists of thirteen sections, contains the fragments and shards of memory. These are explored, interrogated and reflected upon generating micro-narratives that include creative pieces.
Chapter Three:
The Archaeological Site
Every journey contains another journey within its lines: the path not taken and the forgotten angle. These are journeys I wish to record. Not the ones I made but the ones I might have made, or did make in some other place or time. I could tell you the truth, as you will find in my diaries and maps and logbooks. You could follow it then, tracing those travels with your finger, putting red flags where I went.

The earth is round and flat at the same time. This is obvious. That it is round appears indisputable; that it is flat is our common experience, also indisputable.

Maps are magic. In the bottom corner there are whales; at the top, cormorants carrying pop-eyed fish. In between there is a subjective account of the lie of the land. Rough shapes of countries that may or may not exist, broken red lines marking paths that are at best hazardous, at worst already gone. Maps are constantly being re-made as knowledge appears to increase. But is knowledge increasing or detail decreasing?

A map can tell me how to find a place I have not seen but have often imagined. When I get there, following the map faithfully, the place is not the place of my imagination. Maps, growing ever more real, are much less true.

Not so. Fold up the maps and put away the globe. If someone else had charted it, let them. Start another drawing with cormorants at the bottom and whales at the top, and in between identify, if you can identify, the places you have not found yet on those other maps, the connections obvious only to you. Round and flat, only a very little has been discovered.

Time has no meaning. Space and place have no meaning, on this journey. All times can be inhabited, all places visited. In a single day the mind can make a millpond out of oceans. Some people who have never crossed the land they were born on have travelled all over the world. The journey is not linear; it is always back and forth, denying the calendar, the wrinkles and lines of the body. The self is not contained in any moment or any place, but it is only in the intersection of moment and place that the self might, for a moment, be seen vanishing through a door, which disappears at once.”

Jeanette Winterson, Sexing the Cherry: 1989, p.130
**Introduction**

I have folded up the maps that others have charted and 'put away the globe'. I have set path on a journey of discovery to navigate the landscape and the switchback lanes of memory – others’ and mine. My rucksack for the archaeological excavation contained memories, imagination, emotions, and reflections. There were also visual clues, stories, nostalgia and the aural and nasal senses. As each fragment is revealed, questions have emerged. However, as time goes by the answers slowly bleed into my reality, emerging from the palimpsest of memory and experience. Gradually through the process of excavation, I find I am writing myself into existence.

I will now reveal the fragments that emerged during the process of excavation on this archaeological excavation. These fragments; the shards of memory are manifest through:

- Excerpts from personal journals over the past forty-four years.
- Photographic images related to memories of place, people, experiences and objects.
- Remembered stories from my parents, family members and others.

These fragments are pivotal in the construction of a series of artefacts. Both fragments and artefacts form reference points within the discussion. The artefacts exist as separate yet interrelated objects within the presentation of the research. While the following artefacts exist as separate entities all are closely interrelated, providing markers in the formulation of a sense of identity. This is illustrated in Chapter Two with an example of how an interplay and interaction of emerging fragments and reflective processes contribute to the creation of the various artefacts (*Figure 5*).

The content found in the archaeological site is emergent due to the non-linear nature of the research process. In this chapter I will engage with the fragments, interrogate them in the present and reflect on their relevance to my identity today. The interrogations are primarily reflective and are located after each fragment. Drawing on these reflections a theoretical interrogation and analysis of the fragments is to be found in Chapters Four and Five as the *Excavation A (Memory)* and *Excavation B (Self)*.

I have drifted in vast open spaces on this *Journey Around Myself*, in a tumbled topography-forming layer upon layer, shaped and re-shaped by destiny, circumstance, experience and the ravages of time and space. In this landscape I have floated between points, some
visible others hidden deep below. As suggested by Jeanette Winterson (1989), I have drawn and re-drawn maps, climbed mountains, forged rivers – from the red laterite earth of Goa to the turbulent pacific shores of Eastern Australia; from the icy reaches of the Arctic Circle to the southern reaches of the temperate rainforests of Tasmania. The journey has amounted to an archaeological excavation, an archaeological inquiry into the landscape of memory in search of the ‘self’ and resonates with the concept of a peripatetic existence suggested by Georges Perec (1999) in his book *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*.

But, what lies beneath the landscape? Many forms of recorded events and times will show that throughout my life I have been a reflective person. However, the event of January 1967, the departure from India interrupted my journey and left me in a wilderness – lost and dislocated and haunted by ghosts of a childhood paradise left behind. The terrain of the next forty-four years has been enigmatic. As each layer of the present becomes sedimented, the topography becomes further stratified and complex. Some of the remains have crumbled into further ruins, piecemeal structures, some neglected and forgotten, some re-invented or abandoned. Critical incidents experienced during the journey of excavation often become fossilised, while fragments or pieces of the self further fractured and became lost along the way. Sometimes the search for a sense of self and place of belonging became more complicated often resulting in further dislocation. With each new experience another layer was gained or shed.

Like Meena Alexander, the eternal migrant, for many years I was unable to claim a single, fixed home with which I can align my fragmented sense of self. Alexander explains, “Houses shatter and fall in me. Shards of them, bits and pieces of them” (p. 119).

Amongst the ruins, there was a self – but where? How would I find it? Where would I look? Memory is inscribed and present in many and various forms. In this way, the excavation of memory presents us with an abundance of fragments that inherently serve a mnemonic function. On the *Journey Around Myself* the fragments uncovered found in this ‘archaeological site’ are later used as clues to embellish and generate micro-narratives. Some fragments are amalgamated and collated to become artefacts. These artefacts in turn can form auxiliary fragments. For example: photographs in the family archive are essential to the artefact *Happy Memories*. This artefact in turn is a fragment rich source for stories in the fable *Satatantra*, the digital story *A Journey through Lost Time* and for various collages in the *Hall of Mirrors*. 
Fragments and clues buried deep below as shards of memory from lived experience await excavation. Guided by the shattered mirrors of ancestral tales and an intuitive understanding invoked by photographs, relics, memories and the stories of my family. I set forth in this research to construct a landscape that will lead to an understanding of who I am in the present – a homecoming to the ‘self’ that lies within. Narrative theorists Arendt 1975; Brockmeier 2001; Cavarero 2000; Elliot 2001; Ricoeur 1990; Taylor 1992 suggest that we can only know who we are in the present moment as the self and our related stories keep evolving. In keeping with this notion, I will continue to explore the landscape of self in the present with the aid of my memoried past.

The archaeological site contains fragments of memory that include journal entries that span the forty three years since migration. These entries are direct excerpts, and, as such, are raw and remain unedited. Fragments also include reflective pieces of writing triggered by memories of place and places of memory. Each fragment is followed by an interrogation of the memory in the present moment and includes creative pieces that culminate in the artefacts generated as part of the process.
GUIDE TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

FRAGMENTS:
Excerpts from personal journals, photographic images related to memories of place, people, experiences and objects and remembered stories from my parents, family members and others. The excerpts have been loosely grouped into 13 thematic fragments and are not mutually exclusive.

INTERROGATIONS:
Each fragment is followed by an interrogation in the form of self-reflexive narrative. As such it explores the connections between each fragment and its contribution to the unraveling of my identity.

The fragments and interrogations are investigated using a theoretical analysis in Chapter Three (Memory) and Four (Self): Excavation A and Band in Chapter Five (Story)

1 Memory - Story - Identity
Interrogation 1

2 Memory - Childhood - Identity
Interrogation 2

3 Memory - Place - Identity
Interrogation 3

4 Memory - Senses
Interrogation 4

5 Memory – Childhood - Place
Interrogation 5

6 Silencing of Voice - Sexuality
Interrogation 6

7 Motherhood – Feminism
Interrogation 7

8 Borderlands
Interrogation 8

9 Ways of Seeing
Interrogation 9

10 Friendship
Interrogation 10

11 Return to India - Identity
Interrogation 11

12 Dislocation - Identity
Interrogation 12

13 Visual Fragments
Interrogation 13

ARTEFACTS: Constructions of the narrated self
These were generated through the process of excavation, interrogation and reflection and are considered as fragments of data for further investigation

1 The Hall of Mirrors
A book of twenty-one photographic collages and reflections relating to ‘significant others’.

2 Argumentum e Silencio
A Digital Story

3 A Journey Through Lost time...
A Digital Story

4 Lost in Translation
A Digital Story

5 Happy Memories
A book of photographic excerpts from the Fonseca Family Archive.

6 Satatantra: the elephant and the mirror
A Fable

7 Charting the Journey
A narrative account of the research Narrative Research Journey

Figure 10. Guide to the Archaeological Site
Archaeological Site

Fragments
FRAGMENT 1: Memory, Story, and Identity

Recollection of a story told to me by my parents.

She tells him that she must get to the hospital or the baby will be born right there. The atmosphere is tense. In a corner of the attic room in St Andrews Road, sits his austere mother. Still wearing signs of mourning for her beloved Cajetan she is draped in black lace and rocks back and forth in her rocking chair tatting and insisting that he go and bring the taxi to take them to the hospital. Pacing up and down on the creaking wooden floorboards, her authoritarian, tweed jacketed father taps his walking stick and insists that she is not ready – he reminds them that he has fathered seven children and knows best about the timing of such things.

There is a sense of fear in her eyes; he empathises recalling the loss of their two first unborn. Confused, he chooses to heed her unspoken words and races down the fire escape stairwell into the moonless night. He negotiates the potholes; making his way through the back streets of Pali till the monsoonal torrent proves too much and lurching forward he tumbles head first into a flooded drain. Soaked to the bone, he pulls himself together and arrives at the doorstop of the owner of the taxicab. He bangs down the door in desperation, each thud of his fist and his cries echoing in competition with the falling rain. The door opens but just before it does – whack – he feels the crack of a cane over his head and shoulders – he turns to find himself face to face with a stern faced and animated member of the constabulary. He explains his situation, no; he is not a thief but an overly anxious ‘father to be’.

The four of them cram into the back and yellow Hindustan cab. She sits quietly with him as they wind their way through the unusually quiet streets of Bombay to Matharpakadi in the southern end of the city. They arrive at a small wooden doorway in a narrow galli. Resting on his shoulder, she has to navigate her way up three flights of stairs past the nightly activity of the other tenants of the building. “Where have you brought me?” she pleads with him exhausted – “Dr Ammonkar’s Hospital” he exclaims, feeling every bit of her agony. “It will be OK” he re-assures her lovingly. Her father and his mother have followed them adamant that they should be present for the birth.

At 11.55 – five minutes before the stroke of midnight on the fifteenth day of June, on that dark moonless night in the height of the monsoon season she was born – a daughter. Her parents were overjoyed, and as they had planned all those years ago when they were mere children, they named her Lariane.

On her arrival, the grandmother looked at the newly born child and above the din of clattering pots and pans in the corridors, and rain on the tin roof she was heard to comment: “Oh! It’s a girl and isn’t she black?”
Interrogation 1

We are all born into at least one if not more ascribed identities. The most common of these are family and culture. It is family and culture that often provides the basis for affirmation of who one is. However, what happens when a genesis life story such this one does not provide a positive affirmation of one’s social identity?

This is starting point to my story, the story of who I am and how I became this person - this is an arbitrary point to call a beginning. I have to say that this is ‘genesis’ story. From my earliest years my mother has relayed the incident. I cannot recall the first time I heard it in its entirety, however I do recall many occasions when the power of this story, particularly the comment from my paternal grandmother about being a ‘girl’ and being ‘black’ has re-enforced my feelings of alienation and powerlessness thus shaping my sense of self. However, the story has also had many positive effects. It has influenced my determination to succeed despite the real hurdles posed to those of us who are first-born female into an Indian family. Later, it has provided the trajectory that drew me to feminism and inspired my role in social and political activism.

The story has been told and re-told over the years. My own questioning of my mother in search of truth and verification had prompted most of these occasions. Perhaps I had secretly hoped that it would not stand up to the rigours of re-telling and cross-questioning. Perhaps somehow, the gentle old woman I had come to know as my paternal grandmother was not capable of disowning me and alienating me from her will as she had done. I also recall another two very powerful positive aspects of this story. The sense of comfort and safety I drew from hearing about my parents love for each other, and the magic of visualising descriptions about place – the attic room in St Andrews Rd; the monsoonal downpour; the back streets of Matharpakadi, places I have returned to on this odyssey – the search for self.

The narrator of the story in this fragment had always been my mother. It is interesting that after her recent death, it was with this story that I chose to start a conversation with my father while recording his life story. He related the story to me, almost verbatim. It was as if he and my mother had rehearsed the words. I sat there listening – still the child, the daughter, first-born – still secretly hoping that somehow my mother had got the story about my grandmother wrong. Any idea that somehow his story would have a different recall faded. For, as I heard the familiar words, I realised that in the end it did not matter – whether the story was true or not, the power of it had shaped who I am now. Part of the
magic and power of the story had also been my parents’ love for each other. This fragment was written after my father’s telling of the incident.

Inevitably our stories are constructed and re-constructed as they weave their way through the social and historical fabric of our lives. The landscape is always unpredictable; the time, place, cultural and historical context play a major role in the construction and interpretation of the story. The manifestations have taken different shapes as the influence and perception of the initial story moved through childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. On its journey these manifestations have shaped my identity. The telling and re-telling, and moments of my own memory telling it, have moved me toward a better understanding of who I am in the world today.
FRAGMENT 2: Memory, Childhood, and Identity

Personal Journal December 2006

What do I know about separation – to separate?
One of the earliest fears, one of the earliest experiences – the pain thereof – there are many stories to tell – but I shall try and relate the most significant.
Separation has permeated my life regularly – its deft hand impacting – carving a new etch – a new imprint on my sense of self and identity at each swipe of its hand

It must be 1953, I am not quite 3 years old and my beloved dad has sailed away to England – this may not have meant anything to me in terms of the scope or extent of the separation – but at the docks saying goodbye – I remember to this day that I felt a pain – a sadness – a melancholic aura that I would not have had a name for back then. There is photographic image of me cradled in Dads arms at Station Pier – Mum at his side in dark glasses – to hide her tears perhaps? To shade her eyes? Or more realistically to hide her pain – her pain of separation. I wonder now, as an adult – knowing what I know – what would have been her emotions? Her fears? After all the prince was leaving.

I look lost – my eyes appear bigger than seems possible – there is a melancholic gaze into the camera – I am wearing my ‘best’ dress – I think it was made for my 2nd birthday – then of course, there was the shock of curls – especially the lock ‘right down the middle of her forehead’ for, ‘when she was good she was very, very good and when she was bad she was horrid’ – oh yes, their beloved could be horrid – nevertheless, I was always their ‘Scondie Blue’ – right to her death Mum was unable to tell me what it meant.

The days went by slowly – I remember the little window of the house at St Andrews Rd, Bandra. The stone lintel was my perch – I sat in it for hours – mum tells me that I would not eat – I pined for him – morning noon and night. There are recordings of me singing ‘Laddies’ daddy …when the boat comes in.’

It was in those months of the ‘absent father’ impact had a positive spin off – as the bonds with my mother grew and strengthened. We were thrown together in shared grief – the pangs of separation from the beloved – I now understand that this time of my life was very special, for it was then I started to consciously realise the immense and immeasurable love I had for her. We would spend hours with storybooks, her soft gentle voice reading to me. She would encourage me to sing and dance – and it was in that time that she recorded songs – some of them preserved to this day.

However, today I realise that it was in that time that my fear of separation from mum became a reality – and when she died on the 13/11/2006 – I realised that it was the day I had dreaded most since those days in 1953.
Critical Incident recalled 2004 – Personal Journal
This situation was never about the watch – it was about sentiment and symbolic meaning and it has devastated me to think that my parents in some way have no idea about who I am and my values. They have no idea that this discrimination is real. Something happened today that has changed my relationship with them forever. The experience of betrayal has affected my life at many levels.
The idea of ‘disinheritance’ seems far-fetched but at a level in my consciousness this is what I have experienced – a disinheritance on the basis of my sex and sexuality. The reality that ultimately the powers of hetero-patriarchy are alive and well and embedded in my parents’ psyche and practice. The disillusionment of discovering that my parents see what they want to see – that their acceptance that I have so lauded and defended is in the end superficial – perhaps they don’t really know me at all. I am invisible and in the end silenced once again.

The constant thought and expression I am currently feeling is that of dislocation – I really don’t know how I am feeling. I don’t seem to care – I cannot imagine ever being able to be hurt by anything worse than this and as a result I really don’t care about anything or anyone. Perhaps this is about the Sartre concept of nothingness. If I recall he talks about the idea that in order to ‘be’ or experience “being” one has to transcend ‘nothingness’ – I feel like this is my transition – my transcendent phase.
In many ways I feel like this is where I have been heading for some time now but I never imagined that it would take something like this to catapult me forward.

To me this is a form of disinheritance – because property does not mean much to me. This invisibility is a denial of who I am of my own heritage and of who I am. I don’t feel that what I really am counts in this instance and it is reflected in this experience.

I feel disinterested in ‘family’ and at the moment somehow disconnected with ideas of tracing family heritage and story – why should I care? I ask myself – after all it feels that this is the ultimate non-belonging. This has implications for my research – I feel on the one hand that I have lost the passion, the fire of curiosity – but then on the other hand this is even more of a reason to examine the ‘question of silence’ – the invisibility of the lesbian.

Personal Journal January 2007

The ‘giver’ of the mirror is dead – gone, and with this loss it appears I have been plunged into an abyss – the abyss that is the created space between my memory of things past and my attempts to retrieve the self embedded in those memories. It is as if once again I am drawn into a sense of dis-location, of dis-ease. The space I had begun to create through memory, a space of ‘belonging and homecoming has eluded me once again. But why is this so? Exploration of this question through the conversation reveals the possibility that the loss of my mother could equate to the loss of my major catalyst to memory. As a catalyst her stories and own memories together with her physical presence gave me access to memories past, which have been critical to my endeavour of ‘remembering the self’. This access is no longer possible. She was the locator of memory, the connector of memory to place and context of the remembered self – there is now a gap. In many ways in this role my mother provided me with a memory, and it didn’t matter that it was her memory, nor that it was true or not. It provided me with a context, a landscape on which to overlay my own memories, and a canvas on which to paint my nostalgia.
**Interrogation 2**

The one place, the one moment that represents my most joyous, safe, and absolute experience of ecstasy in my life, is captured in the photo taken of my parents and me at Lands End in 1953. To this day, the memory remains in focus and often in times of insecurity, doubt and weakness the recollection and emotion of this experience has been the source of strength and re-connection with self.

Lands End is a rocky promontory created by land reclamation in the northern suburb of Bandra in Bombay where I spent my youth. It is a place where, to this day locals seek relief from the heat in the soft ocean breezes that caress the shore from the Arabian Sea. I spent many happy childhood summer evenings here with my parents. It was a very special place of my childhood. In 2004 and on other visits since, when I have returned to this place the memories of these early times have flooded back to me as if time had stood still. The images have changed slightly – there are more people, more pollution, the surrounding architecture has altered – but the essence of joy, of the wind tussling my curls on my forehead, the arms of my parents around me – these are still vivid – and it seems to me that this memory readily supplies what I may have forgotten.

Temporally, the photo is situated within the three years in which I had my parents to my self. I am the first born of five children. An older sibling died at childbirth, and my mother had been told that she would never be able to have children. This information is relevant to the story, from conversations I have had with my mother, that my birth was a precious gift. I have no doubt that this factor played an enormous part in the manner in which I was loved and spoiled by my parents prior to the arrival of my next sibling.

Born into a colonised India of the British Raj, my parents were both results of inter-cultural liaisons. The colonisers had succeeded in creating a ‘them’ and ‘us’ using the ‘Anglo Indians’ as native police to maintain a separate class of contradictory location. It appears that finding themselves caught between cultures, and facing ambiguous threats, they perpetuated the myth of their class by miss-representing their own history to themselves.

Through conversations with my parents and other relatives, I have been able to readily trace my ancestry in terms of its British, French, Portuguese and Spanish roots. But what about India – I have cried so often in frustration. Defiant against all phenotypical evidence,
logic or rationality the answer I receive from most people I have harassed on this matter is either ‘I don’t know’ or at best a comment from my father who once said ‘I think my father’s first wife was Hindu – but I have no information about her – we never talked about her’. On my mother’s side there is simply no mention of ‘Indianess’ except to record that her father’s ancestors were part of the Dutch East India Company, and as such called themselves East Indians. Interestingly, my mother and her siblings adopted their maternal surname of Chaves instead of Rodricks, as the French ancestry was deemed more valuable in the social environment of Poona where they lived.

My parents’ story of love and commitment, of struggle and sacrifice is too vast to be told here. Suffice to say, that the motivations for their actions in relation to our family, have always been of good intent. Their own upbringing in a colonial Raj and post-colonial India combined with their devout Catholicism strongly influenced their view of the world and the reality that they desired for us, their off-spring. Born into a 1950’s India, a new post-colonial era, into a racist, male-preferring and alienated culture, I grew up desperately trying to understand my parent’s own denial of their Indian identity. When they decided to migrate to Australia in 1967, I did not understand their leaving and for many years I held this resentment. It underpinned the powerlessness and anger that infused my own experience of migration. As an adult I know and now accept that their decision was based on wanting a better future for their children.

Apart from the first three or four years of my life, I was not able to really know my father. By profession he was a businessman who travelled extensively and was, for much of my later childhood, ‘absent’. When we arrived in Australia the pervading racist attitudes prevented him from pursuing his expertise and he commenced a teaching career. Soon after that time I left home. Despite the later years of absence, the early experience of our time spent together as a family formed a deep bond. The inclusion of the experience of separation from my father in this fragment reflects the intensity of the connection with him.

This reveals how the first experience of separation can be the worst and the most powerful – it leaves its mark, like a deep etching – the wound never heals – just closes over, only to have the threads torn away with each further experience. The body, the mind the heart the soul are left with this indelible stain – the wound is fed by fear – the fear of separation wields its powers whenever it chooses – the self is always vulnerable – perhaps life’s greatest achievement is to learn to tame this fear – to harness it and lessen its
destructive force. For, in doing so one can finally be complete – self contained – home with oneself - grown up.

Notwithstanding the absences, my father remains a larger than life figure in my life. As I have evolved, and through my own experience, many of the perceived ‘aberrations’ I have had of him are now understood and tolerated rather than totally accepted by me. The case of inheritance of the watch represents his unwavering belief in the idea of male-right and patriarchal lineage, whilst for me, it represented a deep emotional connection to him, the man I adored and loved.

Even today, almost two years after her death, my mother’s presence has been indelible throughout my life. She was an extremely beautiful woman in every sense. Deeply spiritual, she maintained an aura of love, kindness, tolerance and strength in all that she did. My earliest memories are mainly located in her physical presence – the softness of her skin, the warm smell of her body, which cloaked me in a sense of love and safety. I can remember her lilting voice sing nursery rhymes to me or tell stories while I tried every trick in the book to draw out the goodnight. Sometimes at night I would hear her serenade my father with French songs she had learned. I remember the touch of her felted dress, the rings on her fingers, the way she scolded me when I threw a tantrum.

A talented woman, creative and a wonderful teacher she subsumed her profession of teaching for wifehood and motherhood in keeping with middle-class Indian expectations. On arriving in Australia, she was able to return to the profession she loved and till her death was fondly remembered by hundreds whose lives she passed through. In a way, Australia presented my mother with another tabula rasa, one on which she could inscribe her own story.

I had a special bond with my mother. She was the first giver of my story and of course she was central to it. In later years her invisible presence filled my life, and today, as I write this, she watches me from the photo framed on my sideboard. She is never far away from me.

As children we all hear stories; before we can read we hear stories in many forms. At the centre of all our learning is a core ongoing story and the story of our ancestry – who we are, where we have come from and all the myths and legends as well as missing links that accompany such stories. The first tellers of these stories are our parents; and our parents
have dreams and expectations of us. In entering their narrative we become part of their story, and this narrative becomes our story.

My parents have played a significant role in my search for identity and the struggle it has presented. In their own way they have led by example and good intention and, despite our philosophical and political differences, it is they who have provided the foundation of love and support to be who I am thus enabling me to record my own story.
FRAGMENT 3: Memory, Place, and Identity

Personal Journal 1976, Khyber Pass, Afghanistan

We’ve been sitting here for almost 9 hours now – landslide they say. I can’t see the start or the end of the queue of jalopy trucks and buses, ramshackle four wheel drives as they snake their way on the narrow, dusty and half sealed road. I think we have managed to get about 20 kilometers into the Khyber Pass heading from Kabul to Peshawar. In the distance I see the snow capped mountains of the Hindu Kush as they reach towards the clear blue skies and stretch as far as the eye can see.

The landscape is desolate, rugged and covered with rocks, rubble and dry, dry bushes – there is no colour in it except for grey, brown and olive green – this bleak landscape serves to enhance the colour of the brightly clad locals who are in transit with me. I survey the crowd from my perch atop the jalopy I am travelling on – women carrying, feeding, pacifying – always working. Groups of turban clad men sit cross-legged on the ground – chewing, talking, and smoking. Most of them are carrying rifles of some description. Alarmingly, I have got used to the sight and proximity of guns – my travels in Afghanistan – especially the experience of the coup in Kabul has de-sensitised me to the horror of these implements. A beggar sits in the middle of the scene – holding out his deformed hand for alms.

I wonder about the history of this place – who has walked here before me? This strategic gateway – the march of Aryans? Greek and Persian armies? The Mongols? The Seljuks...the British? The Indians? Camel caravanserai, ancient merchants, silk traders ...and now travellers like me- hippies on the Magic Bus Route or tourists on a different kind of mission. The sun scorches down on my head – the stench of unwashed bodies in the heat is stifling – I’m getting very hungry and if we don’t get out of here soon I will probably be dehydrated. In the deep distance I can hear the raging Khyber River as it cuts its path through the gorge hundreds of feet below. I light up a bidi, lie back on my pack and wonder if I will ever reach my homeland – this historic trip for me was planned after all, as my great return to India. I hear gunshots in the neighborhood – it sounds quite close – I look up from my journal. The man beside me mutters something - I don’t understand – I can only catch the word ‘Allah’ – he grabs his turban and ducks his head and as he does a bullet whistles past my head ... I’m writing this after the incident – I am told that it is quite common place – Khyber ‘cowboys’ – I climb down from the roof of the bus and clamber over bundles of clothes, food and others’ earthly belongings – I head towards a little stall selling chai and hashish – what a welcome thought!


I am enjoying the solitude at last! I feel free and calm and certain that I can regenerate my self. I have to some extent allowed myself into the realms of despair – no hope- darkness. Am I really that destructive? Is it possible for me to be everything I thought I was not? What about the existentialist position I so valiantly proclaim? What about hedonism? Surely I am connected to the principles of such – after all it is in me – it pervades, my flesh, my soul, my intellect – but what about my morality? Morality inherited from an alien culture – a culture
whose language is pervaded by vestiges and vertigos – a depository of illusions, of obsessions of passion – of anger that transcends and forces us to transpose reality.

My reality, given way to others – forcing my hand the alien moral imperative transcends my experience and has led me to a place where altruism and masochism begin to cloak the shell once filled with pulsating rhythms of life. – Flesh, soft, warm, and sensuous. Flesh, alive – vulnerable to pain, vulnerable to pleasure – fluid yet solid, coursing the recesses of the watery underworld – But, flesh that emerges into the sunshine to rest upon a rock – whose horizons are licked by a boundless ocean – sometimes blue, sometimes grey – angry, calm – but always fluid.

So, I must uncloak this mysterious fog – undo the mercurial inversion of heat and cold – reach towards the sunshine – regenerate, renew – the flesh lives – the synthesis is possible – mind, body, soul, spirit at one are strong – a basis for one’s own morality – time to oneself.

So in retracing the steps to this path – one cannot erase the memory of the stones, the thorns, the pain.
But, in traversing the path one also reveals the fragrant labyrinth of the start filled nights and the hedgerows – dogwood, elderberry, primrose, and bluebells – Sensations and words that stretch the self so that they simultaneously caress their origins – the boundaries and the centre at once.

Heidelberg, Germany, 12 May 1992

What is this emptiness I feel? Was it not Hegel who recognised emptiness ‘What makes the beginning must be taken as something non-analysable’ so in its simple unfulfilled immediacy – hence as being – as the wholly empty.

One feels the compulsion to surrender – because one’s surrender is freedom – existence.

Surrender is extra-ordinary, not routine.

Ordinarily, I am not thrown back on myself – but I am found to live by habit or tradition-viable or vicarious but precisely by routine.

So, the whole soul is never one – save in ecstasy – in the surprise enchantment that I have experienced – WHY?
Perhaps, the self every instant it exists is in the process of becoming. Certainly, according to Kierkegaard, the self does not actually exist, it is only that which is to become.

But in surrender I feel that the ordinarily scattered fragmented self fuses all aspects of self into one – surrendering these I become otherwise I am only potentially – although I imagine that the attainment of the state is never definite.
Life seems to be a chaos in which we are lost – I guess as an individual the self suspects this and I am frightened when I find myself face to face with this reality – this is when I try to cover the reality by fantasy – survival and surrender for all things seems clear. I suppose it is rather superficial hence it does not worry me that my view / ideas are not true because I use them as ...for the defence of my existence as scarecrows to frighten away reality.

So can it not be said then that those ideas which lead to the fabrication of a reality stand between myself and surrender?

Monti di Villa, Italy, 18 May 1992

As each day passes so does the angst that has filled my life more recently. The rain from the mountains washes everything and gives clarity to the path before me. Time becomes meaningless; save the missing the body ebbs and flows, gently – piano – as the locals say.

I am overwhelmed each day by my surrounds. Everything I see is fresh and new, almost every face, every movement. At some level I am truly living in the moment – bewitched by colours, shapes, smells and sounds. Always making new connections and always moving from them. My inner calm is centred within myself in the present moment. A kind of vagueness pervades me – about what has gone before or what lies ahead in my existence. The word vagueness may seem very strange – certainly the memories of one’s life seem precise and sharp enough – and consciously it seems impossible to orchestrate a ‘cutting off’ from those memories of self. So, how does one cut off one’s self – and place one in the moment of being? Surrender?

Siena, Italy, 10 June 1992

Travelling alone my outward self takes on a curious thinness and an unreality, which may be difficult to describe. It’s almost at times that I am physically transparent – even invisible. Yet, at the same time I often feel eyes upon my curious self. The last couple of days I have merrily drifted through the tourist crowds of Siena, St Gimignano, and Volterra virtually without any contact. I find it an enormous sense of freedom to choose when I wish to acknowledge that I understand anything including English!

Apart from endless galleries, I have been frequenting cheap cafes and bars, gardens, deserted off beat churches and back street piazzas with their dancing washing lines and pattering fountains. There are the ones that have escaped the guidebooks. In the evenings I have spent endless hours in the Piazza Il Campo, staring at the wonderful pink stone masonry and watching the passeggiata of the local Senese; arm in arm, pausing to emphasise this or that.

I return each night to my loft room on the top of the Tre Donzelle just out of the Campo and with a view of the Mangia Torre.
Tonight I think about this self inflicted solitude – a rather subtle almost poetic idea – ‘going to Italy’ – as if real travel is concerned with disorientation rather than mere distance. It’s losing myself to find myself again – casting myself as it were into the vault of the gods to see what happens.

As I sat there I must have looked somewhat desolate. I had felt eyes upon me and looking around I am being ‘watched’ by an Italian woman – we exchange a lifetime of conversations with our eyes – she moves over, sits down, we share coffee and hurried talk in broken English/Italian. We part, I hurry down via Citta – domestic lights have now appeared – I feel a tich lonely, but I guess this is a familiar feeling as night approaches and the lighting up of windows in houses where the traveller does not belong and where I cannot go.

Returning to my room I once again think about my time of travel – what has this experience been about? Grappling with physical and emotional hardships, loneliness – solitude, relaxation, and the search of identity – the search for a path to life.

Time has brought me back quite easily – without effort – the past months since January have been an act of deliberate psychological trespass – an invasion – an encroachment which left me vulnerable – haunted – alienated. The alienation left me almost with a fictional relationship with my self – my conscious identification for the purpose of escape was purely with me – the subject. This form of self- identification as a final showdown or cry for help – it seems to me, has led to a series of moments of personal disillusionment – objective re-creation and this could not last. It is in a sense a manner of ‘death’ as I have often mused. So it is in the very search for the self, that the space to re-capture the subject objectively – the metaphysical search leads to the core of self – the self that never exists wholly in one place – but fluidly, in motion.
Interrogation 3

I wonder if one is born a peripatetic. Stories related to me by my mother and aunts tell of their anxious moments during my early years when I would venture away from home and wander around often to be found in someone’s house in the neighbourhood, listening to their stories and sharing their food. Today, rarely a year goes by when I do not venture out in search of the same enchantment.

My love for travel has always occupied a central position deep in the heart of who I am. My love of adventure, of people and learning about other cultures are consistent threads woven through the fabric of my story. Remembering travel narratives such as these has facilitated a number of discourses within my own story. Firstly, they have operated as a mechanism of ‘finding my self’. From their earliest form in the streets of Bandra, through adventures such as the one described in the experience ‘through the Khyber Pass’ to my travels today, these memories contain traces of my negotiation with the social world in the formation of self.

The experience of travel has also been the cornerstone for the development of my resilience. The negotiation of boundaries in the development of self when located in alien environments be they domestic or foreign demand courage or capitulation. To this end, it seems that while the myriad of travel events themselves are not necessarily all fixed to specific points in time, in memory they can move in and out, forwards and backwards across the continuum of life experience. Some events, such as the one described in this fragment remain important in my life schema. Not only did the experience contribute to my development of resilience. Today the memory of the event affirms my sense of adventure and existential underpinnings and inspires me in my negotiations through everyday life as I constantly tread the interface of the new and the familiar.

The idea of heading off into unchartered territory with no particular destination has always appealed to me. For pragmatic reasons I have often had to have some structure to my travels, however, I have most enjoyed the times when I have been able to be ‘lost’. ‘Losing oneself’ to find myself has been the cornerstone of my ability to reflect and re-surface. As recorded in the fragment, this has particularly been the case following turbulence in my life. The opportunity to be a stranger in some one else’s world and culture frees my self to strip away illusions and see myself through another mirror. The metaphorical mirror in this case is the culture in which I immerse myself. It creates a ‘tabula rasa’ a blank space on which I am able to re-connect and re-construct who I am.
The incidents recorded in fragment 3 are like many other travel narratives found in my journals over the years. They reflect how the experience of travelling has woven itself into the very core of who I am. It has manifested as significant attributes of my identity and contributed throughout the wider context of my life.
FRAGMENT 4: Memory and the Senses

11 December 2003 Elsternwick, Melbourne, Australia - Honeysuckle

Warm, sweet honeysuckle – I am overcome by your entrancing perfume – overwhelming, joy and happiness of summer holidays at ‘Sunnydale’ – poppies, pom-pom lilies, roses – but your perfume gives me comfort, enveloping me immediately with a soothing, homely memory. I wander and lurk in the garden carefully observing the lush green fronds filled with ladybirds. The freedom of endless days wandering in discovery of new forms and secret places in my own piece of heaven – haplessly I trace a path around the house first visiting the guava tree and the lawn roller-climbing up – grazed and etched knees reaching for the seemingly smooth limbs of branches barely in reach – swinging back and forth, back and forth hands almost raw – exhilaration as I hover and fly over the elliptical mass of concrete which has served me well as a launching pad.

Large black ants – armies of marrows, marching along with sense and purpose in antithetical rhythm to my floating pendulum like body – “where are all of you going/” I squeal knowing they will not pay any mind to my mortal musing. A few feet away my favourite feathered friends in the chicken coop – much loved brood of grandpa – a patient and gentle soul – wire rimmed glasses, leather slippers and tweed jacket – bicycle clips, off to church – every lunch – the post prandial activity of patiently cutting up leftovers – banana skins for his chickens – his wire rimmed glasses slipped down his nose – a picture of concentration.

“Pigeon pie” – now, could anyone seriously consume these poor creatures? I remember well my chair at the table – nanny’s specialty – ‘green pigeon pie’ – not one of my favourites!

Aah! The comfort of honeysuckle wafting sweetly through the front door – the security grill, unable to keep out its warmth – a reminder of happiness, freedom and carefree days at ‘Sunnydale’.
Interrogation 4

Our senses often reconnect us with memories of times, people and places from our past. These connections can arrive unheralded, and often relate to childhood memories. The olfactory sense is a powerful evocator of memory. In this fragment the perfume of honeysuckle triggers childhood memories of happiness, freedom and holidays.

Contained within the story of visits to ‘Sunnydale’, the home of my maternal grandparents is the seeds of an important sense of my self. It is here, in the garden suffused with the perfume of honeysuckle and roses, where my love of gardens and nature was formed. It is a location of part of my sense of self. Even in the present, as I read or write this piece, I can instantly recall the perfumes, the sensation of the petals on my nose as I drew deeper into the flowers – the tickle on my skin of a ladybird or butterfly landing on me, and the smile on the face of my little sister as we played hide and seek amongst the pom-pom lilies.

The fragment also reveals threads of my relationship with my maternal grandparents and my memories of them. There were regular annual visits to ‘Sunnydale’ during the first fifteen years of my life in India. Formative years, during which I became conscious of the uniqueness of my self and where the experience of significant others, such as grandparents, were critical to my development. The memory of this place, triggered by the smell of honeysuckle, provides a psychic anchor and a thread of connection to my maternal genealogy.

Returning to ‘Sunnydale’ as an adult, ex patriot or Non Resident Indian has been a highly emotional experience. Apart from the ravages of time evident in the peeling paint, rusted bicycles, and dilapidated spiral stairwell – nothing much has changed. The concrete roller lies idle under the guava tree, the interior artefacts are as they were forty-four years ago. The chicken coops have given way for a brick outhouse – my grandparents have gone, but the garden remains. As I have recently lost much of my sense of smell, the memory of the perfume and its connection with the memory of place has taken on much significance. It continues to facilitate a memory of where I came from, of who I once was and the people who contributed to my sense of self.

Today, as I walk through a garden or down a street I am able to draw on that memory, to visualise the place and the perfume of what I see. On this journey of self-discovery I have often overcome feelings of fragmentation by seeking solace in gardens and the wild places of nature. My connection with nature's visual beauty, structural delicacy and the
fragrances that enrich my life can be attributed to the experiences in my grandparents' garden in 'Sunnydale'.
FRAGMENT 5: Memory, Childhood and Place

*Personal Journal, Geelong, Australia 1968*

Any connection with the India I loved has been hidden or veiled from me since our arrival here. India, it’s (my) people and my sense of freedom and belonging are what I miss. Those carefree days in the streets playing marbles, flying kites with other children gave me my sense of equity and self-determination. In the streets at play there was no class, no caste, no cultural difference ... I never felt the pangs of gender difference, I felt equal. I cannot underestimate the value, the influence and the incredible input of the ‘servants’ or ‘ayahs’ in my life.

*Return to my childhood home, Travel Journal - India 2004*

Bandra – known as the queen of the suburbs! Is in this context truly so – the streets are tree-lined and signs of affluence abound – there is evidence of this in the apartments and the decaying elegance of the Art Deco buildings of the 1930s. I finally, rather apprehensively enter 1st Road and as we draw closer to the end of the road at the intersection of Waterfield Rd I spot the familiar grey and red of the ‘Mascotte’. Greeted by two lazy boxer dogs I make my way through the familiar gate, the immediately recognisable fancy grillwork, to be carefully checked out by the Gurkha on duty.

Upstairs from the first floor window, I spot AT, but I don’t think she has recognised me. The house has grown with two further stories built to accommodate the expanding family. All evidence of the garden is gone. No mango tree behind the garage, and later I am to discover no banana grove down the side of the house. All the garden has been concreted – gone are the crotons, the cacti, the flower beds once lovingly tended by the mali – gone also the red brick edging which to this day has scarred my forehead from failure to clear the high jump attempt almost 40 years ago. The parapet still hangs over the front window – I spot a crow in the very place where once a similar creature had dropped a bone on the baby skull of Conchita.

Cars and motorbikes line the driveway resembling a car yard rather than the playground that I once played in. I approach the obviously renovated main entrance and touch the warm concrete balustrade on which I used to while away much of my time. The façade has been transformed by dark pink marble. The front door is now a heavy dark wood monstrosity. I tremulously place my finger on the doorbell as instructed by the Gurkha, and as I do a lifetime of memory courses through my mind, my heart, and my body.
Interrogation 5

‘The Mascotte’ is a grey, brick piece of modernist architecture with red trim. In 1958 it was new, unique in the neighbourhood and symbolised wealth, success and the beginning of a new trend in the northern suburb of Bandra. Today Bandra is seen as the ‘Paris’ of the Bollywood set. For nine years from 1958 to 1967, until our family migrated to Australia, the ‘Mascotte’ provided a place we called home. Together with my siblings I attended St Joseph’s Convent in this suburb. Bandra was a special place of my childhood, and the ‘Mascotte’ a special place of sharing with my siblings, a very special place where I discovered the first meaning of friendship and adventure.

Like many special places the memories of Bandra and ‘The Mascotte’ have remained vivid in my life. I can distinctly recollect the inside of our house, its modernist interior decoration and furnishing; every detail of its layout. Contained within this cache of memory lies other layers of memory. On my return to the ‘Mascotte’ in 2004, entering the lounge I stood at the very spot where in 1963 I picked up the Times of India to read of John Kennedy’s assassination. At twelve years of age I could hardly imagine the impact of the occasion and yet I clearly remember the emotion of the moment.

I have clear memories of the garden as it was then with its pots of crotons, angular brick lined beds of annuals and banana groves. To this day, when I see a pair of pruning shears or hear the swish of blade on blade, I recall the Mali who patiently clipped the lawns with his scissors. In these gardens and on the back streets I learned about life, about belonging, justice, and friendship. I dared, I became adventurous – it was a time critical to my development of self, and sense of who I was.

The set of thirteen fragments in this excavation, record a continuum of emotions over the years. My confusion at the alienation from all that I remembered as ‘home’ and a place of belonging is evident in my 1968 record of arrival in the new homeland. The sense of self that is recorded here is lucid and closely associated with India, and the streets of Bandra.

Rich and vivid memories provided the backdrop to an emotionally charged return to this childhood environment in 2004. The fragment describing my return to the family home tells of the tension and anticipation that affected me profoundly. The transformation of the ‘Mascotte’ and the general environment confirmed the sense of loss and alienation I had experienced on leaving it in 1967. The desecration of the banana grove was the most
devastating. This had been a significant and secret place for me, especially evocative in the memories of my childhood.

Out of the vestiges of past memory and present experience, a new memory has been formed. From this connection between past and present a new layer of text on the palimpsest of my life is written. These days the memory of the friendships, gardens, the modernist interior, family gatherings and street play all shape and influence my life and the environment I create. They continue to keep me connected with a fondly remembered place and an environment that provided security and centeredness. Today, as the adult researcher, I acknowledge the significance of this place and its role in the creation of my identity through the loss and discovery of it in secret spaces of my memory.
FRAGMENT 6: Silencing of Voice - Sexuality

Personal Journal, 30 May 2003

Only two years ago I embarked on a journey – seemingly simple; I approached my quest for a MEd (Teaching) with the same enthusiasm and academic fervour that I had demonstrated most of my life. But, unexpectedly the road was not one I had anticipated and as I progressed the twists and turns presented challenges to me and led me to a remarkable revelation – I had it seems, buried my authentic voice under layers of ‘academic socialisation’ and had succumbed to the tyranny of patriarchal culture particularly in relation to the construction and validation of knowledge – my knowledge.

The sometimes painful yet ultimately joyful experience in response to the question from my supervisor of - “Where are you in this?” – was that I discovered my authentic voice – and acknowledged my own ways of knowing.

Poem written following meeting with Adele Flood-discovery of voice. May, Geelong Australia 2003

Strained turbulence
temporarily abated.

Then you march in all white and gleaming
Solemn and smooth ivory
inviting – anticipation
flamed gravity
drawing force.
What do you want from me?

What will you reflect in return?

Inherited scripts

Buried shards, particles, sharp
Piercing –
sensuous boulders
Molten rock.

Will you yield to me
the contours of my soul?

Revealing possibilities
Unwritten endings?
Interrogation 6

The journal entry six months after the completion of my M.Ed. (Teaching) represents an important signpost in self-realisation. In many ways up to that point, I had been successfully co-opted and socialised by an academic discourse that lay within a Western, patriarchal paradigm. The experience of research and writing for the above qualification led me to the acceptance that there lies within me a deep East/West, Feminist/Patriarchal duality. The contradictions manifest in this dualism cause constant tension. The result is that I often find myself having to adjust to ‘audience’ needs. While this may be considered to be a confused and non-authentic approach, both voices are valid as they reflect who I am, they reflect my authentic self.

To this day, even as I write this research I am constantly confronted by the competing demands of ‘academic tradition’ and the power of reflexive narrative. The traditional academic demands, particularly in the writing of ‘self’, are fraught with the pressures of self-regulation and the silencing of voice. Often such writing has been charged with accusations of narcissism and self-indulgence.

My trained academic voice comes readily, and it would have been far easier to use a traditional academic research process with a linear argument, and insular approach. This fragment is a stark reminder to me that in order to maintain the authenticity of this work I must preserve my reflexive voice. The use of journal excerpts is an important device in maintaining this authenticity for it allows me to locate my own experiences in the work and better understand my self in the wider social context. Applying a metaphor of archaeology facilitates a non-linear approach reflecting the kaleidoscopic nature of life. Linear argumentation and distancing from the ‘subject’ must be abandoned.

