The Women From Rhodesia: An Auto-Ethnographic Study of Immigrant Experience and [Re]Aggregation in Western Australia.

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BA Hons

This dissertation is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Murdoch University, Perth, 2003
I declare that this dissertation is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Acknowledgments

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Abstract

This thesis examines the positioning of white, English-speaking, immigrant women from Africa to Australia. I explore the effects that minimal differences have on issues of identity. Notions of identity, memory, and belonging are contrasted with white settlement in Rhodesia in the last century. My personal history and the desire to write a thesis relevant to the Australian experience led me to ask, “How do women from a privileged background, from Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, understand their experiences as immigrants to Australia?” The relevance lies in the perception that Australia is populated by immigrants and this research interrogates at a deeper level some specific issues presented by this sample group and my interpretation of their experiences augments the literature in this area. I questioned (individually) a small group of immigrants using unstructured interviews; the use of my own experiences and ‘long/desk drawer’ makes the study significantly autobiographical. Notions of migration into Australia from Southern Africa are explored using theories and themes of rites de passage. I interrogate the meanings attributed to assimilation and integration in immigration and connect these to the theory. Identity, memory, and reflection are discussed in the context of separation from Africa and integration into Australia. The similarities and differences and embodied history (habitus) that shape us, interweave the trope of rites de passage, uncovering a multiplicity of identity—attributed, assumed, and self-determined. I examine the ways in which Australians of Anglo-Saxon and British origin tend to position English-speaking immigrants from non-British backgrounds as outsiders and suggest that this attribution has more to do with similarities than differences. Reflection and
discussion of other times and places reveals how memories intersect with ‘new’ lives in Australia and the complexities of time in migration as rites de passage make possible an exploration of present experience shadowing earlier experience. Finally, I discover that identity and belonging as continually negotiated spaces are illuminated by the contrast I drew between assimilation and integration as conceptual tools in understanding the migrant experience.
Background
Chapter One

Introduction, method, and preparation.¹

So one of the hidden grounds of ethnography’s possibility is that ethnographers can ‘be there’ (Probyn, 1993, 71).

I write because I want to find something out. I write in order to learn something that I didn’t know before I wrote it (Richardson, 1994, 517).

The genesis for this work is situated in personal experience. The desire to explore a thesis relevant to the African/Australian experience led me to ask the question, “How do women from a privileged background, from Southern Africa understand their experiences as immigrants to Australia?” Historically, the last thirty to thirty-five years has seen an exodus of white Rhodesians (and later Zimbabweans) from Africa; the emigrants have spread throughout the Western world. I have elected to examine a small segment of this diaspora in my thesis. The fragment I have chosen to study comprises six white women who have immigrated to Western Australia from Southern Africa (Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, and Zambia) in the past forty years. I counterpoint my core sample by drawing on
correspondence and conversations with friends, relatives, Australians, Zimbabweans, and expatriate Rhodesians. Therefore, while the six women are fundamental to the thesis, there are numerous other individuals who have added to the development of the hypothesis. In the historical context I heed the voices of those long dead; in the present I consider the opinions of colleagues whose ideas and input have encouraged me and inspired the research. There are others too who are anonymous, their words and conversations overheard here and there. The effect of these myriad voices initiate motif and leitmotif as the past impacts on the present and the present on the past. As a seventh member of the core sample my own voice, my own experience, are evident throughout the work and I signal this autobiographical element here, at the beginning, and as palimpsest, throughout the writing.

So, I take the opportunity to look at some white women who have come into Australia and who are, or have been, mistaken for Australian women (until they speak), for the racial markers which symbolise difference, are absent. I link the questions of belonging and not belonging that are, in my hypothesis, closely linked to assimilation (as I define it) and integration. As author, and by declaring the autobiographical content of the work, I am situated in the society and, inferentially, in the authenticity of the text. It is within the concept of authority and of speaking for others that I contemplate my own role in the narrative because I too have a history in colonial Rhodesia and I am entangled in the weaving together of history, memory and identity; of separation, transformation, and integration. The issue of authority extends to, and extrapolates from, my authority as writer of this thesis and it is the underlying motif of the methodology and the
subsequent writing of this work. I believe it is critical for me to acknowledge the imbrication of authority (of the author) wherever it manifests and this acknowledgment becomes integral to the work.

In exploring the identities of immigrant women I reflect on the transition from immigrant to integrant as a rite of passage; I consider how our experiences (and memories) shape us and bring us to the understanding we have of ourselves now. In this context stories of migration into colonial Africa, and from Southern Africa into Australia, are explored. It is within the issues of transitory identity and memory and my reflection on them that I am able to tease out my theories of assimilation and integration into Australian society. Therefore, the validity of our experiences and memories extending from our cultural differences shadows and shapes our identities—national, personal, and attributed; and, in a sense, attention to this bricolage, these minutiae, frames the work.

When I set out to do the research for the thesis in January 1998, there was no question in my mind but to follow feminist interpretive social research methodology. Clear guidelines for feminist ethnography are described as being consistent with three goals, “(1) to document the lives and activities of women, (2) to understand the experience of women from their own point of view, and (3) to conceptualize women’s behaviour as an expression of social context” (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992, 51). In addition to these guidelines is my profound belief that the transparency demanded by feminist research, the authenticity of “making visible why we do what we do—and how we do this” (Klein in Reinharz 1992, 74), helps me avoid what Donna Haraway describes as a
claim of “… power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation … the god trick of seeing everything from nowhere …” (Haraway, 1988, 581). And Elspeth Probyn, commenting on ethnographic writing says, “Through an analysis of self-reflexivity we find a prime example of how certain disembodied masculine selves emerge as central at the expense of the materiality of others” (1993, 60). In other words, I am fully involved and clearly visible in the research—which becomes as much about me as about the women with whom I am working. I reiterate, this persistent/consistent situating of myself within the study signals the inherent subjectivity of my writing.

The methods I use in the research begin well before the idea of studying for a doctorate entered my mind. In fact, I discover during the lengthy process of being a doctoral candidate, that I have been a researcher since childhood and I signal here the Bakhtinian notion of the “long drawer”. As a research student I discover that my researcher persona seldom takes a holiday. Conversations I have—and have had (or overheard), the books I read, the events I participate in or observe become intrinsic to my life, to my thesis, and the garnered information is stored, often in a journal, sometimes in memory, sometimes on tape or in pictures, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, but is there to be “drawn” on when I need it! Does not a feminist ethnographer have to work like this? In this way my ‘situatedness’ travels with me, as a feminist ethnographer, connecting my familiar to what is, at first, strange and moves/comes with me in my writing.

Apart from the timely and serendipitous “long drawer” (which I will elaborate upon in the course of the narrative) and my ever-present journal, the methods I
use for this research entail interviewing several women who, in the event, turn out to be six women. The process of selection for the study is informal and I am motivated by the interest and enthusiasm of the women to join and participate in the research. Some of the women (in the study) have been living in Australia for many years and some have arrived more recently. All of the women are of European or British descent and their home language is English. All of the women are educated and come from privileged backgrounds. For the purposes of this dissertation I have not used the participants’ real names although I gave them the choice of using their own names. Three of the women, Betty, Sarah, and Amy, I knew when we all lived in Rhodesia. Another, Vivian, I meet in Perth when, at a social gathering, she expresses interest in my work; and Marlene befriends me at a book club we belong to. Clare, a postgraduate student, hears about my research and contacts me. As research students working on similar hypotheses, we are able to explore and discuss ideas and she raises questions I may otherwise have avoided. Besides their participation in this research there are few other connections between the women although some of us attended the same schools in Rhodesia, and have social interaction in Australia. The ages of the women vary from around forty to over seventy years old. I have mentioned that none of the immigrant women chose to use their real names for the study and the pseudonyms were, for the most part, my choice. Only one of the women, Vivian, rejected my selection of a name for her and she told me she preferred ‘Vivian’ to the name I had chosen.

Other participants include my friend and colleague, Robin, who is an Australian woman. Robin’s input inadvertently leads me down some surprising avenues that
enrich the story. Then there is Barbara, my long-time friend from Rhodesia and an author of children’s books. Barbara lives in Melbourne and her voice, her views on the research and my methodology form an integral theme in the work. Barbara’s polyphonic voice appears again and again in the work; in the metaphor of motif and leitmotif Barbara’s voice is counterpoint that combines and harmonises. My mentor, friend, and supervisor, Dr Jennifer de Reuck and my mentor, therapist, and friend, Theresia Johnston, both of whom inspired, encouraged indeed, on occasion, provoked me to transcend self-doubt. As part of the process, all of these women are central to the premises of the work. Throughout the work I draw deeply from my personal journal and this record is evidence of my visibility as participant and author.