As an incidence of reflection and self-realisation, this signpost also marks another point of challenge for me as a writer. It forces me to think about the nature of engagement with the reader. ‘For whom am I writing this?’ When challenging my self with this question my immediate response is that I want to engage emotionally and intellectually with others who resonate with my story, who, by this participatory experience as part of their own knowing, are encouraged to reflect on and write of their lives. I write for those who may read this and imagine themselves, tell new stories and create new ways of hearing the new ways of telling.
The journey of this research often feels overwhelming. On many occasions I find myself sitting blocked by the enormity of the task, the vulnerability of the topic, the complexity of self-involvement, the frustration of the ‘duality’, the confusion of choice – which fragments will rise to the surface – which stories will I tell? This journal entry provides a stark reminder of the value of the journey undertaken thus far. It provides the power to excavate the layers and layers of sedimanted experience and to remain authentic through the process.
FRAGMENT 7: Motherhood – Feminism

Personal Journal, 25 June 2004

Today I re-read parts of Ann Oakley’s ‘Taking it Like a Woman’ and it has prompted me to think about the years gone by – it took me back to what must be the most grim years of my life.

Twenty and pregnant I recall sitting in a pub on Flinders Street opposite Banana Alley where the misogynist and violent specimen I was married to peddled his pornography from a warehouse.

Ironically, depressed and bored I would wait for him at the pub till the working day was over. I recall stealing money from him and from the grocery kitty to purchase two books I had been eyeing off – I had read about them in the newspaper – they were Betty Friedan’s The Feminine Mystique, and Germaine Greer’s Female Eunuch. I recall when I finally managed to procure both books how I hid them under layers of clothing – pink wool maternity wear! To me these books were more precious cargo than the living being I was carrying within my body. How strange that one should feel that way – then, no sooner had that thought crossed my mind I remember adjusting my thinking – torn between the guilt of my catholic upbringing about how I should cherish and value this gift of ‘motherhood’, and my feelings of disinterest and powerlessness in the idea of conceiving something borne of violence. I don’t recall ever feeling connected – and I really didn’t try. For me the Friedan words leapt off the pages of the paperback – there and in the Greer book I found words and messages of comfort and affirmation – totally absorbed, these messages had a tremendous impact on my world as a new horizon opened up to me.

The floodgates opened for me – the internal floodgates – but like a dam wall still holding the building pressure I became more distressed at my powerlessness, which started to change the course of my life. Abortion was not an option in those days even though I succumbed to this in later years.

I walked around Melbourne for days – each day I would ride in the car while he stopped at various newsagents.

I wonder now whether I resented my situation in terms of my incapacity to leave – to take action because of the unborn child. The child probably paid the price for it – I don’t think I ever really connected at all – this puts pay to the ‘biological motherhood’ myth. I just wanted out – I just wanted to run away from this madness – I felt I was going mad – self-mutilation – attention seeking or desperation? I recall Friedan’s words – ‘when women cry out for help and they are not heard the only response can be to turn up the amplification’ this is what I did – perhaps in the end, the toxemia, the premature inset – the near death experience was my passage through the furnace – if I was to come through this I would survive.

The days got darker – longer; the homecoming without child – the daily visits to the hospital to a scrawny bit of life in an incubator – I was being instructed on how to love home to feel the joy and to be proud f my son! None of this worked and I felt even more disconnected, alienated from the process, the product and from life itself.
As the days went by I was starting to intellectually and emotionally reform within – there was a new awakening within me – like spring flowers still struggling in a late winter which was cold and bleak. But there was an awakening and once again it was in the form of a book. I found a copy of Simone de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex in the local library that I had started to frequent. The sun began to shine outside both in reality and metaphorically – it was 1972 – inside my heart was raging. The child now home began to scream for attention which I could not ignore – my energy fell each day as I tramped around the dowdy streets of Kensington pushing the pram – a blank face, a blank heart – I often saw the familiar look on the faces of women I met in the street and sometimes even today recognise the pain of powerlessness.

I recall wondering about what lay beyond this horizon – there must be more than this to life – I was lonely, I was silenced – I was without friends. And then one day the answer came – not as I expected but as a result of violence towards me. I was kicked out of my bed after being called a ‘fucked up mother’ – I ended up in hospital with lower limb paralysis – he ended up with ‘his’ son – after all I was told the child was more his than mine as he was white and I black.

I recovered the following year and two years later I won a settlement of $12,000 but more importantly my freedom.
**Interrogation 7**

It's well into spring now but the cold grey morning defies seasonal guidelines and expectations. The water, solid, silver grey strip foregrounds the bright yellow gorse covered promontory beyond. I am in Moeraki, an isolated fishing village on the North Otago coast in the South Island of New Zealand. I have come here for solitude and reflection. Throughout my life I have enjoyed creating such spaces to think and re-connect with my self. Moeraki, could not be further away from the reality expressed in fragment seven and reflecting on it, I am somewhat taken aback as I recall the journey of the evolving self that connects these two points in time.

As I sit here today in the heartland of Janet Frame country, I read from her book – The Goose Bath Poems. One poem in particular, strikes a chord:

"I must fight and fight
with my red and yellow head
even after I am dead, to stay
My own way, my own way."

*(Frame 2006 p. 16)*.

So I think to myself – yes, I have fought to make and stay my own way. To struggle and free myself, to carve a path through a world that despite the rhetoric, still values heterosexuality, male right and biological motherhood.

My choice to walk away from my child and the marriage was in the end a conscious one. The repercussions have had a major impact on my life and have manifested in a mixture of joyous self-fulfilment as well as deep sadness. The initial experience was awash with the emotions that freedom can bring; the newness of prioritising the self and the re-discovery of the adventurous core of self within – this part of who I was had been subsumed and partially lost by the experience of marriage. The immediate years that followed allowed me to piece together the parts of self that had been eroded, and in that time many deeply buried fragments of this core strength found a path to the surface.

As an example of this, a retrospective analysis reveals that a ‘feminist’ core of self laid deeply buried within me. Perhaps these core beliefs were developed during my early childhood in India. I had always been conscious of the inequities between men and women, and as a child remembered observing the manner in which these inequities played out in street play or other social environments. I remember always fighting and
lashing out against them. The marriage/motherhood experience provided a catalyst for the awakening. The Friedan, de Beauvoir and Greer writings supplied the necessary affirmation to accept that I was OK – that what I was experiencing was a shared experience by many women in the world.

However, I was to discover that just as sunny days turn to night and are invariably prone to being punctuated by dark clouds, my life was interspersed with periods of intense loss and grief. At these times I have wondered about my son – where was he right now? What did he look like? What was he doing? Would he know me? What did he think of all of this? I asked questions, I searched faces in crowds, often feeling that somehow we would see each other and recognise our loss instantaneously. Then one day in 2005, wondering ceased to be – my mother had arranged the meeting and as he walked into the room at my parents’ home, the years melted away magically.

Today is his thirty-sixth birthday. Sadly a chasm built on his sense of loss, anger and feelings of abandonment divides us. He has questions that I do not have answers for; well, not the answers he wants to hear. While I am empathetic, I cannot take his feelings on, he does not understand my reasoning. For now we must accept our polarised positions and drift apart again. A sea of mixed emotions ebbs and flows as once again turbulence stirs the heart and I am reminded that ‘I must fight and fight...to stay my own way, my own way’.

My passage into marriage had been the result of an anxious and reckless quest for freedom from my immediate family ties. Caught in an inter-generational conflict familiar to many migrant families, I transited from father/property to husband/property with not much thought of the consequences. Following the birth of my child, the violent circumstances surrounding my new role of mother had silenced and frightened me. I had accepted that this sort of thing happened to other people – nothing had prepared me for it. At this time I had also lost the support of my parents, whose Catholic beliefs simply could not accept my ‘abandonment’ of my child and my flight from the marriage. I felt alone.

The circumstances I have described provided a critical turning point in my life and an awakening of consciousness. I did not have a name for it then, however, the term ‘women’s liberation’ and feminism started to enter my language and thinking. For the first time as an adult, I became conscious of what it meant to be a woman in a ‘man’s world’ - a world of patriarchy. An important aspect of this awakening was the realisation that I was not alone.
The power of this realisation shaped my consciousness as a feminist and social activist from that time on.

A shroud of ambivalence still cloaks my notions of motherhood and my role as a mother. I can accept that women readily embrace the role in their quest for love and that the experience of motherhood can, as Adrienne Rich has claimed, be a series of ‘bad moments linked by the good ones’. However, I have never quite been able to accept that the nuclear family with its capacity to imprison and enslave women within its patriarchal formula was in the best interests of women.

When de Beauvoir, against her own desires, chose to leave Sartre and live in Marseille to write, she claimed she chose the most difficult option at that moment – she said it was to ‘safeguard the future’. In many ways, while the circumstances were quite different, the day I chose to leave my marriage and son was the day I too chose a difficult option. In the end it has proved to be the right one. For, as painful as some of the moments have been, it did safeguard my future. My present is largely shaped by the sum total of that experience, just as all individuals shape or construct their present experience from the stories of their past.
FRAGMENT 8: Borderlands

25 September 2005, New Delhi, India

The ‘beginning of the end’ – I’m becoming increasingly invisible – fading away, and I cannot remember using any of the transitions available to me. A cross-dissolve sounds like an apt description – The misogynist – the racist – the homophobic. We may jest at breakfast about this experience of mine, which I feel leaves no option but to withdraw. It’s not that I really care because I am trying to develop a way in which not to. But the reality is very frustrating, to be at the end of this constant barrage – what is it? What makes it happen? Is it real? Or is it something I should address from within myself? But there it goes again – turning the analysis within, making it reflexive – taking the responsibility.

24 September 2005, WHIM Conference, New Delhi, India

It’s raining, It’s pouring – it’s day four of the conference and I am in need of some space – space to reflect – space to create – space to be nothing – to do nothing. The reflection is more needed because somehow once again I find myself marginalized in my own culture. Internally, on my arrival in India, I always feel OK – but then it starts to creep in and I am now convinced that it is my external association with Westerners. In the conference context of course, this is even further exaggerated – the adoption of the ‘expert’ status of those who have been here before – my own invisibility as I move in and out of people’s perspectives on my ‘Indianess’ or lack there of. I too move in and out of these spaces both internally and externally, which confirms the duality of my existence. I wonder if this can be looked as analogous to my existence as a lesbian in a heterosexual world? Perhaps not.

Ashok Hotel, New Delhi, India - 27th September 2005

The parcels have been disposed off and there remains little trace of the acquisitions of the past eleven days. The usual ‘tamasha’ surrounds the post office experience – this time the location is Lodhi road. After being shunted off to Johr Bagh Market to find a calico wrapper – I finally find success and a three-hour ordeal!
The others have finally left in the middle of the night, bound for Dakar. While I miss the company I am rather relieved and have a maelstrom of clothes, books and other paraphernalia, gone too leaving a clean and vacuous room 1519 at the grand Ashok Hotel to myself to reflect in.

New Year’s Eve at Sunnydale Pune, India 2005-06

I am relieved now to experience India. The relief is akin to taking a layer off – the peeling off of an identity not necessarily emerging from within but one acquired by association – but then again, I wonder how much of it is the duality within me? – The co-existence of cultures inherited by my existence in both worlds. When with my western friends I feel like I inhabit the negotitated space in between. So what happens when the two worlds of sexuality also provide two worlds in which I must co-exist? I am not by nature a separatist.

I have been unable to put pen to paper much on this trip – too many emotions coursing through my every cell and at every moment of the day. This visit has been more familiar in many ways – none of the tense apprehension about what may or may not be – none of the questions – will it have changed? Will I remember? Will I understand? Yet in many ways I remain a stranger in a familiar land. Language and custom comes more easily and there seems to be a lack of desperation to try and fit every single experience into the short time available. However, Pune evoked chaos – the tension and frustration of cross-cultural boundaries – related to belonging ...

Few days later ...

We arrive in Pune at 2.00 – the air seems more polluted than I remember – the traffic is dense and noisy. It is New Year’s Eve and we are invited to Sunnydale for dinner. Greeted by Aunty Esme and the rest of the family follow behind her. I feel more comfortable about this visit as I had seen all of them in 2004. Despite this, mixed feelings surge through me all evening as I swing between wishing we had never left India and being grateful that we had. I guess the truth of such emotional dichotomies only serve to highlight my reality – never really belonging and yet belonging everywhere...
Interrogation 8

At a seminar I recently attended, I heard someone say ‘if you are not on the margins you are taking up too much space’. At the time I remember smiling and thinking this quite clever and in a curious way empowering. It affirmed the value of uniqueness, of difference and supported my naïve socialist ideals about equity and disdain for greed of the centre stage. But just how much space at the margins is comfortable? How much marginalisation can one take? And how do we negotiate the underpinnings of the paradigm that draws these boundaries?

Any such discussion involves a referential point to relate to. In my case, issues of identity, belonging and ‘acceptance’ relating to my ‘Indianess’ have seen me struggle in both my homelands. For often the referential point has been located with a third party. In the case of these particular fragments, the referential point is the ‘foreign’ (white) travelling companions who accompany me to India. However it is interesting that I have suggested that the same may be applied to my experience as a lesbian in a hetero-patriarchal world.

My experience in and of India has varied significantly depending upon whom I am with on these travels. This is not necessarily about the differences between western and non-western people, nor is it about an account of travel – a departure and arrival – it is about being caught between two worlds. The world I have left and returned to (India) and the world that I have come from (Australia) and simultaneously carry within. This experience exacerbates the confusion created for me by the merging of cultural boundaries contained within my self.

To experience India alone or with other native Indians optimises my capacity to blend into the cultural landscape and to some extent feel the freedom of belonging. It alleviates the tension between my ascribed identity and my labelling as a foreigner or NRI (non-resident Indian). This is a tension, which almost always manifests in the experience of marginalisation.

To live between two worlds is to constantly be designated as coming from ‘there’ and not ‘here’. To always be from ‘somewhere else’ means that I have often struggled at the intersections of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ contained within me. My experience returning to India on these occasions was located in relation to ‘other’. How I was perceived and subsequently treated depended on the association with those people I was with. It is only when I was alone that I was able to partially transcend the feeling of being an outsider.
This experience is reflected in my September 2005 journal, which records my relief at ‘shedding a layer of skin’.

To live in a ‘third space’ is to constantly straddle the intersections of culture and space in the making of identity. It inevitably means that my sense of ‘place’ is not a fixed structure inhabiting time and space, but a concept that is constantly composed, de-composed and re-composed in the interlacing of my inherited history with where I am, who I am with and who I am.
FRAGMENT 9: Ways of Seeing

Personal Journal Kangaroo Island, South Australia April 2006

The blue waters beyond sparkled like a canopy of diamonds under the deepening sky of blue velvet. A large brown eagle sweeps in search of his unsuspecting prey – softly before me scurries a large heath goanna, its skin camouflaged from the sharp eyes above. I pause to breathe in the fresh, salt air – there is no sound except the whip of a passing flock of birds – and the crashing turbulence of the sea below – I wonder about the old remains of the ‘landing place’ below the lighthouse. Who tread these boards? Who were these faces that came before me in search of the Promised Land? Did the lighthouse betray them? Perhaps it did not even exist…What stories could they tell us? What stories were lost?

I think about my story – my journey – the documentation of such – for who will the story be told? Who will stop to hear it? Who will feel the resonance with the experiences I tell you of?

I merge into the landscape before me – I feel strongly a part of it – no, not the photographer, nor the artist – the observer – but I feel part of it – I feel, smell, I touch and taste it – I am all at once within and without …my eyes see what I have been blinded to...

I take my camera out – ‘if the heart is the right place – the idea will come’ – and so it is that the heart is firmly in beat with the land, I am able to feel – to see.

For many years my photography has recorded landscapes of other worlds – even my flower photography reflected this perspective – I have had occasions when I have ‘seen’ the Australian landscape and recorded it – to my satisfaction – but somehow this feels different – I have strayed into another dimension – and I love it.

Conversation with Adele after the trip to Kangaroo Island, Melbourne, Australia 18 – 25 April 2007

“For the first time I started to feel part of the landscape; I felt a belonging. There was a resonance with feelings of being at home. I felt the rhythms as part of the landscape rather than being the observer.”

Wilson’s Promontory, Victoria

Waratah Bay, Victoria

Lushington’s Bay NZ
Interrogation 9

Landscape remains a powerful visual catalyst for my senses and there have been occasions such as this one when the experience has been so lucid and profound that it was epiphanous. In the process of remembering the self, landscape is also pertinent to matters of time and place. Embedded in many landscape fragments are memories, which, in turn are the genesis of the stories that make up my 'self'. Remembering place and telling and re-telling the associated stories heighten the sensations and emotions. Memories of landscape and place have provided me with strong visual metaphors of important life events.

As a photographer, my life has been actively saturated by images. My sense of self is constructed and re-constructed by the visual and my mind is honed to receiving information about my environment through visual acuity. Visual memory plays a dominant role in my journey of remembering the self. My search for a sense of belonging and place has often been closely linked to the landscape I have inhabited. Through visual memory, recorded in photographs and film in family archives, I have been able to make connections to the 'landscape' of my childhood and invoke a strong sense of place and the past.

In 2007 when I recorded these words in my journal, I had recently been through two significant experiences. Four months earlier my mother, the giver of so much of my story had died. Then, in January I returned to India to my maternal family home, the home of my mother's childhood. More importantly, this was a place and a landscape of my childhood. It was on this journey that I finally started to gain an understanding of who I was. It was a homecoming – a home coming to my self and it was facilitated and mediated by my experience of place.

It is curious and interesting then, that I chose a trip to Kangaroo Island, in South Australia to express the confluence of identity and landscape. As I have recorded, it was all at once a psychological, spiritual, emotional and physical union, an embodiment of the landscape with a sense of self. However, what is reflected in this fragment is a shift within the self. It signifies a key turning point, which propels the newly awakened self into a different relationship with a landscape once seen, but not connected to.
**FRAGMENT 10: Friendship**
*Berlin, Germany 1 September 2007*

The boundaries blur
formless waves
crash incessantly
depth blue
white foam
Washing over the signposts in the sea
Panic
Fear
The hopelessness of a disappearing
horizon
Drowning – not waving
In the stillness of a Berlin morning.

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**Berlin, Germany 26 September 2007**

**Berlin Chronicle**

Only in loneliness can one find the ‘whole self’ – in Berlin I found loneliness and in doing so I found myself.

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**Poem from Journal February 1990, Victoria Australia**

Radiant the citrus cast against the verdure
Fragrant, refreshing, you pluck it from its place.
Why?
The steel blade cuts deep with precision
opaque, the fluid oozes – escapes.
You capture it hurriedly – pressure on the rind
Your hands a deft vice
The words trickle out – fill the steel chalice.
Do you hear me?
Fragmentation is heightened, as the spent fruit falls wasted
at your feet.

I watch – I listen – I speak – I follow your words in frenzy
Careful not to deny my experience
The words interpret, tell, reconstitute –
Additives – preservatives
Re contextualise my experience.
Perhaps your gin and tonic needs a final touch?
You catch my eye
Did you hear me?

Foolishly my friends I trust you – bewildered at this denial
Perhaps I must speak louder
But my words fade as you raise your glasses
Press them against your privileged lips which
Form and shape my destiny with words.

Your paintbrush dips into the citrus fluid
The deft strokes work effectively

INVISIBILITY

Do you see me?

What was that? My invisibility has honed your aural senses
But you now must see me in order to hear me –

Or so you say –

So you hold a candle to the paper
The flame tortures, burns –

Searing heat as the flame licks the surface – the
words become tangible for you.

My pain exposes the experience in a form you can grasp
Curiosity – voyeurism, a synonym for sisterhood?

You momentarily consider it, whilst the tears of my
friend extinguish the flame.
The words fall to the floor – tossed aside again in ashes.

Tell me sisters – friends –
Why? When you could have seen me/ heard me
Anyway, it would have enhanced the flavour of your gin.
Interrogation 10

I’m walking home from school along the hot dusty road that circumvents Waterfield Road Park in Bandra. I feel alone in the world and find the solitude quite comforting. It must be about 1963, John Kennedy had just been assassinated, and I had been moved to tears by the news but cannot say why. The day at school had brought about an eerie atmosphere – there were prayers for the dead, silence in the corridors, a minute’s silence at assembly and our sports session, the activity I valued most at school had been cancelled. Why? Was the question I most remembered thinking, what did all of this in America have to do with us?

Confused and seeking answers I turned to my closest friend and confidant. She was a wonderful ebullient character – clever at school, popular with teachers and peers, excelled at sports and a year older than me. I had her on a pedestal, and I loved her dearly. We had started our schooling together and had been friends since then. That day in the schoolyard, for reasons I still don’t understand, in front of a group of our playmates she mocked and betrayed me. Her rules were not my rules. It was my first lesson in the fickleness of friendship, and the capricious nature of relationships. It was my first conscious experience of the betrayal of trust. I was twelve.

This fragment recently penned in Berlin reflects the confluence of four rivers of my experience. These are friendship, relationships and intimacy, sexuality and the role of significant others particularly those who have influenced my creative self. In naming these I will briefly reflect on each.

For me, the idea of friendship, in the end, is the relationship with oneself. I feel that I had this relationship with myself when I was a child. It may have been that, as a first born much of my reality involved time alone. Apart from the experience described in the schoolyard, the friendships at school and in the street were free of the emotional attachment, which may have rendered me vulnerable. When I left India in 1967, it was the place I felt torn away from – the smell, the sound the visual and physical environment and the everyday rituals. I cannot say that I consciously missed any particular person/friend.

After migration, my experience of a new culture and subsequent marginalisation in Australia changed the way I related to people and developed friendships. The erosion of self-confidence, the encroachment of doubt and low self-esteem usurped the free and open way of being that I remembered as a child. As a result, the strength of the relational origin
I had with my essence of self was eroded and my relationships and friendships started to be founded on desperation to belong – for acceptance.

Despite this experience I have endeavoured to be optimistic, to trust and accept that there must be a shared vision. A lifetime of unfulfilled expectations, lack of real caring, impossible differences and betrayal has plagued my existence. There have of course been exceptions however, they remain but few. It is only recently, in re-connecting with my own self that I have acquired acuity, and started to value realistically the meaning of real friendship and the terms of endearment. I have discovered the importance of the reality that while the ‘personal is political’ it is also essential that the political is personal. A shared personal and ethical politic underpins true friendship.

I recently found myself in conversation with a stranger in a small remote town in the Central Otago highlands of New Zealand. Accompanied by my cameras, iPod, books and laptop I had been happily travelling around the South Island. “Are you travelling all by yourself?” she asked; “don’t you get lonely?” My immediate response was – “no – I love it”. The occasion prompted me to reflect on my life in terms of my intimate relationships, intimacy and ultimately the relationship with myself. Why have I always been more comfortable alone? Why have I felt most free to connect and dis-connect when I am alone, outside of a ‘relationship’ with another? I realised, as the excerpt from my journal suggests, that it is only within a relationship with an ‘other’ that I have experienced loneliness.

My transition from heterosexuality to Lesbianism had been a political choice. My foray into romantic love, marriage, domesticity and nuclear family ideas had been fraught with violence, dissonance and disappointment. Philosophically and practically lesbianism fitted more closely to my fundamental ideals of gyn/affection, a term used by Janice Raymond to describe the friendship between women. At least this was at face value – and through my lesbian relationships I remained optimistic that it was indeed possible. However, I had romanticised the idea of lesbian relationships and I was to be disappointed as I discovered that many lesbian relationships merely replicated hetero-relationships. Once again there were exceptions, but for most the result was the reality of existing and surviving in hetero-patriarchy.

In the last decade my reflection and analysis on the matter led me to consider issues of my cultural difference. All my intimate relationships have involved people from ‘western’
cultures. A few years ago while visiting India for a conference I recall saying to a friend “I think I need to be in a relationship with an Indian woman – that would make things so much easier” and she replied, bringing me down to earth with a thud – “I don't think so Lariane, because all your Australianisms would rise to the surface and then you would have the same problem in reverse” – touché! The duality within me – my reality!

Issues of power and control have loomed within all my relationships. The most heinous manifestation has been the silencing of the self and individuality.

Today, I still call myself lesbian but one who chooses to remain outside an intimate sexual relationship. For me this means that to be lesbian is to extend the idea of ‘sexual preference’ beyond a sexual category. For me, it is a social and political existence. I am happiest when I am alone as it liberates me to connect with a vast range of people in many ways. This way I am able to maintain close and particular friendships with many people who satisfy my diverse needs. This has been particularly relevant to the emergence and development of the creative self.

For many years, much of my creativity fell into a chasm. A chasm formed somewhere in the space between my early memories of drawing, painting, singing, poetry or following my grandfather around his garden with his camera. My mother had always encouraged my creativity and I cannot really recall any instances of mockery of my artistic products as a child. So why had I lost this? Why had I subsumed my artistic voice?

The experience of migration, of dis-location and displacement provides some of the answers. Desperately seeking acceptance and belonging in an alien landscape I basically had no choice as a fifteen year old but to re-invent myself. If you couldn’t change your reality then change your perceptions of it! We were the ones who were supposed to be grateful for the lucky country, our gratitude expressed by the surrender of self. For the following years I successfully pursued excellence in everything I did – sport, employment and academia. In doing so I subsumed the adventurous, free and creative self and to my horror only relatively recently accepted that for much of my adult life I have buried the ‘authentic’ self.

1987 was a catalytic and watershed year for me. After nearly twenty years of travel and experience I returned to Geelong, the provincial Victorian town that my parents had chosen to settle in. A true friend of great significance entered my life and in the years that
followed, and to this day I owe much of the awakening of creative spirit to her. In many ways, she re-kindled my relationship with myself, brought a new meaning to friendship and introduced me to a world of literary and artistic inspiration. The writings of Virginia Woolf, Vita Sackville West, Alice Walker – the photography of Georgia O’Keefe and the art of Frida Kahlo opened up a new world and were akin to the epiphanous experience of my first encounters with De Beauvoir, Friedan and Greer.

I started to question my own abandonment of creative talent. To some extent I had successfully found acceptance as a social activist and intellectual, which had superficially propped up my self-esteem. But deep down I was not happy. I was no longer satisfied with my old guise and became determined to unravel the enigma. I had always been a photographer. But now, inspired by the vision of Georgia O’Keefe and encouraged by my friend Colleen I started to exhibit my work and nurture the talent. My artistic endeavour became a channel through which I could externalise my view of the world. It was always subjective and intensely personal. It was a way in which I could enlarge my own voice and vision. However, another surprise awaited me, one that was to once again turn my world inside out and catapult me into this research of memoir and identity.

In 2003, during the process of my M.Ed., I was to discover that the duality that co-existed within me extended past East/West, that in fact the voice I had used to express myself for so long, the socialised, academic voice had subsumed the ‘I’. Once again, it was a mirror provided by my friend and supervisor Adele that uncovered this.

The women I have mentioned are but some of many significant others who through their reflection have provided a ‘Hall of Mirrors’ to honour and nurture the evolving creative self. These are women who have had and continue to have a profound influence on my life – through their work, their friendship, support, love and courage - they engage, challenge and inspire me. Their contribution forms a ‘leitmotif’ – a hall of mirrors reflective and transformative in their capacity.

I want to end by returning to the questions posed to me by the stranger. “Are you travelling alone?” And “Don’t you get lonely?” I want to consider them in the light of the fragment, and take into consideration my reflections.
No I am not travelling by myself – I never do. I have my music, my sketchbooks and journal, my constant observation of my environment – with or without a camera. I have new people to meet, strangers to speak with and in the end I have my self. I am never alone and never bored.

No panic; no fear and no hopelessness of a disappearing horizon. For whether it is writing, sketching, taking a photograph or merely contemplating the beauty of the light on water, a falling autumn leaf as it loses hold of the branch or listening to the silence of falling snow, my life's horizon is endless and filled with potential. For now I can see my self and that presents many creative and fulfilling possibilities.
FRAGMENT 11: returning to India and Identity
Personal Journal, Bombay, India 2005

The air is thick and oppressive; the searing heat dulls the senses, the click clack of the Shatbadi Express lulls me deeper into the experience of this return to my beloved homeland, as it thunders through the Western Ghats towards Bombay.

In the corner of the ‘first class’ compartment a middle-aged woman unexpectedly addresses me and says, “What is your caste?” I find myself paralysed by the question. I hesitantly mutter, “Brahmin – I think”... I had never perceived of myself belonging to a caste.

The experience crystallized questions that have haunted my existence since I left India in 1967 at the age of 15. Who am I? And what is my place of belonging?

This experience commenced me on a journey to unravel archaeology of identity.
Interrogation 11

In January 2005 I had almost completed another journey back to India. This had been my third trip in the same number of years. Each trip had brought with it anticipation, memories, nostalgia, and reflection. For my part, I had gone about my life in a breach caused by leaving India when my parents chose to migrate. I had often felt in exile – lost without home or country, and without a place of belonging. The ‘self’ I knew had felt most comfortable mid-air during my frequent travels overseas where finding myself neither ‘here’ nor ‘there’ - I was comfortable in transit.

That day, on the Shatbadi Express as I travelled between Goa, the land of my father, and Bombay, my own birthplace, I discovered that there is no place in the world to hide. The question that spilled from the lips of the woman in the carriage was courteously phrased and probably well intentioned, however, it had the impact of a wrench opening up something buried deep and shrouded by family secrets and unknowing. I had been born into a Catholic, post-colonial family. My research to date had revealed a heritage linking my genealogy to the English, French, and Portuguese. While it had been easy to trace the origin of my surname and that of my maternal lineage, I had and have never been able to get an answer to my questions about my phenotypical inheritance. Where was the ‘Indian’ in all of this? So, imagine my surprise when I was asked about caste. I was shocked.

Caste is a concept and social construct that I had always related to ‘real’ Indians – the ‘real’ associated with religion, more specifically Hinduism and Islam. While intellectually accepting the pragmatism of caste as relevant to social arrangements in India, I had never for a moment considered the concept as having anything to do with me. Moreover, somewhere in my self-censored memory/knowledge, I had allowed myself to accept that the caste system was simply a remnant of the past and of little relevance to modern India. I was confused. The very manner in which the question was posed reflected the reality that caste remains a quintessential part of Indian life. I was confronted by the reality of having to recognise that the caste system existed. Furthermore, the void of information on this matter in both my maternal and paternal history had re-surfaced, and this question provided me with another point of departure on this quest to locate my ‘self’ in the world.

My immediate but hesitated response was to resort to a choice reflecting the safety of my educated, middle-class status - attributes related to the Brahmin or ‘upper class’ Indian. Why did I do that? On what basis did I respond? Perhaps it was simply a case of perception management, for at that time I had no substance on which to make the claim.
Even though I had spent the first fifteen years of my life in this stratified society, I had remained oblivious to my own designation in the social paradigm. This fragment records a catalytic moment on this journey. The incident on the train revealed another layer, uncovered another shard in the excavation of self. It has opened up a further pathway of exploration, and in doing so has re-focused many familial stories and incidents in a new light. It has made me realise that little in India is simple or easily understood. Categorisation seems to help and knowing your caste speaks a million words.
FRAGMENT 12: Dislocation and Identity

26 January 2006, Goa, India

Out of the skin of my persona Hathi and back for the final 24 hours in this land of my ancestors – of stunning sunsets, Figaldo (never early, always on time) of Sussegad derived from the colonisers of the Iberian variety, of soulful music, mandos and fados, of exquisite cuisine flavoured with the abundance which was sought after and plundered by the invaders – of tamarind and mango, chikoo and guava, of palm fringed beaches and warm Arabian waters. A land of coconut, seas bustling with fish of the tiger, the bagh, the Shere and the naag. Jungles filled with vines carrying birds – the Nikanth with his neela coat, the sunbird in haldi – the owl, drongo, and flocks of white heron, Brahminy kites, and golden eagles …

Red earth and laterite and basalt and silver sand; land of rivers caressing verdant mangroves carving valleys of Dudhsagar waterfalls. The only place I know where I am rendered too lazy and numbed by a good meal and a Kingfisher beer, I put off my photographing the scarlet sunset knowing almost guaranteed that there would be another one tomorrow. But tomorrow I will have left – another leaving, another farewell on the perennial journey – for the ending presents another beginning – the ending of such a journey always lies between two beginnings.

I am not sad or melancholic, as I know I will return home again – for my Punar means an eternal homecoming is always assured. I have accomplished my mission on this journey, put shape to my research and drawn a line around it. I will need to maintain the momentum – to dig deep and continue the journey. I am unsure of the personal in terms of the relationship. I cannot say whether it will fulfill or sustain me – I cannot say that without the fire that the passion is possible – when I examine my friendships that work at a deep level – they all contain the power, the passion and the absence of fear.

It is the absence of fear of what they see in me that is essential to possibilities of friendship and passion. This is my main concern with the current situation. The behaviour may be deemed conditional – but I must examine my own part in such matters.

28 January 2006, Kuala Lumpur Airport, Malaysia

We’ve said our farewells and been in transit for nearly twelve hours now. The brain has faded somewhat; together with the southern Indian tan KL Airport is not a place of great interest – architecturally pleasing with its post-modernist construction of glass and steel – but little else to offer. We settle for a decent coffee at ‘Deli France’ – globalisation – few redeeming features and make our way through the seemingly sanitised world to departure gate C25. On the way I attempt to visit the Ladies toilet only to be screamed at by a woman cleaner who kept pointing me towards the ‘Men’s’. Rather frustrated and annoyed by yet another altercation with women thinking I was a man, I pull my T-shirt up and stick my breasts in her face!
Having almost herniated every muscle in my body from carrying my backpack I collapse exhausted in the humidity. We sit down, but, not till we have been put through yet another security check. This time however, the name tag on the officer reads ‘Vaughan’ – Australian Federal Police and a voice rings out as he handles my passport – “Goin’ Home?” in the broadest Australian accent which all at once is music and a jarring assault to the ears. I hesitatingly reply “yes” with some relief and a little confusion in my voice.

We place ourselves strategically in order to gain advantage of the queue for boarding carefully avoiding the reserved seats for elderly and physically challenged – aren’t we both of these? ...We laugh!

A bombastic Indian (NRI) male accompanied by a demure and quiet wife and child (predictable stereotypes) says to us – “where have you two been?” We reply in unison “Goa”.

He slaps his knee with great animation and says, “Well, that’s where we are from!”

Adele then replies – “that’s where she is from’ indicating towards me.

He says, “\Going home?”

I reply “yes” with some confusion and smiling relief!

The more things change - the more they stay the same … the eternal homecoming!
May 2006, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

Dearest Colleen,

How strange to address you so – as letters have been few and far between – yet there is constant conversation – the meeting of the minds, of spirit and soul traversing the everydayness of existence.

I’ve been saving up these papers – remember the warm English summer – fragrant breezes over the South Downs, in the garden at Charleston – filled with poppies, lavender, and roses? And the bumblebees harmonising in sweet melody with the dragonflies in flight to keep us company?

The crunch of white pebbles – the ‘woman in the garden’ on the bench – you in your bright yellow T-shirt – memories of our travels retracing the steps of friendship and love that has gone before us. Here we are almost twenty years on and the friendship only deeper – takes on new shapes – but shapes ever changing, reflecting the source and the kaleidoscope.

It’s good to be back in Tasmania again – once again I feel like a ‘homecoming’ – Punar – but so much has changed within as the journey continues – or ends – and a new one begins. It feels different to have a fresh understanding of self of the idea of perennial beginnings and eternal homecomings – of belonging nowhere and somehow everywhere – of inhabiting the core/ the very centre – yet dangling in the spaces at the margins – to be within and without.

In accepting this self that I have discovered/uncovered it is challenging to accept that perhaps what I have been for so much of my life has been in attempt to fulfill what others have crafted for me – an archetype to satisfy their needs – and my dismissal of self that has been so embodied that its loss has let me succumb to the enticement of approval and accolade – only to be chained, caught in the net, entrapped by the promise of love, of self importance and acceptance.
Masks in abundance – for each moment but none so great as to truly understand the masquerade – for the masker knows the mask but not necessarily the masquerade.

So I have arrived at this place now – naked – the masks slip and in my unmasked state, which is still not shared with the world I inhabit – I am in many ways alone. I think of death quite often these days, not with fear – but with embrace. The idea of passing through – of transcending this form – but the journey’s not complete, and of course, cannot be hurried along.

So, I will continue to dwell and float in my new skin – in and out and through the boundaries – keeping as my core -the self – rediscovered and sustained by the resonance between the very few I have found – and trust. It goes without saying then, that your existence is one that is central to survival – the underpinning friendship.

We hear the music, we dance. We hear the words – some unspoken – there is an eternity that clothes it and it will continue to end and begin again in shape and form.

So I dream of eternal gardens to explore together – of summer roses, autumnal paths of gold – the spring daffodils, the winter fires – of whispering palms and singing rivers where our friendship will just be.

Personal Journal, Melbourne, Australia 31 January 2007

Today is the day of landing – the day of arrival – the day that shook the world – the great anticipated day of setting foot on the ‘promised land’.

As I drive in to Melbourne with Graeme Wishart, 40 years almost to the minute – I am struck with the memories of what I knew then but more so of the realizations of what I didn’t know.

What was in store for me – the confusion, the lack of understanding, and the loss of self – the loss of place, the loss of the familiar – the loss of identity?

But, 40 years on the journey of exploration has given me the skills, the desire and the unquenching thirst to know – but it will always be a knowledge based in what I have come to know through the experience of being, existing, negotiating and dwelling in the ‘alien landscape’. The creating and re-creating of the self in order to find a place, the use of masks, the adaptation, the multiple selves that exist within. And, in time, the homecoming has finally established itself within my self wherever it finds a landing place.
It has been a life of eternal beginnings and eternal homecomings. It is hard indeed to locate the particular – ‘watan’ as a homeland is still located within the heart.

But why is it then that I am moved by nationalistic fervour – by the melancholic strains of ‘Advance Australia Fair’ and ‘I still call Australia Home’ and if I was honest – as I am trying to be – this outpouring then is equally exuded at the sound of ‘Jana Gana Mana’?

The visceral response I have to arrival in India with its familiar pungent odours, dense air, humidity and heat – the throngs, the colour, the babble in foreign tongue – no more foreign than Italian or English – is this so different to the feeling I have of coming home to the wide open spaces – the endless horizons, the cool clear air, the lack of people and babble in Australia? Another ‘home’? Or is it much different from my arrival in Italia? The place where I have felt an immediate ‘simpatico’ – where art and music and food and the energy of the people all seem to seep in and out of my skin in familiar rhythms like breathing/inhaling and exhaling.

The feel of slipping into the familiar, well-worn jacket... I suppose I could recount place after place to make my key point.

Yesterday 40 years after the departure/arrival I recounted to Dad and Conchita the anniversary. I am taken aback that no one else even remembers the date. Did it mean so little to them? Or is it exactly the act of ‘forgetting’ of obliterating memory? Both of them are somewhat surprised – questioning my recollection of the date – “Are you sure?” dad says to me and then sadly exclaims, “I suppose I have spent half my life there and half here – in fact more than half here because I spent the first 2-years in Pune”. It felt to me like he was trying to press the point that this is where home is.

Mum would have remembered the date – she would have just remembered.

Personal Journal, Melbourne, Australia 2007

Almost 40 years ago to the day we set sail, departing our watan, our beloved homeland of India. I must have been fifteen and a half years of age, but for the last forty have always thought of being fourteen and a half at the time we left. A year may not seem significant as an adult but in my memory felt like it constituted an eternity. Then, and through the many years since I have spent so much time contemplating the evolving journey – painful, confusing and dislocated. Nevertheless, as I recall here, I see now how I was caught in the mire of adolescence somewhere between childhood and the desperation to embrace the advent of
adulthood – a condition so cruelly forced upon me by the circumstance of this leaving – the departure, the act of migration.

Looking back in sadness and with so much more understanding now I dare to wonder about that experience – as we sailed off from Ballard Pier on the SS Oronsay, ‘lift vans packed with cultural artefacts from the homeland – ivory inlaid tables, saris, brass lamps, rosewood beds and cabinets, bangles, paintings, wall hangings, it appeared that my parents had ensured that through these tangible tokens establish a cultural identity that would endure the waves of assimilation policy, racism, and difference that awaited us in the promised land. But, something was missing and somehow I, in all my naivety sensed it then – something I have come to know now through this journey in search of the ‘lost’ self. What had been discarded and not included in the baggage was my parents own inner sense of self and identity – their cultural heritage, their real sense of who they were of all their life experience up to that point that constituted the ‘self’. This may not be entirely true of my mother, who on arriving in the ‘Promised Land’ and subjected to horrendous personal trials recorded the experience in her journals. On discovering them, these journals were burnt by my father who screamed in his own frustration that this was ‘utter non-sense’ and that we had to move through and ‘burn our bridges and accept the consequences of our choices’. And with this act he single-handedly sought to enact the obliteration of memory and enforce a forgetting.
Interrogation 12

Most of us can locate a central event that shapes and distorts our lives. For me it was that day in January 1967 when we left our beloved homeland of India. I was 15, not quite grown up in my familiar environment and with absolutely no fit to the one towards which I was heading. In the space of 16 days aboard the SS Oronsay, I travelled between childhood and adulthood, between chaos and pre-destination, and between innocence and the dawning of a new knowledge. Since then, every action and thought of my existence has been affected by that fulcrum of time.

Since then, I have been caught in the space between two worlds accompanied by a constant companion – a ghost that shadows every aspect of my existence; a ghost who never fails to interrogate my actions, my feelings of estrangement, and haunt my recollections of the past and present with feelings of displacement and ambiguity.

In retrospect, my loss of identity can be traced to a loss of a sense of place. For me the two are intricately connected. My sense of belonging was disrupted through my experience as an ‘unwilling’ participant in the migration of our family, and the separation from all that I cherished as the familiar. Since that time, I have experienced a feeling of dis-location and dis-ease for much of my life.

For me, re-location caused loss: loss of place, loss of the familiar, loss of the self and of identity. It fired a longing for what was ‘before’, and a need to continue to re-locate to re-claim a sense of place, one in which I belonged, one in which I could feel safe to be my ‘self’. However, the act of each re-location caused further disruption, further fragmentation and only served to further emphasise the dis-location. As I traversed the landscapes of geography, philosophy, politics, work, sexual identity, and lifestyle in my attempts to re-create myself, the effort increased dis-location and much of what I tried to achieve, was for all intents and purposes ‘lost in translation’.

Furnished with a number of disparate personae, I returned to India in 2003. I had no answers just questions, and even the questions were vague and unformulated. As India revealed itself to me and I yielded myself to it, this journey became a spontaneous exploration of place, of memory, and subsequently an emotional evocation of who I was. It was the start of a journey of reconciliation between the past and the present, between lost
and present time, between the remembered self and the explorer, and between the many disparate selves and places I inhabit.

In the last five years I have returned to India several times. On each trip I have gained a layer and shed a layer of my skin, my experience. My search for identity and belonging finally dissipated with the realisation and acceptance that I embody two worlds of experience and that within me now lay a permanent duality. My self contains two worlds; the world of the East (India) and the West (Australia) and each of them brings me joy of belonging, of connection and relation and ironically each of them also causes alienation, frustration, and the sorrow of rejection.

The concept of ‘Punar’ a Sanskrit word for primal beginning is most appropriate to describe the journey I take. My journeys of emotional connection and relatedness to the worlds I live in mean a journey towards this beginning – a journey of eternal beginnings and eternal homecomings.
FRAGMENT 13: Visual Fragments

ARTEFACT 5: Happy Memories
Interrogation 13

“Smile”, "Why don’t you sing me a song? Look this way”; “look at the camera”. These are familiar requests or pleas made by many parents, friends and anyone wanting to seize that decisive moment and capture time and image for their archives and memory. Like so many other children, I grew up with parents who were eager to record precious moments on celluloid. My father, like my maternal grandfather, has been a keen photographer. My mother thankfully used her creativity to painstakingly preserve all the family photographs in an album.

Since its inception in 1953, the family photo album entitled ‘Happy Memories’ has been a source of photographic archive of our family covering the years we lived in India, before we migrated to Australia in 1967. I hold lucid memories of the initial construction of the large grey/blue book. It was hand made and bound by leather hardback covers held together by winged screws. Painted on the front cover were the words – ‘Happy Memories’. My mother had carefully assembled this in my father’s absence overseas, and I can still hear her softly cuss as she struggled to manage the project she had undertaken. I spent hours by her side handing her the photos and glue, which I invariably spilled over myself and the table. She would patiently place, decorate and record the occasion in her handwriting.

The album holds photographs from my mother’s birth and family home, my father’s youth, their courtship, wedding and the birth and other events of each of us children. I recently asked my father what triggered his interest in photography. I was rather surprised to hear that, contradictory to the myth I had created about this pastime being associated to his relationship with my maternal grandfather, it had its genesis quite by accident. In 1947-48, during the violent partition of Pakistan/India my father undertook a dangerous business trip to Lahore. He was billeted with a family who turned out to be the head of Kodak in Pakistan. Being a non-drinker, and indifferent to the ‘party’ culture of the household he borrowed a box-brownie from the store at the bottom of the house. The photos he took of the death and destruction of Lahore are in the album. They have a rare photojournalistic quality, and without much prompting, he tells a chilling story of an important time in history.

In 1953 he took a camera to Europe and recorded his experiences to bring home to Mum. These too are found in the album. Since then Dad has continued to photograph the family and Mum while alive, kept updating the archive as it spilled over into new ‘flip albums’ in
Australia. It was this album, 'Happy Memories' that she called for on the day before she died. As she asked our friend Colleen to turn the pages for her, she related with absolute clarity the story of her life.

On the Journey Around Myself photography plays a critical part in elucidating memory in the unraveling of archaeology of identity. As autobiographical narrative, photographs particularly those I uncovered in the family photographic archives not only support family narratives that I was told about the past but also provide visual fragments that could be embellished and generate micro-narratives to understand my sense of identity and place of belonging. The availability of these photographs offers me a set of representational images for the act of 'looking at myself'. In her book Patterns of Childhood, Christa Wolf (1980) discusses the importance of photographs as part of any research that seeks to remember the self. She ponders the association between memory and photography as her narrator attempts to reconstruct her childhood by creating mental images of photographs that were lost at the end of the war. So too, Walter Benjamin (2006) in his book A Berlin Childhood around 1900 examined the critical role of photographs and/or their absence in the construction of history narratives.