In this work I use several names for the country from which I, and my protagonists, emigrated and these are: ‘Southern Rhodesia’, ‘Rhodesia’ and ‘Zimbabwe’. From 1895, and until the break-up of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, in 1963, the country was called ‘Southern Rhodesia’. The name ‘Rhodesia’ was used from the time of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) proclaimed by the white minority government in 1964 until 1979, after which (during a period of transition) it became for a very short time, ‘Zimbabwe-Rhodesia’; and only after majority Independence in 1980 did the name change to Zimbabwe. Therefore, when I write about Rhodesia I am referring to the period prior to majority Independence. The dates are connected in my memory with births and deaths and I address these issues further in Chapter Three: The beginning is not at Perth Airport.
In writing this thesis I sometimes use a combination of words, separated by a slash (/). This strategy occurs where I find myself caught between two words, neither of which carries completely, the intended meaning, but both of which are significant/representative of that meaning. Therefore, this is not a random laziness of choice on my part but a provocative tool to carry the semantic weight of the idea and, textually, the slash represents the passage between the words, or, on a re-layered re-reading of this passage, of me – as if I were situated as an intermediary between the words. The motif of ‘passage’ is apparent, recurring throughout the work, and in a microcosm the slash is its representative.

The referencing system I have used in this work is the Harvard style. This is similar to the American Psychological Association (APA) system of referencing. The APA is considered to be a complex style, and for that reason I have chosen this, the less complicated affiliated style, as being suitable for this thesis. In addition I have modified the style to suit my own purposes and there are minor variations from the approved version; nevertheless, the style as I have moulded it, remains consistent throughout my thesis. In the Harvard and APA style of referencing, personal communications are not included in the final reference list but are cited, in parenthesis, in the text. I have referenced my personal journal in the same way, in parenthesis, in the text, because the journal entries are an intimate communication to myself.

As a feminist ethnographer working in the field of social relations, it is necessary to define the meaning I accord to the term “field”. The assumption that the field is separated from the ethnographer's own home world is widespread probably
because, traditionally, an anthropologist travelled far from home and, of course, this emphasises the ‘god trick’ already mentioned where the community is studied by an unrepresented being. In Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of social relations, the field is likened to the arena of war and is compared to a site of struggle, thus, “… any agent in the field may be assumed to seek maximum power and dominance within it. The aim is to rule the field, to become the instance which has the power to confer or withdraw legitimacy from other participants …” (Moi, 1991, 1021).

The field in which I am working is, by comparison, more an area of connection and intersection between the women with whom I am working and myself; it is not being cut off from my own world nor a second home (Fortier, 1996, 307). For I believe that a feminist ethnographer does more than ‘study’ the field. I believe that, in many cases, the boundary between her life and field disappears, if it had ever been there in the first place. Shulamit Reinharz’s comment that “many feminist researchers … take the position that closeness with women is necessary to understand them” (1991, 67) resonates to my belief. The wry lament that it is a foolish anthropologist “… who mixes up the field with her life” (Behar, 1995, 77) gives some indication that there is emotional and spiritual paraphernalia associated with the process. But, here is the disclosure that the field I am researching is my life; and this emphasises for me that, as a feminist ethnographer, I do more than study the field: I live the field.