On the Journey Around Myself I often turned to the album to imagine, remember and elicit stories about the images from my parents. I have included a selection of key images from the album as an artefact that accompanies this research. It contains an excerpt of visual fragments that triggered micro narratives that in turn fed the construction of the digital story A Journey through Lost Time, the fable Satatantra, and collages contained within the Hall of Mirrors. Some of the images are also embedded as Fragments in Chapter Three, the Archaeological Site.

Linda Haverty Rugg (1997) tells us that any auto biographer must come to terms with:

\[
\text{The existence of photography in creating a textual self-image, for the mere presence of photography challenges traditional forms of autobiographical narrative by calling into question essential assumptions about the nature of referentiality, time, history, and selfhood (p. 231).}
\]

On the Journey Around Myself the photographs in Happy Memories helped me excavate and reveal memories of people, places, disappeared places and things. The photographs generated micro-narratives that opened up a space for those places and people to co-exist in the places and time I inhabit now. They gave me a touchstone through which I could use
my imagination and paint pictures with words and images by crafting an innovative approach to self-inquiry and autobiographical narrative.

For me, the album ‘Happy Memories’ has always been the most important family artefact. It records not only my ancestral history but also holds photographic records of my self and my relationship with many other significant others in the years during which I lived at home. The emotional significance of the album for me is so great that it is the only object that I have specifically requested in my parent’s will.

This album of photographs is not merely a collection of memories, it is a catalyst: the photographs provide the basis on which family myths and legends are re-affirmed. The connecting points and disconnection between the various images preserve open cracks, offering clues about possible histories and pasts. These are some of the fragments by which I can create the narratives that I have yearned for and are my anchoring points. They are the means by which I can organise traces to make sense of my past in the present I inhabit today. As Flood (2010) tells us, these anchoring points are important elements that anchor the individual’s story and give it meaning that is significant. In doing so they bring linearity to the narrative discourse.

I have spent hours of my life leafing through this album, gazing at the images, questioning my parents about who and what and where and why. Each time I look at the images I see something new, something I have missed on the hundreds of other occasions. I have found it particularly intriguing to observe what has been included in the album, and to speculate on what may have been left out. The photos I have included in my artefact ‘Happy Memories’ are those that directly relate to myself. In choosing the photos I am aware that I am attempting to retrieve my past, but it is a past embedded in the lives of others whose images are also recorded here. In that sense it means that the past is not just my own but belongs to others.

For me, ‘Happy Memories’ contains two points of significance critical to this work about identity and memory.

Firstly, there is the close relationship between my memory, visual memory and photographs contained within the album. The visual narrative along with the accompanying oral stories, myths, speculations, dreaming and debates have generated clues about who I am and my place in the world. However, the photographs also uncover
some insight into the world of the ‘other’ – the outsider, though absent, whose gaze captures the images presented. Is this how the photographer sees me? And how do I construct a sense of the authentic self in this writing? What are the issues of referentiality; of history, of interpretation? Throughout my life I have used these images to locate myself, to find meaning – I have wanted to ‘read’ the visual text as much as I have wanted to understand the stories I have read or heard about my early life.

Secondly, as an artefact, this album represents in some ways the genesis of my own creative self. In my earliest memories I recall that I would follow my maternal grandfather around his garden in Poona. He was a photographer and a grower of prize roses. On holiday visits to my maternal grandparent’s home, Sunnydale, in Poona I remember observing the visual detail in flowers, the bark of the gigantic Jambul tree, and the texture of the stones. I was always curious about his camera, asking questions and no doubt disturbing his peaceful pastime. For his part, my father and his camera were a constant presence in my first fifteen years. Through his approach, I became an observer of people, of objects and learned the value of photography as a way to record moments, which, later triggered and fed my memory. My mother encouraged my interest in drawing and writing. In the many hours I spent with her while she compiled this photographic record she allowed me to contribute to the artwork. More importantly she told me stories of the people and places within the photographs and persuaded me to tell my stories through the photographs.

As a professional photographer today my vision has been shaped by these early lessons and by the visual stories preserved in ‘Happy Memories’. My vision of people, places, nature and things are as much who I am as they are of the world around me. Much of my early photography focused on the subject of nature – particularly – flowers. I was then, and still am drawn to the fragility and imperfection of nature as much as its beauty and perfection. My landscape photography often reflects a vision of endlessness, of complexity, rootlessness and isolation. Today my interest in architectural photography is also about artistic detail – about ‘things as they are…. rather than a whole harvest of invention’, a Francis Bacon philosophy adopted by photographer Dorothea Lange.

All these visions, these ways of seeing, are for me a synthesis of my inner and outer world. I owe many of my insights about my past to the family album and the family stories it has generated. ‘Happy Memories’ remains a critical and significant source of data for my life in relation to my ‘remembering the self’.
Artefact 1: The Hall of Mirrors

The motif of the mirror first emerged in the fable *Satatantra*. Bhudevi the young elephant moves through life gaining reflections of herself from significant others. From these she constructs her identity. The *Hall of Mirrors* is an extension of the mirror as a device by which I explore the role of significant others in unraveling archaeology of identity.

The Hall of Mirrors provides a conceptual framework to represent the construction of identity that occurs through social interaction with others. Underpinning this framework are the works of early Symbolic Interactionists such as George Herbert Mead’s ‘Looking Glass Self’ and more recent theorists such as Jacques Lacan work on ‘the Mirrored Self’, who propose that the self/identity is formed and shaped through interaction/reflection with others in society.

The twenty-one individuals whose portraits are included are twenty women and a dog that had a significant influence on my sense of self and my creativity. Some of these included artists and writers whose creative work shaped my political and personal identity. What is of significance here is that none of the choices for inclusion were planned. In my grief I reached out and instinctively turned towards these individuals as a source of strength.

In Chapter Five I give a comprehensive account of the underpinning conceptual crafting of the *Hall of Mirrors*. Suffice to say, the process was a spontaneous response to the death of my mother. I created the twenty-one collages by combining my own photographs with public domain photographs of art works or people (significant others) and using creative media software. In the process of collage making I re-contextualise these images by embedding them in multiple pictorial layers. Each collage was often created in short bursts, sometimes taking only a matter of fifteen minutes, working intensely without any plan or pre-meditated choices. All twenty-one collages were completed in four days.
Each collage represents my relationship with the person whose portrait is included with mine. Each collage is dependent on individual elements in it and the relationship that exists between the elements, which in some instances include motifs, landscapes and other poignant details. Contained within the relationships are the fragments of stories that generated the self-knowledge required to arrive at an understanding of my self and as such hold more significance than the overriding order superimposed on the work of art. In Chapter Five, I become the ‘viewer’ and deconstruct each visual metaphor, thus revealing my interpretation of the elemental relationships involved.

In the *Hall of Mirrors* the viewer bears witness to a visual dialogue that results from the inherent relationships contained within each collage. While the images contained within each collage have the capacity to trigger meanings and fragments of memory for me; the interpretation of the collages remains subjective. So, the viewer is invited to engage, read, reflect and generate his or her own interpretation. Ultimately this interpretation, while not definitive, does result in communication between the narrator and the viewer.
Artefact 2: Argumentum e Silencio

For Joe Lambert (2002), every process has a genesis story – an arbitrary point to call ... the beginning. My first foray into digital storytelling in 2004 produced *Argumentum e Silencio*. The experience corresponded with the start of my PhD journey and this digital story can be considered as the genesis story of my *Journey Around Myself*. It was the beginning of a number of creative responses to fragments uncovered during the archaeological dig.

The story is conceptualised around my original research question involving the silencing of the lesbian voice in India. To present a historical background of *Sakhi* or female friendship in India, I drew on the work of Giti Thadani (1996) on the history of lesbian desire in ancient and modern India. My own negative experience of returning to India as a lesbian had been profound and I was determined to present a message that told of the reality of lesbians in India today. To do this I use multiple layers of image, voice and soundtrack to build both context and knowledge in which to set my dramatic question. The images are my own photographs and are an amalgam of ancient statuary, tribal and Indian miniature paintings and a painting given to me by a friend.

The focus point of drama in the story is the naming of myself by name and as a lesbian. The accompanying image 'the shadow' symbolises the silencing of voice and self.

The making of *Argumentum e Silencio* and the screening of it was an overwhelming experience. This digital story has been presented to a number of private and public audiences. These include confirmation of my PhD candidature in 2004 and the UN Women's Health International Conference in India in 2005. Audience response has been emotionally intense and indicated deep resonance with the message.

*Argumentum e Silencio* ends with the words "this is not an end ... but a beginning – the journey continues..." and so it did.
Artefact 3: A Journey through Lost Time...

In November 2006, encouraged by my dying mother to ‘tell my story’ and deep in grief following her death I increased the intensity of my search through family photographic archives. On my travel back to India in 2004-5, I had re-visited many of the places of my childhood. I was struck by the way memory markers of places such as my childhood home, my maternal grandparents home, and objects like packets of Bournvita Biscuits, kites flying in the sky and the smells and sounds of India had seemingly remained unchanged. Yet it had been forty years since our family migrated to Australia and the memory of that day in January 1967 came flooding back with all the emotional intensity as if it were yesterday. I was curious about this elasticity of time and memory and it is this curiosity that gestated the seeds of A Journey through Lost Time.

This digital story is constructed in multiple layers of time that work at a linear and non-linear level. In the first section I use a static image compiled of Indian iconography symbolising my Indian heritage. These include a pair of ancient dancing temple elephants and a brass icon of indigenous tribal origin. The seven images in the centre of the static background are images of myself representing the seven stages of my life journey.

The story progresses to reveal photos of places of my childhood in black and white that have been technically rendered to represent a moving image. Each is followed by an image of the same place captured by me on my return to that place. The voice over is paced to allow spaces in which the audience can reflect on the material in front of them. This transitioning of place and time and the accompanying voiceover represents the elasticity of time and memory especially in the remembering of self.

Finally A Journey through Lost Time transports us to the present time as it traces the growth of the family story and the continuity of my story. Through the process of
constructing this digital story I consciously experienced the nuances of time and its impact on the remembering of self. This was an important stage of the journey to unravel archaeology of identity as I reflected on which memory? Which reality? Which fragment?

*A Journey through Lost time* is one representation of memory, a tangible object. This object connects the narrator and the audience through a visual and aural experience. At the core of digital story telling resides the power of voice – the voice that narrates, that tells the story – the voice that poses the dramatic question leaving the viewer to ponder not just the story of the narrator but their own stories. It has been presented to a number of audiences and includes the conference in Adelaide 2007 *Moving Cultures, Shifting Identities: a conference about migration, connection, heritage and cultural memory*. Once again, the way in which the audience responded confirms that this medium works to elicit personal reflection in both the teller and receiver of the narrative, tell their own stories or share observations spontaneously.
At the end of 2007, the excavation of memory and self combined with an overwhelming sense of grief left me feeling melancholic and hopeless. The loss of my mother had also triggered a heightened desperation about finding a place to belong. Further self-reflection prompted by memories of place, photos in the family archives and my experience in Berlin of ‘coming home to myself’ had once again led me to that familiar space of darkness that somehow precedes my creative energies. In December, the idea of a *Journey Around Myself* started to take a more formidable shape.

Over three days and nights with almost no sleep and very little sustenance I poured my energy into the creation of *Lost in Translation*. The script emerged from my pen first and remained unchanged at the completion of the research. It was fuelled by raw emotions as I authored my self through the critical experiences of my life after arriving in Australia. This was a disclosure of all the key experiences and elements that contributed to the dismantling and dislocating of my self and how they had manifested as who I am today. Sometime during the making of this story I recall watching a documentary about the Spanish Civil War. The archaeologist being interviewed is commenting on the digging up of remains of the victims of the conflict. Then, almost on cue as if he were tuned to where my thought process was he says “in order to face the future – we must deal with the past”. I did not need any more motivation to continue with the story.

I have often been asked how I chose the images for the story. As a photographer I have literally thousands of images. In a flurry of activity I randomly chose images leaving creative judgment to intuition and good fortune. Thanks to family film archives I was able to extract the perfect introduction to the digital story. Moving images of myself as a happy
child dancing uninhibitedly singing *When I was just a child at school, I asked my mother – what will I be?* have proved to be immediately engaging for audience members. This happy ‘child within’ is also represented at the close of the story to show that despite the experience of dislocation this essence of inner happiness has been preserved within me.

In this digital story I rely on both visual and spoken metaphor to explore the experience of dislocation resulting from a loss of a sense of place. The narrative journey uses fragments of visual memory as records or critical incidents of my life. However, the metaphoric quality of the story generates the stimuli for the viewer to reflect on their journeys and sense of place. Once again this continues to be borne out by audience response to the story.

The crafting of *Lost in Translation* contributed to the unraveling of an archaeology of identity as the fragments uncovered enabled the reconstruction of an ‘imaginary homeland’ (Rushdie 1991) - a place of belonging and homecoming.

The soundtrack and pacing of this story are critical to the quality of potential impact the point of view has on the viewer. This is the most complex of the three digital stories and as such it involves multiple ‘dramatic questions’. While these sometimes overlap and weave together, they can also be considered individually and are totally open to subjective interpretation. For me, *Lost in Translation* was the most ‘therapeutic’ of the digital projects. However, in the end, this remains my story and it is offered to encourage others to tell theirs.
Artefact 5: Happy Memories – Visual Memories of a Happy Childhood

The discussion relating to this artefact is found as Interrogation 13 following Fragment 13 earlier in this chapter.
Artefact 6: Satatantra: The Elephant and the Mirror

Background

As previously indicated in Artefact 7 Charting the Journey, two years into my research journey my narrative voice found form through engagement in a three-week journal conversation with my supervisor Adele Flood who acted as a muse. The result was a journal in two voices that I named the Elephant Journey. The motif of the elephant remains as metaphor and following this journey spontaneously inspires the idea for a fable. In time, this fable became the vehicle through which I am able to use memoir to craft the fable.

Title and Synopsis

The fable is written in the Indian Panchatantra mode. The Panchatantra 'Five Principles' is a collection of animal fables in verse and prose. The Panchatantra approximated its current literary form within the 4th to 6th centuries CE. No Sanskrit texts before 1000 CE have survived. According to Indian tradition, it was written around 200 BCE by Vishnu Sharma, a sage. The Panchatantra is one of the most influential Sanskrit contributions to world literature. Satatantra is a word I have created to mean seven principles or parts (Sat meaning seven in Hindi).

Satatantra is the story of the elephant Bhudevi, who lives in a faraway land. On the occasion of her first birthday her mother gives her a mirror with magical powers to reflect her. Not heeding her mother's warnings to take care, Bhudevi travels the world trustingly handing the mirror to many along the way. Some are trusted friends and significant others, others betray and hurt her. From the reflections received she explores and constructs her sense of self and identity.
**Structure**

Using metaphor the fable is written in seven parts and is conceptualised and structured by employing the original seven life chapters that I used early on my research journey when I was asked by Colleen Lindner to ‘write my life in ten chapters’. The numbering of the chapters is based on the philosophy of the three *Gunas* in ancient Sanskrit. The chapters like the philosophy are not seen as energy states to be kept apart, instead they are seen as elemental states of fire, water and ether that are constantly in movement, transformation and renewal. The chapter names and numbers have a symbiotic synergy and resonate with the story at each corresponding phase of my memoir.

The fable is written using narrators to set the context and introduce each chapter. Narrators are also used to change of context as Bhudevi travels across the globe. I use a various fonts to indicate these changes.

I include a diagrammatic representation of the chapter structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Guna Philosophy</em></th>
<th>Life Chapters</th>
<th>Life Phase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shunya – Zero to the One</td>
<td>Acts of Will</td>
<td>1951-52: Birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dual</td>
<td>The Unbearable Lightness of Being</td>
<td>1952-1967: Childhood in India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Triad</td>
<td>Unwilling Acts</td>
<td>1967: Migration – The Sea Passage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Double Triangle</td>
<td>Lost in Translation</td>
<td>1967-1989: Arrival in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Seven</td>
<td>Inner Conversations from the Outer</td>
<td>1989-2003: In Australia and overseas travel. M.Ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Eight</td>
<td>Facing the Mirror</td>
<td>2003-2005: Visits to India. Start of PhD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most fable writing takes the form of prose, however, Indian fables use a combination of prose and verse for 'literary and instructive goals' (Govindan 2007, p. 1). Whilst the fable consists of prose I have embedded verse into Satatantra (p. 126).

**Characters**

The usual length of a fable is akin to that of a short story and it normally has some sort of moral message at the conclusion. Satatantra is neither of these. Despite this seemingly obvious misnomer, I have consciously chosen to call it a fable for it contains a number of other features that resonate with the Indian *fabula* tradition.

A fable uses animals as symbolic characters in the story. The characters in Satatantra are represented as birds and animals whose identities are based on an amalgam of people I have known. In each case I have chosen animals and birds that represent the geographical location and resonant characteristics with the people they are meant to represent. For example, In India characters include a Golden Eagle, a Lion and a Brahminy Kite while in Australia you will find a Cockatoo, a Blue Tongue Lizard and a Currawong.

**Language and Symbolism**

I use idiom, concept and expression from both my Indian heritage and Indigenous Australian and modern Australian culture to reflect my own essence of the duality in my identity. This duality is also evident in my use of relevant indigenous flora, fauna and food mentioned in the story. These names or phrases are indicated in italics and are included in a glossary of terms at the conclusion.

**Narrative**

It has been established that the narrative for Satatantra evolved out of the elephant journey. A self-reflexive narrative generated within the framework of the life chapters gave form to both the fable structure and the narrative itself. A multiliteracies approach (Kalantzis & Cope 2004; Reason 1988) to the subject matter and detail was used in the process of crafting the fable. In the course of this process I excavated and unraveled memory fragments, listened to and told stories, explored photo archives, reflected on experiences, people I have known and places I have been. Critical to the process was several return trips to my homeland of India. I spent an inordinate number of hours, dreaming, imagining, sketching and journaling my thoughts and ideas in research journals.
Engaging my imagination to embellish the fragments I was uncovering and applying them to my writing was an important part of the process. As Adrienne Rich (2001) explains:

If the imagination is to transcend and transform experience it has to question, to challenge, to conceive of alternatives, perhaps to the very life you are leading at the moment. You have to be free to play around with the notion that day might be night, love might be hate; nothing can be too sacred for the imagination to turn into its opposite or to call experimentally by another name. For writing is re-naming (p. 21).

In keeping with this sentiment, I challenge, question, and play with shards of memory. I embellish each detail and through my writing I re-draw the story and engage in an act of re-naming.

Often conceptual and artistic ideas emerge impulsively or intuitively. Sometimes my voice flows and at other times I stumble as I relive fragments of memory or come to a complete halt over critical incidents as they happened to me in ‘real’ life. It was Jean Lescure (1969) who observed that ‘An artist does not create the way he lives, he lives the way he creates’ (p. xxi). Often the boundaries between reality and my writing blur thus becoming difficult to tell the two apart.

The experience of crafting the fable is the first major artefact produced on this Journey Around Myself. As such, its crafting is significant in the process of the archaeological dig as it guided me to the archaeological site. It is significant too as it is in the fable that a number of important motifs and ideas emerged. For example: the mirror, masks, significant others, the digital stories about dislocation and place and the use of multiple voices. The format also enabled me to include a level of intertextuality into the fable. This concept was originally named by French post structuralist Julia Kristeva in 1966, who used the term to describe a way of talking about allusion and influence of other texts (Irwin 2004). In Satatantra I have embedded excerpts from the writings of other influential authors and texts in my manuscript and are identified by their different formatting (p. 69). The importance of this device is twofold. Firstly it allows me to acknowledge the influence of the work significant of others such as Virginia Woolf, and secondly it is a way of demonstrating the connections that exist between artefacts. In this case the significant other Virginia Woolf is also included in the artefact Hall of Mirrors.

The fable-narrative practice, particularly in Indian tradition provokes a reflective form of self-inquiry and analysis. On my journey it provides a challenging yet creative device to
excavate memory and develop my story. Such an investigative approach has important contemporary relevance in research on matters of the self, identity and story.

In his book *Illuminations* (1992) Walter Benjamin contemplates the activity of the storyteller. He says:

"Artistic observation ... can attain an almost mystical depth ... the soul, the eye and the hand of someone who was born to perceive them and evoke them in his own inner self ... With these words, soul, eye, and hand are brought into connection. Interacting with one another, they determine a practice" (p. 106).

In the process of crafting the fable *Satatantra* my soul, eye, and hand are brought into connection.
Artefact 7: Charting the Journey

*Charting the Journey* is a narrative account of my research journey. Based on personal and research journals it is a reflection of the way my research unfolds. The narrative is written as a stream of consciousness and as such it is raw and unedited. This is intentional as it reflects the deeply embedded emotions related to my experiences along the way and is consistent with belief in the value of narrative and qualitative research.

I have included *Charting the Journey* as an Artefact 7 in the archaeological site because in addition to documenting the excavation and development of the evolving research methodology it contains significant observations of my lived experience as the researcher.

It is best read in conjunction with Chapter Two: The Non-Linear Path of Excavation.
In conclusion, I draw on the words of Susan Hiller (1994) who suggests that:

... a collection of objects [is] an ambiguously bounded unit that [tells] a particular story, and it is only by setting the boundaries [of such] that [this] story can be told (p. 42).

In the archaeological site I have collated fragments and drawn storied boundaries to frame them. Some of these have been transformed into artefacts. These artefacts that are in themselves fragments become part of the unifying narrative as the process of their creation generates further excavation and interrogation of memory to unravel identity.

In this chapter: *The Archaeological Site*, I have demonstrated the value of fragments such as journals, photographs and stories as sources from the past that are excavated and explored. The fragments are explored to establish their relationship with who I am today. In Chapter Six I show how these fragments and artefacts combine to generate micro-narratives that contribute to a unified life-story (*Figure 2*). This is also seen in the illustration below:
As the collator of fragments, the creator of the artefacts and the narrator of the unifying narrative my relationship with these elements remains in a reciprocal dialogue. In Chapter Four: *Excavation A: Memory*, I examine these fragments in the context of the nature and role of memory in unraveling archaeology of identity.
Chapter Four:
Excavation A - Memory
I, too, know something of this immigrant business. I am a migrant from one country (India) and a newcomer in two. (England, where I live, and Pakistan, to which my family moved against my will). And I have a theory that the resentments we mohajirs engender have something to do with our conquest with the force of gravity. We have performed the act of which all men anciently dream, the thing for which they envy the birds; that is to say, we have flown.

I am comparing gravity with belonging. Both phenomena observably exist: my feet stay on the ground, and I have never been angrier than the day my father told me that he had sold my childhood home in Bombay. But neither is understood. We know the force of gravity, but not its origins; and to explain why we become attached to our birthplaces we pretend that we are trees and speak of roots. Look under your feet. You will not find gnarled growths sprouting through your soles. Roots, I sometimes think, are the conservative myth, designed to keep us in our places.

The anti-myths of gravity and belonging bear the same name: flight. Migration, n., moving, for instance in flight, from one place to another. To fly and to flee: both are ways of seeking freedom...an odd thing about gravity incidentally, is that while it remains uncomprehended everybody seems to find it easy to comprehend the notion of its theoretical counter-force: anti-gravity. But anti-belonging is not accepted by modern science ...

When individuals come unstuck from their native land, they are called migrants. When nations do the same thing (Bangladesh), the act is called secession. What is the best thing about migrant peoples and seceded nations? I think it is their hopefulness. Look into the eyes of such folk in old photographs. The hope blazes undimmed through the fading sepia limits. And what's the worst thing? It is the emptiness of one's luggage. I am speaking of one's invisible suitcases, not the physical, perhaps cardboard, variety containing a few meaning-drained mementoes: we have come unstuck from more than land. We have floated upwards from history, from memory, from time.

Introduction

In 1967, at the age of fifteen, I departed India with my family who migrated to Australia in search of a ‘promised’ land of opportunity and abundance. It was on that day of departure that I came unstuck and as Salman Rushdie observes, ‘floated upwards from history, from memory, from time’. From that day on, my status was a migrant, and on that day I was cast on a journey suffused with loss of place, of identity and a longing for all that I had known and loved. As I have discovered, this act of departure was to forge my very identity, my sense of who I am and my place of belonging.

In this chapter I de-construct and explore the concept of memory and its relationship to identity and place.

In discussion with his biographer Guido Almansi, Harold Pinter (1983) says:

The past is what you remember, imagine you remember, convince yourself you remember, or pretend to remember (p. 91).

On the Journey Around Myself, while traversing the landscape of history, memory and time, Pinter’s advice has been germane to the exercise. It has been facets of memory, imagination, people and artefacts that have provided the capacity for what Walter Benjamin (1979) calls ‘endless interpolations into what has been’ (p. 321).

It is over forty years now since that day, I stepped aboard the SS Oronsay bound for Melbourne, Australia. I remember standing there lost, afraid and uncertain and through the tears, the hooting of the ship’s siren, the farewell babble and the colourful streamers as they stretched, straining to hold on to the last vestiges of connection with a land that I had known and loved. In the context of Nachtraglichkeit or Jean Laplanche’s (1999) translation of the concept as afterwardness, I did not know then - what I know now – that particular moment in time was the start of an incredible odyssey – back and forth in time, in and out of places, in search of a place to belong – the idea that if I could just find that elusive place – I would know who I was – I would have an identity.

In the digital story A Journey through Lost Time the emotions of loss and sadness of this departure from my watan or homeland are reflected in the images contained in the story. The genesis of the story was inspired by my return to India in 2003 when I visited places of my childhood. I was struck by the acuity and power of the emotions and memories
related to places that, despite their physical transformation, collapsed linear time and space into singular sharp focus. Proust (1992), Benjamin (1979) and Winterson (1990) are among some of the theorists who write about the non-linearity of time in relation to memory.

During the process of compiling the digital story *A Journey through Lost Time* (Artefact 3), my emotions and recollections of my experience reciprocally interacted with each other. This influenced my choice of images and the structure and composition of the visual and textual narrative. Memory and associated emotions found voice in the shape of a *Journey through Lost Time*. As the story unfolded it presented me with emergent data for this research as well as providing a mechanism by which I could speak to a wider audience beyond the original text, to connect with others’ shared experience. Looking back in sadness and with so much more understanding now, I dare to wonder about that experience. Joe Lambert (2002) believes that digital storytelling is a powerful mechanism for liberating the voice and exploring questions of identity.

In Chapter Three, Fragment 12 I include a journal entry recalling the experience of leaving India in 1967 and of arrival in Australia, the new homeland. I re-iterate part of the aforementioned fragment that includes a reflection on the experience and associated recollections:

*It has become evident that what had been discarded and not included in the baggage was my parents’ own inner sense of self and identity ... This may not be entirely true of my mother, who, on arriving in the ‘Promised Land’ and subjected to horrendous personal trials, recorded the experience in her journals. After discovering these journals, they were burnt by my father who screamed in his own frustration that this was ‘utter non-sense’ and that we had to move through and burn our bridges and accept the consequences of our choices. With this act he single-handedly sought to enact the obliteration of memory and enforce a forgetting. (Personal Journal 2007)*

The reflection records realisations about memory, the self and loss of self and how these can be interpreted in the present moment, and the impact this has on ideas of the self and identity. This resonates with the ideas about how memory works discussed in the work of Nicola King (2000); Paul Ricoeur (2004); Fred Davis (1979) and Daniel Schacter (2001) to name a few.
As I sit here today, I am able to better understand that in order to bear the rigours of loss and justify his belief in a new life my father’s actions and outburst were a survival strategy. However, the experience remains a critical incident as an event that shaped my personal and political identity. From that moment I understood more fully ideas of patriarchy, of power and powerlessness, of being a woman. Over the years my mother’s stories emerged as if from shadows, sometimes silent. Often she would look at me with eyes that half told her stories. Hers were stories of pain and tolerance borne with patience and knowledge. It was her generosity of spirit and dignity that in the end inspired me to tell my own story. In the fable *Satatantra*, Bhudevi relates a conversation with her frail mother, who before she dies says:

“You must tell your story Bhudevi” she encouraged her daughter “for we are our stories, and without them we are nothing.”

It was on that day she made a promise she vowed to keep – she would tell her story (p. 77).

The incident also served as the first stirrings within myself about notions of memory and its relationship to story. What happens to memory that is obliterated? What is cast out and how does this impact on the story that is remembered and told? In the end memory of this incident became one of the seeds of my determination to tell my story.

Throughout the forty years that have passed since departing India, my mind has journeyed back and forth, traversing an inner and outer landscape of experiences – a canvas deftly marked by the memory of this single incident. This emotion and its impact is captured in Fragment 12 in an excerpt from a personal journal that records the memories of the incident triggered by the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of arrival in Australia.

Each experience of my reality has been influenced, each fragment finely impressed upon by the architectural nature of its imprint on my identity. Time, memory and place have woven a rich tapestry – a textured basket collecting each leitmotif of identity, each fragment of the ‘self’. Drawing on the Freudian (1907) idea that the past exists somewhere to be rediscovered by the individual, I have utilised Walter Benjamin’s (1979) metaphor of digging. As referred to in the quote at the start of this chapter, I have heeded Benjamin’s advice that ‘he who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging’ (p. 314). I have considered the landscape of self as an archaeological project and excavated my memoried past.
This *Journey Around Myself* is an archaeological exploration of identity; clues to memory have been exposed through the uncovering of shards and have provided a visual and textual narrative of fragments to develop a sense of self in the present. As the journey progressed the fragments and shards uncovered evolved as artefacts. Throughout this discussion I will interact with and interrogate the fragments and shards within these artefacts to deconstruct and explore ideas of memory, identity and place.

To illustrate this further I present the following excerpts found in various constructed artefacts to reflect parts of the odyssey that has been a search for identity and a place of belonging.

1. In the fable *Satatantra*, the protagonist, Bhudevi the young elephant reflects on her journey; and establishes a strong sense of the ongoing nature of a storied life.

   Bhudevi still had questions about her journey, her loss of place, and her loss of self. It appeared that her attempts to 'fit in' and belong had further alienated her from who she really was.

   "The pain of loss is far too great to bear" she exclaimed (p. 45).

2. In a photographic collage included in the book *Hall of Mirrors*, I discuss the issue of identity with a friend as I struggle to explore the idea of who I am and establish a sense of belonging.

   "Do you know who you are Lariane" Suniti asked me as we walked along the windswept Dorset beach. "Yes" I replied without hesitation. "Then, why do you need to belong?" she replied.

   Conversation with Suniti Namjoshi, Dorset, England 1990

3. An extract from my personal journal in 2005, recorded following a critical incident on a train in India is included in *Fragment 11*. The incident led to intense self-reflection and served as one of the many key points of departure on this journey.

   The air is thick and oppressive; the searing heat dulls the senses, the click clack of the Shatbadi Express lulls me deeper into the experience of this return to my beloved homeland, as it thunders through the Western Ghats towards Bombay.

   In the corner of the 'first class' compartment a middle-aged woman unexpectedly addresses me and says, "What is your caste?" I find myself paralysed by the question. I hesitatingly
mutter, “Brahmin – I think”... I had never perceived of myself belonging to a caste.

Temporally the excerpts all lie in the period post-migration, and thus reflect a sense of loss experienced by the act of leaving my homeland. Similar experiences have been recorded in memoir and story of many others who have left their homeland. These include the stories of Suketu Mehta in *Bombay: Maximum City* (2004), and Salman Rushdie in his essay *Imaginary Homelands* (1991). However, a story of great poignant resonance is the story of Meena Alexander (2003) who left India as a five-year-old child. In her memoir *Fault Lines* she reflects on the experience of her beloved amma and recalls her own:

Sometimes I think that the journey across the ocean was like a death to her. Or perhaps I should say that it made for an entirely different life for her. As for me, just turned five, my days changed utterly and I became a child of a different sort. My life shattered into little bits and pieces. In my dreams, I am haunted by thoughts of a homeland I will never find. So I have tuned my lines to a different aesthetic, one that I build up out of all the stuff around me, improvising as I go along (p. 27).

Like Meena Alexander, as I crossed the ocean and headed towards Australia in 1967, I had lost the homeland I would never find. While in essence this may remain true for both of us at one level, at another Alexander has used her power of writing to re-create a self and new homelands. As a *Journey Around Myself* will reveal, I have used my creative powers to find a way home. Recently a friend inquiring about research asked me: "What are you writing about?" and I spontaneously replied: "I’m writing myself into existence".

On this journey as I traversed the landscapes of geography, philosophy, politics, work, sexual identity, and lifestyle in my attempts to re-create myself, the effort increased a sense of dis-location and much of what I tried to achieve, was for all intents and purposes ‘lost in translation’. This process meant that often over time I mistrusted my own childhood experiences and the memories of them and lost a sense of who I was. As I straddled the space between two worlds I used masks to disguise the pain as I evaded situations and hid in the cracks between the world of the white dominant culture and the black migrant. Despite this, I remained an outsider, my voice often either silenced or emerging in frustrated rebellion.
Masks can be used as a device to conceal and reveal emotion. In the narrative of the Fable: *Satatantra*. The protagonist Bhudevi, the young elephant, while exploring the burdens she already senses she must carry, asks her wise friend Renuka to provide her with a strategy for survival. Renuka comes up with the idea of masks. "Masks are a guise, a pretence, a façade to cover or camouflage the real self," she tells her young friend (p. 22). Later in the story, Bhudevi resorts to the use of masks to present a self that she feels would be acceptable. When on the SS Oronsay, at the talent quest she chooses to sing a popular western song to avoid being mocked (p. 33).

Barack Obama (2008) expresses a similar experience in his book *Dreams From My Father*, while exploring issues of identity and belonging as ‘mixed race’.

As it was, I learned how to slip back and forth between my black and white worlds, understanding that each possessed its own language and customs and structures of meaning, convinced that with a bit of translation on my part the two worlds would eventually cohere. Still the feeling that something was not quite right stayed with me (p. 82).

The experience of migration and the journey since has continuously raised critical questions about my identity and issues of belonging. The search along the journey has manifested at two levels. Firstly at a personal level, as underpinnings to the central existential questions of ‘who am I?’ and ‘where do I belong in the world?’ Secondly, the search has also led to a wider exploration of ideas of what it means to be Indian outside of India – an ‘ex-pat’, a stranger, a non-resident Indian (NRI), not only in foreign but also in familiar lands such as when I have returned to India or Australia where I have lived for the past forty two years. In order to explore these questions it is necessary to address the concepts related to the construction of ‘self’ and ‘identity’, ‘place’ and ‘belonging’, and their relationship to memory.

Ideas of memory, identity and place are inextricably linked and interwoven and to understand each and their interrelationship has required me to journey on an unchartered course into the labyrinth of my past. In further developing Benjamin's (1979) conceptual metaphor of ‘digging’, I employ the metaphor of archaeology to excavate my own and others’ memories to remember and re-construct the self. In doing so it reveals that both the process of excavation and the data are emergent. I uncover shards or fragments that
provide clues for embellishment and for storytelling through the creation of various artefacts.

Memory is a critical component to our sense of the past. It is through the act of remembering that we are able to recover and recount experiences of the past. Memory's most basic feature is that it facilitates our ability to differentiate the present from yesterday. Memory plays a vital part in the recovery of past to illuminate elements of our present experience and develop a sense of who we are. Daniel Schacter (2001) reminds us that memory has its vices and virtues and sometimes these can operate as similar ‘elements of a bridge across time which allows us to link the mind with the world’ (p. 206). This can be seen in the digital story *Lost in Translation*. An excerpt from the narrative based on a poem scribed after a re-union with my son thirty-two years after my leaving him, echo the emotions imbued with the vices and virtues of the passing of time and forming a bridge into the present moment:

...He turns away from your gaze
Leaving silhouetted shadows in your eyes
Veiling the sadness of lost years
Souls harnessed by shared pain

Today you dredge the rivers within
To find common ground
the soft, sweet gentleness of his voice
gives hope of a new tomorrow.

However, he warns us that ‘the sin of ‘bias’ reflects the powerful influences of our current knowledge and beliefs on how we remember our pasts – unknowingly or unconsciously – in light of what we now know or believe’ (p. 5). To illustrate Schacter’s ideas I draw attention to *Fragment 7* and my experience of marriage and motherhood expressed in the journal excerpt in 2004. This entry indicates the bridging of time between ‘yesterday’ and today. The yesterday remembered and expressed here is built on a memory infused with a growing awareness of the world and the politicisation of the ‘feminist’ self:

‘Today I re-read parts of Ann Oakley’s ‘Taking it Like a Woman’ and it has prompted me to think about the years gone by – it took me back to what must be the most grim years of my life...’

and then later –

‘As the days went by I was starting to intellectually and emotionally reform within – there was a new awakening within
me – like spring flowers still struggling in a late winter which was cold and bleak. But there was an awakening and once again it was in the form of a book. I found a copy of Simone de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex in the local library that I had started to frequent. The sun began to shine outside both in reality and metaphorically – it was 1972 – inside my heart was raging.’

For me, the abandonment of motherhood was both a painful and liberating experience. The remembered incidents hold traces of both the ‘virtues’ and ‘vices’ of Schacter’s observations and also resonates with the Jean Laplanche’s (1999) concept of ‘afterwardness’: memory illuminated the experience of reunion with my child thirty-two years later. I found that as the emotional fragments that I had buried deeply re-surfaced, some wounds were re-opened and some were healed. Memory of both, the pain and the freedom, helped facilitate an understanding of the encounter in the present.

The issue of memory has been carefully examined and written about since the earliest writings of Plato and Aristotle. In his scholarly research and analysis on the history of Memory, History and Forgetting, Paul Ricoeur (2004) shows us that the issue of memory – ‘thus the representation of the past which is, in the final analysis, the issue of the presence of something absent’ (pp. 7-15) was thoroughly dealt with in the Socratic dialogues, and to which Aristotle dedicates an entire study. Ricoeur explains the way in which Plato deals with the concept of eikon (associated with the idea of imprint), as the representation of something absent, thus he suggested that the issue of memory should be dealt with in relation to the larger issue of imagination. Plato explores the issue of representing something previously perceived or learned, and therefore his philosophy defends the inclusion of the image and that of remembrance.

Imagination plays a pivotal role in the evolution of my fable Satatantra and the development of the characters in it. Each creature is based on the characteristics of real people; significant others who have played a major role in my life. However, it is the synthesis of memory and imagination that presents a rich palette from which to draw together the story. It is memory and imagination that have come together bringing life to the now emerging self-knowledge that lies between the disjointed and fragmented moments.

Ricoeur (2004) provides the reader with a detailed explanation of how Aristotle perceived of the relationship between memory and imagination (pp. 7-15). For Aristotle, memory in the perseverance of remembrance in the mind is associated with pathos (or affection) as
distinct from recollection. He says, ‘memory is of the past’ and only exists ‘when time has lapsed’. This is based on the perception aesthesis of time – sensation that permits humans to distinguish between the ‘before’ and ‘after’. An important observation is that Aristotle identifies a relationship of memory to time. Memory is also conjointly examined in relation to imagination, as Aristotle deemed that it is the sensation that produces the affection – thus the presence of affection and the absence of the thing that produced the affection. In *A Journey Around Myself* it is the nostalgia attached to some of the components of and the artefacts I have created that represents what is lost.

Since the twentieth century the human memory has been the focus of much research. In the early part of the century research on memory primarily centred on neuro-scientific approaches through the research of Sigmund Freud who was followed by neo-Freudian theorists such as Carl Jung, Alfred Adler and Karen Horney. However, throughout the period, musing and writing on memory has also been embedded in the work of philosophers such as Henri Bergson, Walter Benjamin and literary authors like Virginia Woolf, Marcel Proust and Henry James. Narrative constructed by ‘memory work’ is featured in a plethora of contemporary writing post the Jewish Holocaust. Some of these are Eva Hoffman (1989), Maurice Halbwachs (1992), Georges Perec (1975), Ann Michaels (1996), Hannah Arendt (1975), and Christa Wolf (1980). One common thread that runs through this body of work is these writers’ compelling desire to return in memory to ‘place’ or ‘homeland’ in the construction of their narrative. This research adds to the body of literature by building on the work of Walter Benjamin and other writers, theorists and philosophers by using an archaeological approach to the excavation of memory in order to construct my identity.

In *Journey Around Myself*, my exploration into identity is underpinned by memory. While the critical point of dislocation has been identified as the memory of leaving my homeland, the journey itself has involved many other memories and records many critical incidents portraying the formation and expression of a sense of the evolving self through the process.

There have been many others who have also used the concept of memory to form and articulate narratives of loss and belonging, self and identity, time and place, nostalgia and violence to express landscapes of emotion in works of memoir and fiction. These include Toni Morrison (1987), Salman Rushdie (1991), Meena Alexander (2003), Carolyn Steedman (1986), Bharati Mukherjee (1990) and Sylvia Fraser (1989).
Since the era of post-war migration there has been a burgeoning of narratives, based on memory that conveys the experience of loss, dis-location, identity and place. As human populations are forced to transit the globe in search of refuge, work and new horizons, and as technologies have developed, these narratives have emerged across a wide range of creative formats. These include: books (written and audio), film (cinematic and digital story), photographic and theatrical. In a world that is vast and alienating to the individual, the idea of personal story and its importance is of more relevance than ever.

Many other theorists have also contributed to the ideas of memory and social memory. Also included are sociologists such as Cooley (1909), Mead (1959) and Peter Berger with Thomas Luckmann (1966); anthropologists such as Evans-Pritchard (1969) who develops a notion of "structural amnesia" in his famous study of the 'Nuer', and psychologists Jean Piaget who critiques Freud's ideas of memory and Pierre Janet's (1927) study of the evolution of memory and the concept of time. There were also historians such as Maurice Halbwachs who published his landmark *Social Frameworks of Memory* in 1992 or his colleague Marc Bloch (1980) and Vygotsky's 1929 claim that memory takes narrative form and is wholly shaped by cultural influences (David Bakhurst 1991). There have also been literary critics and philosophers like John Locke (1975(1690) who takes memory to be the ‘power of the mind’ to revive perceptions, or Christoph Hoerl (1999), whose idea that episodic memories "are necessarily memories of particular events or situations, namely of episodes in the subject's autobiography" (p. 235). All these have embraced the study of memory.

In *Memory, History and Forgetting*, Paul Ricoeur concludes with a 'phenomenology of memory'. For him the question of memory is firstly a ‘happy fulfilment of certain capacities and not deficiencies or dysfunctions' as considered by neuro-science. For Ricoeur, memory has a claim of faithfulness to the past and for him the deficiencies of memory – namely forgetfulness, is part of memory (p. 15).

On the matter of memory and forgetting, Nicola King (2000) goes a step further. In discussing the importance of remembering and forgetting and the part it plays in the obliteration or creation of identity and self, she identifies memory as being the mediator between the two, and tells us that:
Reading the texts of memory shows that remembering the self, is not a case of restoring an original identity but a continuous process of remembering, of putting together moment by moment, of provisional and partial reconstruction (p. 175).

The relationship of memory to truth is of significance. Within our memory reside the clues that something has taken place or as Ricoeur (2004) puts it ‘has happened, and has happened before we claim to remember it’. So we don’t just remember – we remember something, and it is the recognition of the ‘something’ that is catalogued into our ‘regime of remembrances’ (p. 9).

For Ricoeur then, memory is not only about things that happen. The event itself becomes something inscribed in the mind – in memory and thus becomes a form of knowing or knowledge.

The incident on the train while travelling between Goa and Bombay in 2005 described in Fragment 11 will remain such an inscription in my mind and memory. The question ‘What is your caste?’ posed to me by the woman in the carriage and my paralysed unknowing response of ‘Brahmin – I think’ has been a critical incident of departure on this unraveling of identity. The event itself has become a signpost of personal knowledge of the self. Even though I had spent the first fifteen years of my life in this stratified society, I had remained oblivious to my own designation in the social paradigm. This fragment records a catalytic moment on this journey. The incident on the train reveals another layer, uncovers another shard in the excavation of self.

To accept memory’s claim to truth is a highly contested position and much has been written about the infallibility of memory and the way in which time and space are able to distort our memories, (see Rushdie, 1995 and 2006; Benjamin, 1979; Ricoeur, 2004). Scientifically, Einstein devises a way to prove the relationship between time and space; however, it was French philosopher Henri Bergson who, following his work on time and space in Matter and Memory (1911), discusses the non-linearity of their relationship and goes on to hypothesise that if time and space were non-linear, then so too is human memory. The emergence of the processes within this study affirms that essential non-linearity.

In the digital story Lost in Translation I recall the experience of the first months at our house on arrival in Australia. I had just left India and a childhood where I had been treated
as very special. We lived in a luxurious home, surrounded by many comforts and every need within was catered for – a sense of privilege existed. On arrival in Australia I was thrust into a very different environment and a set of cultural norms and customs. I remember the ramshackle weatherboard with the outdoor toilet and the freezing first winter when there was little else to keep the family warm but a *briquette* fireplace. The whole experience was terrifying and alien and totally contradictory to any concept of a ‘promised land’ given to me by my parents as reason for leaving our homeland. In the story, the visual images I have chosen have a subliminal randomness about them reflecting the non-linearity of time and space and of my memory of the experience.

*The wind blows chill outside the door – cutting you in half as you wend your way*

*down the broken red brick path to the ramshackle construction at the end of the yard.*

*You trip, stumble and curse this ‘promised land’.*

For Bergson the self is a real entity that experiences continuous growth by re-absorbing and re-inscribing the whole of its experiences and perceptions as any single moment; each moment presents a new ‘whole’ self to the world, but paradoxically this ‘new’ self is a compilation of ‘old’ selves. The self cannot exist without memory, for the self is in fact *memory*. In this state of constant change and flux, memory becomes fragile as it is influenced by both time and space. Bergson’s ideas of continuous growth, re-absorption and re-inscription pervade my study. Many examples of the cyclic nature of translation and re-translation as the self evolves are evident in the artefacts created as an expression
of the process of unraveling archaeology of identity. In *Journey Around Myself* I use reflection as a device in this cyclic translation and re-translation. The journal excerpts contained as *Fragments* and my *Interrogations* that follow each fragment in the archaeological site bear testament to this method.

In the fable *Satatantra*, Bhudevi the elephant engages the use of a mirror with magical powers to reflect her identity – who she is and her place in the world. On receiving the mirror as a gift from her parents on her birthday she exclaims:

“A mirror” exclaimed Bhudevi excitedly – she had spent many hours gazing into her mother’s three winged mirror, but that reflection had only confused her – for there were always multiple images of her self in it and caused her to spend much time musing over trying to figure out which image was the ‘real’ self.

“This one is different,” said her mother stepping in, “it only reflects a single image but it has special powers. It will reflect your identity; it will mirror your soul” (p. 16).

With these images Bhudevi is able to receive reflections from others as she forms and re-forms her sense of identity. In using the protagonist Bhudevi and her experiences I have created the stories through which I can reflect on the journey of my own identity.

Similarly, in the book of photographic collages, the *Hall of Mirrors* comprises images reflecting the influence of ‘significant others’ in the formation and re-translation of self. In each of these artefacts, the ‘self’ experiences continuous growth as it absorbs, interprets and translates itself.

From Bergson’s premise we can see that forms of memory permeate life on a daily basis. However, the constant presence of memory is often subsumed within what Fred Davis (1979) refers to as habit, recall and mementos. In his book *Yearning for Yesterday*, Davis refers to habit as being that which embraces ‘all mental residues of past acts and thoughts, whether remembered or not’ and recall as involving ‘awareness of past occurrences or states of being’. Mementos are ‘cherished recollections purposely salvaged from the greater mass of things recalled’. Davis (1979) observes that:

Like a collection of antiquities, our store of precious memories is in continual flux, new keepsakes all the time being added, old ones discarded, some rising to the surface of present awareness, others sinking beneath conscious note (p. 48).
In my research, I employ all three of Davis' devices, and in particular I use the archaeological device of excavation of mementos. Time has accumulated several experiences and memories buried deep in the strata of life. Some of the 'digging' and recovering has been simple recall – a photo here, a conversation there, and a return to places I once knew or a chance encounter with a person, news item, or films I have seen. However, it has been the deeper, involuntary shards and fragments that have been exposed and emerged, either spontaneously or in relation to exposure of other artefacts, that have provided the most surprise and satisfaction, and the greatest level of personal insight.

In 2004 when I returned to my childhood family home in India, I had very lucid memories of the physical characteristics and environmental detail of the house in Bandra. However, as observed in *Fragment 5*, the significance of the experience is not just in the tangible changes recorded in the journal but the layer that lies behind the final sentence ‘I tremulously place my finger on the doorbell as instructed by the Gurkha, and as I do a lifetime of memory courses through my mind, my heart, and my body’.

In Poetics of Space, Gaston Bachelard (1994) explores the psychology of houses. He asserts that a building is a special kind of poetry and in doing so addresses the powerful symbolism of doors. For him a door is a threshold that can imbue expectation for it can be welcoming or imposing and has the power to realistically as well metaphorically create the ‘insider’ outsider effect. Diana Fuss (2004) in her essay on Emily Dickinson in *A Sense of an Interior* tells us that long before Gaston Bachelard began exploring the lyrical recesses of the architectural dwelling, Emily Dickinson was busily mapping her ‘own poetics of space’. She says:

> In Dickinson’s letters and poems, the door emerges as a richly layered metaphor for loneliness, loss and death on the one hand, and memory, secrecy, and safety on the other. The door is the most reversible of Dickinson’s images, and the most complex. It dramatizes a tension at the heart of almost all Dickinson’s poems, the tension produced by the terror and excitement of the threshold (p. 38).

On the day that I stood on that threshold, the act of placing my finger on the doorbell is a gesture symbolizing the opening up of a vault of memories. That doorbell and the door represented a gateway into my past, into memories of my childhood home; a place I loved
and the place from which I departed. That day, at that door I felt all the ‘tension produced by the terror and excitement of the threshold’.

The film *Slum Dog Millionaire* (2009) recounts the story of a boy from the slums of Bombay, who against all odds, succeeds as a quiz show champion. As the images, sounds and story unfolded before me, I was transported on a roller coaster of memory and emotion into a world that had largely been hidden from me in my childhood. I recalled the first Easter after arrival in Australia in 1967. As children we were allowed to watch the *Yooralla Appeal* on TV. I remember watching the images of slum children ‘dogs’ being portrayed to evoke compassion; I also remember railing at my parents about what I understood to be a ‘lie’ that was being presented by the media.

As a privileged, middle-class child I had been protected from the reality of the poverty in India. On special holidays or on our way to our seaside house we would drive through the throngs in tinted windowed chauffer driven cars. On my returns to India since 2003, I have meandered along Marine Drive, up Malabar Hill, past the Parsi *Towers of Silence* to Crawford Market and to Ballard Estate in the Fort area where my father worked. I have noticed the beggars, the shanty slums, and string beds; people bathing in the gutters, silk sari shops all a glitter, pungent odours of street food stalls and a child defecating on the roadside. Why had I not consciously noted any of this prior to my leaving India? It is possible through memory, as both Virginia Woolf (1976) and Vladimir Nabokov (1966) to ‘carry our childhood with us, and with it a golden age we thought we left behind’. In other words we have a powerful ability to edit out what is painful and embellish the joyful experiences. While I agree with this idea, on the matter relating to the poverty and slums of Bombay this was not the case. I had observed the scenarios as a child, however by virtue of class and privilege I had developed a subconscious blindness to it that may have been a culturally contrived blindness by those who protected me from it.

In the fable *Satatantra*, the avian narrator *Indrani*, describes the slums of Bombay as she sets the scene for Bhudevi’s return to her homeland:

> Beyond the tarmac, lining each side of empty space the densest of corrugated shanties – layer on layer – dark, twisting metal, punctuated by splashes of light reflecting numerous TV antennae piercing the orange sky beyond (p. 71).

The extreme polarisation of wealth and abject poverty in India is a reflection of the pattern of social, spiritual, political and economic complexities. The poverty in India is so obvious
that it is possible for some observers, such as Edward Said (1995), to believe that ‘to see its poverty is to make an observation of no value’ (p. 41). This may also have been a reason for such cultural blindness while we lived in India.

Despite this, I had a sense of this world, a sense of social justice and inequity. Again in fragment (p. 5) I record: ‘In the streets at play there was no class, no caste, no cultural difference ... I never felt the pangs of gender difference, I felt equal. I cannot underestimate the value, the influence and the incredible input of the ‘servants’ or ‘ayahs’ in my life.’ Though permeated by a sense of difference related to rebelliousness, on matters of class, caste and ethnicity, I remained quite innocent.

Much of the contributing content that I have remembered has been uniquely personal, as it includes intimate and minute details of past events of my life. The use of metaphor, particularly in the case of the fable Satatantra, and in the digital story Lost in Translation preserves the intimacy of my memories and still presents these in a public context where they are subject to the viewer’s or reader’s own interpretation. The use of metaphor also takes the reader to a more removed and theoretical position rather than merely locating the experience in my story.

The uniquely personal nature of memory means that such memory is often relegated to the realms of fiction. This fictitious quality is the direct result of memory that is not shared therefore remains uncorroborated and delusive. In William Wordsworth’s autobiographical poem The Prelude (1979) he refers to the unreliability of recollection when he speaks of ‘naked recollections’ as distinct from ‘after-meditation’ (Book II L614-16). Here he is referring to remembering things as distinct from remembering them; in other words primary and secondary memories. Other literary authors have also alluded to this process. In A Sketch of the Past, Virginia Woolf (1976) recalling her childhood days at St Ives, appears to be ‘watching things happen as if I were there ...my memory supplies what I have forgotten, so that it seems as if it were happening independently, though I am really making it happen’ (p. 67). Likewise, Vladimir Nabokov (1966) re-creates a picture of childhood more than fifty years on from retained memories. These memories in almost every detail, regardless of importance, have been transferred into the recesses of his mind. Experiences of his more recent life, however, have transformed themselves into lucid, almost indistinguishable,"blocks of perception" (p. 21).
In all of his fiction, Salman Rushdie too merges memory, imagination and history to create a fictional narrative. In *Shame* (1995) he creates new images to replace memoric images that he, as the exiled writer, has lost. Through his protagonist’s character, he explains:

As for me: I, too, like all migrants, am a fantasist. I build imaginary countries and try to impose them on the ones that exist. I, too, face the problem of history: what to retain, what to dump, how to hold on to what memory insists on relinquishing, how to deal with change (p. 87).

My own journey is punctuated with experiences of primary and secondary remembering.

In the digital story *A Journey through Lost Time*, I have used the device of dual images (below) representing the ‘then’ of my childhood and the ‘now’ of my return to the place to demonstrate primary and secondary memory associated with textual and written narrative:

![LANDS END 1953](image1) ![LANDS END 2006](image2)

The accompanying narrative is drawn from my 2006 journal An Elephant Journey:

*The lines of the body have drawn me to paths travelled childlike and joyous along the winding road leading me to Lands End – the black rocks resemble my hide – black granite worn and marked by the sweet caresses and angry Arabian Sea – the soft wind warm and gentle still blows across the waters – many years ago, in the happiest of my memories, sitting with my parents safe and secure in their love …*

This narrative, which is also represented in the fable *Satatantra* (p. 19), depicts the complexity and stratification of primary and secondary memory.

In the course of remembering, these instances inevitably implicated other people as I turned to them for confirmation of things I recalled. In time, these memories of others
have become incorporated into my own and have become indistinguishable from mine. Most of us are given stories from our elders that we incorporate into our own stories as ‘facts’. The sharing and validation of memories sharpens and facilitates their recall. While writing the fable, and often in the reflexive practice of journal writing (fragments), I found myself knitting together my discontinuous memories into narratives in which the personal and intimate mementos are woven collectively into a remembered past.

In some instances, this personal memento is linked to collective memory or public history. The visit to my family home described in Fragment 5 triggered the recollection of the John Kennedy assassination in 1963. As I entered the Mascotte and stood where once as a twelve year old I looked at the Times of India with the news, I vividly remember the circumstances of that day – the time it happened, where I was and how I reacted. What is also significant is the way that this incident is remembered in relation to other aspects of my life at the time. It is in interrogation of this fragment dealing with friendship that I recall the occasion, and in doing so, my writing records the traces of my personal and political development. “What did all of this have to do with me?” I had asked. The question also reflects an understanding of my self in relation to the broader world in terms of politics.

However, actual recollections such as these can also be misleading; they can be misremembered because they are so vivid. Once again, the issue of the fallibility of memory is raised. In this case the memory of the headlines in the paper and validated by historical fact provided an anchor point by which I remember the experiences of the day, all of which are prone to the fragility and fallibility of memory.

The subject of the self in relation to memory, truth, reason and history are the fundamental concerns of Salman Rushdie’s (2006) novel Midnight’s Children. For Rushdie, memory, or our personal history is at the core of our attempt to know our self. It is the memory of individuals and their personal histories that make up collective memories and it is these that in turn form the basis of our history. Memory, reason and history are inextricably linked. However, as Rushdie points out, neither memory nor reason are infallible and therein lies the possibility of distortion. However, this is not always such negative thing. We are reminded of how forgetfulness is part of memory and the manner in which such occurrences can serve to feed the interface between memory and imagination, brought to life through the act of telling.
The structure of the fable is intentionally designed to give me the space to embellish the story. The fable structure opens up an opportunity to ‘play’ with the ‘remembered’, and more importantly the ‘forgotten’ details of people, places and things. This facilitated my imagination to produce a memoir, which not only represents traces of autobiography, but also provides a departure point for the reader to bring their own interpretation, and questioning into a dialogue with Bhudevi and ultimately with me.

In a 1994 interview with Uma Chaudhuri, Rushdie explains his thought process involved in the creation of *Midnight’s Children* (1991):

I think I relied mostly on memory, I spent a long time just kind of excavating my memory and the memories of other people. And when there were errors in the remembering, I found I quite liked that, because I didn’t want to write something that had journalistic truth but rather something that had a kind of remembered truth. And of course memory does plan those tricks ...

He goes on to remind us that the use of ‘mistakes’ of memory are important in the embellishment of narrative and the creation of story –

... There are a lot of mistakes like that: they are consciously introduced mistakes. The texture of narrative is such that it almost depends upon being an error about history; otherwise it wouldn’t be an accurate piece of memory, because that’s what narrative is, it’s something remembered (p. 2).

In *Midnight’s Children*, Saleem, Rushdie’s protagonist, explains his idea of memory’s truth:

“I told you the truth” I say yet again, “Memory’s truth, because memory has its own special kind. It selects, eliminates, exaggerates, alters, minimizes, glorifies and vilifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent version of events; and no sane human being ever trusts someone else’s version of the truth more than his own” (p. 292)

If we concur that ideas of memory are linked to the construction of self, and that memory is non-linear, then it follows that the journey to excavate memory and unravel the self is a complex, uncharted and non-linear course. One only has to look at Jeanette Winterson’s novel *Sexing the Cherry*, (1989) in which she muses on the idea of non-linearity in relation to memory and the ‘self’, to recognise that:
The journey is not linear, it is always back and forth, denying the calendar, the wrinkles and the lines of the body. The self is not contained in any moment or any place, but it is only in the intersection of the moment and place that the self might be seen vanishing through a door, which disappears at once (p. 80).

This chapter documents much that has been written about the association between time and memory. Prominent amongst such writing is French author Marcel Proust (1992), whose influential work *Remembering of Things Past*, demonstrates how the wonders of life are to be found buried in memory and how richness is invoked by ordinary detail, the detail found in fragments of memory. His imaginative work also reveals to us the complexity of time and its correlation to memory. Proust, like his contemporary Henri Bergson, contrasts involuntary memory with voluntary memory. However, as critics such as Walter Benjamin (1980) and Gilles Deleuze (1964) observe, the difference between these two interpretations of involuntary forms of memory lies in the idea that Proust was first and foremost an explorer of individual memory on a psychological and metaphysical level. He believes that voluntary memory, which focuses on, and is based on retrieval by ‘intelligence’, did not account for the emotive or sensory memory, which inevitably reflects the “essence” of the past. In his 1914 Paris, Proust (1992) succeeds to shut out the present by occupying a cork lined room where not even the march of the German armies can divert his attention from the ‘madeleines’ that remind him of his mother.

During my journey, sensory memory has been a powerful evocator of the past, particularly in relation to moments of happiness associated with the sense in past and subsequently in the present moment. The smell of honey suckle on a visit to a friend’s house in Elsternwick, Australia, takes me immediately back to the gardens of my grandparents in Poona, India in the 1950’s. In 2003, I write:
Warm, sweet honeysuckle – I am overcome by your entrancing perfume – overwhelming, joy and happiness of summer holidays at ‘Sunnydale’ – poppies, pom-pom lilies, roses – but your perfume gives me comfort, enveloping me immediately with a soothing, homey memory.

I wander and lurk in the garden carefully observing the lush green fronds filled with ladybirds. The freedom of endless days wandering in discovery of new forms and secret places in my own piece of heaven...

The sensual experience was so powerful that the reflection of it in my journal recorded as Fragment 4, expresses the past sensation in the present – as though it is happening again. Once again time collapses and a circle comprising the two events is completed by a memory triggered by the senses. In Chapter Six: Story: The Making of Identity, I show how triggers of past experience lead to memory becoming enacted in the present time and how micro-narratives are formed (Figure 1). In this case the experience of smelling the honeysuckle triggers a response that generates the micro-narrative.

The senses have played a significant role in the way that they facilitate the embodiment of experience of an environment with the self, causing the experience to be inscribed in memory. In Fragment 12, I reflect in my journal on the occasion of our fortieth anniversary of arrival in Australia. Moved equally by the strains of the Australian and Indian national anthems I ask myself:

But why is it then that I am moved by nationalistic fervour – by the melancholic strains of ‘Advance Australia Fair’ and ‘I still call Australia Home’ and if I was honest – as I am trying to be – this outpouring then is equally exuded at the sound of ‘Jana Gana Mana’?

The visceral response I have to arrival in India with its familiar pungent odours, dense air, humidity and heat – the throngs, the colour, the babble in foreign tongue – no more foreign than Italian or English – is this so different to the feeling I have of coming home to the wide open spaces – the endless horizons, the cool clear air, the lack of people and babble in Australia? Another ‘home’ Or is it much different from my arrival in Italia? The place where I have felt an immediate ‘simpatico’ – where art and music and food and the energy of the people all seem to seep in and out of my skin in familiar rhythms like breathing-inhaling and exhaling.

Involuntary memory unlocks the narrator’s past and by recognising this past produces happiness of the past that becomes part of a present moment.
The non-linearity of time is also evident in the work of Martin Amis’ *Time’s Arrow*. Amis (1992) like Rushdie (1995) centers on the importance of memory for the individual who inhabits a fragmented and dislocated world. The character Tod can only understand his actions and their significance in a future context through a reverse time structure. ‘How many times have I asked myself: when is the world going to start making sense? Yet the answer is out there. It is rushing towards me over uneven ground’ (p. 123).

I have become acutely aware of the role and impact of time on memory. The elasticity, the cunning illusion created by emotional filters of everyday life, the layering of experience as it crusts over the original fragment – on the one hand burying the memory deeper, and all at once, striking like a familiar stranger, as it renders any given moment palpable as if it were yesterday: the lifelong fragments of experience that contribute to the archaeology of one’s identity.

I am also aware that what we often remember are events that took place in what Nicole King refers to as a ‘time of innocence’ (King 2000). This paradoxical ‘knowing’ and not ‘knowing’ is the position of any autobiographical narrator. Drawing on an account by Auschwitz survivor Leon Greenman she warns that:

Greenman’s account raises key issues about the function of memory and the ways in which it is re-constructed in narrative and implicated in notions of self-identity – an identity which for Greenman and others, is rehearsed again and again in narrative which attempts to recover the self who existed ‘before’ (p. 1).

Consistent with this notion, my birth story involving my paternal grandmother’s comment “Oh! It’s only a girl and isn’t she black?” (Chapter 3: Fragment 1) has been rehearsed again and again in family narratives and in my own story telling about who I understood I was and my search for who I am today.

I have identified that the critical point of departure for my loss of sense of place and of who I am was my experience as an ‘unwilling participant in my parents decision to leave India and migrate to Australia in 1967’. The recurring sentiment of loss and bitterness at my parents decision is revealed in the digital story *A Journey Through Lost Time* which starts with the words:

*Most of us can locate a central event that shapes and distorts our lives. For me it was that day in January 1967 when we left our beloved homeland of India. … In the space of 16 days aboard the*
Excavation A – Memory - 175

SS Oronsay, I travelled between childhood and adulthood, between chaos and pre-destination, and between innocence and the dawning of a new knowledge. Since then, every action and thought of my existence has been affected by that fulcrum of time.

In the fable, Satatantra, Bhudevi, on realising the enormity of the decision made by her parents to leave for the Promised Land, sinks into melancholia.

It didn’t take long – no, in fact it was only a split moment, when like a blinding flash Bhudevi’s own reality of the situation hit her. She would be gone, far across the sea to this land of plenty and yet potentially of nothing that mattered – her friends, her culture, the familiar forest, her language, music and dance (p. 24).

The day I walked that ‘gang plank’ to the SS Oronsay was a defining moment in my life, one of sadness and loss, a moment that defied my capacity as a child to understand my parents’ decision. Despite the anguish that has followed this critical incident, today, through the process of this Journey Around Myself, the ‘homecoming’ has brought with it a deeper understanding of the decision. While the experience of that day of leaving is not forgotten, the pain and bitterness have subsided.

The adult is able to make connections through invoking various levels of experience and learning to give substance to narrative in the present. So it is, that in the present moment of my narration I possess knowledge that I did not have then in the moment of my experience.

The process of memory requires the construction and re-construction of things past. In the process of re-construction, memories are distorted by either the individual or social needs to present the desired picture. In many ways, memories according to French theorist Jacques Le Goff (1992) are the raw material of history providing historians with the various expressions of memory to embellish their records. If memory relies on the unconscious from which it draws the voluntary or in-voluntary, then it is dangerously subject to manipulation by time and those in powerful positions. As Le Goff (1992) reminds us:

To make themselves master of memory and forgetfulness is one of the great pre-occupations of the ruling classes, groups and individuals who have dominated and have continued to dominate historical societies. The things forgotten or not
mentioned by history reveal these mechanisms for the manipulation of collective memory (p. 54).

At an individual level the issue of memory and power is equally important. In fact it is often individual memoirs that can provide the counter memory to recorded history. I have spent much of my adult life attempting to gather information about my ancestry. These attempts at uncovering ancestral story have been fraught with hurdles. While there has been plenty of information about ancestry relating to the colonizers of India such as the English, French, Portuguese and Spanish, there has been an unwillingness of parents and other relatives to speak of their Indian ancestry. There have been ‘fragments’ of story, photographs and official records, which I have been trying to piece together. In the end I have discovered that much that has been forgotten has been a ‘willful forgetting’ through the ages: a strategy for survival for the ‘mixed race’, who, as a minority in the colonized homeland, misrepresented their history to themselves. In such circumstances, individual memoir has a critical role in providing a counter memory to recorded history.

The issue of memory and remembering or forgetting is particularly significant in the act of naming or identification as opposed to identity. In his work on diasporas, cultural theorist Stuart Hall says it is both important and productive to think of identifications rather than identities in the act of remembering and naming, because as he states Identity, is what “is at the end, not the beginning, of the paradigm. Identity is what is at stake in political organization” (Hall, 1997, p. 292). On the other hand, “Identification means that you are called in a certain way: ‘you, this time, in this space, for this purpose, by this barricade with these folks’” (Hall 1997, p. 292).

However, Hall goes on to emphasise that it is important to remember that it is ‘identity’ that always has a “constitutive outside”: “Power uses difference as a way of marking off who does and who does not belong” (Hall 1997, p. 298).

The power of the dominant culture invariably uses difference as a demarcation point for exclusion and derogation. Being presented with counter identification, especially one so derogatory and on one so young impacts like a sledgehammer on confidence, self-esteem and a sense of who one is. This is represented in the fable Satatantra where Bhudevi, on her way home from school, is identified as a ‘Boong’ and ‘Wog’ and told to go back to where she belongs (p. 41). The silencing of the individual through such racist aggression has a significant impact on memory and perceptions of the self.
This experience is further explored in the digital story *Lost in Translation*

*Once again you find yourself in the company of blue uniforms: pigtailed, inkwells, raucous little groupings of secrets and lies.*

*You hear their laughter as you skirt the perimeters searching for a way in. There is a chasm separating you from them.*

*You cry out but the sound falls on deaf ears: your cry is in silence, for they have taken your tongue.*

The dynamics of power such as that used in such racist aggression stole the power of my voice. In the narrative cited above the enforced silence takes on a visceral sense of disabling in ‘they have taken your tongue’. I was silenced, I was disabled, and I lived in fear and dread of walking home each day that I attended school that year. In her book *Bread, Blood, and Poetry*, Adrienne Rich (1986) also uses a bodily metaphor for another type of silencing that her family sustained when her father rejected his Jewish identity to gain acceptance in a white southern society in the USA. She tells us:

> What happens ... when the white gentile world is softly saying "Be more like us and you can be one of us" What happens when survival seems to mean closing off one emotional artery after another? (p. 115).

Following the events of the Holocaust and the WW2 there has been increasing interest in ideas of memory and cultural amnesia. Earlier in this chapter I refer to the body of literature recording, discussing, analyzing and theorising both individual and collective or social experiences, which has grown. In this study, I too explore the ideas of memory and its vulnerability to distortion and cultural amnesia, thus contributing to the ongoing literature.

In the digital story *Argumentum é Silencio*, a story prompted by my return to India as a lesbian, I portray a historical message of lesbian invisibility and the silencing of voice in India. In doing so, I refer to a quote from the *Jagori* archives:

> Ignorance. When something is ignored, it will gradually lose any vitality it once had, first becoming invisible and then finally disappearing altogether. If memory is not passed on in some coherent way, that which is not remembered no longer exists, and it can then be said that it never existed. This is what is happening to the histories of lesbian sexualities. *Anonymous. Jagori Archives 2002*
The issue of lesbian sexuality is a significant example of cultural amnesia and silencing. Giti Thadani (1996) founder of Sakhi, a lesbian archive in New Delhi, has researched and recovered lesbian histories from archaeological sites and ancient texts. In her book Sakhiyani, she constructs a tapestry of feminine kinship, genealogy, and sexual or erotic bonding between women (Sakhiyani) in ancient India. Her research shows how through systematic destruction of artefacts, and colonisation of memories by hetero-patriarchal domination, a cultural amnesia resulting in invisibility and silencing has occurred.

Individual memory is also fallible and prone to amnesia. Take for instance my interaction with my father and sister on the matter of our fortieth anniversary of arrival in Australia. In Fragment 12 I attempt to understand the amnesia of such an important event:

Yesterday 40 years after the departure/arrival I recounted to Dad and Conchita the anniversary. I am taken aback that no one else even remembers the date. Did it mean so little to them? Or is it exactly the act of ‘forgetting’ of obliterating memory? Both of them are somewhat surprised – questioning my recollection of the date –

“Are you sure?” dad says to me and then sadly exclaims, “I suppose I have spent half my life there and half here – in fact more than half here because I spent the first 2-years in Pune”. It felt to me like he was trying to press the point that this is where his home is.

In accepting the notion that the individual’s memory is fallible and subject to distortion, we can observe the way in which collective memory is formed. It is subject to abuses of power and surrendered to those who are in positions to shape history to their own means and ends. It may be said that ideology, the great perversion of reason, can be utilized to prevent us from remembering our true self. Here, we can appreciate the appeal by cultural theorist Stuart Hall to focus our attentions on identifications rather than identity. To fall prey to ideological categories such as Christian, Marxist, Australian or migrant to name just a few, we risk losing the ability to appreciate and celebrate our eclectic self. If we use our identification to form our identity we may just distort our true identity and the memory of who we are.

Global, generic categorizations such as these may offer a ‘universal haven’ devoid of geographical borders and ethnic boundaries. Adopting these may provide an immediate passport of acceptance into the ‘insider’ group. In Fragment 12 I record that during the first year in Australia, my father’s insistence on ‘burning bridges’ and being ‘Australian’
were an attempt to obliterate memory and experience of the past and present experience in Australia. Equally, my parents’ heightening of ‘Catholicism’ as an identifier was an attempt at promoting acceptance and accelerating assimilation. To some extent this worked because as I remember, in a harsh and alienating environment, the Catholic Family Movement became an instant network of support.

Unfortunately the dangers in such conditional acceptance is that they are inherently superficial. I recall a conversation between my father and his closest friend who happened to be a white middle class professional. ‘I’ll be honest with you’ he said to my father, ‘I am happy for your children to play with mine, however, I would never consent to one of them marrying into our family’. I remember being outraged, not only at the words spewing out from the man but also at my father’s conciliatory and subservient response of silence. I recall the look of hurt and loss in his eyes, surely, this experience must have challenged and dissolved my father’s dreams of a better life in this land of promise.

In such situations, as Homi k Bhabha (1994) states:

> We are no longer confronted with an ontological problem of being but with a discursive strategy of the moment of interrogation, a moment in which the demand for identification becomes, primarily, a response to other questions, of signification and desire, culture and politics (pp. 49-50).

Acts of counter identification and naming marginalise, and in doing so the experience can exacerbate feelings of dislocation and uprootedness. Harbouring in counter identities can, as in the case cited, bring superficial acceptance, but this comes at a cost. Despite playing to the rules of the game, because acceptance is always conditional, the colour of one’s skin and the memory of dislocation are deeply ‘othering’.

At the commencement of this research journey, my questions of identity were concerned solely with my experience of being lesbian in India. This consciousness had been raised through my experience of returning to India in 2003. (Argumentum é Silencio) As the journey progressed, and I began to further investigate ideas of who I am, it became clear that the idea of a single identifier as a category for investigation would distort and diminish my eclectic self. I realised that such single categories are underpinned by collective memory and experience and may lead to the eradication of individual experience and memory.
In such instances identity, when categorised, is distorted and diminished as it calls into play the erasure of all memories that may run counter to the ideological or cultural identification. The experience of dissolution of identity when relegated to ‘other’ through categorisation can be de-stabilising and dis-locating as these records indicate:

In Fragment 3 while travelling in Italy in 1992, I record:

Travelling alone my outward self takes on a curious thinness and an unreality, which may be difficult to describe. It’s almost at times that I am physically transparent – even invisible. Yet, at the same time I often feel eyes upon my curious self.

And in India while attending a conference in 2005, recorded in Fragment 8:

The ‘beginning of the end’ – I’m becoming increasingly invisible – fading away, and I cannot remember using any of the transitions available to me. A cross-dissolve sounds like an apt description...

and later that week:

...somehow once again I find myself marginalized in my own culture.

Internally, on my arrival in India, I always feel OK – but then it starts to creep in and I am now convinced that it is my external association with Westerners. In the conference context of course, this is even further exaggerated – the adoption of the ‘expert’ status of those who have been here before – my own invisibility as I move in and out of people’s perspectives on my ‘Indianess’ or lack there of. I too move in and out of these spaces both internally and externally, which confirms the duality of my existence.

In Interrogation 8 I discuss how my experience in and of India has varied significantly depending upon who I am with on my travels, and express how the experience of being caught between two worlds impacts on the self. Meena Alexander (1996) discusses the issue of multiple ethnic borders as part of a shifting reality we inhabit. She observes how shifting borders, particularly when racialised, can be tormenting. She says:

Appearing in the flesh, I am cast afresh, a female of colour – skin colour, hair texture, clothing, speech, all marking me in ways that I could scarcely be conceived of. And there is a febrile edge
to this knowledge, something that has always been with me, even in India, the country I ‘come from,’ a country where the issue of race never touched me (p. 66).

To experience India alone or with other native Indians optimises my capacity to blend into the cultural landscape and to some extent feel the freedom of belonging. It alleviates the tension between my ascribed identity and my labelling as a foreigner or NRI (non-resident Indian). This is a tension that almost always manifests in the experience of marginalisation. Being Indian in India on my own is a very different experience to being Indian while travelling with others or, for that matter being Indian anywhere else in the world.

I agree with Rushdie that the idea of a collective memory is almost impossible. Memory cannot be separated from the individual; any collectivity would render it meaningless. If you separate memory from the individual, you strip memory of its meaning.

Despite the paradox of Rushdie’s theses, he believes that ‘the broken mirror may actually be as valuable as the one which is supposedly unflawed’ (2006, p. 11). Stumbling through the inadequacies of ‘total recall’ when writing *Midnight’s Children*, Rushdie (2006) discovered that it was:

...precisely the partial nature of these memories, their fragmentation, that made them so evocative for me. The shards of memory acquired greater status, greater resonance, because they were remains; fragmentation made trivial things seem like symbols, and the mundane acquired numinous qualities (p. 12).

The ‘broken mirror’ is not just a mirror of nostalgia but a useful tool with which to work in the present. Using this technique, Salman Rushdie has created a model for narrative expression. Using the fragments or shards of memory available to us, provides fuel with which to remember and inspire the imagination. In this archaeological enterprise I have used fragments or shards of memory available to me to provide fuel by which to remember and inspire my imagination.

My erratic and non-linear path of excavation reveals the fragments and shards of memory to substantiate this *Journey Around Myself*. Each of the artefacts involves excavation, reflection and interpretation. My process sews together discontinuous narratives to draw together images of the self – an eclectic self that is flexible and adaptable in its relationship to the wider social context.
I return to the work of Salman Rushdie and his ‘Broken Mirror’ and the relationship between distorted memory and our identity and place in the world. Rushdie believes that as humans we are not capable of perceiving things as a whole and that at best we absorb and form fractured perceptions (Rushdie 1991).

For Rushdie the essence of memory is its inaccuracy, which allows individual interpretation of the past. For me, memory is the blunt and imperfect tool that shatters the past into fragments or shards that trigger clues. In his 1982 essay *Imaginary Homelands*, once again he uses the character of his narrator Saleem in *Midnight’s Children* to explain his ideas:

> This is why I made my narrator, Saleem, suspect in his narration; his mistakes are the mistakes of fallible memory compounded by the quirks of character and of circumstance, and his vision is fragmentary. It may be that when the Indian writer who writes from outside India tries to reflect that world, he is obliged to deal in broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been irretrievably lost (p. 11).

Similarly, in the fable *Satatantra*, I use the device of the avian narrators to reveal the context and commentary of the protagonist Bhudevi’s life. This leaves the narrators with the creative space to reflect on the fallibility of my memory on matters of the story as memoir.

Since we often lack the ability to tap into sources that can substantiate who we are, out of necessity we turn to memory to find the continuity to our lives. But can memory be trusted? Experiences, people, places and things often remain fleeting or illusionary. On many an occasion since leaving India I have sought to establish a sense of my family history by speaking to other family members and friends and coaxing them to put their memories to work. While some information in the form of stories and photographs has been forthcoming, it has not been an easy task: some memories have faded, some appear to have been willfully forgotten to suit emotions and circumstance.

When writing the fable *Satatantra* I found myself increasingly relying on fragments, that were shadowy images, illusions, a piece of music here, a pungent odour there – then there were the stories from my mother – those I remember from my childhood and those that changed and evolved over the years as she aged. “You remember things that never happened” my mother once said to me, a statement she was forced to withdraw after photographs in the family album ‘*Happy Memories*’ corroborated my story. The access to corroboration of story is an important element of narrative. I sometimes wonder what the outcome would have been had I been unable to verify my memory of the incident. Doubt
would have lingered, other emotional baggage created as my mother’s memory was pitted against mine. My father’s stories also illuminated my own shards of memory, but, as the years went by, they became more suffused with nostalgia. It is this nostalgia and its relationship to memory, particularly in cases where the memory seems unchanged by time that brings about a sense of loss. For me the loss of place propelled me on a reflective odyssey, through archaeology of memory to find meaning and place.

In *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, Rushdie (1999) describes the way in which we reach out for continuity and our need to find meaning and reason:

> When it comes to love there’s no telling what people will convince themselves of. In spite of all the evidence that life is discontinuous, a valley of rifts, and that random chance plays a great part in our fates we go on believing in the continuity of things, in causation and meaning. But we live on a broken mirror, and fresh cracks appear in its surface everyday. People may slip through those cracks and be lost. Or like my parents they may be thrown by chance into each other’s arms and fall in love. In direct contradiction of their predominantly rational philosophies of life, however, my father and mother always believed that they were thrown together by destiny (p. 31).

Memory can also be conditioned by emotion and often in these circumstances reason becomes irrelevant. As in the case of Rushdie’s characters who believed they were thrown together by ‘destiny’, so too every day we censor, edit and shape our narratives via memories that are chosen for inclusion and omission. We remember moments of intense happiness or trauma and we move in and out of stories and time to create the desired picture.

Nostalgia plays a vital role in my process of sifting, constructing and re-constructing myself through memory and narrative. On the journey, which I have already described as an uncharted course, I discovered that despite my attention to reflexivity and my recording of experiences, when it came to remembering, my memories were far from organised chronologically. As the journey progressed memories twisted this way and that, sometimes fading in and out in an ephemeral haze, while at other times sharp and focused defying time and tide. Each clue emerges in the form of a fragment or shard as a non-linear path of excavation cut its way through.

In *A Journey Around Myself: an Archaeological Exploration of Identity*, memory and identity remain a continual process of re-translation.

One such re-translation is particularly evident in the fable *Satatantra: The Elephant and the Mirror* that emerged from a conversation with Adele Flood mid flight on the way to
India. In my journal she wrote ‘If an elephant lived a hundred years, how many memories would she have?’ This was a critical incident and a turning point of the journey, for, in taking on the question, the construction of self is liberated with the recording of memoir through fable. The immediate and receptive response to the question means that there was a story to be told: until a story is told it does not exist: by telling my story I have written myself into existence.

The collages for the artefact ‘Hall of Mirrors’ were created between the thirteenth and seventeenth November 2006 on four long and reflective nights, which fell between the death and burial of my mother Therese Rose Chaves Fonseca. The timing of this creative effort is significant. It reflects a subliminal emotive and cognitive ‘reaching out’ to people who have/had been sources of strength throughout my life. The collages were constructed intuitively: gathering images through my memories of these individuals and the visual representations of their contribution to my self.

As artefacts, both the Fable: Satatantra and the ‘Hall of Mirrors’ involve the drawing together of a kaleidoscope of experience and emotions found in the fragments and shards of memory. The process of excavation and interrogation subsequently lead to a translation and re-translation of self. The artefacts are valuable as triggers to memory and serve as a pathway to the knowledge embedded in their tangibility.

To find out who I am, and know myself has demanded a recollection of who I have been. Any continuity of self relies on memory and remembering the past is thus crucial for our sense of identity. The recollection of past experiences provides the nexus between who we are today and our earlier selves. Without our memories we have no sense of self; amnesiacs appear to have lost their story of who they are. Mircea Eliade (1975) tells us that the Greeks linked the forgotten past with death. Some privileged were exceptions to these beliefs; all others who were dead had no memories (p. 215).

For Australian indigenous tribes, there is no ending of life at ‘death’. Dead relatives are very much a part of continuing life. It is thought that in dreams dead relatives
communicate their presence. Death is seen as part of a cycle of life in which one emerges from Dreamtime through birth, and eventually returns to the timeless, only to emerge again. Memory embedded in the landscape forms this communication (Crisp, 2005). Avoidance of speaking the name of the dead is a mark of respect and is part of the Australian Aboriginal culture. This silence does not deny but rather honours the importance of those who have come before.

Recalling or reminiscing various chains of memories does not necessarily mean that we arrive at our sense of self, destination complete. In her biography of *Orlando: A Biography*, Virginia Woolf (1928), weaves the reminiscences of her character based on Vita Sackville-West into a historical portrait challenging ideas of masculinity and femininity and drawing together a portrait. So too, in Jeanette Winterson’s *The Passion* (1987), her characters of Henri and Villanelle are drawn together by memory of events and places, which feeds their ‘passion’ and depicts how memory envelopes life, and history as interdependent.

My recollections and reminiscences drawn on as fragments of memory have required synthesis and shaping of events and memories into a narrative that provides a picture. The narrative or story may change, however, in the present time the stories constructed reflect a critical part of my journey. The artefacts in this research are my synthesis; in the act of drawing the fragments together I mobilise them to paint a picture of my identity.

Earlier in this chapter I referred to claims that forgetfulness is part of memory (Ricoeur 2004; Rushdie 2006). Through the archaeological de-construction of self, memories are continuously shrunk, abandoned or discarded in a process of ‘forgetting’. It is through this process that one recalls fragments that develop and embellish into story as and when needed. In his autobiography *A Small Boy and Others*, Henry James (1913) explains the way in which he self-edited his recollections when writing: ‘the ragbag of memory hung on its nail in my closet, though I learnt with time to control the habit of bringing it forth’ (p. 41).

The documentation of events, reflections of experiences and recording of incidents are
critical to memory and its role in memoir. In his book *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Milan Kundera (1999) reminds us of the importance of these records through his protagonist Mirek who meticulously keeps a diary and records discussions and events. It is 1971. “The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.” Mirek tells his fellow countrymen assuring them that they are not doing anything to violate the constitution (p. 4).

In my return journeys to India, I found that the episodes of recall that brought most substance to memory of self were those that I had forgotten. I had put them away or shrunk them into oblivion. Some were painful moments like being belittled in the art classroom, an experience that brought to a halt, or at least severely altered, my creative potential for many years to come. The experience came sharply back to me the day I returned to the red brick St Joseph’s Convent in Bandra in 2004. The emotions of pain and horror experienced in that classroom in 1965 were as fresh as the day I stood there.

Some of the happier memories appear to have been involuntarily self-edited as a protective device. This could be because the sheer joy of the memory has been embellished possibly beyond the reality of the experience. However, one that remains is the memory of being at Lands End with my parents in 1953; a motif of unbridled happiness and joy that appears regularly within artefacts and stories. In this instance memory is triggered through senses and feelings rather than a series of facts. Emotive and sensual responses provide the links to the incident and linearity is then established through the checking and validation of detail like dates.

Marcel Proust (1992) explains how this can happen. The story *Remembrance of Things Past*, reminded me of how often the most sharply remembered scenes or experiences are those that are sometimes forgotten. He says:

> As habit weakens everything, what best reminds us of a person is precisely what we had forgotten. It is thanks to this oblivion alone that we can from time to time recover the person that we were, place ourselves in relation to things as he was placed ... Owing to the work of oblivion, the work of memory ...causes us to breathe a new air, an air which is new precisely because we
have breathed it in the past, ... since the true paradises are the paradises that we have lost (p. 692).

If memory is something that exists as a delineator between past and present experience, and if it is fallible, then memory relies on either corroboration or validation to assert its authenticity for the individual attempting to construct a sense of who they are by remembering. If the related knowledge of the past depends on oral transmission of story, and if no other form of records exist, then the memory and its relation to the past is based entirely on present interpretations. It is important to re-consider the impact of ‘Nachträglichkeit’ in relation to this idea – a term used frequently by Freud but never developed by him into a constant theory: this concept makes explicit the fact that memory, operating as it does in the present, must inevitably incorporate the awareness of ‘what wasn’t known then’ (King 2000, p. 11).

In some oral cultures, the remembered past simply does not exist in that the most recent account of the oldest living person was the ‘memory’.

During a recent visit to my ancestral land in Goa, India, I returned to an area known as ‘Old Goa’ about nine kilometers from the capital Panjim. Old Goa had been ruled by many Indian kingdoms and dynasties from the 4th century onwards and had become a great trading post. Goa was colonized in 1510, and became Portugal’s first real territorial acquisition in Asia. Old Goa was the capital with a thriving community of roughly 200,000 by 1543. Malaria and cholera epidemics ravaged the city in the 17th century and it was largely abandoned, leaving a population of 1,500 in 1775. In 1843 the capital was moved to Panjim, and remained so till 1961 when the state was finally back in India’s rule.

Let me explain the relevance of this information. On my visit in 2005, while scratching around on the property that once belonged to my paternal ancestors, I wandered around filled with nostalgic stories from my father and uncle; hoping to find small clues in the ruins – clues that somehow would substantiate the tales I had heard. The sun scorched down on the red laterite dust, I had been so intent on my mission that I hadn’t noticed the dark figure crouched under the spreading limbs of a gigantic mango tree. “What are you looking for?” he asked me in Konkani, the local language that I could barely understand. I replied in Hindi, explaining my situation and relieved that he understood.
During the course of the afternoon, I came to understand that he belonged to the indigenous tribes of the region, and that he was now involved in a ‘land rights’ claim. I was intrigued. He explained his people had a problem; they had no past records, no evidence and no corroboration of their story and therefore their rights. Theirs was an oral culture, and it had been the type of oral culture that was so present-oriented that the past was never a topic of discussion up to now, there had been no distinction between past and present. There was no evidence, and in his current world there was no way of verifying memory or claim. This means that for cultural memory to lay claim to validity in the western traditional cultural paradigm, it is reliant on documenting events, it is the system adopted since India was colonised and retained post independence documentation and tangible evidence is tantamount to claim.

The value of tangible artefacts to trigger and verify memory is significant. The realm of the senses plays a particularly important role in actively stimulating memory and recall of the past. There are several fragments uncovered during the research that support this notion: the watch on my father’s wrist in Fragment 2 and its symbolism in relation to inheritance and my place as a daughter in an Indian family; the image of the window at Monti di Villa in Italy in Fragment 3 is suffused with memories of endless summers in the Apuane; the collage of Berlin, in Fragment 10 holds memories of five weeks during which I endlessly walked the streets of this city in search of meaning as I battled the loneliness of a relationship gone wrong and the overwhelming feeling of being a stranger in an alien landscape; the sound and moving image of myself at three years of age in the digital story Lost in Translation, or the many images from the family photo album contained in the artefact Happy Memories which over the years have painted a memoric topography drawn out of the childhood left behind.

These fragments depict experiences, often so intense in their emotion that their inscription has found a place deep in the wilderness of the landscape of my memory. The tangibility of the recorded fragments and artefacts has been precious in their value to recover memory from the wilderness and contribute to my associated stories.

Vladimir Nabokov (1966) looks back on his childhood as a golden era. In his memoir Speak Memory and in his book Ada, Nabokov tackles Freudian notions of guilt and childhood.
When he began to write about time, memory and eternity he ‘offers an escape from the cruelty that attends beauty and engenders guilt’. In both works Nabokov often refers to his childhood as ‘paradise’. In his essay *Cruelty, Beauty and Time*, writer Orhan Pamuk (2007) tells us that ‘Nabokov reminds us that our memories allow us to carry our childhood with us, and with it the golden age we thought we had left behind... the encounters with belongings evoke the past at most unexpected moments; the images are laden with wondrous memories, opening up our eyes to the golden age that is always with us, even in the ugly material world of the present’ (p. 156). I too have found that memory and imagination are associated in the linking of narrative into a continuous story.

In her memoir writing, Virginia Woolf (1976) emphasises the association between senses and feelings related to memory of childhood. In *A Sketch of the Past* she describes ‘I am hardly aware of myself, but only of the sensation, I am only the container of the feeling of ecstasy, of the feeling of rapture. Perhaps this is the characteristic of all childhood memories’ (p. 81).