There are problems, however. In the beginning I have doubts about the interviews; these manifest in cold feet and butterflies in the tummy that I feel before an interview. In my journal I write again and again about how apprehensive I am about conducting the interviews. I write of my worry that I am
‘doing it properly’ and that I still haven’t plucked up enough courage to phone Vivian, and then, to put this in the context of how I am able sidetrack and avoid things, the next sentence reads: “The liquidamber is turning at last. Soon it will be bare and skeletal again” (1999, Personal Journal). About a month later I write, “I still have to interview Amy. I don’t know what to do about Vivian”. And, again, “my main chore is to write in here as often as possible and to interview Amy and phone Vivian”. I know now that I am not alone in this place of nervous prevarication and procrastination; feminist Susan Mitchell is open about how nervous she is before approaching someone for an interview, about the stress she feels prior to an interview and often afterwards as well (Mitchell, 1997, passim). In interviewing I am aware of the skill of careful listening to hear the meaning of what I am being told, but being cautious not to read more into it than is there. I am aware that being sensitive to nuances that may need to be followed up and examined is something I sometimes handle clumsily. In my journal I remind myself “… to listen more than talk. Don’t cut them off. Follow up leads …” (1999, Personal Journal). I often seem to write in the journal about how difficult it is not to be ‘objective’ and I ask myself, is this because it is easier to judge than to participate? Sometimes I think how much easier it is to disengage and retreat into the patriarchal, traditional—albeit passive—position of the anthropologist’s gaze, the ‘eye of god’ role, and remove myself from the proceedings. In other words to talk and write about the women from a distance “…to represent while escaping representation” (Haraway, 1988, 581). Then, of course, there is the problem of trying not to introduce my own words into the mouths of my women, especially when they minimise or even disregard their own experience and maximise that of husband and/or children. There is difficulty in coaxing women to talk about
themselves, their own experiences. Early in April 1999 I wrote this in my journal: “I asked Vivian if she would be in it and she sounded quite interested but then downgraded herself and said she didn’t want to bore me. Nearly all the women do it. It is as if they are not important enough or don’t have interesting things to say, or have never experienced anything anyone else will find interesting!” (Personal Journal). Feminists have recognised for a long time that in traditional patriarchal research: “Almost all discussions of women deal only with what they are in relation to men in terms of real, ideal or value criteria. Nobody asks what they are for themselves” (Simmel in Reinhzarz and Davidman, 1992, 52). “Georg Simmel (1858-1918) was” according to Shulamit Reinhzarz, “one of the few early social scientists to recognize this problem” (Reinhzarz and Davidman, 1992, 52). It seems that at least some of my women would fit this assumption, but at least one is adamant this project is about her and not her husband. In my journal I write “Amy’s husband tells me I can use the journals he has kept on previous visits to Zimbabwe, Amy objects, she says to him, ‘This is about me, not you!’ She is very clear that it is her life, her experience, that we are talking about” (Personal Journal). Another, Vivian, tells me that her husband left her after they had been in Western Australia for four and a half years and her youngest child (of nine children) was two-and-a-half. This is the same woman who often excuses herself for “boring” me! Betty, who arrived here in the early 1980s, said to me ‘My husband … the only way my husband could cope was to get on, I mean, he had to learn a whole new system of law. The only way we could cope was, he could do his job and I could cope with everything else, look after the children, and work in the home … I was also having to look after a very frail and aging mother-in-law …”. The history spoken by minority groups such as this one contains in its
narrative the notion of multifaceted experience, “… they [migrant women] produce, necessarily, another version of history … the secret story which the overt story covers over” (Gunew, 1993b, 12). Therefore, the underlying premise in this thesis is the necessity for women’s experience to be made visible, and reflected in this notion is the analogy of an holograph, where each fragment contains an image of the whole. Thus, it is the women in my study and the minutiae contained in their experiences that comprise the story.

_The writer’s object is—or should be—to hold the reader’s attention. ... I want the reader to turn the page and keep on turning to the end_ (Barbara Tuchman).

The structure of my thesis falls into three major sections—a triptych—and the triptych is supported by sub-sections that form a visible infrastructure, a scaffolding, that shadows and supplements the whole. Initially, I was tempted, in the microcosm, to divide each page into three parts: the exploration, the thesis and the history; in the middle range, each chapter divided into three parts and, in the macrocosm, the entire thesis as triptych. In the event, because I believe the thesis needs to be accessible, transparent, and in order not to alienate the reader with obfuscation and elaborate techniques, I find that my thesis adopts the three partitions of the triptych in a way that is only marginally contrived. My thesis therefore, follows the macrocosm—the three major panels/chapters that mimic and reflect the tripartite pattern of the _rites de passage_ as introduced by Arnold van Gennep and amplified by Victor Turner (Turner, Victor, 1977c; Turner, Victor, 1977b; van Gennep, 1960, passim). These three sections, therefore, comprise, but are not entirely enclosed by, in the first place, the left panel that depicts the separation from the homeland – the matrix from which we originate –
and this corresponds to ‘preliminal’ rites in the traditional model. The central panel is the limen (the threshold) where the transitional process of transformation begins and proceeds. This is the time an immigrant moves through a period of assimilation: “Since liminal time is not controlled by the clock it is a time of enchantment when anything might, even should happen” (Turner, Victor, 1977a, 33), and the trope of time is recurring. Following the central partition is the right panel, that illustrates (if finality is possible) the final outcome, the ‘postliminal’, wherein the immigrant is integrated—sometimes incorporated—and there is space in this locus for abortive/unsuccessful integration too. Thus, the structure of the thesis is transparent, often flagged but other times segued into the narrative.

By weaving the threads of immigration, identity, and rites de passage together there is the potential for something that is rigorous, clear, and engaging. Writing the narrative/thesis is paramount to, and part of, my research. Iain Chambers likens writing to travelling and draws on the imagery of Michel de Certeau: “Writing is to enter a space, a zone, a territory … everywhere characterised by movement: the passage of words, the caravan of thought, the flux of the imaginary, the slippage of the metaphor, the drift across the page … the wandering eyes” (Chambers, 1994, 10) and I explore this involvement of writing and identity in the sub-section of Chapter Five, Identity I: Being in the centre of my margin. I believe that writing is a method of discovery, “… a dynamic creative process” (Richardson, 1994, 517), and the combinations of writing and identity; writing and research; writing and memory, and writing and methodology that serve to enrich the hypothesis also support the transparency of the work.
Chapters:

In this, the first chapter, I describe the impetus behind my research and the writing of my thesis. A significant aspect of this chapter is to introduce the women in my core sample and to express clearly the autobiographical content of the narrative. However, throughout the thesis, I remind, prompt, and reiterate information about the women in my sample, and in this way I remain respectful of the ethical practices implied in feminist social research (as cited on page two). I address the dilemma I face being situated as the author[ity] as well as a participant and indicate how I deal with this predicament. The methods I have used are elucidated and the paradigms in/by which I work are delineated although I (prudently) qualify any rigidity in the boundaries. In this chapter matters of style are discussed and I present my arguments as to the appropriateness of the referencing system, idiosyncratic textual tools, and the broader structure of the thesis as triptych. I define and clarify the rationale behind naming ‘Rhodesia’ and ‘Zimbabwe’, and I show that the choice of name, in each context it is used, is not an erratic one; and this is further defined in the third chapter: The beginning is not at Perth Airport. Because of my desire for transparency in the writing of this thesis, I reveal some of the problems I faced during the research and illustrate these with excerpts from my personal journal. This introduction foreshadows the following chapter, which contains a review of the literature, in that the (aforesaid) transparency of writing allows me to layer the different sections of the work and elements of the methodology appear in the chapter (and thereafter) thus reflecting elements of the literature review in the introduction.
The Review of the Literature, subtitled *Themes Already Formed*, reviews the relevant (and sometimes irrelevant) literature and becomes, *per se*, an extension of this introduction. Indeed, as already indicated, the review of the literature is not confined to any one chapter, and where it is not embedded in the narrative, it is picked up and developed, throughout the thesis. Therefore, using the evocation of transparency in structure, in the review of the literature I continue to indicate the outline or map of the ground that the thesis covers. I consider the metaphor of a physical map of an area and decide it is pertinent to the shape and form of the thesis in general and the review in particular. Thus, where a political map would have distinct borders, sharp colours, and insular/rigid names, a physical map is fluid and the ground/earth is traced by the curves of rivers and the contours of mountains. The review advances notions of matrix and *Axis Mundi* and links them to the first panel of the *rites de passage* triptych, thus making a tentative connection to Bourdieu’s theory of *habitus* (seen as embodied history). Perspectives of migration and exile are seen from a psychological point-of-view, and also empirically, in the writing of immigrants. In my exploration of the nexus of history, identity, and memory I intersect literature by immigrants and emigrants to and from Australia, and search for autobiography to rationalise the use of my own. The autobiographical literature that situates women in the historical aspect of my thesis is more difficult to find, and I resolve this problem by examining ficto-autobiography and autobiography written by white men. Literature surrounding issues of identity in the colonial and postcolonial context is vast, and I engage with a representative sample. Finally, I permit myself to engage with some poetry that I see as inherent in the processes of memory and history – this indulgence serving to signpost the next chapter.
The choice of subtitle for chapter three: *The beginning is not at Perth Airport*, brings into the frame the history of white settlement in Southern Rhodesia. While the main thrust of this chapter concerns a focus on the immigration and settlement of white people in Rhodesia, I flag Australian immigration and other issues (both practical and theoretical) that affect the hypothesis. The narrative embraces stories and biography from my own family whose history as early settlers in Southern Rhodesia reflects personal, present experience in Australia. This chapter serves to situate the white immigrants to Africa and the more recent immigrants to Australia in the context of migration as a rite of passage. Two significant themes in my thesis arise in this chapter: that of Australian identity, and that which contrasts the meanings attributed to assimilation and integration. The balance between personal and historical insights constitutes a locus for the first stage of the *rites de passage*, that of separation, to proceed.

The fourth chapter, Migration/Separation, sub-titled: *Leaving and landing*, begins in a more formal way to address the first division of the *rites de passage*, that is, the separation from the matrix. I develop and explore the events of separation as an overt ritual within the framework of the *rites de passage* and how this theory relates to emigration. The separation from life in Africa in order to migrate to Australia and the issues that may have provoked the departure are examined; sharp fragments of dissonant memory are thrust into the bricolage. Severance from family, home, and friends is not gentle and even remembering the events can be harsh and painful. The tropes of homesickness and return start here, at the beginning. Engagement with issues of migration through the interviews allows
me to interweave the experiences in a way that augments and enriches the narrative. And, then, after we arrive in Australia, questions of identity begin and the complexity is compounded because of being mistaken for Australian women, for the language and the racial markers which symbolise difference, are absent. Among the identities that are attributed to recent immigrants is that of ‘new Australian’, that is, once we are recognised as being one. It is significant in that this attributed identity very likely becomes our preferred assumed identity. The attribution of ‘racist white South African’ that has been the experience of some of the women (including myself) is discussed and the repercussions of this pejorative attribution often ricochet from our assumed identity. In this chapter and the subsequent sub-chapters I explore this somewhat ambiguous attribution/assumption of identity and look at theories of compliance and survival adopted by the subjects of my study as they seek to confront the inconsistency.