In order to stimulate and activate my lucid memory I need some form of sensation in the present moment. The smell of roasting spices, the strains of a melancholic Santoor or Sitar, the framed celluloid images old and faded that line the gaudy green walls in the lounge at my maternal grandparents’ home ‘Sunnydale’, the warm salt air from the Arabian Sea blowing over the cow dung sand at Marve, the clink of glass marbles as they hit the dust or the whoosh of a whirring paper kite in aerial battle – any one of these and a million more are the sensations of my childhood.

These are all relics of memory and all of them help me regain my past. They make up the sights, sounds and smells that are the essence of childhood memories. These are memories of my childhood of carefree happiness, memories that I describe as an ‘unbearable lightness of being.’

**Visual Memory**

As a photographer, I am particularly drawn to visual clues in this archaeological
enterprise. Visual memory has always been a critical aspect to the way I have remembered my past, and sought validation of my memory via tangible relics such as photographs and film. Adele Flood (2003) refers to the way that artists ‘return again and again to the same place to reinterpret significant places in terms of their own or others’ pasts.’ (68) The experiential immersion of travel to places of my childhood have also stimulated and embellished fragments of memory.

Adele Flood (2003) tells us that the importance of visual memory recorded and embedded in the narratives collected over time is a valuable aspect of cultural heritage.

She explains:

> Whatever form these records take, they all entail the creative spirit of humankind: they use the creative ability of individuals to enable those who come after them to view and interpret life in another time (p. 96).

Photographic and other visual forms of recording such as film, as relics to stimulate visual memory have had a major impact on the way we remember. In the past century the evolution of photography from the Daguerreotype to digital imaging completely altered the way that the present is documented, thus forming an abundance of visual archives to aid memory.

For me this research has been made possible by the fact that my maternal grandfather and my father had more than a keen interest in photography. Thanks to my mother’s capacity to painstakingly organise and preserve the images, I have had the good fortune to access a rich archive of photographs, film and audio recordings to aid my process of remembering. Over the years I have spent many hours poring over the family album Happy Memories, trying to find the traces of childhood wanderings half-remembered and only half understood. So much information, both explicit and implicit is contained within these images – powerful and significant moments at both a personal and socio-political level. Some of these images were given meaning through the stories told to me by my mother and father; stories already constructed and handed down via a storytelling tradition. However, I find that many images carry their own parallel narrative, a story based on my own senses and emotions of experiences.
Through the ages historical knowing has been aided and abetted by a variety of visual, oral or written devices. People have written notes, drawn sketches and painted. In the past century the photographic image has made a significant contribution to the genre of visual artefacts. Visual memory existed prior to the evidence of it. After all one could claim to have visually witnessed something but the matter of validation of evidence and description remained highly suspect and open to interpretation. The advent of the photographic image meant that its role in matters of memory promoted a high level of debate and discussion. Some believed that while the photograph enhanced knowledge of the past it also lessened the need for recall.

In 1978 John Berger in his essay *The Uses of Photography* states how to some people photographs ‘depict only frozen static moments severed from past experience, conveying no sense of diachronic connection’ (pp. 50-52).

Some photographers, on the other hand, see themselves as historians. Believing that they live in a vanishing world, American photographers Walker Evans and Dorothea Lange both record their environments to portray images of the social milieu. In Europe, Cartier Bresson and Eugene Atget follow suit.

Amongst a profusion of influential writing, Walter Benjamin produces some of the most profound work on the analysis of photography as medium and metaphor. The works that contain his thesis on ‘Unconscious Optics’ are of particular relevance and are included in his essay *A Short History of Photography* (1931) and in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936). He is concerned with the invisible that is present inside the visible and with the minute movements too small for the human eye and too automatic to impact on human consciousness. For Benjamin, what passes between the unconscious and consciousness functions like an optical instrument: a telescope, or perhaps a camera (Hirsch 1997, p. 118).

Benjamin holds that photography is too transparent and ‘disguises its own inability to represent’. To some extent, I concur with Benjamin that photographs, which claim to capture the ‘true’ image of the subject/object, photographed fail to do so as it claims to represent something that is far too layered and complex. In the book, *Hall of Mirrors, Collage 2* contains a picture of my paternal grandmother gazing at me in my mother's arms.
Only three months prior to this image, at my birth, she was known to comment ‘oh it’s only a girl and isn’t she black’, and I as I have been told, wanted nothing more to do with me. This comment has since been related to me and has had a powerful impact on my early sense of identity. It is embedded in the fable Satatantra as a voice that is heard on the night Bhudevi the elephant is born (p. 15).

While the dynamics contained within this visual form can be interpreted speculatively, the complexities and layers of emotion that lie behind the image are impossible to convey through this medium alone. Today the issue of the photographic image and technology is further complicated by technical developments. Debates regarding ‘truth’ in terms of the captured image continue and many of these relate to the manipulation that is possible through digital media technology.

In her book Family Secrets Annette Kuhn (2002) discusses the role of photographs in ‘remembering the self’.

To show what is evidence of, a photograph must always point you away from itself. Family photographs are supposed to show not so much that we were once there, as how we once were: to evoke memories that might have little or nothing to do with what is actually in the picture (p. 12).

She observes:

Memories evoked by a photo do not spring out of the image itself, but are generated in a network, an inter-text of discourses that shift between past and present, spectator and image, and between all these and cultural contexts, historical moments. In this network, the image itself figures largely as a trace, a clue (p. 12).

In the ‘Journey Around Myself’, the photograph, and particularly the collection of family photographs in the archives play more than a simplistic compass in a network.
In *A Journey through Lost Time*, it is my ability to use the images recorded of life events and places that allow me to return to those places and reflect on the visual memory of them. Similarly, as a photographer I am able to create a visual narrative expressing a depth and breadth of emotion of personal experience in *Lost in Translation*, that would not be as representative without the images.

So, like Adele Flood (2003), I do not completely disagree with Kuhn's position that the photo does provide a trace or clue. Flood, like Kuhn, suggests that when memories are generated and spoken they become part of a network of discourses that moves from past to present and back again. However, there is an important point of departure in the two positions and I concur with Flood who claims that 'the image itself can and does invoke memories that spring out of the image itself' (Flood 2003).

In her essay in *On Photography*, Susan Sontag (1977) expresses ambivalence towards photography and its role in society. Generally, her criticism focuses on the many ways by which photography alienates us from direct experience, thus providing us with only an illusion of knowledge. For her, photography cannot provide the sort of truth that comes from words or narration. In an interview with Geoffrey Movius (1975), following an essay she authored for *The New York Review of Books*, she explains how photography 'does queer things to our sense of time' and says 'If photographs are our connection with the past, it's a very peculiar, fragile, sentimental connection. You take a photograph before you destroy something. The photograph is its posthumous existence' (p. 1).

In *On Photography* Sontag also talks about the way in which photography can impact the viewer. In telling her own story of distress when coming across images from the holocaust as a child she writes, 'When I looked at those photographs something broke ... something went dead, something is still crying' (p. 20). For her, the impact of such images on someone so young, before they are able to fully comprehend the narrative, meant that the images 'anaesthetised' her and thus the photography had a negative result. Despite Sontag's (1977) ambivalence and negative analysis of the use and impact of photography she extols the virtues of the 'single frame' and photography as a trigger to memory – in her words:

I think it has to do with the nature of visual memory. Not only do I remember photographs better than I remember moving images. But what I remember of a movie amounts to an anthology of single shots. I can recall the story, lines of dialogue,
and the rhythm. But what I remember visually are selected moments that I have, in effect, reduced to stills. It’s the same for one’s own life. Each memory from one’s childhood, or from any period that’s not in the immediate past, is like a still photograph rather than a strip of film. And photography has objectified this way of seeing and remembering (p. 2).

From earliest recollection of our family photographic archive Happy Memories, I recall the images my father had recorded during the 1947-48 Partition of India and Pakistan. The horror of these images viewed from the age of about two are indelibly inscribed in my memory. However, unlike Sontag’s experience, the images I viewed triggered a lifelong awareness and questioning of such horrific human experience and in many ways contributed to my early politicisation.

Photographs, including those that I have managed to see in the collections of family members and friends who lie outside the direct family archive, play a critical function in unraveling the archaeology of identity. In this case, photographs serve as a vivid provocation and asset to validating and supplementing memory and facilitate an enhanced recollection of things past.

In addition to utilising my family archives in this research, from an early age I have used photography as a way to record my own life visually. My personal archive of thousands of images taken over the last forty years of objects, places, travels and people provides a rich source of data. In this research, as each creative episode arrives in a non-linear and spontaneous way, I am able to access relevant imagery to enhance, embellish, validate and supplement my memory of a variety of incidents to produce the desired narrative.

For me, photography at an active and passive level (observer and the observed) has expanded my consciousness of the past. In the digital story Lost in Translation I use remnants of film and audio archives as a compelling evocator of images of a joyous childhood. Access to such visual and audio fragments of the past, which have been recorded and preserved by various ancestors and friends, not only secures but also serves to amplify my personal memory. In doing so, the hundreds of images and in some instances sound, contribute to the remembering of self and provide an important connection with the self of the past.

Visual forms of memory have further value as they play a critical role in the memory of place. As such, preserved images, sights and sounds promote the spatial situating of the
self in the past. As the past appears to ebb from us we often search for ways to re-evoke notions of self ‘as we were then’; an important part of this process is being able to see ourselves in the landscape of our past. In her book Patterns of Childhood, Christa Wolf (1980) muses on the close relationship between memory and photography. Following her opening lines ‘what is past is not dead; it is not even past. We cut ourselves off from it; we pretend to be strangers’ (p. 1). Wolf uses her narrator who attempts to retrieve and reconstruct a childhood by creating mental images of photographs that were lost at the end of the war. The missing photograph album signifies a ‘blind spot’ in Wolf’s history and in may be said the history of Germans generally (Rugg 1997). This ‘spot’ becomes a point of departure from which Wolf explores the ways she herself was constructed by National Socialism. She uses her text to reframe and recover her own self-image.

Visual memory representing landscape also provided a trigger for reflexivity on my journey of self-discovery. As indicated by the record in Fragment 9 the use of images to connect with place helps to locate my self in a temporal framework and prompts questions and imagination on matters of history and the stories of those gone before:

‘I think about my story – my journey – the documentation of such – for whom will the story be told? Who will stop to hear it? Who will feel the resonance with the experiences I tell you of?

I merge into the landscape before me – I feel strongly a part of it – no, not the photographer, nor the artist – the observer – but I feel part of it – I feel, smell, I touch and taste it – I am all at once within and without ...my eyes see what I have been blinded to...

I take my camera out – ‘if the heart is the right place – the idea will come’ – and so it is that the heart is firmly in beat with the land, I am able to feel – to see.’

The art of ‘place making’ is a discursive activity. Most commonly it can be said that discourse occurs between two people or more. However, for me, the experience of ‘place making’ often involves a dialogic relationship with the landscape, a symbiotic experience of ‘being’ at one with my environment. It remains a constant part of my reflective self, and memory making and is the object and subject of something I highly value – that is the capacity to embrace ‘wakefulness’.

In the Hall of Mirrors, I use photographs and visual imagery to create visual and mental images through which a story emerges. In the first instance, the collages each frame and reframe my self-image in the context of the ‘significant other’ and the reflection they
provide. Other viewers are provided with some accompanying text, which presents a framework for interpretation but more importantly a trigger for their own story as it relates to the image.

I have already noted Walter Benjamin's disregard for photography as a 'true record' of the complexity of things. For him the photograph interrupts time, makes time spatial and non-linear. Wanting desperately to acquire the art of losing himself in a city, an art, which according to him requires practice, in One Way Street he writes, “once we begin to find our way about (a place), the earliest picture (we had of it) can never be restored.” The first memory of a place is unique and must therefore be protected against any potential temporal contamination. Benjamin believes that the photographic image has the capacity to alter our first memory, for him visual memory can only be represented in words. While I agree with Benjamin that our earliest picture can never be restored, I cannot underestimate the role that the visual plays on my journey. I have always been a visually oriented person. To this day I am able to navigate almost any place I have been to on the basis of visual markers.

In the digital story Lost In Translation I use the metaphor of landscape to demonstrate the importance of the visual in the Journey Around Myself. In describing the process of alienation from my self reflected in my ways of seeing I say:

*Over many years, your camera has recorded landscapes of other worlds...*

*today you begin to record your own.*

In my digital story A Journey Through Lost Time I intentionally use a number of visual sequences with images that represent time. An original incident is followed by an image captured on return to the place. Using this device, I explore and reflect on my visual memory to embellish the narrative recorded in this Journey Around Myself. Through this experience I realise Benjamin's argument that 'the photograph interrupts time'. In my experience, while the images provide a trigger to memory and offer substance for embellishing the narrative, they do render time spatial and non-linear. However, unlike Benjamin, I find that this enhances my memories and my expression of them.

In further developing the metaphor of 'digging' discussed in Freud's Aetiology of Hysteria (1907), Benjamin (1992) makes a case for the value of language and narrative despite his claim that the 'real treasure hidden within memory consists of 'image' which can only be
uncovered by a long process of excavation: they can only be reconstructed within language that is always inevitably a translation or interpretation (King 2000, p. 14).

While Walter Benjamin describes his autobiographical record *Berlin Childhood Around 1900* as a series of images, there is not a single photograph in this particular work. What his writing consists of is a series of memories of place expressed in words whose lucidity projects visual images to the reader and challenges the ideas of visual memory and their representation.

Therefore the role of images in visual memory essentially remains to trigger, enhance and serve to supplement memory. Words or narrative continues to be the most commonly used mechanism by which visual memory is expressed. Virginia Woolf is a strong supporter of this idea for her visual memory could only be represented in language. However like Benjamin (1932), Primo Levi (1989) maintains that 'a memory evoked too often, and expressed in the form of a story, tends to become fixed in a stereotype' (pp. 23-24). In *Sketch of the Past* Woolf (1976) writes: ‘I find that scene making is my natural way of marking the past. Always a scene has arranged itself: representative; enduring’ (p. 142).

Unlike Benjamin and Woolf, in most instances I combine textual and visual narrative in the thirteen *Fragments* presented for viewing. The combination is carefully and intentionally developed and portrayed to create enough space in which the reader and viewer can exercise their imaginations. If it is nigh impossible, as Benjamin suggests, to communicate visual memory in anything but words, then it is important in any such process of articulation to leave space for the imagination. While I include photographic imagery in the fragments, each image contains its own story and is there to invite the viewer to use their imagination if desired.

The image of my parents and myself at *Lands End* in 1953 consistently appears and re-appears as a symbol of 'happiness' in my life. Even in my research, both the image and the related story emerge in the Fable *Satatantra* (p. 19) and in the digital story *Journey through Lost Time* where the spoken narrative echoes the sentiment.

Again in *Fragment 2*, I place the image in a contradictory position to the accompanying text. Despite the symbol of happiness that the image represents, I place it along side a journal entry on separation:

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6 See Virginia Woolf, *Sketch of the Past* 1939 (1976) and *To the Lighthouse* 1927 (1992)
'What do I know about separation – to separate?

One of the earliest fears, one of the earliest experiences – the pain thereof – there are many stories to tell – but I shall try and relate the most significant.'

The power of this image results in me subliminally placing it to balance the memory of the pain of separation.

The image at Lands End continues to remain my first and symbolic image of Nabokov’s and Woolf’s ‘childhood paradise’; that first lucid memory from which self-awareness springs. So significant is this image that on return to the place in 2004, despite the complete alteration of what visually stood before me, the power of the memory and associated narrative was not altered. The sanctity of the experience enacted here on visits with my parents in 1953 has become preserved as a ‘precious object’ in my memory which I have embodied and can be seen as Benjamin’s ‘engram’ or inscription, or Virginia Woolf’s (1976) words ‘things we have felt with great intensity have an existence independent of our minds’ (p. 12).

If memory and more specifically, visual memory make a significant contribution to memory of place, then it is important to value the contribution of photography to the genre of memoir and autobiography. In this research, photography plays an important role in creating a textual self-image. As Linda Haverty Rugg (1997) says:

The mere presence of photography challenges traditional forms of autobiographical narrative by calling into question essential assumptions about the nature of referentiality, time, history, and selfhood (p. 231).

I agree with Rugg when she says that ‘photography is not only about imbricated time or the construction of self-image ... it is also about place, disappeared places, and it allows those places to coexist with the places we inhabit now’ (p. 238).

We are all immigrants from a far away land called the past. We all suffer loss – it is part of our common humanity. However, if you have experienced discontinuity with the past and your present is in a different place, then there is fragmentation through dis-location. You end up inhabiting a place, which many writers in the diaspora identify as being from ‘elsewhere’ (Carter 2007; Lahiri 1999; Mehta 2004; Naipaul 2002; Rushdie 2006; Said 1995). For me, it is the acceptance of this notion that we are all immigrants from the past.
that forms the essence of ‘shared loss’. This realisation has driven me to retrieve a sense
my past through memory – both the literal and the remembered so that I can share it with
others with whom the story may resonate. Visual memory provides me with some clues.

My conviction was verified recently at a conference where I presented my digital story *A
Journey through Lost Time*. Following the presentation more than half of the audience
members were keen to share their experiences – their stories of the past. There were
stories from those who had moved from country to city, stories of those who has changed
neighbourhoods, stories of loss, stories of nostalgia, stories of dislocation … My story had
provided a trigger, and released the voices of others in the room.

Creating images of a life story involves an emotional journey requiring me to recall
experiences of my early life and to come to understand feelings of dislocation and seek a
place in the world.

Marcel Proust (1992) claims that:

> Memory is not a constantly accessible copy of the different facts of
our life, but oblivion from which, at random moments,
present resemblances enable us to resuscitate dead recollections (Vol. 1, p. 146).

Through the excavation and exploration of memories in the form of these ‘random
moments’, fragments located in records and contained within family photo archives, I am
able to ‘resuscitate dead recollections’ to piece together a landscape/ a context by which
to locate myself in the world today. Re-visiting the places of my childhood has embellished
the landscape and added to the richness of the memoried tapestry via the aural, visual and
nasal senses experienced on these visits.

However, the landscape to be explored and excavated is a landscape of memory – one that
is flexible, malleable and ever changing. With each experience, each new story, each new
image or journey I embark on, there are continual changes, interpretations, constructions
and re-constructions. In many cases, the focus on new information or experience
heightens the perception or interpretation of a past shard.

My memories are altered by reflection and re-consideration. Their flexibility allows for
certain aspects to be heightened, particularly when I interpret them in the light of my life’s
experience in the present. However, as the writer Vladimir Nabokov (1966) demonstrates
in his memoir *Speak Memory*, for writers the imagination is their greatest resource because of its ability to ‘envelop the present with a halo of the past’. Nabokov (1966) shows how the past and present can co-exist:

The cradle rocks above the abyss, and common sense tells us that our existence is but a brief crack of light between two eternities of darkness ...

That this darkness is caused merely by the walls of time separating me and my bruised fists from the free world of timelessness is a belief I gladly share with the most gaudily painted savage. I have journeyed back in thought – with thought hopelessly tapering off as I went – to remote regions where I groped for some secret outlet only to discover that the prison of time is spherical without exits... (pp. 17-18).

‘Displacement is an exile from older certitudes of meaning and selfhood, a possibly permanent sojourn in the wilderness’ says Mark Krupnick (1983, p. 5). If this is true, then I have spent much of my life since leaving India ‘in the wilderness’. During my research I found that I had remained unaware of many things I had forgotten, precisely because they had been forgotten through exile from any tangible characteristics. Many of the ‘random moments’ remain as fragments, buried deep in my archaeological landscape, inadvertently leaving me haunted by a feeling of loss.

Some of the most poignant moments of my life since leaving India have been times, when in the course of my voracious consumption of literature, I have stumbled unknowingly into narrative or story that resonate at the very core of my existence. The empathy with, and the total understanding of, has transported me seamlessly into the narrative of the storyteller. It has also been my experience when reading other authors who write about displacement and exile; Meena Alexander (1993); V.S. Naipaul (2002); Suketu Mehta (2004); and Eva Hoffman (1989) are just a few who evoke such emotional connections.

For me, it is the experience and writing of Meena Alexander (2003) and Salman Rushdie (1991 and 2006) that creates the deepest connection with the characters, places and an ‘imaginary homeland’. Alexander’s memoir *Fault Lines* (2003) holds a strong resonance for me. However, it is also the familiarities of emotion expressed in Meena Alexander’s (2004) poetry that depicts sensitivity to feelings of alienation and estrangement that are of interest to me. Here I include an excerpt from one of her many poems *Rumors For an Immigrant*:
3. Notebook

She has heard the rumour no one will have a homeland.
She opens up her notebook.
She wants to flee her past.
She thinks she can live on the white page.
Wo ist Heimat?
She murmurs this in a tongue she does not understand.
Wen Beitak? Naad evida?

Sitting very straight she writes in her best hand:
I have floated on the river Spree.
Seen Brecht’s Theatre from the outside in.
Tucked my body into two suitcases,
with a hole cut between,
hung in a museum at Checkpoint Charlie.
Tired suddenly she stops writing, rubs her wrist (p. 37)

In Fragment 10 I include a poem scribed in my notebook. Feeling lost and fragmented I write:

‘The boundaries blur
formless waves
crash incessantly
deep blue
white foam
Washing over the signposts in the sea
Panic
Fear
The hopelessness of a disappearing horizon
Drowning – not waving
   in the stillness of a Berlin morning.’

The emotions and feelings of alienation in Alexander’s words resonate with my own in this poem echoing my feelings of estrangement in Berlin in 2007.

Salman Rushdie’s childhood home of Bombay, the characters in his novels Midnight’s Children and Shame who are so real to me that I feel I have met them, the places of my childhood too that he describes, transport me there almost instantaneously. All these evoke memories and help bring me out of the wilderness to recall experiences I may have forgotten.

Suketu Mehta (2004) speaks of his experience on arrival in America, and his desire to return ‘home’, as his ‘true period of exile, when I was held back by forces greater than myself from going back’ (p.8). He differentiates this feeling from nostalgia, which he says ‘is simply a desire to evade the linearity of time.’ For Hoffman (1989) it is the migrant’s entire life before emigration that is Lost in Translation. However, like Theodor Adorno
who once warned his fellow refugees that if they lost their alienation, they'd lose their souls, she believes that ‘the soul can shrivel from an excess of critical distance, and if I don't want to remain arid and internal for the rest of my life, I have to find a way to lose my alienation without losing my self’ (p. 209).

Likewise, migrants who attempt to transform themselves to fit the shape of the new culture suffer, in Hoffman's quote from Milan Kundera, from an “unbearable lightness of being” (p. 116).

**Memory and Place**

So how do I find this bridge, this balance between the two worlds? What is this place for which I long?

The idea of memory and its reciprocal association to place is written about in both fictional and theoretical literature. People's sense of place and belonging coexist and are most often located within cultural and physical landscapes. The landscapes themselves are created out of an understanding and engagement with the world around them (Bender 2002). For Bender there are many kinds of peopled definitions of landscape: 'historical landscapes, landscapes of representation, landscapes of settlement, landscapes of migration and exile, and most recently phenomenological landscapes, where the time duration is measured in terms of human embodied experience of place and movement, of memory and expectation' (p. 103).

Equally, there are numerous ideas of what constitutes 'place', and it is important to acknowledge that the concept of place itself is located within both personal and political parameters of 'home, community and nation'. In her essay *Defining Genealogies: feminist Reflections on being South Asian in North America* Chandra Mohanty (1993) reflects:

What is home? The place where I was born? Where I grew up? Where I live and work as an adult? Where I locate my community – 'my people'? Is home a geographical space, an historical space, and an emotional sensory space? Home is always so crucial to immigrants and migrants ... and I am convinced that this question – how one understands and defines home – a profoundly political one ... Political solidarity and a sense of family could be melded together imaginatively to create a strategic space I could call 'home' (p. 351).
For Judith Gill and Sue Howard (2005) place is a complex phenomenon and implies people's connections to locales. Places enable association between lived experiences, personal stories, myths, images, and memories, which present legacies that carry meaning to individuals.

The concept of place, of home and belonging can only be understood from an experiential phenomenological stance. It is from this very intimate and personal stance that one gains a deeper understanding of what it means to belong and to find a place.

For example, I embrace Augé’s (1995) comment that ‘the traveller's space may ...be the archetype of non-place’ (p. 86). Here he is referring to transit-lounges, airports, mid-air travel; then we can understand the experience of Suketu Mehta (2004) who speaking of his experience of leaving his homeland and travelling between the USA and India says: ‘I had met my wife, who was born in Madras and raised in London, on an Air India plane, the perfect metaphor for a meeting of exiles: neither here nor there, happiest in transit’ (p. 10).

My experience of this phenomenon is described in Fragment 12, when in transit in 2006 between Goa, India and Australia at Kuala Lumpur airport I meet fellow Indian travelers 'neither here nor there'. As I record in my journal:

‘...yet another security check. This time however, the name tag on the officer reads 'Vaughan' – Australian Federal Police and a voice rings out as he handles my passport – “Goin' Home?” in the broadest Australian accent which all at once is music and a jarring assault to the ears. I hesitatingly reply “yes” with some relief and a little confusion in my voice.

We place ourselves strategically in order to gain advantage of the queue for boarding carefully avoiding the reserved seats for elderly and physically challenged – aren’t we both of these? ...We laugh!

A bombastic Indian (NRI) male accompanied by a demure and quiet wife and child (predictable stereotypes) says to us – “where have you two been?” We reply in unison “Goa”.

He slaps his knee with great animation and says, “ Well, that’s where we are from!”

Adele then replies – “that's where she is from' indicating towards me.

He says, “Going home?”

I reply "yes" with some confusion and smiling relief!
The more things change - the more they stay the same … the eternal homecoming!

This experience of non-place and transience has been a constant in my life, which has been punctuated regularly by moments of ‘floating upwards’, suspended from geographic points on the map, comfortable in a space ‘neither here nor there’ and defying the burdens of borders and boundaries.

John Berger (1984) describes the way in which people face alienation and create an identity or ‘place’ of belonging out of nothing ‘by turning in circles the displaced preserve their identity and improvise a shelter. Built of what? Of habits … words, jokes, opinions, objects and places …photos. The roof, the four walls are invisible, intangible, and biographical’ (p. 63).

For some like Eva Hoffman (1989), there is no return to the ‘place’ they considered to be home, and while making do in an alien landscape, their notions of place remain unstable and fragile. In *Lost n Translation* she says:

Poland has covered an area in my head coeval with the dimensions of reality, and all other places on the globe have been measured by their distance from it …[Now] I have been dislocated from my own centre of the world, and that world has been shifted away from my centre. There is no longer a straight axis anchoring my imagination: it begins to oscillate, and I rotate around it unsteadily (p. 132).

Sometimes the idea of ‘place’ can be embedded in notions of ‘home’ and safety. I have often had to ask myself what does it mean to have a ‘home’, that familiar place that can be of comfort? The concept of home and place is often encoded with many meanings that include placement, belonging, location or even position of power. I concur with Sontag’s (1983) view that for the disenfranchised or displaced often these are simply not available. It can also be a temporary refuge extending from a particular encounter or set of larger spatial relationships which can move backward and forward between the minutiae of everyday experience and wider social and geographical structures.

bell hooks’ (1992) experience while walking to her grandmother’s house expresses this well:
It was a movement away from the segregated blackness of our community into a white neighbourhood. I remember the fear; being scared to walk to Baba’s our grandmother’s house, because we would have to pass that terrifying whiteness...

Oh that feeling of safety, of arrival of homecoming, when we finally reached the edges of her yard, when we could see the soot black face of our grandfather … (p. 344).

In *Satatantra*, Bhudevi is tormented by other school children with derogatory chants; in the fable she finds comfort in the company of her friends, the ‘gang of four.’ However, the incident that inspired the inclusion of this is more closely associated with the sentiment of the bell hooks experience. In my circumstance, home, despite my ambiguous acceptance of it as such, became a place of safety, a place where I could hide from this outside world.

**Memory and Belonging**

We are all born with a story, one we inherit from our ancestors. For example, one critical story of my self was handed down from the moment of birth when my paternal grandmother expressed her disappointment about my colour and gender (Satatantra p. 9). This moment situates the self in the ancestral story and reflects the values that may be held by the immediate familial society of the day. It also locates the self in a social context of patriarchal and cultural values, which continue to impact the development and emergence of an identity.

As a ‘mixed race’ person, caught between the worlds of ‘Black’ and ‘White’ in America Barack Obama (2008) reflects on his angst about belonging. 'The constant crippling fear that I didn't belong somehow, that unless I dodged and hid and pretended to be something I wasn't I would forever remain an outsider, with the rest of the world, black and white, always standing in judgment' (p. 111). When he finally visits his father’s homeland of Kenya he expresses a familiar joy and relief of belonging.

For the first time in my life, I felt comfort, the firmness of identity that a name could provide, how it could carry an entire history in other people’s memories, so that they might nod and say knowingly “Oh, you are so and so’s son”. No one here in Kenya would ask to spell my name, or mangle it with an unfamiliar tongue. My name belonged, so I belonged, drawn into a web of relationships, alliances, and grudges that I did not yet understand (p. 305).
For me, visits to the homeland have always stirred mixed emotions. The occupation of the neither 'here nor there', the space in between carries with it the burden of expectation and impact of my dual identity. Homi Bhabha (1994) refers to this as the 'third space'. My own experience of this tension and confusion is reflected in the excerpts included in Fragment 8. The company of friends from the occident exacerbates the torn emotions and feelings of mis-placed identity. The following excerpts are indicative of the emotions I felt in that place of contested identities:

It's day four of the conference and I am in need of some space – space to reflect – space to create – space to be nothing – to do nothing. The reflection is more needed because somehow once again I find myself marginalized in my own culture (p. 8b);

Or on another visit:

I am relieved now to experience India. The relief is akin to taking a layer off – the peeling off of an identity not necessarily emerging from within but one acquired by association – but the again, I wonder how much of it is the duality within me? – The co-existence of cultures inherited by my existence in both worlds. When with my western friends I feel like I inhabit the negotiated space in between (p. 8d).

A few days later, on the same trip, I reflect on the experience in my journal:

However, Poona evoked chaos – the tension and frustration of cross-cultural boundaries – related to belonging ... Despite this, mixed feelings surge through me all evening as I swing between wishing we had never left India and being grateful that we had. I guess the truth of such emotional dichotomies only serve to highlight my reality – never really belonging and yet belonging everywhere... (p. 8d).

I find it difficult to theorise the concept of belonging. Pierre Bourdieu (1990), building on Norbert Elias' (1987) concept of *habitus* provides a framework in which to explore the sense of belonging in terms of - 'the group, the place, the country'. *Habitus* as formulated by Bourdieu is conceived of as 'an ensemble of practices and dispositions – what you do and how you feel about it – whereby one is 'at one' with the environment or context in which one lives' (p. 12). Essentially Bourdieu is referring to an understanding that is acquired, often early in life, which predisposes members of a society to interact in ways consistent with the specific societal norms of their group and consequently to feel at ease and to belong. These experiences often go unnoticed as they are practiced through habit and assign the memory of such experience into oblivion. Similarly, Marcel Proust (1992) suggests that:
We relive our past years not in their continuous sequence, day by day’ wrote Proust, ‘but in a memory focused upon the coolness or sunshine of some morning or afternoon; between these isolated scenes lie vast stretches of oblivion (vol. 2, p. 412).

In *Feeling and Form* Susanne Langer (1953) refers to the way in which notions that may be ambiguous or unfounded can gain clarity in the light of new experience. She says that ‘Memory is the great organiser of consciousness. Actual experience is a welter of sights, sounds, feelings, physical strains, and expectations’ (1953, p. 263). These are perceptions that memory simplifies and composes.

The loss of my ’authentic voice’ exposed through the journey undertaken in my MEd., Fragment 6 illustrates how my academic socialised voice subsumed the ‘I’. The ‘new experience’ represented by my supervisor’s challenging question ”*Where are you in this?*” shed a new light on my defensive and ambiguous claims. ’*But this IS me!*’ This new consciousness fired me with the desire to return to India. In turn, this journey provided the genesis for further exploration of the self and a search for connections between identity and a sense of place.

In the Jewish Museum in Berlin I came upon a quote from Hannah Arendt who said:

> Without memory and the representation of memory in the tangible object (which in turn stimulates memory), the currency of living exchange, the spoken word and the thought, would disappear without trace (Hannah Arendt).

Furnished with a number of disparate personae, I returned to India in 2004. I did not have any answers just questions, and even the questions were vague and unformulated. As India revealed itself to me and I yielded myself to it, my journey became a spontaneous exploration of place, of memory, and subsequently an emotional evocation of who I was. It was the start of a journey of reconciliation between the past and the present, between lost and present time, between the remembered self and the explorer, and between the many disparate selves and places I inhabit.

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7 This quote was seen on a plaque at the Jewish Museum, Berlin 2007.
I have only recently acknowledged that my search for a ‘place’ of belonging is intricately connected with the creative self. The need to imagine, to have a vision and to create an ‘imaginary homeland’ has opened up and fed my inquiring mind and has manifested in the continuing discovery of my ‘voice’, and a myriad of creative ways to express it.

It provides a vehicle by which I am able to embark on a journey of exploration and discovery, and it encourages me to face the trauma of dislocation through exploring memory, particularly visual memory. The memory may be fallible, the vision fragmented and the mirrors may be broken and some of these shards of memory may be permanently lost, but the shards that are left are rich with narrative potential. It is precisely the partial nature of these memories, fragmented as they may be, that I find to be a source of great resonance and essential to my effort to evoke a self-portrait that reflects the ‘self of the past’ integrated with the present.

In continuing this journey I return to Salman Rushdie (1991) who reminds us that:

> If we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge – which gives rise to profound uncertainties – that our physical alienation from India most inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind (p. 10).

Some call it ‘nostalgia’, a sentiment of loss and displacement others, like Roberta Rubenstein (2001); see nostalgia as ‘an expression of yearning for an earlier time or place or significant person in one’s history, the memory and significance of which or whom contributes to the sense of the self in the present.’

Caribbean poet Olive Senior (2005) in her poem *Blue Foot Traveller* speaks of this nostalgia that imparts hope for those like myself who have embarked on an expedition underpinned by an ‘architecture of longing’.

> ‘yet from the architecture of longing
> you continue to construct a bountiful edifice.
> This is not exile.
> You can return any day to the place that you came from
> Though the place you left has shifted a heartbeat’ (p. 52).

In 2007, two months after my mother’s death I returned to India. As I stood under the *Jamun* tree on which she used to play seventy years ago, I wept for her. Somewhere in
those moments of sadness and loss there was a new stirring; somewhere in the loss I experienced a homecoming – not to any geographical place or point on a map, but a homecoming to the source of self within. I record in my journal:

*Once upon a time the loss of place brought trauma of immeasurable depth – it instigated a desperate search to relocate – to find another place - yet I did not contemplate a return to the place lost. It has been through the search for 'lost time'; that the belonging has been fulfilled, for these days I find that the journey has led full circle to the source of the self – the place of eternal homecoming within.*

Through the reflections in written journals, I travel a pathway of exploration and excavation and ponder the need for place and belonging ... But who am I? How was this sense of self-created? What is identity? And how have I come to remember my self and tell the story?

This discussion has centred on issues of memory and its relationship to identity and place.

In the next chapter the journey continues to explore these questions. Using the process of excavation, I enter the archaeological site once again to examine and interrogate the fragments and shards of memory. I am opening up the ‘invisible suitcases’ to piece together the picture and to share with you, the reader, the emerging image of self and a sense of identity.
Chapter Five:
Excavation B – The Self
In Joseph Conrad's (2002) *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow speaks of his childhood fascination with maps, with ‘blank spaces’ that beckoned him. Later, in adulthood, these spaces even as they fill with rivers and lakes, dwindle into areas of ‘darkness’. But what is an area of ‘darkness’ for the English man, is the site of ordinary life for those who live there. The scents of the leaves haven’t changed nor the colours of the sky.

Yet colonial naming rips apart the density of the ordinary knowledge, daily life.

What would it be like to be a woman at the water’s edge, in such a ‘place of darkness,’ crying out at the white men who enter her world, changing it forever? How to understand the terror of a history that has torn away place names, shredding sense so that what she knew as her ordinary world has turned into someone else’s darkness? What would it be like for her granddaughter fifty, seventy, a hundred years later to try to take back that tree, that river, that ancestry, and in such naming make the world over again?

It is out of shreds like this, out of muscle, bone, iron shards, slings and shots, the cruelty of a world torn away from our bodily senses, that we start to make up our post colonial stories, start to pick out places and dates, the flow of rivers, unpack a sense that was submerged, mute ancestral memory.

And so to travel in the mind, through places one has known, is also to scrape back history, reveal the knots, the accidental markings of sense and circumstance that make up our lives. To disclose ordinary lives as they cut against the grand narratives of our history, the rubric desire gritty against the supposed truths we have learnt. Poetry becomes part of this difficult labour, weaving a fabric that can bear the gnarled, tangled threads of our lives. Then, to cross a border can be to die a little. And the shock of a new life comes in, tearing up the old skin, old habits of awareness.

Introduction

In the previous chapter I followed a non-linear path of excavation by exploring the role of memory and its relationship to identity and place. In this chapter I continue the excavation of the archaeological site to examine and interrogate fragments of memory in order to reveal how memory interacts with lived experience to unravel a sense of self and identity.

In January 1967 I left India with my family who migrated to Australia. In January 2004, thirty-seven years later I returned to the place of my birth, my ‘watan’/homeland. To this day I clearly remember the experience of departure, streamers straining as the ties between the SS Oronsay tugged away from the friends standing on the dock at Ballard Pier. The wrenching of inner ties was not so tangible – the slicing up of the self, the fifteen year old persona, the unwilling participant, who like a young tree putting down roots, had just started to develop a sense of self. On returning to India in 2004, I ponder the plight of others in the immigration queue at Chatrapathi Shivaji airport, who may have had a similar experience to mine:

...Ironically the sign for Indian nationals is considerably shorter and moves quickly. The queue bearing the beacon ‘non-Indian’ is for all intents and purposes NRI – winding itself, zigzagging across the stained marble is made up of literally hundreds of expats. I wonder, pausing to reflect on what each of their individual journeys may tell. What are their purposes? Hopes? Dreams? Their narratives – do they struggle with identity – are they perplexed by the same torments? Are they too in search of belonging? (Indian Journal 2004).

In the space between these two points in time, and since my return to India I have lived in a variety of places, and like Meena Alexander, most of that time has been spent in places where I ‘had no history’. Having left India, I have lived in five Australian states; I have travelled across the globe, often spending large tracts of time in Europe. Even in my new homeland of Australia, until relatively recently, I have been a peripatetic in search of self and of a place to belong.

In his novel Un-nameable Samuel Beckett poses questions similar to those that have haunted my existence since the experience of leaving India. Who was I? Where was I? When was I? At the core of these questions lies the concept of self. In order to unravel and understand these questions in the context of who I am today, I have created the artefact
the *Hall of Mirrors* and explore the emerging and adaptive ‘self’ through my relationships with significant others.

There have been two phenomena that have consistently engaged my curiosity in relation to matters of identity and belonging. In many ways, both bear some relationship to the questions: who was/am I? where was/am I? and, when was/am I? The first phenomenon is the notion of reflection derived from the object of a ‘mirror’. The second is my lifelong interest in maps.

**The Mirror**

The mirror as object and metaphor often appears in my recollections and stories. In the fable *Satatantra: the Elephant and The Mirror* (Artefact 6) it is a mirror that the elephant Bhudevi uses to gain her reflections from which she constructs her identity. The mirror is also referred to in the digital story *A Journey Through Lost Time* (Artefact 3). As my earliest recollection of a search for self. I say:

> So in this stillness I speak to you through time – through memory – I cannot say which self reaches out for you - ... from those moments fifty-three years ago in front of your hinged three winged mirror – the self repeats itself endlessly – infinitely – causing mayhem in my young mind – there are many selves within – fractured and repaired – the shards each contain a story and another within each story (Transcript Artefact 3).

The mirror appears again in Fragment 2 when I refer to my mother as the ‘giver of the first mirror’. Thus the mirror appears as a symbolic device.

The word *symbol* derives from the Greek (*sumbolon*) signifying and object cut into two; each part constitutes an indentifying marker enabling it to be re-united (*sumballein*) with the other. From this definition the symbol of the mirror is used to reveal the correspondences between the self and others, and the inner self and the outer world via visual and self-reflective narrative; an intuitive and synthesising way to present a unifying story through remembering the self. It allows me to explore and interrogate the shards and fragments of memory through the lens of the mirror to arrive at some notion of the authentic self. In this research to unravel an archaeology and sense of identity, the mirror is an important tool of excavation providing rich data about the way in which the self is constructed in place and time through its relationship with others.
As I navigate the archaeological site on this *Journey Around Myself* the mirror becomes an instrument of knowledge with its role increasingly evolving as a mechanism by which I can confirm responses to my own questions. In time, as I am presented with fragments of memory, the fragment is investigated, interrogated and refined through the instrument of the mirror. In the *Hall of Mirrors*, the instrument of the mirror is represented by significant others. The contours of the soul are shaped; my sensibilities honed and the deep understandings of my self are enriched by these reflections. For the ultimate knowing of my self is through this mirror; it is a key to an understanding of who I am? Where I am? And when I am?

**Maps**

Like Marlow, in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, the second phenomenon is concerned with my fascination with maps. As a child, I spent many hours amusing myself with maps – tracing the contours of borderlands, exploring the spaces I had only read about in books as part of my post-colonial education. Using maps, I let my imagination run wild and free as I toyed with ideas of life beyond my familiar world. Questions of who I was and where I belonged were mainly curiosity, for these questions were securely wrapped in a sense of identity and belonging and a freedom that facilitated my somewhat carefree existence.

A dismantling of this free and secure self, a loss of place and a fragmentation that rendered the landscape in a veil of darkness resulted from leaving my homeland. For a number of years, I have dwelled in this ‘area of darkness’ clouded by a sense of alienation from self and place caused by the ripping apart of the ‘density of the ordinary knowledge, daily life’ I had known. Like Alexander's ‘woman at the waters edge crying out at the white men who enter her world, changing it forever’ I too have lived through the shattering of all that was familiar – my ordinary world ‘turned into someone else's darkness’. From within this darkness a new journey evolved.

The experience of ‘leaving the homeland’, when considered within the framework of mythologist Joseph Campbell’s heroes journey (1993) *A Hero with a Thousand Faces* can be deemed a critical incident likened to ‘the call to adventure’. For Campbell, something shakes up a situation, either from external pressures or from something rising up from deep within. The ‘hero’ must face the beginnings of change. In *A Journey Around Myself* the experience of migration forces me to face the beginnings of irreversible change, for as Stuart Hall (1987) observes ‘migration is a one-way trip. There is no ‘home’ to go back to’ (p. 44). It is the traces and fragments sedimented over, which form the ‘archaeological site’
for excavation. In the fulcrum of time, from the shreds, fragments and shards of self that remain buried, I tear away the layers, pick out places and dates and 'unpack a sense that was submerged'. In my research the self is considered to be a complex entity, conditioned and shaped by experience which sediments and fossilises into layers of the self (geographical layers of life) over time. Like an archaeological site, the layers contain the sedimentation of experiences into strata and include the shards and fragments from fractures and critical incidents. In Chapter Six I discuss how these layers are embedded in and are revealed in the process of narrative construction.

The Self

As humans we often strive to make sense of our lives and to understand our 'selves' in the context of some larger story. In other words, it seems important to make sense of who we are and where we belong. There are deep cultural assumptions about how we see the self, however, as Anthony Elliot (2001) suggests selfhood is 'flexible, fractured, fragmented, de-centred and brittle'. But what is the 'self'? To throw light on this question and examine some of the influences on our understanding of personal identity and subjective experience in the construction of self, I outline some of the broad social science conceptions of self.

Sociologists are concerned with the way the self is shaped by wider cultural forces and consider the self as a 'social construction'. Later in the chapter I explore the work of the Symbolic Interactionists Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead, Erving Goffman and Anthony Giddens. Psychoanalysts on the other hand are more interested in the internal symbolic constructs that shape our identity and selfhood. To consider this perspective, I briefly touch on the work of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. French philosopher and feminist Simone de Beauvoir and American feminist philosopher Mary Daly provide radically different ideas on the emergence of the self. All these perspectives manifest in diverse approaches to identity formation, identity conflict and the way in which the individual transforms and fits into the society they inhabit. As a sociologist, I subscribe to the notion that the individual is 'socially constructed', however I am well aware of, and agree with Elliot when he maintains that such conceptual approaches 'can be further distinguished on other grounds'.

Just as conceptual approaches divide over prioritising either social or individual experience in the constitution of self, so too issues over unity and fragmentation, continuity and difference, rationality and passion, gender and sexuality, come strongly into focus (p. 3).
Much of my journey in ‘search of self’, since arriving in Australia has been fraught with difficulty, confusion and a recurrent ambivalence about my identity and place of belonging. If we understand and accept the sociological tradition that human beings are fluid and that we change, we adapt and that the ‘self is a symbolic project that the individual actively and creatively forges’, then, what happens when the ability to do this is severely curtailed by powerlessness. In discussing the concept of ‘agency’, British sociologist Anthony Giddens suggests a ‘reflexive’ relationship between the self and the social system (Freadman 1991). In other words, the self as an agent is constituted through a social system. If Giddens’ account of agency acknowledges that as human agents we are multidimensional creatures, then as Richard Freadman suggests, ‘the agent is inconceivable without something that corresponds to what we customarily think of as the will’ (Freadman 1991 p. 41). If we are to accept Giddens’ concept of reflexivity, and Freadman’s link between agency and will, then it follows that matters of agency and will are highly dependent on issues of power, control and social inclusion.