Notions of the pejorative in the attribution of identity lead me to the first part of chapter five: Being in the centre of my margin, which deals with questions and reflections of multiple identity; self-determined, assumed, and attributed identity. Positionality and observation from the margin re-introduces the topics of assimilation and integration; these are examined through prisms of coercion and compliance. I question why it is necessary to appear to belong, and the strategies that immigrants use to acquiesce to this tacit demand by mooting the point that assimilation is a form of anarchy. That this necessity to belong is a process of sublimation, even coercion, is embedded in the liminal stage of the rites de passage. The notion of the immigrant women as agents-of-change becomes valid, here, because if their behaviour is seen as being symbolic and indicative of
learning to be a white Australian, then Victor Turner’s argument that “symbolic
behaviour actually ‘creates’ society for pragmatic purposes—including in society
both structure and communitas” (Turner, 1974, 56) and thus the immigrants have
the potential to be agents-of-change. The statement I have cited evokes a number
of questions that are addressed in the next chapter of this work, the central panel
of *rites de passage*, the liminal. Among these issues Bourdieu’s concept of
*habitus*, that is, embodied knowledge is suggested.

In the structure of this thesis as triptych, these two sections that make up chapter
five are the exposed scaffolding that supports the central panel of liminality.
Therefore, Identity II: *True Mirrors*, uses the metaphor of mirrors and non-
reflecting mirrors to reflect difference. The theory I advance uses the metaphor of
a True Mirror® that is, a non-reflecting mirror (and the work of Lacan and
Bourdieu) to illustrate that minimal difference from ‘the norm’ is less acceptable
to many white Australians than radical distortion: manifest differences such as
skin colour, language, and other overt cultural differences. Linking this to Lacan’s
theories regarding the mirror stage of human development, which I define as ‘the
self-as-symmetrical’, I argue that it is the minor distortions we recognise in others
that often reflect the traits we fail to see in ourselves, and that this denial of
asymmetry in ourselves encourages us to denigrate those who are similar, those
who resemble us. Therefore, it is in the realisation that being ‘a little bit different’
is not as acceptable as being radically different that the differences between the
immigrant women and the self-designated (white) Australian women begin to
appear, and the theme of identity, both Australian and immigrant, is developed.
Bourdieuian theories of doxa, orthodoxy, heterodoxy, crisis and change flag the
immigrant women as agents-of-change in the microcosm, and the major changes wrought by immigration to social and political life in Australia in general, and this trope continues.

Chapter six, *The ambivalent neophyte,*iv is central to the thesis and examines the liminal stage of the *rites de passage*. The evocation of the historical aspects of the liminality of immigrants in Rhodesia, which has been explored and discussed more fully in chapter three (history) is seen, *pentimento*. Structuring the thesis as triptych based in the *rites de passage* makes this the central panel. The exploration of the central stage of the *rites de passage*, and *habitus* (as embodied history) in the context of migration is interwoven with narrative from interviews and personal annotations. The nexus between *rites de passage* and Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* becomes the locus for the discovery of those minimal but significant differences in the justification of my thesis. The notion of the immigrant as a liminal *persona* and the subtle differences that separate her (as neophyte) from the Anglo-Australian becomes the metaphorical province of the arcane procedures of *rites de passage*. Within this chapter I discover/uncover further feminine interpretations of rites of passage (Rutter, 1994) and in the context of participant ethnographer, discover there are additional aspects of assimilation and integration to understand. The quest for a secure placement in Australia reveals the struggle to separate from previous identity and allows a nexus for reflection on life in colonial Rhodesia. Notions of time/space, and the understanding that “liminal time is not controlled by the clock” (Turner, Victor, 1977a, 33) remind me that space/time in Escher’s etchings is an evocative metaphor. Time, problematised and fragmented, reflects the metaphor of mosaic

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and segues into this panel of the triptych. Fragmentation is inherent in the liminal period because this is when identities (self-determined, assumed, and attributed) disintegrate, possibly to be reformed, and this is associated with the flexibility I attribute to time in the liminal/transformation period.

Chapter Seven: Memory and the myth of the eternal return. In this chapter I have projected the myth of the eternal return home into dreams and memory, and connected it to the overall theme of liminality: thus it is located in the meta-thesis. Elements of the research methodology thread through the narrative, moving the nostalgic into a locus more sterile. Through episodes of ‘returning home’ that are the experience of many immigrants, the costly (not only in financial terms) return to the home country invoke notions of time in memory and the significance of remembering and forgetting. Often driven by homesickness, the belief that we can return ‘home’ creates a passage filled with confusion. And, situated parallel to or circling the confusion, is the passage from the liminal stage to the aggregation – the passage that leads to the final panel of the rites de passage. I conceive this as the remembering and misremembering that sends the immigrant ‘home’ and then ‘home’ again. While there is always the suspicion that things were not as bad as we remembered them, the return to the matrix is seldom permanent. There is no successful return because the return becomes a reversal of the immigration. Recent autobiography lends a poignancy to the remembering (Fuller, 2002) and I address the likelihood that not all liminal personae are successfully integrated; from here I draw in the trope of rite de passage to the final part.
Chapter Eight considers the final stage in the tripartite image of *rites de passage*, that of integration and incorporation: thus, I have titled this chapter *A real Aussie*. In this chapter I address the integration of the migrants into their adopted society and the rituals and ceremonies that are necessary, if not obligatory, when becoming an Australian citizen. By comparison, I draw on some historical occasions in the white settlement of Southern Rhodesia where the conferring of integration was problematic. This leads to the issue of ‘ownership’ of being ‘Australian’ (or ‘Rhodesian’) and who is excluded and why. Here, notions of integration as the final step of rites of passage are clear. Elements of assimilation remain and the negotiation of identity that is shared by most individuals continues. In this chapter I examine the rites of integration, of being recognised by others as an Australian and the self-recognition of being an ‘Australian’. The interaction of family in society, and especially the presence of children, is significant for most of the women, in moving through the postliminal to integration. Through the interviews I learn of the experiences the women in this study have (and have had) of the official processes involved in gaining Australian citizenship and the validation bestowed by a public ceremony. The chapter concludes with a reflection on quotidian life pre-integration and post-integration.

*Reprise*: the completion of the study. I revisit the map signalled in the introduction, and retrace the winding contours that have been associated with the *rites de passage* in immigration. This over-arching and retrospective view of the process brings a modicum of closure to the immigration experiences of my protagonists even as I acknowledge there is no general finality or answer. My own voice is part of the chorus for the stories in my life, too, have been heard. In
the event it is my own experience that has led me to explore the thesis and to
determine how we work through the transformation from immigrant to integrant
to finally achieve/contrive to locate ourselves in Australia, as Australians. Finally,
as an ‘Australian’, I revisit the integrative ceremony that immigrants are required
to participate in to become citizens, and from the vantage point of my (new-
found) Australian-ness, I realise that this is, really, just the beginning.

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3 Material from this chapter was first presented at the Sixth Annual Humanities Postgraduate Research Conference: Liveable Communities, 7-8 November 2002. Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia as: ‘Using True Mirrors as an analogy in the attribution of ‘difference’ (in similarity) to fabricate Other’.

4 Material from this chapter was first presented at the Fifth Annual Humanities Postgraduate Research Conference: Undisciplined Thoughts, 8-9 November 2001. Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia as: ‘The Ambivalent Neophyte, Immigrant to Integrant: An Exploration of some English-speaking Immigrant Women in Western Australia’.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature: Themes already formed

This review of the literature follows themes already formed. The themes embrace emigration and immigration as rites of passage. Tropes of identity and autobiography fuse with memory, time, and history. The discourse of placement and home and the myth of returning to the past reveal aspects of experience otherwise denied. The motif and leitmotif of these recurring themes encourage me to extrapolate the past into the present and the present into history. Therefore, in this review of the literature I first explore the theoretical framework into which my thesis is cast, signalling the importance of the rites of passage in my thesis. I review the stories of other immigrants to Australia and their issues of identity, after which the space arises for the writing of Australian emigrants. Because of the autobiographical substance of this thesis it is necessary that autobiographical writing be examined and I do this by interweaving my own story with the stories of migration. This connects to the review of selected books written by migrants into and out of Africa (both men and women), and across time and the range is apparent in the dates of publication. The issues of identity in colonialism and
postcolonialism are intersected with the biographical and autobiographical narratives and the nexus is conspicuous in this review. My own worldview appears in this context. The study of migration and exile has a large literature and, in relating these issues to the rites of passage, the poetic and technical merge; being reconciled with my own history where appropriate. The boundaries between memory, time, and history are indistinct and I take advantage of this to examine these writings together. The final part of this review looks at literature I have considered for methods of ethnological and feminist research and integrates the literature within the hypothesis.