The digital story *Argumentum e Silencio* addresses the silencing of voice and decimation of self, and female friendship (*Sakhiyani*). In her research, Giti Thadani (1996) has uncovered how this silencing occurs through powerful social structures and belief systems perpetrated and perpetuated by a misogynist and homophobic culture. Within such a paradigm, agency and will are virtually dissolved, the authentic self is silenced and, in this case, the lesbian in India is forced powerlessly to ‘live between the lines’ and be rendered invisible.

The story *Lost in Translation* is an allegorical depiction of the impossibility in retaining a sense of real power in matters of control of agency and will when facing social exclusion. Contained within this digital story are many instances that represent the powerlessness of the individual dislocated and alienated from the dominant social system. I recollect from school experiences:

*Once again you find yourself in the company of blue uniforms: pigtails, inkwells, raucous little groupings of secrets and lies. You hear their laughter as you skirt the perimeters searching for a way in. There is a chasm separating you from them. You cry out but the sound falls on deaf ears: your cry is in silence, for they have taken your tongue* (Artefact 4).

In the fable *Satatantra*, the young elephant Bhudevi sits on the deck of the ship carrying her away from her homeland. She cries helplessly and exclaims to her friend the sea eagle...
Usha: "I must be accepted - it is important to me and my family that this is so, I have seen people laugh and make fun of us - they mock me" (p. 37). Even in a seemingly neutral social environment, such as the sea passage, this piece of ficto-memoir writing reflects the angst and powerlessness of someone unable to exercise personal agency and will in her need to orchestrate acceptance of her self to the dominant culture.

My story, as autobiography is an act of will, a construction of identity using self-interpretations of experiences involving significant others and critical incidents. The 'self' is not examined in isolation, but in relation to the significance of others and noteworthy critical incidents to who I am and to my sense of belonging. It is these factors that frame the questions for reflection along the way. In the course of this Journey Around Myself, I have been mindful of the work of Charles Taylor, in Sources of the Self (1990) when he argues that:

We are ourselves only in that certain issues matter for us. What I am as self, my identity, is essentially defined by the way things have significance for me, and the issue of my identity is worked out, only through the language of interpretation which I have come to accept as valid articulation of these issues. To ask what a person is, in abstraction from his or her self-interpretations, is to ask a fundamentally misguided question...one to which there couldn't in principle be an answer ... (p. 34).

The influence of significant others has been examined and discussed in the work of the Symbolic Interactionists such as George Herbert Mead (1974) whose theories on the emergence of self are explored in his thesis Mind, Self and Society. His theory is concerned with the way in which the individual is socialised, fashioning their sense of self through engagement with and reflection from other 'selves' whom he calls 'significant others'. According to Mead 'our own selves exist and enter as such into our experience only in so far as the selves of others exist and enter as such into our experience" (p. 164). He explores the tensions between the external pressures of society and culture against the internal ideas of identity and self. Mead's 'I', or ego limits the social self, the 'me' from cultural dislocation.

Like Jerome Bruner (1991), I accept that the process of self-formation cannot be perceived of as a solo project. Development of a sense of self relies heavily on inter-subjective and inter-active processes. Bruner observes:
Self making is powerfully affected not only by your own interpretations of yourself, but by the interpretations others offer of your version (p. 34).

Within each collage in the Hall of Mirrors exists a ‘significant other’; the architecture of each creative piece, underpinned by a subconscious meditation on my engagement with the self as seen from the reflections provided by ‘significant others’.

Sociologist Charles H Cooley (1909) develops his concept of the Looking Glass Self in his thesis on Human Nature and the Social Order. Cooley maintains that a person’s self grows out of society’s interpersonal interactions and the perceptions of others. This is evident in the fable Satatantra, when the elephant Bhudevi is given a mirror with magical powers on the anniversary of her birth. On handing it to her, her mother cautions the naïve youngster: ‘you will be able to do whatever you put your mind to – but you must be careful who you entrust with it, for in handing it to them you will empower them to reflect you’ (p. 11). While I agree that society’s interpersonal interactions and the perceptions of others facilitate the emergence and development of self, on occasion I find that these ‘looking glass reflections’ can wrought further confusion and burden to the dislocated self. In Fragment 3, whilst on holiday in Italy I express relief as I shelter in isolation. In an effort to retrieve and restore a sense of who I am, I write:

Tonight I think about this self inflicted solitude – a rather subtle almost poetic idea – ‘going to Italy’ – as if real travel is concerned with disorientation rather than mere distance. It’s losing myself to find myself again – casting myself as it were, into the vault of the gods to see what happens (Chapter 3, 1992).

This excerpt clearly paints a picture of confusion as I struggle to make sense of a world in which I feel lost, found and lost again; the frustration drives me to ultimately abandon my destiny to the ‘vault of the gods’.

Erving Goffman (1956) uses the metaphor of theatre to expand the sociological landscape of the development of the self in his work The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. He examines the process of the socially constructed self in terms of social interaction and emphasises the importance of “symbolically defined roles and relationships that individuals engage with in creating impressions of the self for others” (Elliot 2001, p. 32). For Goffman, identity is conceptualised as a performance. The young elephant Bhudevi in the fable Satatantra illustrates this. To deal with her feelings of social exclusion and dislocation, Bhudevi uses masks to create impressions of the self that she thinks would be
more desirable or acceptable to others. Her friend the cockatoo Moowa asks her: “How many times have you wished for the safety of the mask of night to protect you on this journey you take?” and she replies:

The masks are interchangeable. Moowa. I keep them in a box; lined with downy velvet to minimise the damage ...

Protecting, camouflaging, chameleon-like evolving, presenting; then re-presenting as circumstances demand ... alas the box is never far away (p. 84).

In these words Bhudevi represents Goffman’s idea that the self and reflexivity are closely enmeshed. In this way social practice and acceptance of self is closely checked in a person’s day-to-day existence.

In Modernity and Self Identity Anthony Giddens (1991) further develops Goffman's idea of social interaction, by suggesting that identity is primarily concerned with the powerful influence of institutional and global forces in the development of the self. The influential power of institutions cannot be under-estimated. In India, the impact of colonisation suffused every aspect of everyday life. Despite some resistance to it, the power and influence of colonial values is successfully maintained via institutions such as education, the Christian church and India’s role in an emerging global economy.

As a child growing up in India in the post-colonial era, in a family with a strong Catholic heritage and educated in a Catholic convent, early notions of my self and identity were inextricably linked to the power and value systems associated with these institutions. Even today, regardless of conscious efforts to shake off the shackles of these influences, from time to time fragments of these values emerge as responses and behaviors and catch me unaware. These still contribute to who I am today.

In Australia, the impact of institutional forces continues to impact on my sense of self and identity in a new culture. In Chapter Six I explore how these value systems and influences are often lost in translation as they are forced to adapt from one set of cultural institutional structures to another. In the interrogation to Fragment 10, I trace the manner in which a significant part of who I am is lost in a desperate attempt to subscribe to the values and institutional norms of my new homeland. I record:

Desperately seeking acceptance and belonging in an alien landscape I basically had no choice as a fifteen year old but to re-invent myself. If you couldn’t change your reality then change your perceptions of it! We were the ones who were supposed to be
grateful for the lucky country, our gratitude expressed by the surrender of self. For the following years I successfully pursued excellence in everything I did – sport, employment and academia. In doing so I subsumed the adventurous, free and creative self and to my horror only relatively recently accepted that for much of my adult life I have buried the ‘authentic’ self (Interrogation 10:2007 Chapter 3).

The adaptation to and accommodation of the new values and norms resulted in me successfully developing and embracing academia as my strategy for survival. In doing so, I unwittingly buried both the realisation and full acknowledgement of my creative self and the ability to be comfortable and value the use of my authentic voice. The acceptance and belief that this is my true self was so powerful as a survival strategy against institutional forces, that it was only at the age of fifty-four whilst researching and writing my Masters of Education, that the reality of my buried voice and associated self became apparent.

In 1936 the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan delivered his thesis on the Mirror Stage. As a follower and interpreter of Sigmund Freud, he develops an idea that the ‘I’ is established through visual identification with its image in a mirror. Lacan believes that the mirror provides the child with a sense of a unified physical ‘self’ for the first time, from which she/he is able to perceive and separate that ‘self’ from ‘others’. However, this formation of ‘ego’ from a mirror image is fraught with contradiction. The child’s experience of wholeness is diametrically opposed to its lack of control over its world. Lacan suggests that this brings about a sense of alienation and a misrecognised sense of selfhood. Anthony Elliot (2001) believes that Lacan’s theory of the Mirror Stage ‘suggests that the ego is constituted not from the inside, but from without – perceptions of the self are structured according to an external image’ (p. 54).

During the process of excavation of the self as an archaeological site I have paused to reflect on the development of, loss of and attempt at retrieving the authentic self. Questions about who I am? Where I am and when I am? inevitably confront issues about how the self is constituted and the way in which perceptions of self are structured according to the external images available. It goes without saying that these external images can be negative as well as positive. In the significant formative years, the child is subjected to an abundance of influences from ‘without’. According to psychologist Alfred Adler (1930) the very core style of life is founded in the first four or five years of childhood and this is preserved as a fragment of memory. These influences can, and in my experience did have powerful positive and negative effects on the development of my ego.
In the *Hall of Mirrors* (Artefact 1) these fragments are revealed to the reader more explicitly through visual narrative and the associated narrative. In Collage 1 and 2 in the *Hall of Mirrors*, the influence of my mother and grandmother’s love provides a foundation of love and security about who I am, where I belong and in time gave me a strong appreciation about the value of my story. In Collage 2 however, we also have an example of the power of an external influence in the form of a family story. The stories of my paternal grandmother’s comment at my birth “Oh, she's only a girl and isn't she black” serves to partially dissolve the strength and confidence in my early self-perceptions as a female in India.

In Collage 3, my early school experiences of being labelled as ‘different’ and a ‘rebel’ by people in authority opens up a space for a close friendship with a likeminded peer. I recall: “And so it was for a decade …we became a fearless duo – as rebels, we knew we were different and wore our rebellious difference as a badge of pride”. One could argue that in this case the outward perceptions were affirmed by another and turned into a positive influence on my sense of self.

However, on this *Journey Around Myself* I discover that the self is constructed both from within and without; I consider that external images and reflections generate and interact with internal processes in complex ways when we engage in remembering and authoring the self.

In time, and particularly as an adult, there have been shifts in the level of influence that external sources or mirrors have. While I accept that the self is mostly structured by influences from without, adulthood can bring more opportunities to internally process and shape one's sense of self. However, I am mindful of the fact that this can be severely limited by issues of powerlessness and social exclusion; my experience of migration is an example of this. In the digital story *A Journey Through Lost Time* I articulate the emotions associated with the powerlessness resulting from dislocation and of the internal processes of holding on to and preserving a self that is seemingly slipping away.

*Most of us can locate a central event that shapes and distorts our lives. For me it was that day in January 1967 when we left our beloved homeland of India. I was 15, not quite grown up in my familiar environment and with absolutely no fit to the one towards which I was heading … Since then, I have been caught in the space between two worlds accompanied by a constant companion – a ghost that shadows every aspect of my existence.*
A ghost who never fails to interrogate my actions, my feelings of estrangement, and haunt my recollections of the past and present with feelings of displacement and ambiguity (Transcript A Journey through Lost Time).

My sense of dislocation and loss of place left me lost and powerless in the dominant culture of the new homeland. As time passed by, immersion in to the values and culture of this adopted homeland left me caught in a ‘third space’ (Bhabha 1994) thus often heightening my feelings of dislocation. This process was often exacerbated by the reality that the mirrors available to provide a reflection of self were culturally at odds with those of my own cultural heritage.

The more over-arching symbolic aspect of the concept of the mirror is what I am concerned with. I am interested in ‘mirror’ as metaphor, as a device that facilitates a level of interaction with significant others, objects and phenomena of significance; a device that via its metaphoric power has the ability to release and define the contours of self. If Lacan’s mirror ‘lies’ by leading the subject to a ‘misrecognised sense of selfhood’, and if as suggested this original experience becomes the ‘basis of all interpersonal relationships’, does the metaphoric mirror have the same capacity? Is it as shallow? Or are we able to get behind the mirror? Are we able to separate the reflection from our own self-perceptions? Are we able to employ our imagination selectively in the fashioning of selfhood?

I am using the power of the symbolic mirror to excavate fragments of memory and unravel archaeology of the self. In doing so, I get behind the mirror and employ my imagination to create narrative and author the self.

When investigating the developmental stages of personhood, British psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott (1964) examines the link between the creative development of the self and a child’s relationship with the mother. Winnicott suggests that an emotional mirroring occurs between mother and child; however, unlike Lacan (1977) he understands that this process occurs through the ‘transitional relations’ of imagination, creativity and artfulness.

Imagination, or what Winnicott calls ‘potential space’, is essential to the creative development of the self. The space between mother and child becomes filled with potential, according to Winnicott, when the former gives the latter chances to experiment and opportunities to create (Elliott 2001, p.62).
In November 2006, when my mother died, the strength of my relationship with my mother and the influence of her 'emotional mirroring' in the creative development of my self was unleashed in all its fury. It was at this time, that I subconsciously reached deep into my imagination and creativity to produce the Hall of Mirrors. In doing so I was able to reach behind the mirror; to move past my childhood experience of confusion to locate my self amongst the multiple images of self as reflected in my mother's three-winged mirror.

I reach out 'through the mirror' within this Journey Around Myself, using a combination of external signifiers and internal processes of reflection and creativity. I acknowledge and re-claim a sense of self in the course of recollecting positive influences gained by the reflections of significant others. These are recorded as the Hall of Mirrors. (Artefact 1) The series of collages contained within Artefact 1 focuses on and reflects the positive influence of women in my life. As a girl and a woman, women have had a powerful role and impact on the development of my sense of self, my identity and my values.

The nature of gender and its relation to the development of self has been the domain of feminist theorists. Across cultures, we live in a paradigm of patriarchy. Inequity in gender power manifests and affects the development of the self. The degree to which this happens also varies culturally. For me, growing up in a male preferring society in India has had a lasting impact on my sense of self and on my sexual politics. Within the feminist theoretical paradigm there is also diversity about how power relations influence the self and how the self develops.

Long before I had any formal conceptual notions of feminism and its underpinning tenet that 'the personal is political', the practice of feminist principles infused my existence and my way of being. Over time, the retrospective exploration of self within feminist theoretical frameworks has facilitated a deeper and more contextual understanding of my feminist self. While I agree that gender identity is a social construction, the manifestation of it within the paradigm of patriarchy is debilitating and destructive to women. It affects every aspect of women's lives and includes the very construction of language and conceptual frameworks with which women can articulate their experience and identity (Daly 1978; Spender 1980). Indian culture and its treatment of women as 'second class citizens' or as 'burdens' etches another layer of tyranny on to women's lives. Whilst I did not suffer any overt discrimination from my parents on the basis of being female, my status as their daughter has surfaced in subtle nuances of bias and expectation. In Lost in Translation (Artefact 4) this is represented in the narrative:
24 carat gold encases the ticking watch on his wrist. The repetitious tick tock hammers against the fine capillaries of your inner ear.

You rearrange your dress, carefully adjusting the folds of silk, which cover your head.

The voice, which finally drowns the ticking, reminds you that your fine wrist will never have the opportunity to wear it. You are only his daughter: the watch will never be yours (Artefact 4).

The value of a male child over that of a daughter is so entrenched in Indian culture that despite rhetorical attempts by my parents to avoid favoritism, matters of inheritance clearly reflect the bias of values they deeply held.

Amongst the most important feminist authors who provided me with an early understanding of the nature of patriarchy were Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan and Germaine Greer. In her book *The Second Sex* (1984) Beauvoir writes about the way in which patriarchy has been able to establish systems of power that in turn render women inferior. She talks about inequality while insisting on the reality of sexual difference, and challenges the very underpinning assumptions and criteria used for the justification for this power. Through my reading of the *Second Sex*, I embarked on another stage of feminist development as I started to understand her idea that ‘one is not born but becomes a woman’ (1984, p. 267). Simone de Beauvoir is included in my *Hall of Mirrors* in Collage Four as a significant influence on my feminist self. In her fiction and non-fiction I found the vocabulary for analysing the social constructions of femininity. Subsequently, it was her work that gave me the first structure and framework for understanding my experience and my ‘self’.

Germaine Greer’s *The Female Eunuch* (1970) and Betty Friedan’s *Feminine Mystique* (1984) put more flesh on the skeleton of my emerging self. This was an awakening of consciousness, the realisation that neither my experience nor I stood alone. The power of this realisation forged my identity as a feminist and activist in the women’s movement. Since then there have been a variety of women of substance who have had an external influence on my creative self and shaped my sense of who I am today. Many of these women such as Virginia Woolf, Vita Sackville West, Renate Klein, Frida Kahlo and Georgia O’Keefe are depicted in the *Hall of Mirrors*.

In the mid 1970’s as part of the evolution of my political self and identity as a ‘Radical Feminist’ I embraced the slogan of *the personal is political* and made political choices
about my sexuality. I identified as a lesbian and found resonance with the work of radical feminists like Mary Daly (1978), Monique Wittig (1973), Adrienne Rich (1976), and Audre Lorde (1982). The idea of living as a woman-identified woman strongly impacted on my efforts at re-defining a space for myself and helped deepen my understanding about my identity. In doing so, lesbian radical feminism contributed to my ability to deconstruct my own experience of motherhood and heterosexuality. It became crucial to my understanding about how the power of men as a social group is used to control women in public and private spheres. In interrogating Fragment 7, I document my new found freedoms and its impact on who I am in the present:

> When de Beauvoir, against her own desires, chose to leave Sartre and live in Marseille to write, she claimed she chose the most difficult option at that moment – she said it was to ‘safeguard the future’. In many ways, while the circumstances were quite different, the day I chose to leave my marriage and son was the day I too chose a difficult option. In the end it has proved to be the right one. For, as painful as some of the moments have been, it did safeguard my future. My present is largely shaped by the sum total of that experience (Interrogation 7: 2004: Chapter 3).

Another key trigger for this *Journey Around Myself* is the experience of returning to my homeland of India in 2004. Prior to leaving on the trip, most of my emotional preparation for the visit had centred upon the anticipation and excitement of ‘going home’. Nothing had prepared me for what I encountered. On arrival I experienced relentless pressure to answer questions about my marital status and where my husband and children were. After all, in India a woman of my age must have a husband and children. In fear of external perceptions and repercussions for my family, I was forced to edit my life to accommodate the acceptable value system and doing so felt the veil of suffocation descend on my sense of who I am. Up till this time, I had considered my sexuality a political choice. While I had no illusions about the reality of living outside the margins of the dominant heterosexual culture in Australia and had been involved in feminist struggles for my rights as a lesbian, the struggles had remained largely political.

I quickly learned about the silencing and invisibility of lesbians in India and on returning to Australia I was determined to investigate this experience. In India I felt my lesbian self silenced; it was partly this experience that made me reflect on questions of self and set me on a journey to articulate my identity. In the digital story *Argumentum e Silencio* I conclude:

> In January 2004 I returned to India a lesbian.
On this visit I experienced a number of critical incidents when I felt silenced in relation to my sexuality.

The act of being silenced dramatically impacted on my sense of self (Transcript Argumentum e Silencio).

This experience increased my desperation as I started to realise more clearly that I would never be able to find a place where I may be completely accepted. Collage 16 represents an early attempt at answering questions of identity and belonging. In this instance my search had led me to a friend, who like myself, had left her homeland of India and was openly living as a lesbian. ‘Do you know who you are Lariane?’ asked Suniti, as we walked along a beach in Dorset, England. ‘Yes’ I had replied without hesitation. ‘Then why do you need to belong?’ She had replied. Encouraged by her insight I accepted the perspective as a guide to frame my existence. My return to India in 2004 unsettled this existence with a further set of questions.

In the sociological text The Homeless Mind: Modernisation and Consciousness Peter and Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner (1977) investigate the link between modernity and a particular kind of consciousness. They argue that movement between multiple life worlds leads to an individual feeling at home in none. Thus they claim that the ‘loss of an absolute reality in a unified traditional life world gives rise to homeless minds’ (Dawson & Rapport 1998, p. 10). In my case, the return to India as a lesbian now meant that my knowledge of self and its relation to identity and place were further fragmented on the grounds of my sexuality and its level of acceptance in the worlds between which I moved. I was not necessarily a ‘homeless mind’ but I did not feel ‘at home’ in either world.

This feeling of unease and dissonance was resolved at a somewhat epiphanous meeting on a visit to India in 2006. The value of my friendship with Giti Thadani and her mirrored reflections of my self as an Indian lesbian/lesbian in India and an expatriate are represented in Collage 21. Her wisdoms on the history of female friendship (Sakhi) in India, and her extrapolation of the Sanskrit word Punar that expresses a primal beginning and a return to this beginning as likening it to an ‘eternal homecoming’ provided me with the resonant mirror I had been seeking. This was the ‘mirror of belonging’ in the Hall of Mirrors and the reflections were reciprocal.

Since I was young, I always knew that I would never fit into society – would not even try – but I knew that I was looking for my people and that I would recognise them. And, when it
reciprocates – as with you – it’s childlike happiness’ (Correspondence LF to GT 2006).

‘The resonance was overwhelming - a true mirror - a sense of relief, of belonging - at last someone who understood.

In you, I saw myself (Correspondence GT to LF 2006).

Another significant fragment of the puzzle in the emotional and cognitive archaeology of self is revealed. But how am I to excavate this knowledge and apply it to my reality?

In today’s world of mass migration, globalisation and cultural diversity the emergence of self is burdened by its own set of complexities. Webs of cultural negotiations about the idea of self and identity are impacted on by the experience of dislocation. Inherited narrative structures and often a sense of loss and powerlessness influence both the ability and opportunity for migrants and exiles to articulate their ‘self’ or understand their ‘identity’ in a new land. The issue of identity and the experience of dislocation through migration are at the core of this research. Within this exegesis (Chapters 3 and 4) and contained within the artefacts I identify the critical incident of migration as a ‘fracturing’ of self through a loss of place. It is through the excavated fragments and shards of memory that I am able to unravel a sense of who I and where I am today.

As a migrant, the negotiation of selfhood is a complex journey because it involves undoing the ties that once held us to a particular centre, and resetting the compass. For, me this has involved confronting feelings of dislocation by further disturbing the new sense of place by an archaeological excavation and interrogation of fragments of memory. Invariably on the journey, I find myself in what Edward Said refers to as a ‘discontinuous state of being’ (1990). In Fragment 8, whilst on a visit to India I record this discontinuity of my existence:

I am relieved now to experience India. The relief is akin to taking a layer off – the peeling off of an identity not necessarily emerging from within but one acquired by association – but then again, I wonder how much of it is the duality within me? – The co-existence of cultures inherited by my existence in both worlds. When with my western friends I feel like I inhabit the negotiated space in between (Fragment 8, Chapter 3).

In his book Migrancy, Culture, Identity Iain Chambers (1994) observes: “To come from elsewhere, from ‘there’ and not ‘here’, and hence to be simultaneously ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the situation at hand, is to live at the intersections of histories and memories ...” (p. 6). My interrogation of the experience in Fragment 8 records this precisely. I say:
To live between two worlds is to constantly be designated as coming from ‘there’ and not ‘here’. To always be from ‘somewhere else’ means that I have often struggled at the intersections of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ contained within me. My experience returning to India on these occasions was located in relation to ‘other’. How I was perceived and subsequently treated depended on the association with those people I was with. It is only when I was alone that I was able to partially transcend the feeling of being an outsider (Interrogation 8: 2006: Chapter 3).

Living between two worlds means that one inevitably ends up forced into occupying a hybrid space. Salman Rushdie (1991) believes that this occupation of two worlds unleashes a valuable double perspective “because they, we, are at one and the same time insiders and outsiders in this society. This stereoscopic vision is perhaps what we can offer in place of ‘whole sight”’ (p. 19).

For Homi K Bhabha (1994) this position of hybridity or ‘third space’ can be a positive experience for he sees this space enabling ‘other positions to emerge’ (p.211). To some extent I concur with this view as to my knowledge many of the questions I pose in the negotiation of selfhood on this journey emerge from the tensions experienced from within this ‘third space’.

Meena Alexander (2003) and Salman Rushdie (1991), also discuss the value of dislocation and fragmentation experienced when leaving one’s homeland. Rushdie believes that the significance of dislocation has been an important influence on his writing. For him, the partial and fragmented nature of memories associated with the past homeland renders them evocative and ripe for embellishment (p. 12). This can also be said for my experience, particularly in its application to the creative process embarked on in the development of my artefacts. Partial memories and fragments are excavated and interrogated to arrive at answers to questions in search of self. In her revised autobiography Faultlines Alexander explores the way in which dislocation and exile protect her from dealing with and articulating her experiences of sexual abuse until she is ready to do so. However, it is exactly the experience of writing her self that provided the catalyst for her revisions and facing her truths.

I had the gnawing feeling that under the story of multiple places, of a life lived between languages and cultures, there was something more. That actual dislocation and exile, though true as it was, had served me as an emotional counter for a darker truth, bitter exfoliation of self, something that as yet I had no words for (p. 238).
The American painter Georgia O’Keefe and Danish writer Karen Blixen also subject themselves to extreme forms of dislocation in a quest to heighten creative potential. In her book *Source* Janine Burke (2009) explores the crucial role of place as inspiration in its relationship to creativity. O’Keefe (1987) made the New Mexico desert hers; she wrote: “My period of indecision is over – I am going West … the Mountain calls one and the desert – and the sagebush – the country seems to call one in a way that one has to answer it” (p. 200). Blixen takes herself off to Africa and as Burke (2009) writes: “O’Keefe and Blixen practised extreme forms of dislocation, setting off on solo journeys to places that were sometimes hostile and dangerous in order to reconfigure self and art” (p. xii).

Feelings of dislocation provide the catalyst for the journey in search of self, in search for a place to belong. Traversing the broken geographies and stuttering transitions of an emotional atlas I have found a path ‘home’. This homecoming is reflected in the closing paragraphs of the fable *Satatantra*:

Somewhere in her soul, her life in an alien landscape had left a sediment of knowledge. Her speech was now a curious melange of living words, dead expressions, wisdoms and buried and forgotten phrases.

But these strange words will die out on the tongue and new melodies will break. Melodies from the heart will replace old tracks that are lost. There will always be a joyous homecoming to the place she will carry deep within her (p. 160).

So it is that today, on this journey, I am here in the present, a hybrid space that is sometimes fractured and pitted, sometimes harmonious and calm, a place I have come to call home – a place within myself. But it is often the tension of the present that can cause yet another fissure to crack open the archeological site of the self and in doing so the crevices and fractures flood with nostalgia and remembrances which push and pull at the soul in search of another homecoming. For this is the legacy of ‘Punar a cycle of new beginnings and eternal homecomings’ (*Satatantra* 160), the evolution of self on a continuous journey.

Reflecting on an entire life in terms of central questions relating to grand narratives is the original concept of autobiography posed by Jean Jacques Rousseau (2000) in his book *Confessions*. This idea has gradually been abandoned and today ‘anyone whose questions about life fall outside the central narrative of worldly success, or of moral or spiritual
growth, or of power and its exercise’ (Conway 1998, p. 152) is able to reflect on and address questions of identity through autobiographical writing.

But where should I begin? Memory and history leaves us with a palimpsest of experience – a labyrinthine maze with no maps for guidance. Layer upon layer, shards of experience, memories, and artefacts deposited. Some fossilised, others evolving, surviving and then degenerating. There are no maps for this archaeological site I excavate. The excavation has been non-linear, random and emergent.

A map can tell me how to find a place I have not seen but have often imagined. When I get there, following the map faithfully, the place is not the place of my imagination. Maps, growing ever more real, are much less true (Winterson 1989, p. 81).

The methodology and process is discussed in Charting the Journey, Chapter 2. On the matter of where I should begin, I concur with Jill Ker Conway (1998) when she says that ‘the post modern author can begin and end a story wherever she or he likes’ (p. 152) however, for pragmatic purposes, in this chapter the fragments and shards recorded as creative collages are placed in a linear structure as the Hall of Mirrors. The content within each collage remains non-linear and emergent. However, there are many ways and orders in which they could be presented; thus exemplifying non-linearity.

The Hall of Mirrors

This collection of twenty-one photographic collages comprises a variety of images and visual symbols of objects and places and people who have had significant value and influence in the construction of my identity. Each image and its content tell its own story. Social interaction and reflection underpin the relationship between the roles and significance of these people and events and my ‘self’. They shape and contribute to answering the questions of who am I? And where do I belong? The greatest source of reflection comes from the honest interaction with friends. While family, geographical locations and triggers to visual memory also play a vital role to memory of self, in the end, it is friendship that provides the most valuable set of mirrors to challenge, excavate and interrogate the ‘archaeological site’ on this journey. Milan Kundera (1998) describes the value of friendship in such a project:

...I understood the sole meaning of friendship as it's practiced today. Friendship is indispensable to man for proper function of his memory. Remembering our past, carrying it always with us, may be the necessary requirement for maintaining, as they say,
the wholeness of self. To ensure the self that doesn't shrink, to see that it holds on to its volume, memories have to be watered like potted flowers, and the watering calls for regular contact with the witnesses of the past, that is to say, with friends. They are our mirror; our memory; we ask nothing of them but that they polish the mirror from time to time so we can look at ourselves (pp. 39-40)

The Hall of Mirrors was created at a time of trauma. My mother, the giver of the first 'mirror' had just died, and it is from this deep reflection of her loss, while I awaited her burial, that I 'reached out' to significant others who have or had been sources of strength in my life. The creative response came from the core and it emerged spontaneously. There was no time to consciously distil or choose the images, the design nor who may or who may not be included in the creative process. The reflection on these matters is retrospective. Each of these significant others in some way have held a mirror, a prism that generates reflections that have contributed to my development of self. In the Hall of Mirrors the art generated in this time of trauma draws together what Walter Benjamin, in his essay 'Task of the Translator' (1923) calls 'fragments of a vessel ... to be glued together'. In this case, it is the artistic creation that is the 'translation'; my story is the 'glue'.

The Hall of Mirrors consists of twenty-one photographic portraits. Each collage contains two portraits that of the 'significant other' and one of myself as the artist. Also included are various objects (still life) and a background (often landscape) that serves as a supporting foundation for a spatial context.

The portrait has maintained a central status in Western art since the earliest recording of history. In classical mythology, the young Narcissus gazes at his own reflection in a pool. In Christian stories recorded in the Bible, Veronica is said to have placed a cloth on the face of the suffering Jesus on his way to Calvary and found his image imprinted on the material; a vision of the Virgin Mary was said to have inspired St Luke to become a painter and paint a portrait of her. Portraits depicting friends and family members of artists have existed since the fifteenth century. Since then, and particularly since the nineteenth century the portrait has imaginatively reproduced the relationship between the artist and the 'sitter' (Woodall 1997).

Since the inception of the photographic portrait, the act of recording people in visual images integral to their place in family or social history has grown in convention and importance. In the Hall of Mirrors and Happy Memories: Visual Fragments of a Happy
Childhood, the inclusion of portrait photographs bridges the distance of separation from the subjects, the significant others in my life, and renders them in to the present. In theory, this idea has some resonance with the Aristotelian notion that the portrait epitomizes ‘representation in its literal and definitive sense of making present again: re-presentation’ (Sharpe & Lake 1994, p. 207). I am cognizant of the fact that the Aristotelian tradition is based on Western epistemology however, other epistemologies that underpin oral cultures do exist and these are briefly referred to in Chapter Two: The Non-Linear Path of Excavation.

In the Hall of Mirrors, portraits of significant others are placed there as a representational device by which a dialogue is established between myself as the artist and the ‘other’. Within the collages, the pairing of a portrait of self and of the other are placed in order to establish a sense of the relationship between the two. The inclusion of these images in each collage facilitates a dialogic connection that enriches and informs the story. My ‘self’ and my ‘story’ are formulated through these relationships; these relationships in turn are contextually situated and are open to subjective interpretations that are also socially created.

Collage is a visual representation and in my research, The Hall of Mirrors, is used to portray a story of relational representations between a ‘significant other’ and myself as the artist. One of the many valuable insights into human nature that is gained from Marcel Proust’s work À la recherche du temps perdu (1992) is the way in which Proust advocates the abandonment of ‘ego’ for the paradoxical self. This paradoxical self knows itself only in relation to otherness 'actualised in persons and culture in the time of existence' (Zelechow 2004, p. 80).

The collages involve an intuitive and intentional discontinuity, which means that there is no simple reading of the whole. Each whole contains, and is able to be understood on the basis of the relationships established within the frame of the collage. Any tension and/or harmony of dialogue that is created between the components of the collage are the result of web of relationships both within and outside of the collage. The formation of these relationships into a comprehensible whole or their acceptance as a random collection of elements is left to the viewer. The relationships within the collage, between the various elements, and those, which relate to things that are outside of the collage, between the fragments and their sources, and between the artist and the viewer, are what ultimately weave the story.
Some collages meander through the era of my childhood prior to the experience of migration. Some explore the development of the political feminist self while others investigate relationships and friendships and their role in the making of my identity. They also reveal the awakening and identification of myself as a woman of colour and represent the emergence of the political and philosophical self through the process of travel and career and the search for ‘praxis’. The Hall of Mirrors traces the journey on which my authentic self and voice is silenced and resurfaces. I maintain that the silencing of voice occurs partially through the experience of dislocation. As an artefact, it creatively documents the manner in which this voice re-emerges in the form of the creative self.

Each collage is dependent on the individual elements within and the relationships between them (Butler, 2003). The relationships between the component parts create the significant content of the work. In the Hall of Mirrors the viewers engage through their own interpretations to determine these relationships. Each image within the Hall of Mirrors has connections and layers of story embedded within the other artefacts in the research. These artefacts include the Fable: Satatantra: the elephant and the mirror; the book Happy Memories: Visual Memories of a Happy Childhood; and the three Digital Stories: Argumentum e Silencio; Journey Through Lost Time and Lost in Translation.

The Hall of Mirrors is a framework of visual metaphors within which I explore spatial and interpersonal connections that can be found in the significant relationships. They represent the evolution of self and the making of my identity. These relationships, underpin my story; the story of Who I am? Where I am? And, When I am? for it is in the deconstruction of the visual metaphor in each collage that I have been able to further excavate ideas of self and produce knowledge that illuminates the authoring of my story.

Each collage exists independently and, as such, contains its own story. It is the symbiotic links and intricate connections that are woven together to author the self through a unified story. This unified story is represented visually in the Hall of Mirrors (Artefact 1) and related as a metaphoric narrative of identity or ficto-memoir in the fable Satatantra: The Elephant and the Mirror (Artefact 6).

Salvador Dali’s (1939) quote in his biography by Meredith Etherington-Smith (1995) inspires my interrogation of each collage. I use his questions: ‘what do I see? What does it mean?’ He says:
Of a Cubist picture one asks: What does that represent? Of a Surrealist picture one sees what it represents but one asks: What does that mean? Of a Paranoiac picture one asks abundantly: What do I see? What does that mean? (p. 254).

To elicit fragments of the story and generate the self-knowledge required to arrive at an understanding of my self, I become the ‘viewer’ and I have deconstructed each visual metaphor. What follows is an exploration of what I see and what it means in the construction of my self; my identity.
COLLAGE ONE

From the ethereal blue mists that paint the background of this collage, emerge a secular Madonna and child. Cloaked in a halo like neon light, both mother and child are filled with a joyous effervescence. The deep blue world of love and security is viewed through a poignant cultural indicator represented by the mother and child elephants delicately engraved in the corner of the canvas. The mother elephant stands on a lotus flower, the Indian symbol of an awakening to the reality of life. In the image before us, the mother gazes lovingly at her daughter. There is an unmistakeable likeness in their countenance. The mother hopes that like a lotus flower that pushes through mud to emerge as a thing of beauty, so too her daughter will develop the resilience to emerge and write of a life story filled with beauty, strength and fulfilment.

The child's eyes are filled with wonder as she looks out into the world before her. Her mother is the storyteller, the locator of memory. She has her own story to tell, stories that are gathered from experiences along life's journey, stories about her self gained from mirrored reflections along the way. The collage before us embodies the connection and intertwining of their stories. The mother is the giver of the mirror and the provider of her child's first reflections of self.

The bold red script above cries out pyar, the word uttered for love in their homeland of India. The intensity of the love and gentleness portrayed in the visual text leaves the viewer to ponder the foundations of their own life story.

This is a mirror of unconditional love.
COLLAGE TWO

Within this collage the viewer is offered an overall image that represents a matrilineal connection of story and culture wrapped in the power of maternal and familial love.

The branches of a magnificent tree reach out to hold generations of the women contained in this collage. The tree; the ‘family tree’ symbolises two family branches, linked through the child within the two heart shaped spaces in the centre of the collage. A shaft of yellow sunshine radiating happiness, love and support connects the hearts and tells a story of the child's grandmothers’ and of their love for her. In the shape on the left, her own mother holds the baby child lovingly, unaware of the glare of her paternal grandmother; the newness of motherhood is reflected her nervous countenance. In the second image, the child now older stands proudly alongside her maternal grandmother.

On the left of the collage, her paternal grandmother exudes the grace and pride of her Portuguese heritage. From her the child learns stories about her ancestors and listens to hours of melancholic fados sung to her on monsoon nights. Her maternal grandmother is on the right; her sepia image is set against a beautiful colonial mansion that was her mother’s childhood home and the baby is the artist’s mother. It is here in this home known as Sunnydale that the artist learns of her mother’s family history. The gardens of this mansion are filled with flowers, fruit, insects and birds, providing the young child with wonderful opportunities to explore the intricate beauty of nature. Her maternal grandmother; 'nanny', enchants the child with stories, and teaches her about the magic of spices as she imparts to her the secret recipes of her ancestors.

This is a mirror of cultural wisdoms and familial love.
The red brick edifice in the background has all the hallmarks of a traditional Catholic convent school with an architectural style that had its genesis in the British colonial era. But, who are these children who float outside the frame? Why do they stare out disapprovingly, seemingly unhappy with the world behind them? Are they ‘out of place’? ‘Out of time’? The Devanagari script hanging above them gives us clues to their Indian cultural heritage. The word Swatantra reads Freedom. What does the word symbolise? Is it the freedom of youth and rebellion? Perhaps the idea of freedom rises like an ethereal dream they hold for release from the shackles of the alien learning environment they find themselves in.

Do they hold within them the freedom of childhood and friendship? Their disapproving scowls may reflect a bond – the bond of shared experience, a bond born out of their ‘difference’ as rebels embarking on an adventurous childhood odyssey.

The child on the left is also pictured standing outside the frame. Set against the bright orange of the Indian flag she appears beaming with happiness and optimism about the world of learning she is about to enter.

Faced with images that represent the tensions manifest in the spaces between the optimism of childhood and the reality of institutional learning, the viewer is left to speculate about the resilience of youth, of rebellion and freedom through the mirror of friendship.

This is a mirror of friendship and freedom.
COLLAGE FOUR

A canopy of verdant foliage hangs over the silhouette of a colonial mansion. Small architectural details reveal its history dates back to the 1930s. The lime wash pink paint is protected by stately trees as they shade the ageing home from the elements. The old Iron Gate bears the name of the mansion – Sunnydale, home to the four women who are superimposed on the left of the canvas. There is a striking resemblance between these women. We see Lily, a woman some years older stands proudly behind her three daughters - Poppy, Theresa and Esme. This is their family home and a place where the artist has spent many happy childhood days. These women, who include her grandmother, mother and aunts, have a strong influence over her development. From her aunts she learns much cultural wisdom.

In the top right hand corner the artist is now pictured with her aunt Poppy. The two women share many hours together. Poppy relates stories of the family, her shared childhood with her sisters at Sunnydale and her love of cooking. From her she learns the magic of spices and the secrets of family recipes. On the floating image of a table set with a feast is their love of culinary delights, a visual link with their heritage cultural connections and with the women in the past.

The artist shares a close relationship with her aunt. She visits Poppy in her Queensland home, where the two create delicious morsels to share as they sit on the verandah, reminisce and tell stories of the past. Poppy encourages her niece to record her story.

This is a mirror of cultural wisdom and story.
COLLAGE FIVE

The viewer is immediately struck by the large roman numerals of the clock in the centre of the collage. A closer look will reveal that the image is a section of Laloux’s famous clock in the tower at the Musée D’Orsay in Paris, for looking through the face; one can spot the Sacre Coeur towering above the city. The evidence of Parisian symbolism is also evident in the street scene below where we are transported to the art nouveau sign of the Metro at St Germain du Prés. These two settings give us some clue to the identity of the French intellectual and feminist writer sandwiched between the images.

Simone de Beauvoir, author of *The Second Sex*, gazes through clock face at the figure of a woman emerging from the burnt sienna background. Struck by a moment in time; a catalytic realisation of her self as woman, as *other*, she materialises from a dormant past into the sunshine. Her reading of *The Second Sex* has brought new meaning to her identity as a woman and she strides out into her new world a fresh understanding of the idea that “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman”.

She emerges strong and optimistic. She appears invigorated by her new wisdoms. This is a mirror of feminism.
Emerging from fiery frames overlapping each other two friends emerge, arms around each other they stand together in their personal and political commitments. Their joy of life radiates out into the world. The women are friends and loyal sisters in arms. They are formidable women of fire. The artist stands on the right with her long time friend and mentor Renate. She is a woman of letters, a woman of wisdom and experience. Outside the frame Renate sits relaxed, set against a background of solidity and earthiness. From her, the artist learns of the passion of women and for women. She is infected by her friend's zeal, her resilience and her commitment to women's rights and joins her in wave upon wave of resistance to injustice.

They travel together to many places around the globe. As they do, they share adventures and experiences that enrich their lives. In this collage Renate has accompanied the artist to her homeland of India.

The frame on the right depicts the goddess Kali. Feminists have reclaimed this Goddess as a representation of strength and reconstructed selfhood. The words inscribed on the poster reflect the essence of these women – women born out of the fire of consciousness.

This is a mirror of passion and resilience.
COLLAGE SEVEN

The rugged and dry landscape of the Fleurieu Peninsula plunges into the Gulf of St Vincent. Two friends enjoy the end of a meal. For over two decades they have come here each year to celebrate their friendship.

A window of light floats above the two women. Frames contained within the window share similar form however they hang on divergent branches of the same tree. Despite variation in shape and density they remain connected.

In the right corner we see a woman. She sits her hands clasped together in a relaxed and confident manner. She has an open and trusting countenance and smiles warmly at the camera. The artist captures the portrait of her friend Suzanne.

In the top left corner two dogs sit patiently waiting for their companions who walk with them. The friends walk and talk for hours. They speak trustingly of life and philosophise on matters of existence. They challenge each other to live in the moment and to immerse themselves in all that brings them happiness.

This is a mirror of happiness and existential awareness.
Filigreed leaves emboss the gently lit and dappled autumnal background of this canvas. The fine stems and feint markings form a web of connections that create a framework on which the other images float. The frame is elusive and despite its delicate structure it is flexible and robust. Two abstract figures of women embracing glide off a Matisse canvas while superimposed on this background two women sit together, exuberant in each other’s company. Here the artist is pictured with her friend and soul mate Colleen. Theirs is a friendship for all seasons.

To the right Colleen plays with their two canine companions, the bearded collies, Mactavish and Winnie. The women and their dogs spend many happy times in Colleen’s mountain home where they walk and talk about life and love. A passion for literature and the arts underpins their interests and reflections. They share experiences, debate issues and laugh and cry together. The artist shares a deep bond with her friend. She confides in her and respects her opinions. She is a great teacher and encourages the artist in her creative endeavours. She inspires her to tell her story.

Together they travel the world. They seek out the most beautiful gardens, and share numerous journeys to faraway places. On the left of the collage the two friends share a moment of excitement as they stand together in play. This is a robust friendship and passionate sisterhood.

This is a mirror of friendship.
A woman smiles out at us from this image. She is a woman who is not contained by a border, but lies comfortably embedded in her surrounds, at one with the organic nature of the imagery itself. She is juxtaposed against the delicate profile of a consummate woman of literature; Virginia Woolf; a woman inspired and inspiring; a woman of letters.

The richness of the colours purple and green are the colours adopted by feminists, the colours that are the iconography of the suffrage movement. They resonate and compliment the passion that exudes from the face of the artist and creator of the collage.

What does this image tell us; what mirror does it hold up to the viewer? What has the artist captured in this construction?

Swept up and carried along with the force of a new sense of being, she embraces self-reflection and feminism. Inspired by the real connections she makes with concepts of freedom and liberation from the shackles of male power, she is inspired by the literary genius of Virginia Woolf whose words open up a new stream of consciousness. She has discovered a ‘room of her own’, she has found a small space of belonging in which to reflect, a place to call home on the journey she takes.

This is a mirror of consciousness and inspiration.
COLLAGE TEN

Set against the deep blue indigo canvas, the dark suited woman rests on her cane, her delicate frame formidable against the adobe wall. Her face bathed in sunshine is chiselled by the sun under which she paints her flowers, shells and bones in the deserts of New Mexico. Framed in the swirling rainbow of colours one hand leans on a wooden ladder and presents a point of visual and speculative connection with the black and white image of the photographer pictured above.

This is the painter Georgia O'Keefe. Her unique perspective on natural and architectural forms reveals a new way of seeing and inspires the young photographer to reconnect with her childhood sensitivities to intimate observations of flowers in her grandparents' garden.

The photographer’s interest in flowers is revealed as a subject for her photography. She exudes happiness for she sees the finer details and infinite nuances of beauty in her subject matter. She appreciates the philosophy espoused by O'Keefe, her source of inspiration who once said: *I decided that if I could paint that flower in a huge scale, you could not ignore its beauty.* The words ring in her ears, and her way of seeing the world is re-awakened.

This is a mirror of seeing.
Striding forward through leaves the photographer straddles the two frames. She kicks and scatters the autumnal leaves as she happily meanders about the grounds of Knole Park, surrounding the seventeenth century castle. Her emotions resonate with those of the woman pictured in the black and white frame to her right. She is Vita Sackville West, who is denied inheritance and ownership of her beloved Knole because the house was passed through the male lines. The photographer thinks about her father's watch, the strength of the sentiment she holds for it. The watch will never be hers, for like Vita, inheritance is preference from father to son.

In the left of the frame we observe a copy of the history of Knole, penned by Vita as homage to her ancestry. So too, the photographer records her family story through the creation and recording of visual narratives.

The autumn rural landscape provides a bright and luxuriant landscape. Textured in impressionist brush strokes it paints a timeless horizon. Nestling in the lower corner are two women, passionate friends and lovers since their meeting in 1922. In their correspondence, the women leave no aspect of their lives untouched: they record daily dramas, bits of gossip, the strains and pleasures of writing, and their mutual joy in each other's company.

The artist is fascinated by their story. She researches and reads their letters, diaries and imaginative prose and poetry. She embarks on many pilgrimages to their homes in Sussex, and spends hours capturing the splendour of Vita's garden at Sissinghurst Castle. She learns about the wild beauty of nature, the profusion of colours. She thinks about her passionate friendships with women, and relishes her disregard for rules and constraints.

This is a mirror of passion and the wildness of nature.
COLLAGE TWELVE

Bright warm colours leap out of a solid black frame. Brown, orange, red and green swirl in a magical Matisse landscape. This is an enchanted forest; a world shared by the artist and her faithful companion Mactavish. He is a fine slate and white bearded Collie. Over many years they have shared good times and bad. Their walks and adventures have carried them far and wide to the deepest parts of the forest. She tells him her innermost secrets, and allows herself to cry tears of joy and sorrow in his company.

In the foreground of the collage Mactavish stands alert and attentive watching carefully for his friend to arrive. His fine coat, lovingly cared for by the artist, glistens in the sun. He is always there to greet her at the end of the day; she treasures his loyalty; she learns many lessons of tolerance and patience from him.

And then together, just inside the frame, the two companions are pictured after one of their escapades; surfing brings hours of summer pleasure in the sun. The proud and loyal gaze of Mactavish towards his friend matches the happiness and joy of the artist's face.

This is a mirror of loyalty.
COLLAGE THIRTEEN

Brilliant reds and yellows dominate this canvas. A layered series of frames draws the viewer’s attention: each one allows clues to be gathered about the time, place and context for this assemblage. A heart shape is repeated containing an early portrait of the artist Vanessa Bell. Contained within a deeper layer, towards the centre the observer can see the image of a woman with similar features in a frame. The two women look out from these contained spaces with the same haunting gaze. They bear a connection, a bond of sisterhood. The woman in the frame is Vanessa’s sister Virginia Woolf.

Buried within the layers we see artefacts bearing hallmarks of the two sisters. Virginia writes of the significance of the woman artist to have a ‘room of her own’. Charleston is her sister’s creative space, her studio and a room of her own; a room she shares with a group of intellectuals and artists known as the ‘Bloomsbury Group’. The interior pictured here is marked by the distinctive ornamental style painted by Vanessa Bell. The borders of the collage are those designed by Vanessa for her sister Virginia’s book *A Room of One’s Own*.

In the upper left corner the artist photographer is seen busy at work. She is engaged and inspired by the creative style of the Bloomsbury group and immerses herself in the sister’s letters. She draws on the artistic style, the colours, the gardens, the very fabric and spirit of this Sussex haven. She feels the magic of Charleston as she wanders around observing and photographing each piece of art, each arrangement. The garden, the studio, the haystacks and rusted gateposts – pale blue windowsills, odd shaped ceramics … She sees Vanessa’s art transformed to life – and she thinks – how wonderful to have such a studio a room of her own. Each day she carries within her the spirit of that creative solitude.

This is a mirror of creative solitude.
COLLAGE FOURTEEN

Red representing passion, and blue emblematic of pain borne from struggle combine to paint a picture dominated by the colour purple. Purple, the colour adopted by feminists, and used to symbolise the resistance of the suffragettes.

A solarised image in black and white of the author Alice Walker floats over the figure of our contemplative artist. Camera by her side, she tirelessly travels through life. Often floating invisibly through cultures across the globe, she captures the jagged geographies of her experience as a woman of colour in search of a place of belonging.

In the course of another peripatetic adventure, she rests to consider a book she has just been given: *The Colour Purple* by the Black feminist author and poet Alice Walker. As she absorbs the story, a new politic about her identity as a Black woman, a *woman of colour* stirs within her. The book awakens a new consciousness and empowers her life with new wisdoms.

In the lower component of the collage, we see a purple *Lasiandra* appearing to emerge out of the image of our traveller in deep reflection. Perhaps it represents a chrysalis whose transformation into a beautiful butterfly, whose wings are still wet, awaits flight to freedom and new horizons.

This is a mirror of self knowledge and acceptance.
Silhouetted against the pastel light in the background reminiscent of a Renaissance painting, the dark, gnarled shape of a grapevine hangs over the loggia. Images embedded in the metaphor within this collage tell us that we are in Italy.

A woman whose age reveals years of life’s experience and knowledge glides into the picture, stepping confidently on to the terrazzo surface of the western loggia of her home in the Italian Garfagnana. It is in this aerie in the mountains that she welcomes her young friend the photographer. Each northern hemisphere summer the two friends spend many hours together. They linger over long antipasto lunches washed down by glasses of Chianti; they walk together through the villages and over alpine meadows gathering wildflowers for their vases placed artistically on the vast stone lintels of the house built in the middle ages. They talk of life, literature, food and art. They debate issues of politics and philosophy and exchange stories about their past.

At first glance it is hard for the viewer to locate the artist in this compilation. She feels at home here, a sanctuary for reflection and a welcome space on her journey of self-discovery. Her sense of self resonates with the environment and culture of the Italian people. In this place she feels at one with the surroundings. She feels her self. This congenial relationship is represented in her total immersion in the landscape, for if we look carefully we are able to identify a figure embedded in the verdant countryside. Often they listen to music and revel in the sight of birds and bats going home to roost. But tonight, on this summer evening the two friends sit in silence and as they watch the sun dip behind the towering sentinels, they ponder the value of each other’s story, of place and belonging and meditate to the sound of their own hearts.

This is a mirror of story and place.
Symbols of culture and ancient traditions weave through an ocean of blue. Layer upon layer, intermingled and holding secrets of the ancient Indian wisdom and heritage. Fragments of stone rise up through the watery topography, and in the centre we see Aditi, the mother of goddesses who rules over the sky, the earth, the past and the future.

In the dark shadows a distinguished looking woman in her middle years, her culture and wisdom proudly etched in her aristocratic expression as she gazes out from a space that seems to float in the temporal stratification. A lifetime of knowledge, insight, and astuteness flows from her in imaginative and creative writing that records her memoir. She writes of her Indian culture. She writes of being lesbian. She writes feminist fables that spin magic to inspire and enthral the artist seen superimposed on the Goddess's head. She is the queen of metaphor and fable. She is Saint Suniti who slays the dragon.

The artist is smiling and surrounded by delicate Indian motifs. She is joyful and filled with fresh understandings about her identity. She wears a new braided Indian topi that covers her head and shields her from the sun. She searches for a place to belong. ‘Do you know who you are Lariane?’ asks Suniti, as they walk along the beach. ‘Yes’ she replies without hesitation. ‘Then why do you need to belong?’ asks the wise woman Suniti.

The artist is all at once struck by the simplicity yet depth of her companion's philosophical insight. A pathway for a new layer of her story is opened up.

This is a mirror of self-knowledge and story.
COLLAGE SEVENTEEN

A Blue and White banner dominates this canvas; its stripes weave their way in and around the other images in the collage. A crested border depicts the logo of the Geelong Football Club. In the background we see a windswept palette of Kardinia Park, home of the club’s team the ‘Cats’. For as long as they have known each other, these two friends have followed their beloved team. Their passion for the club and football is woven through their lives and their friendship.

In the top right hand corner we see a woman with her cat Zac, who stares suspiciously at the camera. The woman is Annie, a long time friend of the artist. Together they share a love of music, fine food, travel, art and literature. They enjoy honest debates and never fear to disagree on views.

In the bottom half of the picture the artist and her friend smile in a celebratory mode. They take pleasure in sharing stories over a glass of wine. The artist often turns to her friend to consider impending matters or seek opinions about important issues. She trusts her friend implicitly for she is unwavering in her support, is always non-judgemental and just.

This is a mirror of justice and non-judgement.
COLLAGE EIGHTEEN

The lush green of wild grasses, deep channels and dark mountains are softly rendered; the delicate colours and hues layer the ages of natural history and wilderness into this Tasmanian landscape. This landscape inspires the woman on our left. For many years she has used her fine artistic skills as a painter to capture the light and essence of this small island. She is seen at work deeply embedded in the centre of the compilation.

Dressed in bright orange and reflecting her happy demeanour, the creator of the collage emerges from the same landscape. She shares many adventurous and creative experiences with her friend. Together they traverse the countryside; meandering through many delightful settings of the Tasmanian wilderness. The artist is a mentor to her younger companion, who follows her carefully and watches her friend’s brushes create magic landscapes on paper. She watches entranced at the deftness of her strokes, the acuity of her vision and her love for the wilderness she has fought for all her life.

Together they share a contagious spirit filled with a love for life, imagination and hope for a better world. Theirs is a connection filled with passionate debate, creativity and honest reflection. The friendship and mutual respect is strong and the equity of honesty of their rapport is represented in the placement of the images.

This is a mirror of imagination and hope.
A woman stares out at us, her dark piercing eyes holds the viewer steadfastly and seductively. This enigmatic self-portrait holds secrets for those who care to look. Frida Kahlo has painted herself to camouflage her reality. In her own words ‘what you see is a falsehood – the Frida that I have inside is only known to me’.

Look into her face. Look into her eyes. The real self is not in the image but in the act of painting itself. She materialises from a furnace of red, the blood she has shed, the pain endured; a blood covered paintbrush dipped in her own blood.

In the lower corner a young woman wearing a straw hat rests her head in a relaxed stance. Her dark eyes also stare out at us; her smiling mouth hides her story of pain, of physical suffering, the humiliation of marital violence. She draws deep and draws on her strength. She finds ways to cry out in laughter instead of pain. With courage, she too paints herself over and over again. For her, it is not a bloodied paintbrush. She finds her self, capturing images with the lens of her camera. She sees her world in metaphor, reflected in the imperfection yet intricate beauty and colour of the natural world. She is inspired by the unflinching, passionate determination of her heroine and finds herself swept into the iridescent blue river of Frida Kahlo’s resilience.

This is a mirror of courage and resilience.
Against a vivid pink background of delightful zeal for life and adventure, two women pose for a photograph. Their dress and stance reflect the formality of the occasion, and their faces reveal a sense of joy and pride in achievement. Pictured within the royal blue frame is the artist on the day of her graduation. Standing beside her is Adele, her friend and one of her greatest teachers. Adele shares her knowledge and creativity generously. The artist is inspired.

The image is complex and layered, embedded within are two central motifs. In the foreground we see a young girl holding the trunk of a baby elephant, under swaying palm trees. They are in India. On many occasion Adele accompanies the artist to her homeland of India. Adele is a fine artist and has given the artist this image to encourage her to tell her story. One day Adele says to her friend: *If an elephant lives a hundred years, what stories would she tell?* The question is heard, and the artist finds her voice, through the persona of the elephant. She looks into the stories that surround her, and tells her own.

Lying beneath the surface, holding the elements together, we see the motif of an elephant dressed in a regal Indian coat of arms. The artist has found her voice. She is telling her story. Adele fills the artist with confidence about her creative ability. She mentors her friend and guides her to acknowledge her creative self. With Adele’s support and encouragement she creates artwork and writes her story.

This is a mirror of voice and creativity.
COLLAGE TWENTY-ONE

Paint peels back the pages of history on this bright yellow wall. Emerging from the space uncovered by years of erosion are two women of similar heritage. The friends smile, their faces joyous with newfound celebration. A shawl of hand spun wool and silk wraps the two friends linking them as it spins a web of deep understanding and resonance around them. Floating on the upper layer of the collage the Devanagari script forms the word *Annand*, peace and joy. We are in India.

The artist is pictured with her friend Giti. They share childhood stories about their adventures, and exchange experiences of their culture and traditions. Together they discover the joys and sorrows of their histories. They talk of their love of gardens, the magic of the Santoor, the pain of ‘leaving’ their homeland, the ecstasy of returning, and the despair of difference, the loneliness of alienation, and the search for belonging. A raging red river of fiery politics punctuates their existence.

The artist listens carefully to her friend. She hears the stories of her ancestors and learns about the tradition of *Sakhiyani*. Their life stories resonate and the artist finally begins to appreciate her cultural heritage. She looks into the mirror and in Giti she sees herself.

This is a mirror of belonging.
In this chapter, through the *Hall of Mirrors*, I have excavated and interrogated ‘data’ uncovered in the archaeological site. As shards of memory and fragments of self emerge I have used them as the triggers by which I begin to scrape back history and generate stories that re-construct a sense of who I am today. The telling and re-telling of these stories ‘reveal the knots, the accidental markings of sense and circumstance’ that have made up who I am and where I am today. “And so to travel in the mind, through places one has known, is to scrape back history, reveal the knots, the accidental markings of sense and circumstance that make up our lives” (Alexander 1996 p. 192).

The *Hall of Mirrors* reveals strata of powerful influences and traits that run deep like veins through the archeology of my self. Qualities such as familial and unconditional love, cultural wisdom, feminism and friendship lay a foundation for the establishment of a self. Passion, resilience, courage, justice, loyalty, happiness and hope fuel the process of being. Reflective perceptions such as an existential awareness; ways of seeing; sensitivity to the wildness of nature; imagination and creative solitude frame the creative self. A place of belonging and an authentic voice liberate my creativity and provide the freedom of space to remember, reflect and tell my story. These are the ‘knots, the accidental markings of sense and circumstance’ that have made me who I am today.

These are qualities and traits that exist in human emotional and physical architecture. As values they constitute elements of what it means to be human, and, as such, can be isolated, revealed and acknowledged through the creation and de-construction of creative works. In the *Journey Around Myself*, I have excavated these core values from the archaeological site of my self. I have made these elements manifest through the pictorial representations that emerge intuitively in the collages in the *Hall of Mirrors*.

Each image contains a set of images that embody a story. From these visual and written narratives a set of core needs and values that underpin my personal growth and creativity are uncovered. The excavation of the archeology of self is likened to the work of an archaeologist who exposes the elements of history and culture by painstakingly following clues, uncovering fragments and creating a story by gradually revealing it as it moves through the dust and sediment of time. In doing so the archaeologist also creates a basic framework. In the *Hall of Mirrors*, each collage also presents a set of borders to frame and contain the narrative.
In 1957, the French artist Marcel Duchamp recognises the importance of the complex relationship between the creator/artist and their reciprocal relationship to the external world. He maintains that ‘the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act’ (p. 2).

In the process of construction, de-construction and interrogation the mirrors disclose the essence of my self. They are the device by which I identify and interpret the answers to the question ‘who am I?’ By excavating fragments and clues to memory provided by these mirrors, I move through the morass of the socially constructed identifiers of ‘what I am’ and arrived at a place where I can articulate the qualities and essence of who I am today. The qualities, values and traits that I have identified as important elements in the course of de-constructing the narrative forms the basis of my story. It is important for people to create, reflect and de-construct personal narrative to identify elements of importance to who they are. In articulating my experience and process, I provide an exemplar for the ways in which others can interrogate the role and influence of significant others in remembering the self.

In chapter six I examine the role of self-reflexive narrative and the value of story in this *Journey Around Myself*. Furthermore, I describe the significance of the creation of story and the act of storytelling as the glue with which the excavated fragments and are patched together to create a path for a homecoming.
Chapter Six:
Story - The Making of Identity
These scenes, by the way, are not altogether a literary device – a means of summing up and making innumerable details visible in one concrete picture. Details there were; still, if I stopped to think, I could collect a number. But, whatever the reason may be, I find that scene making is my natural way of marking the past. Always a scene has arranged itself: representative; enduring. This confirms me in my instinctive notion: (I will not bear arguing about; it is irrational) the sensation that we are sealed vessels afloat on what is convenient to call reality; and at some moments, the sealing matter cracks; in floods reality; that is, these scenes – for why do they survive undamaged year after year unless they are made of something comparatively permanent? Is this liability to scenes the origin of my writing impulse?

Virginia Woolf *A Sketch of the Past* 1976, p. 142

There it is; the light across the water. Your story. Mine. His. It has to be seen to be believed. And it has to be heard. In the endless babble of narrative, in spite of the daily noise, the story waits to be heard.

Some people say that the best stories have no words. They weren’t brought up to Lighthousekeeping. It is true that the words drop away, and that the important things are often left unsaid. The important things are learned in faces, in gestures, not in our locked tongues. The true things are too big or too small, or in any case always the wrong size to fit the template called language.

I know that. But I know something else too, because I was brought up to Lighthousekeeping. Turn down the daily noise and first there is the relief of silence. And then, very quietly, as quiet as light, meaning returns. Words are the part of silence that can be spoken.

Jeanette Winterson *Lighthousekeeping* 2004, p. 135
Introduction

“You must tell your story Lariane” these were the words with which my mother encouraged as I said farewell not realising it would be the last time we would speak; it was November 2006. In 2009, at his eulogy, every tribute to my father made reference to his gift of storytelling. Throughout my life, my parents’ stories and their ability to convey a sense of wonder, place and history filled my life with imaginings and knowledge. In turn, they instilled in me the love of story and storytelling. In the fable Satatantra, Bhudevi’s mother encourages her daughter, emphasizing the importance of story:

*Her mother, the giver of the mirror was frail and Bhudevi was keen to draw out their story and record it. She told me that she believed that her story in essence was contained within theirs. Recently, her mother had said to her:*

*“You must tell your story Bhudevi” she encouraged her daughter “for we are our stories, and without them we are nothing.”*

*It was on that day she made a promise she vowed to keep – she would tell her story* Satatantra, p. 109.

Both incidents emphasise the importance of storytelling in our family. Only in this present moment, following my parents’ death, have I realised how I have internalised these stories and how they have become an integral part of who I am. Not only have they contributed to my sense of identity but they have given my dislocated self a place of belonging. Their narrative has ultimately been woven through mine and in the process has provided an important part of the homecoming to self.

The information uncovered through excavation of fragments and shards from the archaeological site in the previous chapters form the basis from which I explore the process of story formation. My archaeological approach to narrative inquiry involving a self-reflexive narrative has facilitated the articulation of my story. I briefly examine the concept of ‘narrative’ and its relationship to ‘story’. I record the significance of storytelling on the Journey Around Myself as the mechanism that glues the fragments together. This process draws on various forms of memory “allowing for the re-composition of past and present into the temporal continuum of the life-story” (Manzin 2008, p. 32).

In this chapter, through a diagrammatic model, I reveal the way in which I have collected the pieces and engaged in ‘scene-making’ that is representative and enduring. The
fragments contained within the scenes are those that have been preserved deep in the strata of memory. Excavation of these fragments has presented narrative for scene making which in turn has provided a story, my story and my impulse for storytelling. It is through this storytelling that I have experienced a feeling of 'homecoming', and an arrival at a sense of identity.

In this chapter I look at the broader understandings about narrative processes and how they provide an avenue for identity construction through memory.

**Narrative**

As soon as we are able to speak, we begin the process of narrative creation. Narrative is the mechanism by which we make meaning about who we are. In Chapter 3, the *Archaeological Site* Fragments that include journal extracts and photographs are inextricably linked to the way in which the created stories were perpetuated. Both forms of fragments rely on memory in the process of interpretation and interrogation in the present. This phenomenon, which is critical to understanding the role of memory in unraveling archaeology of identity, is explored later in the chapter.

The ancient tales of India in the epic *Mahabharata*, the *Vedas, the Koran* and the fables of the *Panchatantra* are important narratives underpinning Indian culture and its belief system. Similarly, epics such as Homer's *Iliad*, Virgil's the *Aeneid*, Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and religious texts like the *Bible* have shaped western narratives. Such ancient narratives have often been perpetuated as entertainment in the form of stories around campfires, performances and story telling and have been a powerful mechanism and translator of cultural knowledge, wisdom and values. Instances of the way in which ancient and historical narratives are kept alive abound in my research and I refer to a couple of examples here.

On each summer visit to the family home *Sunnydale*, my maternal grandmother, pictured in Collage two in the *Hall of Mirrors*, would tell us the tale of our grandfather's role as guardian of Mahatma Gandhi whilst under house arrest in Yervada. The story was contextualised within the broader historical narrative of the fight for independence in India from British rule. As time went by and my own political understandings deepened, this tale and its associated narrative played a significant part in my own political beliefs about colonisation.
The second example can be found in the digital story *Argumentum e Silencio*. Based on my lived experience of returning to India as a lesbian in 2004, and my exposure to the research of Giti Thadani in her book *Sakhiyani*, this digital story explores the way in which ancient narratives have been manipulated to support the dominance of hetero-patriarchy. The power of narrative to shape beliefs and cultural norms and mores is therefore subject to manipulation. Manipulation can sometimes manifest in invisibility from history. In *Sakhiyani*, Thadani (1996) uses a quote from the Jami Project in the Lesbian Archives in Delhi to illustrate this point.

Ignorance. When something is ignored it will gradually lose any vitality it once had, at first becoming invisible and then finally lost. If memory is not passed on in some coherent way, then that which is not remembered no longer exists, and it can then be said that it never existed. This is what is happening to lesbian histories (p. 1).

As in my experience and the experience of many others who do not neatly fit the grand narrative of hetero-patriarchy this has significant ramifications on day-to-day lives. Once again we can observe a link between memory and narrative. Memory and narrative interact in critical ways and in an interdependent relationship.

Fredric Jameson (1981) describes the process of narrative as ‘the central function or instance of the human mind’ (p. 13); and Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984) maintained that narration was ‘the quintessential form of customary knowledge’ (p. 19). In 1694, Locke identified the self with a set of continuous memories, an on-going narrative of one’s past that is extended with each experience.

In Chapter five I discuss how memory interacts with lived experience to unravel a sense of self and identity; of importance here is the manner in which continuous memories have been sustained and extended with each experience. A significant prop to memory in this process is the family photographic record, *Happy Memories* (Artefact 5). This record, as a trigger to memory, is the source of almost sixty years of family stories. What I have observed is that, as each occasion for storytelling occurred, and as each narrator’s life experience evolved, subtle nuances of change could be detected in the narratives. The link between the self and continuous memories is sustained and extended with each experience and it often follows that the narrative is adjusted.
The stories we tell our selves in terms of personal identity are directly related to our levels of perceived agency. Elliot (2001) suggests that ‘as directors of our own self narratives, we draw upon psychic frames of memory and desire, as well as wider cultural and social resources, in the fashioning of self’ (p. 2). This occurs despite the universality of narrative and the belief that:

All classes, all human groups, have their narratives, enjoyment of which is very often shared by men with different, even opposing, cultural backgrounds. Caring nothing for the division between good and bad literature, narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself (Barthes 1982, p. 252).

For those like myself, who have lived much of their lives in an ‘area of darkness’ (Alexander 2004; Conrad 2002) or who are less comfortably situated within Western narratives in what Homi Bhabha (1994) calls the ‘third space’, there are severe limitations created by the available narrative structures. This also limits the level of personal agency in articulating stories about the self within the narrative structures that we are forced to appropriate. While the idea of reasoning and interpreting the self form a central thesis across schools of thought, it is agency that is at the heart of differing perspectives when considering the fashioning and interpretation of self.

At an early stage on the Journey Around Myself, whilst sourcing images for the digital story Lost in Translation (Artefact 4), I found myself engaged in a retrospective analysis of my photography and my ‘ways of seeing’. One of the most noteworthy observations I made was the way in which my early photographic eye had succumbed to frameworks of technical and aesthetic correctness of the dominant culture. Let me explain this further. Despite clear sensations and childhood memories of my grandfather’s garden and an early appreciation for nature, my photography did not reflect this perspective till many years later. In 1989 I was introduced to the work of painter Georgia O’Keefe whose visual perspective affirmed what lay beneath my own.

As an individual who felt dislocated and without a sense of place, my creative self was highly influenced by perspectives of the dominant culture in my new homeland. This influence, combined with my constant feelings of cultural dislocation and powerlessness had forced me to adopt ways of seeing that either nullified my artistic ability through insecurity or meant that my artistic expression often felt artificial and just wrong. I think that this subtle but powerful practice kept me from realising and challenging my personal artistic capabilities. In Lost in Translation I express this in these words:
‘Over many years, your camera has recorded landscapes of other worlds... today you begin to record your own’ (Artefact 4).

In 1989 the work of Virginia Woolf (Collage Nine) and Vita Sackville West (Collage Eleven) opened up a new stream of consciousness and inspired a fresh visual perspective. This new awareness together with the development of a significant friendship with Colleen Lindner (Collage Eight) empowered my creative endeavours with self-confidence. The above statement reflects a turning point in the development of my artistic self: the consciousness of and enactment of personal agency and reflects how the excavation of early memories can impact and influence our sense of personal agency. The process of recalling and developing oral and written narrative about early memories and sensations facilitates self-affirmation and a sense of personal agency.

The idea of self as a ‘collage of fragments unceasing in its becoming, ever open to new experience’ (Sennett 1998) paints a picture of the self in an endless process of self-creation. In post-modern terms this is the process of ‘identity making’ (Braidotti 1994; Lyotard 1991). While I cautiously subscribe to this post-modern idea about the making of identity, it is Giddens’ (1991) idea that the self is a ‘reflexive project’, which I find more resonant and which is sustained through revisable narrative of self-identity.

On the Journey Around Myself and particularly in the visual constructions in the Hall of Mirrors, there exist many layers of meaning: the images within the collages each contain a story, and the collages themselves are a story. While the collection together provides a strong reflective narrative it is the self-reflexive narrative that is the binding power of the story; my story, that provides a sustaining narrative. I concur with Giddens (1991) when he states that:

> The self is not a passive identity, determined by external influences; in forging their self-identities, no matter how local their specific contexts of action, individuals contribute to and directly promote social influences that are global in their consequences and implications (p. 2).

For example, in collage twenty (Artefact 1), the story tells of a journey of interaction with a significant other during which I re-discovered my authentic voice. The process actively forged an integral part of my self-identity in the present. In turn, this led to my embarking on the Journey Around Myself.
In his essay on *Migrant Landscapes* Iain Chambers (1994) discusses identity formation and suggests that the ‘languages and histories into which we are thrown, and in which we appear, lies beyond individual volition’ (p. 25). He goes on to say that:

> The awareness of the complex and constructed nature of our identities offers a key that opens us up to other possibilities: to recognise in our story other stories, to discover in the apparent completeness of the modern individual the incoherence, the estrangement, the gap opened up by the stranger: the stranger in ourselves (p. 25).

The remembering and authoring of self through authentic voice, has offered a key that opens up possibilities for others. Through my story they may be able to recognise, identify and connect with part of their own experience. The *Journey Around Myself* allows a person who has had a similar experience to mine to use fragments of memory uncovered to unravel the archaeology of self; to remember and to forge a sense of identity and find a place to belong.

**Masterplots**

The word ‘narrative’ can be traced to the ancient Sanskrit word *gna*, a root term meaning ‘to know’. It entered the English language through the Latin words for both ‘knowing’ *gnarus*, and ‘telling’ *narro* (White 1987). I agree with Porter-Abbott (2002) who tells us that this etymology “catches two sides of narrative. It is the universal tool for knowing as well as telling, for absorbing knowledge as well as expressing it” (p. 11). However, I suggest that this universality is mediated by the existence of ‘masterplots’.

The *Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (2002) defines masterplot as “recurrent skeletal stories, belonging to cultures and individuals that play a powerful role in questions of identity, values and the understanding of life” (p. 192). That is, the very way in which we take on information or tell it can be influenced by desire to manipulate it to conform to the masterplot.

The idea that narrative and narrative discourse can be limited and/or misread within different masterplots is borne out by the work of Hannah Arendt (1975) in *The Human Condition*. In her essay she discusses the way in which western philosophical discourse and its linguistic limitations severely impact on the conceptualisation of selfhood. More recently, Italian feminist Adriana Cavarero (2000) has reviewed and extended this debate. These positions warrant further interrogation and will be discussed later in this chapter.
The ‘recurring skeletal stories, values and an understanding of life’ underpinning my broken geography have manifested in feelings of dislocation and a loss of identity. Fragments of memory that represent critical incidents/events prior to migration comprise content embedded in a masterplot from a different place and time than the one which is being narrated today. Inevitably, important experience and knowledge can be misconstrued, as can be seen in the following extract from *Lost in Translation*.

*You were struck by the same sun. You trod the same soil as those who walked beside you…*

*The land, the climate, the day, the moments of existence belonged to both of you; but, the two worlds moved as it were on parallel tracks: intimately close but separated by the indestructible veil of your histories. Your rules for living and loving were not her rules* (Artefact 4).

The narrative in this frame of the digital story metaphorically tells of my struggle with cross-cultural issues relating to aspects of communication in my adult relationships with friends and lovers in the new land. Ideas and values of friendship and intimate relationships were formed during my childhood in India. These values and models of relationships contained in the masterplot in the land of my birth are vastly different to those of the new homeland. These early values have impacted on my emotional development and have contributed to the sentiment expressed in *Lost in Translation*.

As an active participant in the excavation of fragments contributing to my story, I acknowledge that my transition from one culture to another has also meant changes in cultural masterplots. This has often manifested in my confusion, frustration and alienation whilst dwelling in the ‘third space’ (Bhabha 1994). I refer to this experience in the digital story *A Journey Through Lost Time* when I say:

*I have been caught in the space between two worlds accompanied by a constant companion – a ghost that shadows every aspect of my existence. A ghost who never fails to interrogate my actions, my feelings of estrangement, and haunt my recollections of the past and present with feelings of displacement and ambiguity* (Artefact 3).

I offer two exemplars to illustrate how roles attached to an ascribed status are exposed to duress and result in role confusion, dislocation and a partial loss of a sense of self.
Daughter (Ascribed Status: Female)

There is evidence (Thadani 1999) of a rich woman centred culture that dates back nearly 2000 years in ancient India. However, Hindu fundamentalism, which evolved as part of the legacy of colonialism, led to the corruption of Indian spirituality and the consolidation of male power.

Despite the sentiments of a former Prime Minister of India (Nehru) that one can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women, India remains a patriarchal society still underpinned by beliefs that render women as 'second class' citizens.

Even today across Indian society, women commonly experience subjugation, marginalisation and general disempowerment. One of the many roles that these prevailing attitudes impact upon is the role and experience of being a daughter in an Indian family.

In a male preferring society such as India, being born female and ascribed the role of daughter is seen as an encumbrance and the dowry system is still practiced. Female infanticide is one of India’s darkest secrets and modern technologies are readily adopted for the perpetuation of this practice.

While women are guaranteed equality under the constitution, legal protection has little effect in the face of prevailing patriarchal traditions. Daughters lack power to decide whom they will marry, and are often married off as children. Daughters often bear primary responsibility for the well-being of their families, however on the other hand legal loopholes are used to deny them inheritance rights.

In India a good daughter is expected
to be both acquiescent and altruistic in the interests of the family and in particular the interests of male family members.

Notwithstanding marginal improvements, the impact of these remains largely rhetorical. As daughters, women’s lives in this cultural masterplot are subject to inequity and injustice. In many cases being a daughter is a matter of life or death.

The second ‘face’ is embedded in “below the surface attitudes” about how they translate and impact on the role of daughter in this masterplot. Research has indicated that despite the rhetoric, Australia is still a male preferring society (Klein 1986) and cultural attitudes towards girls and women are still shaped by patriarchal ideas of women as inferior. There is a plethora of evidence of this in daily media reports and anecdotes.

In this Masterplot the role of daughter is then equally subject to patriarchal ideas of the nuclear family and its roles. However, a key difference is the individual’s ability to eventually break free from the cultural ties that bind.

Observation

On arriving in Australia, my role as the eldest child in the family saw a number of responsibilities and expectations of the role take on new meaning. As migrants, the whole family, particularly my parents, were under duress as they adjusted to the new environment and to the demands of the norms and mores of the new culture. Embedded in this struggle, the experience of racism resulted in internalised pain and heightened their frustration. As their eldest daughter, I bore the brunt of this as I fought to establish my own sense of place and identity. On the one hand I was exposed to newfound freedoms within Masterplot 2, however, internally, I was bound by the norms of the acquiescent Indian daughter and loyalty to my parents. While much of the human world today operates within patriarchal frameworks, the way in which the ascribed status of being female and an associated role of daughter unravels is very different in different cultural masterplots. As a daughter of migrant parents, I found myself subjected to both inter-generational cultural conflict and burdened by a set of expectations and responsibilities that remained throughout my life in Australia up to the time of my parents’ death.

My introduction to and practice of radical feminism, my personal politics, an unsuccessful marriage and attempt at motherhood and my coming out as a lesbian only served to exacerbate the tensions between myself and my parents as their daughter. While I understand that these reactions can be and are manifest in both masterplots, I think that their genesis is different. Masterplot 1 is underpinned by a set of deeply philosophical and cultural values; masterplot 2 is mediated by the experience of migration, feelings of powerlessness and other cultural and political influences such as feminism, western liberal attitudes and the advent of policy changes in response to these. The status of woman and role of a daughter of Indian migrant parents impacted on my life in both masterplots. However, the underlying variation in cultural values of each masterplot meant that the affect was constant. Any freedom from the expectations was bought at a cost of hurting and alienating my parents. This tension of trying to please my parents yet follow and forge my own path impacted on my identity as I relentlessly struggled to shake off my socialised beliefs that acquiescence equated to goodness.
The word *Indian* in Masterplot 1 refers to nationality; including those born in India to parents with a colonial mixed heritage. It does not necessarily refer to specific phenotypical attributes, such as colour of one's skin, as one born of Indian parents.

Whilst growing up in India I cannot consciously recall much reference to or discussion about nationality. Colonisation generated values that indicated a general preference for 'whiteness' on matters relating to the colour of one's skin and bias about one's religion. These values and biases still exist across Indian society today. Despite my early exposure to this bias (Fragment 1), the negative impact of the 'darker' colour of my skin did not fully emerge and impact on my sense of self until after my experience of migration.

Being *Indian* in this masterplot also has links to caste and socio-economic class. However, my parents who were both classified as 'Anglo Indian' or 'Indo-Portuguese' did not consider themselves as *Indian*. In this instance matters of caste were never spoken of and social class took precedence.

In my case, the first exposure to discussions about nationality came when I was taken to get a passport photo as part of the application for migration to Australia. It is then that I discovered that up till that moment my father had been a holder of a Portuguese passport related to his Goan heritage.

In this Masterplot my experience of being *Indian* was already subjected to confusion. While issues of skin colour were referred to reflecting post-colonial values, the idea of being *Indian* was not associated with

In the new homeland of Australia, the description of Indian almost became irrelevant as I was initially referred to as 'black' and then as a 'woman of colour'. From my earliest migrant experiences in a regional Victorian city, it was always my phenotypical features that identified and named me. My 'blackness' became the source of all questioning and inquiry. Questions about where I came from or who I was were secondary.

In 1967, being *Indian* in Australia did not hold any values relating to class or caste. Nationality in this case was identified with the colour 'black' and with my status as a migrant.

In Masterplot 2, the ascribed status of *Indian* is primarily associated with being an outsider. As such, the outsider is marginalised and often powerless.

As new arrivals we were among the early 'coloured' migrants to arrive in Australia after the cessation of the 'White Australia' policy. Since that time, as the cultural demographic of the country has changed dramatically, and globalisation has affected migration patterns, the definition has also evolved. However, despite policy changes and rhetorical hyperbole, I understand that the word Indian is still deeply associated with skin colour. This subsequently often becoming the basis of racism and marginalisation.
being 'black'. Growing up in India, I may not have had the conceptual capacity to articulate ideas of Indianess or nationality, however I did feel Indian and this feeling was clearly rooted in feelings of belonging and a sense of my place.

**Observation** In the above example one can observe how the ascribed status of Indian and its associated roles can unravel in significantly different ways in two diverse cultural masterplots. The value system of each cultural masterplot is maintained and perpetuated by its core institutions. These in turn interact almost seamlessly with the grand narratives that underpin the values. The institutions that include the legal, educational, and political systems have the power to define and enforce the values of each culture.

With the advent of post industrial capitalism and globalisation there have been shifts in labour needs and subsequently in migration policy. More recently, as the global education market for international students has become increasingly competitive, the word Indian in Australia has been more closely allied with nationality rather than skin colour. However, I am not convinced that this is not merely rhetorical.

Moving from a cultural masterplot where notions of being Indian were either not on my conscious radar or, when made conscious, were totally associated with nationality, to a cultural masterplot whose value system was underpinned by racist notions associating Indian with being 'black', came as an incredible shock. The impact of this naming stirred in me the story I had been told about my paternal grandmother’s comment at my birth. Confusion about my status as Indian, insecurity and alienation fuelled my feelings of dislocation. This dislocation was exacerbated with each visit back to India, where as an expatriate I truly discovered the meaning of living in a ‘third space’.

The significance of the impact of masterplots and their role in understanding life and questions of identity is reflected in the way I have employed multiple voices and multiple media to excavate, interpret, create and tell my story. I fully concur with Jeanette Winterson's (2004) idea that “It is true that the words drop away, and that the important things are often left unsaid. The important things are learned in faces, in gestures, not in our locked tongues. The true things are too big or too small, or in any case always the wrong size to fit the template called language” (p. 135). Stories can be communicated in a variety of ways. On the Journey Around Myself I use a variety of devices and media, including fictional narrators and a protagonist, to convey my narrative. Examples of these include the elephant Bhudevi and the bird narrators in the fable Satatantra, and the metaphor of landscape in the digital story Lost in Translation. Chapter Two, reveals the
importance of allegorical modes and my use of a variety of visual, written and oral metaphor that allows me to express difficult emotions and elucidates my voice.

Micro-Narratives

In his discussion of narrative, Porter-Abbott (2002) suggests that one finds a story line or narrative in both narrative and non-narrative genres. These often are stories layered within stories and he refers to them as micro-narratives (p. 2). The fragments and shards uncovered have each been associated with an event, and from each event or series of events a micro narrative has emerged. These micro-narratives are the stories within stories. As my journey proceeded, I realised that the capacity of these micro-narratives for ‘scene making’ (Woolf 1976) and their infinite diversity of form was never-ending. Examples and patterns of this diversity of form, structure and expression are consistently evident throughout this work.

The use of the photographs in the album Happy Memories along with the stories I was told by my parents and grandparents prompted memories and fed the creation of my own story. In another example, the people included as significant others in the collages in the Hall of Mirrors may also be found interwoven into the characters in the fable Satatantra. In the digital stories, particularly Lost in Translation, I have combined landscape and reflective experience in an attempt to convey experience that is lost in translation and resulting in dislocation through a process of self-reflection grounded in place.

These examples also demonstrate the complexity and intricacy of the stratified self. These are layers of experience embedded in memories that require excavation and interpretation in the present moment in order to unravel a sense of identity. For such a complex endeavour there cannot be a simple process. While, ultimately there may be a unifying narrative, the nature and value of micro narratives in such research is not only important but also essential. The micro narratives emerge in complex and interrelated ways, blending, linking and weaving themselves to form a more elaborate and overarching story; a story that has led me to an understanding of who I am; where I am and when I am - my identity.

Our lives are made up of an unlimited number of micro narratives, each one of them has the potential for a story and in turn, we often expect them to tell a story. We are our stories, and our stories are inextricably linked to a sense of who we are. In Salman Rushdie’s (2006) Midnight’s Children, the protagonist Saleem observes that he must work
faster than Scheherazade if he is to end up meaning something. In the remembering of self, the sheer volume of micro narratives means that countless fragments, some of which are buried deep in one’s history, can trigger events and memories of these forming the genesis of stories. In the construction of the artefacts this became a consistent practice. Often the dilemma I faced was associated with what to omit rather than include. This is the character of narrative and as Flood (2003) suggests, it is the storyteller who chooses the details that generate the story.

In the course of the excavation of fragments of memory, micro-narratives associated with those memories permeate the Journey Around Myself. Whilst containing their own story, they feed into and trigger other narratives that unravel archaeology of self and identity. To illustrate my point I refer to the following examples:

As a micro-narrative, the first example is the basis of a ‘genesis’ story told to me by my parents on many occasions. The anecdote about my birth had a significant impact on my early sense of self and has been interwoven into accounts of my life story.

“Oh! It’s only a girl and isn’t she black?” (Fragment 1)

This comment, at the moment of my birth made by my paternal grandmother, whose partial heritage was Portuguese, reflects two significant values underpinning the culture and belief system in India. Firstly, it reflects an Indian culture that is overtly male preferring and secondly, a post-colonial Indian culture that to this day values the ‘whiteness’ of one’s skin. Advertisements seeking marriage partners explicitly read:

Goan R.C. Brahmin parents seek suitable partner for their daughter who is a highly qualified doctor in U.K. 5’6” height, slim and fair complexion. Those interested contact … (Herald Newspaper Panjim 2004, p. 8).

My grandmother’s story and the re-telling of it contributed to negative ideas of my value as a girl and early self-perceptions about the colour of my skin. While the issue of ‘blackness’ did not consciously affect my childhood in India, I propose that fragments of this experience have re-surfaced after migration to Australia and my subsequent exposure to racism. On the other hand, the matter of being female in India and being a female in an Indian family in Australia has had a far greater impact on my life. Nevertheless, being ‘black’ or female in my experience was associated with faults and not attributes. For much of my life, especially whilst in India, I understood that if I tried hard enough and behaved impeccably, I would somehow gain the respect of my parents, my teachers and wider
society. After migrating to Australia, these ‘faults’, as I had perceived them to be, were exacerbated by my feelings of dislocation and alienation in a society that was racist and within which the same levels of misogyny were played out, albeit in a slightly more covert and politically correct way.

In the second instance, photographic records substantiate the story related. The combination of visual clues and stories related to me enhance fragments of my own memory of lived experience. In this case, the early narrative creation of identity through memory of the experience has been sustained because the story of the experience can be linked with my present emotional development, my relationship with my parents and questions relating to fear about separation from those I am close to.

What do I know about separation – to separate?

One of the earliest fears, one of the earliest experiences – the pain thereof – there are many stories to tell – but I shall try and relate the most significant....

It must be 1953, I am not quite 3 years old and my beloved dad has sailed away to England...

The days went by slowly – I remember the little window of the house at St Andrews Rd, Bandra. The stone lintel was my perch – I sat in it for hours – mum tells me that I would not eat – I pined for him – morning, noon and night. There are recordings of me singing ‘Laddies’ daddy ...when the boat comes in (Fragment 2).

These micro-narratives contain memories of my childhood and are central to my attachment to the adults who are captured in the stories that I was told and the associated emotions that evolved. In this incident, I can recall the place in the narrative and have re-visited my childhood home in Bandra during the course of my research. However, it is the power of narrative related to me that remained profound in its influence on my linked emotions. While standing in St Andrews Road, Bandra in 2004, outside the place where the house would have been, I realised that it is the stories I had been told about this experience that sustain a sharp reality and serve to influence and impact upon my emotions in the present.

Memory

As a migrant who had lost her sense of belonging and identity, I set out to explore the role of memory in unravelling archaeology of self and identity. In her personal story about growing up in Iran, Azar Nafisi (2009) refers to memory as ‘a ghost that lurks in the
corners of our mind, interrupting our normal course of life, disrupting our sleep in order to remind us of some acute pain or pleasure, something silenced or something ignored’ (p. xvii).

In Chapters Three and Four I engaged in a non-linear path of excavation to reveal fragments of memory and interrogate clues to explore the way in which memory is critical to the act of remembering the self. Along the Journey Around Myself I have discovered that there is a critical conjunction between fragments of memory and the development of self-narrative through micro-narratives and how triggers to memory of past experience lead to memory being enacted in the present time. Later in this chapter we observe how these memories and micro-narratives contribute to the creation of a unifying story to reveal a understanding of one’s identity, one’s sense of self and place of belonging.
The following diagrammatic representation will help to understand the role of memory in the process of unraveling archaeology of identity. To illustrate this I have constructed an example from the *Journey Around Myself* (Chapter 3, Fragment 4). It demonstrates how triggers of past experience lead to memory becoming enacted in the present time and how micro-narratives are formed.

### MEMORY AND THE FORMATION OF MICRO-NARRATIVES

**Figure 11. Memory and Narrative Formation**

The archaeological site contains many fragments each of which is capable of generating a micro-narrative. They are non-linear and subject to triggers that reveal memories, sensations and emotions to inspire the construction of these micro-narratives (*Figure 11*). In the process of unraveling archaeology of identity and authoring the self, fragments of
memory are excavated, embellished and interpreted in the present moment of \textit{Nachtraglichkeit}. Micro-narratives are generated and may be linked to form a unifying narrative in the shape of a life-story (\textit{Figure 12}).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure12.png}
\caption{Relationship between micro-narratives and a unifying narrative}
\end{figure}

For Peter Brooks (1996) "our very definition as human beings is bound up with the stories we tell about our own lives and the world in which we live" (p. 19). Through a complex process of interaction between memory and narrative, I arrive at a sense of who I am. It is narrative that has given shape to the fragments of memory, for without narrative, memory would lie buried.
**Story and Storytelling**

As humans, our instinctive nature for storytelling can be a powerful antidote in times of stress and personal emotional turbulence. It is an embryonic language of the heart and it has been used in healing by teachers and healers from ancient spiritual traditions. In modern times storytelling has been incorporated into a variety of informal and formal settings ranging from teaching and community building to narrative therapy and courtrooms (Wingard 2001; Epston & White 1998).

There have been many times along the *Journey Around Myself* when, like Scheherazade, I have found myself writing stories to save my life. During the course of my research I experienced the loss of both my parents through death. These have been critical incidents that have had a significant impact on the narrative and process of the journey. Both my parents were storytellers and, as such, were the means of finding the fragments of memory through the stories they held. Whilst abundant film and photographic records provided me with evidence of events, people and places, some of which I have used as fragments in the archaeological site, or in the construction of the *Hall of Mirrors* and digital story *A Journey Through Lost Time*, it is my parents’ stories that enhanced my narrative creation and discourse. Following both instances of loss, I found that despite my grief, I intuitively reached for the storyteller in me and drawing on my creative ability generated visual (*The Hall of Mirrors* collages) and written narrative (*Satatantra* and this chapter) for my research.

In the telling of life stories, the relationship between time and narrative is crucial. For Ricoeur ‘human time’ is the way humans organise time is through narrative.

> Time becomes human time to the extent that it is organised after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal existence (Ricoeur 1984, Vol 1, p. 3).

For Jonathon Culler (1981) the story gains life through the telling of it. In other words he believes that while the story precedes the narrative discourse, there would be no story without the telling of it (discourse). He calls this process the ‘double logic’ (p. 169). In the digital story *A Journey Through Lost Time*, I explore the Proustian concept of time and its relationship to narrative. Through the exploration of memories in the form of ‘random moments’, fragments located in records and contained within family photo archives, I have ‘resuscitated dead recollections’ to piece together a landscape; a context by which to
locate myself in the world today. The framework I provide in Chapter Two shows how I locate my experience and give life to the narrative by placing it within a temporal framework as a story.

We live our lives deeply connected to and surrounded by stories. Stories are always mediated by the narrative discourse. For Porter Abbott (2002) “we are always called upon to be active participants in narrative, because receiving the story depends on how we construct it from the discourse” (p. 19). To this end, I agree with Jean Paul Sartre (2007) who, based on the concept that all stories are constructed, was prompted to announce that there are no such things as ‘true stories’ (p. 39).

In her book *Lighthousekeeping* (2004), Jeanette Winterson’s protagonist Silver, is taken in by Mr Pew the lighthouse keeper who tells her ancient tales of homelessness and longing. The characters engage in an exchange of stories but the essence of the overriding narrative draws heavily on the nature and process of the stories we tell our selves.


In the fable *Satatantra*, I use the device of storytelling to elucidate a ficto memoir underpinned by my life story. The central character Bhudevi leaves her homeland of India for Australia. Her experience of dislocation and her subsequent search for identity and a place to belong reflects the journey around myself. In *Satatantra*, the essence of the narrative discourse is concerned with the journey of self discovery and the relationship between narrative and selfhood rather than the degree of ‘truth’ embedded in the narrative itself.

The issue of the constructed nature of narrative discourse and its capacity for subjective interpretation of events is discussed in Chapter Two *Charting the Journey*. Paul Ricoeur suggests that if we are to make sense of our lives at all, rather than understand life as a series of ‘disconnected atomic events’, we must have narrative synthesis (p. 124). Whilst I partially concur with Ricoeur’s (1992) idea that selfhood is solely associated with narrative unity, in my experience the excavation of fragments of memory on the *Journey Around Myself* spawned hundreds of micro-narratives. Each of these narratives contained their own story. However, in the process of the authoring of self, these micro-narratives
contributed to a unified narrative. In my research this evolves through the fable *Satatantra*.

If we accept that narrative represents events, and we wish to understand fragments of memory in self-reflexive narrative, the arrangement of narrative for the purpose of narrative discourse almost always involves and succumbs to a need for order. This linearity of story that is particularly found in a modern world is underpinned by a Newtonian epistemology of cause and effect. Despite the need for linearity, which impacts on story and the way we engage in storytelling, ancient epics and narratives have often started in the middle. These patterns and rhythms can be found in ancient Indian texts such as the Vedas. In recent times (post-modern era) the need for linearity is being increasingly snubbed in modern literature and cinematic narrative. Examples such as Martin Amis’ (1991) *Time’s Arrow*, a novel in which all events are written backwards, Jeanette Winterson’s (2004) *Lighthousekeeping* in which we find a chapter entitled ‘A beginning, a middle and an end is the proper way to tell a story. But I have difficulty with that method’ (p. 23); and filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard (1998), who, in an interview with Gene Youngblood, famously said: ‘a story must have a beginning a middle and an end but not necessarily in that order’ (p. 40).

Roland Barthes (1982), in his essay on the structural analysis of narrative, refers to this ‘fallacy’ as “the mainspring of narrative … the confusion between consecution and consequence, what comes after being read in narrative as what is caused by” (p. 266).

While I agree with Barthes’ view on the matter, the model I employ and reveal earlier in this chapter (*Figure 1*) may be considered to be sequential. The model shows how fragments of memory interact with ‘triggers’; prompts to memory that are diverse and can range from visual artefacts, spatial impressions, and related stories to kinesthetic memories. However, by using an archaeological approach, I have engaged in a non-linear path of excavation that has resulted in multiple voices and generated associated micro-narratives that do not necessarily rely on ‘cause’ and ‘effect’. Because it is the way that these are used to establish a unifying narrative that brings order and presents an opportunity to establish a sense of identity.

narrates herself into being, or in the Ricoeurean sense, she creates herself as she performs her story” (p. 35). Maan believes that through the manipulation of traditional paradigms she is able to structure a story, which can encompass the conflict of cultural dislocation. The non-linear approach that I have adopted through archaeological narrative inquiry has also manipulated the strictly linear nature of traditional paradigms of narrative discourse. Fragments uncovered in the archaeological site have been interrogated and provide data for the creation of stories. This process has been non-linear and emergent.

Rebecca Goldstein provides us with another example of how she manoeuvres traditional frameworks in her book *The Late-Summer Passion of a Woman of Mind* to narrate the life of Eva Mueller. As the narrator Goldstein (1989) presents an alternative to the master narrative:

> We live our lives by telling ourselves stories...our human creativity is, for the most part, exercised not in the production of new forms but rather in the finding of ways to force our material into the finite available few. We trim off and discard into forgetfulness the incoherent bits that won't go into any kind of story we can tell ourselves – incoherent because they won't go in; that is if we notice them at all (p. 18).

Along my journey of excavation I often found myself alarmed at the way in which memory has sometimes involuntarily edited and manipulated incidents, experience and their associated narrative in its interplay with time and content. For example, in rummaging through my personal journals to randomly extract excerpts for the ‘archaeological site’ I found that critical incidents that had taken up only a few moments of my life have occupied central emphasis and recurrent reflection. On the other hand, large tracts of my life had been rendered invisible. Memories relating to these spaces were subsequently excavated and unravelled through photographs like those included in *Happy Memories* (Artefact 5). Stories related to me by my ancestors as in *Fragment 1 and 2*, and photographs of place are included in the digital story *Lost in Translation*. While I may have trimmed off some of the memories and made others fit into available structures, I have done so by enacting personal agency. By using multiple voices and non-traditional narrative structures I bring the narrative to life in the authoring of selfhood.

In *Faultlines* Meena Alexander permits all her voices to speak, and in *The Late-Summer Passion of a Woman of Mind* Goldstein (1990) suggests that Eva Mueller should begin by letting all her voices speak. In this way, Maan (1999) suggests ‘all the selves’ that have been in ‘all the places should associate internarratively (p. 75).
Maan concludes that:

Narrative identity theory claims that narrative will determine what our experience is, how we tell our stories, who we are, and to a large extent what we will do (p. 85).

I concur with her when she adds that the way in which content is told, or the event represented, is an essential aspect of narrative function especially when it is associated with identity formation. She continues:

The structure of our stories will determine what our experience is, how we tell our stories, who we are, and what our future actions may be. But meaningful narrative agency is limited by an inherited sense of narrative form. To unbind that structure is to assert agency in determining and re-determining, who we are and what we will do, in a way that is truly imaginative (p. 85).

In the course of my journey, the process of selfhood or identity creation in which I consider the self as an archaeological project has been more akin to that of narrative identity theorist Roy Schafer’s (1992) notion that the self is ‘always a narrative construction’ and that selfhood is equated with ‘multiple voices and discordant experiences’ (p. 23). In the end, narrative synthesis does come into play as a device for articulating the story. However, the story contains a non-linear process of excavation of fragments of memory and has generated a complexity of alternatively structured narratives. These include: the fable Satatantra, Hall of Mirrors, the three digital stories and the Fragments found in the archaeological site (Chapter 3). These are micro-narratives that interweave and re-associate with each other emerging as what Maan (1999) calls ‘inter-narrative’ synthesis.

In Time and Narrative, Paul Ricoeur (1984) draws a link between narrative and identity that is based on the concept of linear time. In her model of inter-narrative identity Maan offers us an alternative model by which the narrator engages in an "ongoing creative attempt to avoid traditional plot and correlative identity structure, and equally to avoid simple imitation of fractured experience" (p. 65). On the Journey Around Myself the unraveling of archaeology of identity involves accepting the changes brought about by time and re-arranging both time and narrative to author a unifying narrative of identity. I do this by interrogating the data uncovered through memoric fragments of past experience and assimilating the information with a new awareness and acuity that life in the present moment brings.
Through this process Maan proposes that the narrator is able to use multiple voices; amplifying or silencing these as required, thus transcending the boundaries of the dominant narrative agency. She points us towards the work of Meena Alexander as an example of how this is done successfully.

In her memoir *Faultlines*, Meena Alexander practices a form of self-narrative that disregards the tradition of unified narrative. Like myself, she is a woman who finds herself culturally dislocated and, while attempting to tell her life story in her own voice, she finds that she has multiple voices manifesting from experiences of living in a multitude of places. Alexander successfully presents her memoir by destabilising traditional identity constructions, especially the Ricoeurian stance that identity should remain constant in the flux of change. Altering Ricoeur’s category of narrative has implications beyond identity for, as Maan notes, “it also affects the way one would make sense of time” (p. 93).

On the *Journey Around Myself* through the interrogation and creation of micro-narratives, I generate a self-narrative that does not depend upon a unified structure for its coherence. By excavating fragments of memory and embodying them into my present life experience, I am able to synthesise past lived experience in all its breadth, depth, and geographic and cultural diversity to unravel archaeology of identity. I occasionally resort to chronologically arranging some micro-narratives for reader convenience, (*Hall of Mirrors* Artefact 1). However, contradictory to the Ricoeurian model, and in keeping with Maan’s model of inter-narrative identity, I largely avoid temporal chronology as an organising structure by utilising an archaeological approach to my investigation. By nature, such an investigation can always only be non-linear and emergent.

**Identity**

I return here to the questions posed by Samuel Beckett in his novel *Un-nameable* and to which I refer in chapter five: Who was I? Where was I? When was I? (p. 2).

In philosophical terms the question of ‘who am I?’ is a vexed one and raises the issue of individual uniqueness. Hannah Arendt believes that this ‘who one is’ evades philosophical knowledge because we are tricked into saying ‘what one is’ due to the limits of philosophical language and unequivocal verbal expression. “The moment we want to say
who someone is, our very vocabulary leads us astray into saying what he is” (Arendt 1975, p. 181).

In her book *The Human Condition*, Arendt (1958) tells us that we need to look into the life-story of individuals in order to move from the “what” to the “who” one is. She says:

> The real story in which we are engaged as long as we live has no visible or invisible maker because it is not made. The only “somebody” it reveals is its hero, and it is the only medium in which the originally intangible manifestation of a uniquely distinct “who” can become tangible *ex post fact* through action and speech. Who somebody is or was we can know only by knowing the story of which he is himself the hero – his biography, in other words (p. 186).

With the emergence and development of feminist criticism, Arendt’s perspective has been re-visited and expanded. In her book *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*, Italian feminist Adriana Cavarero (2000) uses Arendt’s ideas as a point of departure. For Cavarero, we get our sense of identity, an answer to the question ‘Who am I?’ through our capacity and desire for story telling. We engage in words and deeds: words are spoken, tales are told. For her these never belong fully to philosophical discourse. It is this desire for story that frames our uniqueness. In other words, our memory’s capacity for auto narration continually ‘tells us our own personal story’. Cavarero tells us “the narratable self finds its home, not simply in a conscious exercise of remembering, but in the spontaneous narrating structure of memory itself” (p. 41).

However, for Cavarero, this remembering of content does not necessarily confer identity; the unity of the narrative lies in our desire for narration of our story, and it is the telling of this story through biography that provides us with the space to uncover ‘who’ rather than ‘what’ one is. She thinks that we can only come to know our life story by ‘exposing’ it to others. Paul Kottman (2000) in his introduction to the English translation of Cavarero’s work emphasises that it is the “exposition”, that is above all political. (xvii) From my own experiences, I understand that it is in this political space of self-narrative that one is able to arrive at an understanding of ‘Who’ I am.

While there are many aspects of Cavarero’s thesis with which I agree, I do not accept her assertion that the unity of narrative (content) and narrative discourse (telling) supposedly present at birth is lost through the passage of time. Furthermore, that as a result of this we can only retrieve ‘unity’ as identity by entrusting our life stories to what she calls
‘another’s tale’. In considering our desire for our own story, she believes that the narratable self then is incapable of telling the story of birth and early childhood (pp. 40-44). Through excavation and self-reflection of fragments that include visual memory, places of memory and memory of places I have revealed and established that auto-narration in the form of an autobiographical life story is possible. It is possible because the stories we are told about ourselves are absorbed into the process of narrating the self. In other words, the stories we are told constitute some of the fragments uncovered in the process of excavation. These are built on and expanded through self-reflection and become part of the unified narrative of the self. Several examples of this are offered in Chapter Three where the reader is presented with fragments of memory revealed as micro-narratives. Each one of these is followed by an interrogation that considers past lived experience from the standpoint of the present moment. Through an unraveling of Nachtraglichkeit or afterwardness (Jean Laplanche 1999) I start to understand what I did not know then in the light of what I know now. This excavation of memory that includes stories we have been told about our selves and the absorption of these stories into our self-reflexive narrative is an integral part of the process of auto-narration.

Using fragments of memory, I engage in ‘scene making’ and construct a set of micro narratives. I have deconstructed and interrogated these micro narratives by deliberately using concepts out of context, grounding my self in many places, deconstructing norms of association and using multiple voices to weave a life story: a sense of who I am.

Ultimately it is story that provides me with a sense of identity in the continuum of my life story; an acknowledgement that contained within that continuum is a homecoming. The concept of Punar in Sanskrit refers to eternal beginnings; every beginning generates a return. So just as there are eternal beginnings, so too I accept that the idea of self contains endless homecomings, multiple voices and multiple selves that reside within, emerge and evolve in the course of our life story.
Chapter Seven: Punar - A Homecoming
In life there are two kinds of travellers
those who look at a map
and those who look at a mirror

those who look at a map –
are leaving

those who look at the mirror –
are coming home.

Anonymous
**Introduction**

At the commencement of this journey I felt dislocated and insecure about who I was and my place of belonging. As a person who, with my parents had left our homeland of India and spent much of my life traversing a broken set of geographies in search of self, I often found myself alienated, out of place and out of time. On the *Journey Around Myself*, I wanted to know what role memory played in the process of unravelling archaeology of identity. To do this I had to disturb my very existence with a set of questions. I had to excavate the archaeology of self, dig up memories, listen to stories, interrogate my findings and create micro-narratives. In the excavation I discovered how memory works to unravel identity. As Azar Nafisi (2009) has succinctly described:

> This is how the past comes to us, not neatly but like a knife, always unexpected. And it comes in fragments. You try to put the pieces together, but you can only really understand it if you accept its irretrievable and fragmentary nature (pp. 304-5).

During the process I found myself reaching through mirrors to sweep away ghosts of the past. From time to time significant mirrors provided reflections to contemplate and contribute to the evolution of a definition of my self. I had to acknowledge and allow the multiple voices uncovered to speak to each other; I had to accept that any unified narrative would always be fluid, subject to flux and change with each new experience, each new fragment of memory.

In undertaking this *Journey Around Myself* I contemplate how a person with a fractured geography, dislocated and re-located in a foreign landscape structures a personal narrative and maintains her authentic voice. I employ the theoretical argument of *Internarrative identity* developed by Ajit Maan (1999) in which she builds on post-modern ideas (Giddens 1991; Foucault 1979) of multiple selves, a shift from traditional Western acceptance of a single, unified "self" as the only option in narrative. I use my dislocation, my fragmented experience, to challenge the Ricoeurean structure of personal identity as the single, fixed and underpinning basis of narrative identity.

If we take the time to excavate our memories, consider and reflect upon the fragments and shards that we find as talismans and treasures, we will discover the seeds of story. By
allowing our various voices to engage internarratively, we can challenge and manipulate traditional paradigms to retain personal agency. In doing this, we are able to glue our endless micro-narratives together and arrive at a sense of identity through the authoring of self. We are our stories and we must try and tell them. In my research I consider the self as an ‘archaeological project’ and in doing so I excavate fragments of existence to trace clues, trigger memory and assign meaning. In this way I have manipulated traditional paradigms (Ricoeur 1990; Cavarero 2000; Arendt 1975; Manzin 2007) to construct a sense of self through story. Winterson (2004) reminds us: 'Turn down the daily noise and first there is the relief of silence. And then, very quietly, as quiet as light, meaning returns. Words are the part of silence that can be spoken’ (p. 135).

In his essay Imaginary Homelands Salman Rushdie (1991), like Jerome Bruner (1991) warns us of the dangers of a ‘ghetto mentality’ resulting from cocooning oneself in a web of subjectivity. In asking himself the question, Rushdie encourages us to pose the question: ‘who are we writing for?’ He says:

My own, short, answer is that I have never had a reader in mind. I have ideas, people, events, shapes, and I write ‘for’ those things, and hope that the completed work will be of interest to others. But which others? ...

So I would say that I write ‘for’ people who feel a part of the things I write ‘about’, but also for everyone else whom I can reach (p. 19-20).

A Journey Around Myself is clearly a study of self. I was interested in my own feelings of dislocation and loss of sense of self. I asked: What is the role of memory and narrative when unraveling archaeology of identity for an individual who has experienced dislocation and a loss of a sense of place? To deepen my understanding about the link between narrative, narrative discourse and the articulation of identity I also reflected on how the creative potential of an individual can be used in the investigation of memory and the self and the role of story and storytelling in the making of identity.

I turned to my own lived experience to find answers to the questions: Who am I? Where am I? and When am I? In the process of excavation of memory, I engaged in an investigation of the emergent fragments and interrogated and reflected on these to
generate narratives of the self. In due course, like Rushdie, I wrote about people, places, events, ideas and shapes. Initially, I did not have a reader in mind.

On my *Journey* I have been the researcher and the researched. However, in Chapter Two I acknowledge my awareness of looking beyond the monological ‘I’. In this chapter firstly I explain how I address this awareness and look further than my story to demonstrate the value and application of my findings for others. Secondly, using the central concepts of memory, self, story/identity as reference points I share my findings about what I discovered along the way. Finally, I present summative account of my findings and how my research adds new knowledge to the field of qualitative inquiry.

**Beyond the Autobiographical ‘I’**

Throughout my research I have considered the self to be a socially and culturally located individual whose identity is shaped by, and, in turn, shapes his or her own lived experience. This is borne out by the acknowledgement of key influences, significant others and the impact of the greater social milieu in the process of remembering the self (Chapter Five).

My new methodological approach *archaeological narrative inquiry* offers a methodology that can be applied far beyond the autobiographical ‘I’ of my own project. The content may vary but the process is germane and effective.

During the course of my research I had the opportunity to present aspects of the project, such as the digital stories to audiences (*Artefact 7: Charting the Journey*). The reaction from viewers validated the significance and usefulness of my research. For, while initial interest was shown in my story, it was often immediately followed by people wanting to relate how my story had resonated with their own experience.

As I have established in Chapter Six: Story: the making of identity; we are our stories and, like Rushdie’s (2006) protagonist *Saleem Sinai* in *Midnights Children*, we know that our lives and our stories are inextricably linked. Critical race theorist Richard Delgado (1989) tells us that:

> Storytelling emboldens the hearer, who may have the same thoughts or experiences the storyteller describes, but hesitated to give them a voice. Having heard another express them, he or she realises, I am not alone (p. 2437).
Listening to people's stories opens up what Jean Clandinin and Jerry Rosiek (2007) call 'possibilities for generating new stories in which we can all live' (p. 62). *A Journey Around Myself* presents the reader/listener/viewer with a story as a catalyst for their own stories.

As I negotiated a *Journey Around Myself*, this archaeological excavation of memory and self, there were several realisations that resonated with the literature I had read and with the central components of my research question.

Firstly I share what I have learned about Memory, the Self, and the value of Story and how they work to unravel a sense of identity.

Secondly, I indicate how my research, through a novel approach to narrative inquiry, contributes new understandings about the idea of the dislocated self and an individuals' search to arrive at a sense of identity and place of belonging. This new approach adds to the body of knowledge in qualitative research and I record my claim that the approach developed establishes a unique method of data construction in narrative form for interrogation and analysis. This results in a new and innovative model for PhD research.

Finally, I present a summary of my findings for consideration and application in a variety of research contexts.

**Memory**

*A Journey Around Myself* is a reflective study of self. In my research, in order to unravel lived experience, the self is considered an archaeological site for the excavation of fragments that in turn are revealed, reflected upon and analysed. The element on which the entire process is critically dependant is the concept of memory; and it is the shards and fragments of memory that are excavated either directly, in the form of micro-narratives, or indirectly via kinesthetic experiences or through visual fragments such as photos that serve a powerful mnemonic function (Schacter 1996). In *Journey Around Myself*, my exploration into identity is underpinned by memory.

In the course of my research ideas of memory, identity and place are inextricably linked and interwoven. In order to understand each and their interrelationship required me to journey on an unchartered course into the labyrinth of my past. As the research progressed I found that with each experience, each new story, each new image or journey I
embarked on, there were continual changes, interpretations, constructions and reconstructions. In many cases, the focus on new information or experience heightened the perception or interpretation of a past shard. I found that through the act of remembering that I was able to recover and recount experiences of the past. Memory’s most basic feature is that it facilitates our ability to differentiate the present from yesterday. On my journey I found that memory played a vital part in the recovery of past as it helped illuminate elements of my present experience and develop a sense of who I am today.

I discovered how the process of memory requires the construction and re-construction of things past. How, through this process of re-construction, some memories became distorted as I struggled to reflect and analyse their meaning in the present moment. Conscious of the concept of ‘Nachtraglichkeit’, I heeded the advice of Nicola King (2000) in relation to this idea and discovered how memory operates in the present by inevitably incorporating an awareness of ‘what wasn’t known then’. In doing so I found out about the fallibility (Rushdie 1999) and fragility of memory. In due course I found that a single memory could have several manifestations; the memory, exists, but at various points in time, the same memory manifested differently. It is precisely the partial nature of these memories, fragmented as they may be, that I found to be a source of great resonance and essential to my effort to evoke a self-portrait that reflects the ‘self of the past’ integrated with the present.

As the excavation proceeded, I found myself tossed from one compass point to another across the landscape of self. As the process was non-linear, the emerging fragments were often randomly revealed. The interplay of memory with these fragments meant that certain evidence in the form of journal writings, objects, photographs and film emerged incidentally. However, it is important to note that often it was use of memory that led me to deliberately follow clues offered and to seek further tangible evidence. This evidence in turn was used to generate further data in the form of creative works. I discovered the significant value of tangible artefacts to trigger and verify memory. The interaction between tangible fragments and fragments of memory were precious in their value to recover memory from the wilderness and contribute to my associated stories.

In the process of remembering the self, I was able to employ my imagination in conjunction with memory to generate creative narratives. As I created works such as the
digital stories *Lost in Translation* and *A Journey Through Lost Time* or the collages in the *Hall of Mirrors* and the fable *Satatantra*, memory and imagination worked harmoniously to produce micro narratives that in turn fed into a continuous story; my story. Like Nabokov (1967), I too found that memory and imagination are associated in the linking of narrative into a continuous story. Using the fragments or shards of memory available to me provided fuel with which to remember and inspire my imagination. In this archaeological enterprise I use fragments or shards of memory available to me to provide fuel by which to remember and inspire my imagination. I reveal a unique way by which interrogation and reflection are used to tap into the creative self to generate data in the form of creative artefacts for examination and consideration.

The idea of memory and its reciprocal association to place has been written about in both fictional and theoretical literature. People’s sense of place and belonging coexist and are most often located within the cultural and physical landscapes (Hoffman 1987; Bender 2002). I discovered how my sense of place and belonging coexist and is often located within cultural and physical landscapes I found myself in. Expressions of a sense of loss of place, of not belonging and living in a ‘third space’ (Bhabha 1994) punctuate this journey. I discovered how memory in all its forms elicits powerful emotions about the self that are associated with place.

I found that memory of place, deeply inscribed within the self, can shift in time and without conscious understanding. In the digital story *Lost in Translation* the spoken narrative articulates experience based on memory of my dislocated self, the result of migration and subsequent loss of place. It describes the loss of self in the new culture and the images portray only landscapes of the new homeland. This signifies a key turning point as it indicates how the newly awakened self moves into a different relationship with a landscape once seen, but not connected to. Engaging in a reflective process about memory of place facilitated this shift. For me the loss of place propelled me on a reflective odyssey, and it is through a process of unraveling the archaeology of memory that I have found an understanding of who I am and a place to belong.

**Self**

I have proposed that *A Journey Around Myself* is a study of self, and in Chapter Five I examine some of the influences on our understanding of personal identity and subjective
experience in the construction of self, and outline some of the broad social science conceptions of self. There are deep cultural assumptions about how we see the self, and Anthony Elliot (2001) suggests selfhood is flexible, fractured, fragmented, de-centred and brittle.

Leaving my homeland of India resulted in the fragmenting and fracturing of self, a state of discontinuity, a position also referred to by Meena Alexander (2003) and Salman Rushdie (1991). As a migrant, the negotiation of selfhood has been a complex journey because it involved undoing the ties that once held me to a particular centre, and resetting the compass. For me, this involved confronting feelings of dislocation by further disturbing the new sense of place by an archaeological excavation and interrogation of fragments of memory. Invariably on the journey, I found myself in what Edward Said (1990) refers to as a ‘discontinuous state of being’. However, I learned that feelings of dislocation provided me with a catalyst for the journey in search of self, in search for a place to belong; for, as I traversed my broken geographies and stuttering transitions of an emotional atlas, I discovered a path ‘home’ to myself. Journal entries and other fragments revealed in the archaeological site attest to my finding and the value of losing oneself to find oneself.

Through this research I have discovered how memory and history leaves me with a palimpsest of experience – a labyrinthine maze with no maps for guidance, how the self in the present moment is made up of layer upon layer, shards of experience, memories, and artefacts deposited. Some of these are fossilised, others continue evolving, surviving and then degenerating. To unravel the self meant that I considered the self an archaeological site and, taking the advice of Walter Benjamin (2006) to approach the self ‘like a man digging’, I proceeded to unravel a sense of identity. There were no maps for this archaeological site I excavated, and I found that the excavation was non-linear, random and emergent.

During the process of excavation of the self as an archaeological site, I paused to reflect on the development of, the loss of and attempt at, retrieving the authentic self by questioning who I am? where I am and when I am? As a sociologist, like the Symbolic Interactionists Charles Horton Cooley (1909), George Herbert Mead (1958), Erving Goffman (1971) and Anthony Giddens (1991), I accept that the individual is socially constructed. On my
As part of my investigation into the socially constructed self, I used the mirror concept of significant others as an important tool of excavation (Hall of Mirrors). The Hall of Mirrors was a spontaneous creative response to grief and none of the choices for inclusion were planned. In the process of creating and reflecting, I learned how the self impulsively and instinctively reached out, turning towards these significant others as a source of strength.

As I navigated the archaeological site on this Journey Around Myself, the mirror became an instrument of knowledge with its role increasingly evolving as a mechanism by which I could confirm responses to my own questions. In time, I found that the process of reflection presented me with fragments of memory. In turn each fragment was investigated, interrogated and refined through the instrument of the mirror. Sometimes I found that these ‘looking glass reflections’ wrought further confusion and burden to my dislocated self.

Along the way I learned how it is important for people to create, reflect and de-construct personal narrative to identify elements of value to who they are. In articulating my experience and process, I provide an exemplar for the ways in which others can interrogate the role and influence of significant others in remembering the self. Ultimately I discovered that this approach provided rich data about the way in which my sense of self was constructed, and how my self knowledge was enhanced through my relationship with significant others.

Story

In a world that is vast and alienating to the individual, the idea of personal story and its importance is of more relevance than ever. We are our stories and we live our lives deeply connected to and surrounded by stories. One of the most significant elements of motivation for this Journey Around Myself was my dying mother’s plea for me to tell my story. But where would I start? Which stories would I tell? At the commencement of this exploration of self I had no idea where the journey would take me. There were no maps to explore the topography of self. However, I did have a ‘ragbag’ of memories in the form of
family stories, photographic archives and associated stories, journal writings and kinesthetic memories that triggered a myriad of recollections forming micro-narratives. Drawing on this landscape of memories as I excavated the archaeology of self, I was able to reflect on the place of memory and the (re) telling of remembered stories (Bachelard 1987) to find answers to the questions: who am I? where am I? and when am I? as I sought to unravel my identity and tell my story.

In the construction and narration of my story that I share with the reader, *A Journey Around Myself* reveals a number of new understandings that have emerged on many levels. Firstly I discovered the immeasurable value and significance of artefacts, photographic archives and associated family stories to trigger memory, contextualise ideas of self and generate micro-narratives in the process of telling and re-telling my own story. These micro-narratives contributed to my sense of identity and, more importantly, I found that these stories, particularly those told by my parents, have given my dislocated self a place of belonging. Family narratives have ultimately been woven through my own story, and in the process have paved an important path to the homecoming of self.

In Chapter Two, I reveal how through the method of an archaeological exploration of self, I uncover fragments of memory. The process uncovers the complexity and intricacy of the stratified self and, in due course, I found that in order to unravel a sense of identity, these layers of experience embedded in memories require excavation and interpretation in the present moment (King 2001). In a *Journey Around Myself* each fragment generates a micro-narrative, which in turn feeds other narratives contributing to the authoring of self, and reveals a sense of identity and belonging. On the journey I discovered that there is a critical conjunction between fragments of memory and the development of self-narrative through micro-narratives and, as these two elements combined to generate new narratives, I discovered how triggers to memory of past experience lead to memory being enacted in the present time. In Chapter Six, I demonstrate how narrative creation of identity through memory of experience is sustained through narrative discourse and linked to present emotional and psychological development.

The importance of narrative discourse or the telling of story is reflected in the work of Jonathon Culler (1981) who believes that the story gains life through the telling of it. Other writers such as Salman Rushdie (1991) and Meena Alexander (2003) also extol the virtues
of storytelling and the idea that without the telling of their account, there would be no story. Whilst fortunate to have been born into and immersed in a culture rich with storytelling traditions, it is only on this Journey Around Myself that I learned the true value of both narrative and discourse. In doing so I found how narrative gives shape to the fragments of memory, and how, without narrative and narrative discourse, memory would lie buried.

In his work *The Post-Modern Condition* Lyotard (1984), who believes that the self ‘exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex than ever before’ (p. 15), tells us that it is people who actualise narratives by listening to and re-telling others’ narratives and by telling our own. On the Journey Around Myself my narrative has been shaped by the very process of listening to, recounting, reflecting and telling the micro-narratives that have combined to build a sense of who I am, where I am and when I am. In the process of shaping and telling a unified narrative as part life-story, I realised the crucial importance of the Ricouerian (1983) relationship between time and narrative. This is particularly borne out in the way in which I use small parts of stories gleaned from family discourse, visual fragments archived as photos or experiences recorded in personal journals to name a few, to reflect, piece together and construct micro-narratives. In time, I found how these micro-narratives were shaped and re-shaped as they generated new stories and breathed life into a sense of identity and belonging.

In her thesis *Torn Identities* Gregoria Manzin (2007) builds on the work of Adriana Cavarero (2000) who proposes ‘the narratable self finds its home, not simply in a conscious exercise of remembering, but in the spontaneous narrating structure of memory itself’ (p. 41). Manzin also draws on the work of S. Felman and Dori Laub (1992) who in their book *Testimony*, discuss the idea that for individuals who have experienced a traumatic event, the process of telling one’s story becomes a necessity in order to survive. Manzin explores questions of identity that emerge in the works of five Istro-Dalmatian authors. In her findings she says that ‘rather than aiming at the identification of fragments which compose the self, narration pursues the recognition of unity’ (p. 203). Like Cavarero she proposes that ‘unity can only be reached when the self is detached from the desire’ and the “who” can be disclosed only by the story’ (p. 203).
In *Torn Identities* Manzin concludes that ‘if we consider story as the discourse that unveils identity ... narration can be seen as the discourse that unveils the possibilities inscribed in the story’ (p. 204). In doing so, she believes that identity is viewed as an outcome of the journey that moves the individual beyond the traumatic experience.

Manzin’s work investigates primary literature in an attempt to disclose ‘who’ one is, as opposed to ‘what’ one is, and illustrates the significance of narrative discourse and its value in shaping identity. By considering the self a complex and stratified archaeological landscape for excavation, reflection and interrogation, *A Journey Around Myself* provides a methodology by which an individual can unravel the fragments that compose the self and reflect on them in the present moment (*Nachtraglichkeit*). In this way, as I have found on my journey, one can build on the emergent evidence to arrive at a unifying narrative and a sense of ‘who’, ‘where’ and ‘when’ one is, – a sense of identity and belonging.

Through excavation and self-reflection of fragments that include visual memory, places of memory and memory of places, I have revealed and established that auto-narration in the form of an autobiographical life story is possible.

Ultimately it is story that provides me with a sense of identity in the continuum of my life story; an acknowledgement that contained within that continuum is a homecoming.

**Archaeological Narrative Inquiry**

As the *Journey Around Myself* unfolded, inspired by Benjamin’s (2006) concept of approaching the past ‘like a man digging’, I placed my investigative process within an archaeological paradigm. I found that the process was influenced by critical incidents and operated at various levels. Sometimes emergent data combined with aspects of the process to inspire the construction of creative artefacts. At other times, data revealed or critical incidents remembered triggered new directions along the way. At the commencement of this research to deconstruct the self and excavate memory, I employed the Flood (2003) model to frame and situate the data. From this model I began to examine how some of the key influences and critical incidents emerged in the unraveling archaeology of identity.
As my research developed, I started to recognise the temporally erratic and non-linear way in which my memory worked. Data emerged unexpectedly and without warning. Fragments of memory were stimulated by experiences emanating from a plethora of sources. These appeared in the form of pictures, stories, memories of places, places of memory and the experience of each of my senses. I discovered how both words and imagery have been essential to the function of my narrative journey. I found that often even these fragments were only shards or splinters worn down by time. In constructing micro-narratives, the embellishment came through interrogating and interpreting them from the perspective of the present moment. In turn, this inspired creative artefacts that further informed my search for self and a place of belonging.

In my research I have used personal experience as primary data and have interpreted the self as a cultural and social being in relation to others. In doing so, I have explored the relationship between my self and others. While the data has been non-linear and emergent, the investigative process used has been through a systematic process of interrogation, analysis and interpretation. In this way, the methodological process of investigating such complex and rich data became cyclical through the interrogative practice. Each step increased the validity and legitimacy of the data by a triangulation of knowledge and verification of data.

As part of the excavation of the archaeological site of self, which involved interrogation and reflection of the fragments uncovered and the generation of micro-narratives, a number of observations were identified:

- I found that 'losing oneself' to find myself has been the cornerstone of my ability to reflect and re-surface. The opportunity to be a stranger in some one else's world and culture frees my self to strip away illusions and see myself through another mirror. The metaphorical mirror in this case is the culture in which I immerse myself. It creates a tabula rasa, a blank space on which I am able to re-connect and re-construct who I am.

- I learned the value of the senses and their relation to memory, for example, my sense of smell, the memory of the perfume of jasmine in Fragment 4 and its
connection with the memory of place. The reoccurrence of this experience serves to facilitate a memory of where I came from, of who I once was and the people who contributed to my sense of self.

- I discovered the value of journal excerpts as an important device in maintaining a level of authenticity as it allows me to locate and validate my own experiences on this Journey Around Myself and better understand my self in a wider social context.

- I started to understand that to live in a ‘third space’ is to constantly straddle the intersections of culture and space in the making of identity. It inevitably means that my sense of ‘place’ is a not a fixed structure inhabiting time and space, but a concept that is constantly composed, de-composed and re-composed in the interlacing of my inherited history with where I am, who I am with and who I am.

- I clearly identified for myself the importance of visual fragments such as family photographic archives and the associated stories that accompanied them. Throughout my life I have used these images to locate myself, to find meaning – I have wanted to ‘read’ the visual text as much as I have wanted to understand the stories I have read or heard about my early life. I could see how my vision has been shaped by these early lessons and by the visual stories preserved in ‘Happy Memories’. My vision of people, places, nature and things are as much who I am as they are of the world around me. Furthermore, I could now see the relationship of these images of my own genesis of creative self.

- I began to realise the significance of this Journey Around Myself as a journey of reconciliation between the past and the present, between lost and present time, between the remembered self and the explorer, and between the many disparate selves and places I inhabit.

- I realised how story and storytelling became part of the very methodology itself. Ultimately I realised how the telling and re-telling, and moments of my own memory telling it, have moved me toward a better understanding of who I am in the world today.
I started to observe how my archaeological approach to narrative inquiry could be of value to others who had felt dislocation and a loss of identity. My model in Chapter Two (Figure 8) shows a clear and interconnected structure as guidance for others seeking to explore their autobiographical ‘I’. The model offers a valid process by which key elements of lived experience can be revealed, interrogated and reflected upon in a cyclical form. Through this, others will be able to release the potential of multiple ways of knowing to excavate their memories and generate self-narratives in multifarious forms.

Archaeological Narrative Inquiry offers:

- A conceptual model based on the tools and concepts of archaeology: the past; a site; digging/excavation; fragments; clues; interrogation, piecing together; interpretation and the generation of narratives.

- A research model that employs the above concepts to excavate memories revealing a plethora of rich, varied and complex fragments and clues of the past self for interpretation in the present. It shows that through a cyclical process of interrogation, reflection, interpretation and generation of micro-narratives, this model presents a methodology by which the individual can unravel identity and author the self.

Archaeological narrative inquiry presents an innovative and compelling method by which any individual searching to construct their life story can engage in this process of excavation. In doing so, they approach their own ‘site’ like ‘a man digging’ and unravel an archaeology of identity and belonging.

New Model for PhD

My research is transdisciplinary in nature and is underpinned by a range of theoretical and methodological approaches, written and visual texts and forms.

A Journey Around Myself involves a unique method of construction of data in narrative form for interrogation, reflection and analysis. In the process no creative piece was produced as standalone piece of artwork to be commented on or contextualised. The creative pieces or artefacts emerged as part of the investigation into the research question and are part of the data.
I propose that my research as a PhD sits in a new space. It is neither a traditional research PhD nor a PhD by artefact and exegesis. My claim is based on evidence of the unique method of emergent data collection that was generated in diverse narrative forms for interrogation and analysis. Revealed through a process of archaeological narrative inquiry, the method, the data, and the resulting narratives are intertwined. They speak to each other in creative ways and, together, have the capacity to speak in a myriad of forms to a diverse and multifaceted audience.

**New Knowledge: Key Findings**

The question that underpinned this research journey was:

**What is the role of memory and narrative when unraveling archaeology of identity for an individual who has experienced dislocation and a loss of a sense of place?**

In conclusion I offer a summary of the new knowledge and key findings of my research.

**Memory**

1. Memory plays a vital role in the recovery of the past. Each fragment excavated is subjected to a continual process of change as it is constructed and re-constructed and interpreted in the present moment with the awareness of ‘what wasn't known then’.

2. Memory is fragile and fallible. A single memory can have several manifestations; the memory exists, but at various points in time, the same memory can materialise differently.

3. Memory of place is deeply inscribed within the self and can shift in time without conscious understanding. As such it has the capacity to elicit powerful emotions about the self in association with specific places.

4. Memory is enhanced and embellished in its reciprocal relationship with the imagination. Employing the imagination in conjunction with memory works powerfully to generate micro-narratives that subsequently feed into a unifying narrative. In turn, fragments or shards of memory can inspire and fuel the imagination causing similar outcomes.
5. Our senses offer us a powerful link to memory that connects us with the people, places and experiences of our past. They are a key element in the process of remembering our selves.

6. Visual fragments, such as familial photographic and film archives, perform essential functions in capturing moments in time and history. Such artefacts offer tangible evidence and clues that trigger and verify memory. The interaction between tangible fragments and fragments of memory are precious in their value to recover memory from the wilderness and contribute to associated stories in the present.

**The Self**

1. The self is constructed from within and without. External images and reflections are generated and interact with internal processes in complex ways to provide a sense of self and identity. In such instances the value of significant others, as an instrument of self-knowledge, is central to articulate personal narrative about who one is.

2. The self in the present moment is made up of layer upon layer, shards of experience, memories, and artefacts deposited. An archaeological approach to unravel the sense of identity means that the self is considered an archaeological site for excavation, interrogation and reflection.

3. Feelings of dislocation can provide a catalyst for an exploration of self and a search for a place to belong. Losing one’s self to find oneself presents the individual with opportunities to explore their identity in new and foreign landscapes.

4. To live in a ‘third space’ is to constantly straddle the intersections of culture and space in the making of identity. It inevitably means that one’s sense of ‘place’ is not a fixed structure inhabiting time and space, but a concept that is constantly composed, de-composed and re-composed in the interlacing of an inherited history with where one is, who one is associated with and who one is.
Story – The Making of Identity

1. Our stories are constructed and re-constructed as they weave their way through the social and historical fabric of our lives. They manifest in various ways, shaping our identity along the journey. The telling and re-telling, and moments of memory combined with the experience of narrative discourse, facilitates an understanding one's identity.

2. The generation of micro-narratives and creative works of art, as part of the excavation of memory and exploration of self, can be drawn together and synthesised to render a picture of identity.

3. There is a crucial relationship between time and narrative (Ricoeur 1983). Narrative gives shape to fragments of memory by articulating memories of past self as discourse in the present moment. This occurs as self-narrative develops through the generation of micro-narratives.

4. Archaeological narrative inquiry provides a methodology by which an individual can unravel the fragments that comprise the self and reflect on them in the present to build on emerging evidence and arrive at a unifying narrative.

Archaeological Narrative Inquiry

1. The process of ‘archaeological narrative inquiry’ uses the concepts, tools, and modes of archaeology to explore the building blocks in the authoring of self. This method embraces the creative potential of an individual and shows how creativity can be used as an essential element to investigate and interrogate the multifarious elements of personal narrative.

2. Investigation of non-linear and emergent data by systematic investigative processes as in archaeological narrative inquiry means that the methodology employed manifests as both process and product.
3. The reflective and cyclical process of *archaeological narrative inquiry* is underpinned by excavation, interrogation, reflection and analysis. The generation of micro-narratives emerging in various forms validates multiple ways of knowing through thematic recurrence. This process results in the triangulation of knowledge and is an essential part of narrative inquiry.

4. Journal excerpts and reflective writing are an important device in developing and maintaining a level of authenticity in such research. The power of written recollection and reflection validates experiences and promotes a better understanding of the self in a wider social context.

5. The use of metaphor enables excavation of the layers of memory and lived experience. It is the distance and separation generated by use of metaphor that facilitates critical disengagement presenting a path through difficult emotional crossroads by providing the ambiguity and latitude to create a safe space and unshackle the voice.

6. *Archaeological narrative inquiry* reveals a unique way by which interrogation and reflection are used to tap into the creative self to generate data in the form of creative artefacts for examination and consideration. The method demonstrates the significance of and the possibilities by which an individual can draw on their creativity as part of an exploration of self.

7. The research methodology of *archaeological narrative inquiry* presents data in a re-current and sometimes repetitious manner thus revealing how often the same memory can occur in different forms and narrative. Secondly, and more significantly, this method demonstrates how triangulation of data enables the validity of the research occurs.

8. This distinctive data mechanism facilitates engagement in a research process that places such PhD thesis outside the traditional ‘research’ PhD or a ‘PhD by artefact and exegesis’.
Finally, I turn once again to the Jeanette Winterson’s (2004) story *Lighthousekeeping*:

Tell me a story, Silver. What Story? The story of the talking bird. That was later, much later, when I had landed and grown up.

It’s still your story.

Yes (p. 151).

Ultimately, it is the remembering of self and the writing of the story that has brought me home to my self. It is neither the facts nor the minutiae of everyday existence that can lead to a defining moment when the self may be revealed. Rather, it is the piecing together of memoric fragments and, more importantly, the understanding and acceptance of content, context and the fragmentary nature of memory that gives us the power of personal agency to fashion the margins of our own story.

Who am I?

*I am Lariane.*

Where am I?

*My place is no longer associated with a particular geography.*

When am I?

*I am in the present moment from which I can consider myself in the knowledge of my past experience.*

Through the *Journey Around Myself* I have written myself into existence. I have come home to my self. It is my story.
The journey continues ...
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This thesis consists of a number of artefacts which are unable to be reproduced online.

The thesis is stored in a box and includes seven artefacts (3 DVDs and 4 books). The 3 DVDs are: (1) A Digital Story: Argumentum e Silencio; (2) A Digital Story: A Journey Through Lost Time…; and (3) A Digital Story: Lost in Translation. The 4 books are: (1) A Book of Photographic Collages: The Hall of Mirrors; (2) An Archive of Family Photographs: Happy Memories; (3) A Fable: Satatantra: The Elephant and the Mirror; and (4) A Narrative Account of the Research Journey: Charting the Journey.

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