The imbrication of the theories and themes is not only the canopy of the thesis but also its composition. I discuss this literature review with my supervisor, Dr Jenny de Reuck, and she says, “Yes, your structure offers you a format for the literature review which you may end up ‘embedding’ rather than foregrounding in the first chapter. Then, in the later chapters, you can expand on the topics (migration, memory, etc.) you've foreshadowed through the literature survey. It’ll ultimately be a matter of judgement as to how much is left in and how much deferred, but basically, the first chapter is synoptic, and the subsequent chapters expand and go into more depth” (Personal Correspondence 16/11/00). Reiterating the metaphor (introduced in the previous chapter) of the work as a physical map, this review serves to chart the research of the thesis and map the work itself, and is, therefore, legitimately situated following the introduction.

The several (and fluid) paradigms in which I have placed this thesis begin when I approach Pierre Bourdieu through Toril Moi’s paper ‘Appropriating Bourdieu:
Feminist Theory and Pierre Bourdieu’s Sociology of Culture’. The conception of habitus, defined by Gillian Bottomley as ‘embodied history’ in her essay, ‘Living Across Difference: Connecting Gender, Ethnicity, Class and Aging in Australia’, guides me to the source, Pierre Bourdieu Outline of a Theory of Practice (1977). The hypotheses of habitus, doxa, heterodoxy, and change, coalesce with the central notion of liminality in the rites de passage as posited by Arnold van Gennep in The Rites of Passage, and developed and refined by Victor Turner in multiple publications including ‘Variations on a Theme of Liminality’ and ‘Betwixt-and-Between: Liminality in the Rites de Passage’. Initially I am intimidated by the qualifications imposed by van Gennep in his (several) classifications and divisions, in and of, rites of passage. Victor Turner’s interpretation and softening of the theory, whilst no less rigorous, allows broader application and space for adaptation, a space which I find necessary in the context of my study, and I recognise, through Turner’s writing, the implicit universality in van Gennep’s work. The esoteric processes inherent in rites of passage and freeing the rules under which van Gennep devised his theory, are also evident in Terence Turner’s paper ‘Transformation, Hierarchy and Transcendence: A Reformulation of Van Gennep’s Model of the Structure of Rites de Passage’. The overlapping of these theories leads me to the significant interpretation of the Deleuzean body as embodied memory, spatio-temporally, (Braidotti, 2000, 159) and the notion I draw from this is of the body, in itself, as a rite of passage. The previously unspoken transformation of such immigrants (immigrants of minimal difference to the dominant group) yields, on examination, a bricolage fashioned from the minutiae of everyday experience, the (unwritten) history of the small, the personal (Bourdieu, 1977; Turner, Victor, 1977c; Turner, 1979).
Therefore, deeply embedded in the matrix of migration and identity is the notion of a *rites de passage* and the nuances of these (now) involuntary and arcane ritual processes shadow the work as the histories unfold. The experience of our immigration is compounded, somehow, by the lack of physical and visible cultural markers. Often, we white women from Rhodesia, are not recognised as immigrants—neophyte Australians. There is an ambivalence of identity that develops in this context. I ponder if it is from being taken for Australians before our liminal, the central stage in the *rites de passage*, is completed. Victor Turner calls this ‘betwixt-and-between’ and recognises it as a state of marginality “… people who for some reason had not settled into the static (sic) structure of society” (Turner in Turner, 1990, 167). Overall, the focus on the tripartite structure of the *rites de passage* informs my thesis, and I reiterate the metaphor of a triptych throughout the work. The three sections or periods of the rites of passage are classified by Arnold Van Gennep thus: “… preliminal rites (rites of separation), liminal rites (rites of transition), and postliminal rites (rites of incorporation), [however] in specific instances these three types are not always equally important or equally elaborated ” (van Gennep, 1960, 11). He defines *rites de passage* as rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position, and age in man’s (sic) life (van Gennep, 1960, 3), thus indicating a universality that, as I have indicated, allows me to adapt the theory for the purposes of my thesis. Victor Turner tends to focus on the liminal stage which he describes as being interesting in itself but also because of its “… implications for a general theory of sociocultural processes” (Turner, Victor, 1977c, 36). Whilst the liminal chapter in this study is the central panel of the triptych, the sometimes
astonishing stories that arise from both the separation and the integration periods have nuances that lend colour and intensity to the liminal stage; thus van Gennep’s comment cited above that, “… these three types are not always equally important or equally elaborated” (1960, 11), indicates the foregrounding of whichever section is deemed relevant. Therefore, extrapolating from the theory of *rites de passage* to migration is not an enormous leap. In broad terms, recognition of the absence of difference allows the nexus between *rites de passage* and *habitus* that becomes the locus for the discovery of minimal difference—minimal but significant in the justification of my thesis.

Choosing the next point of entry, I approach this section of the literature review with the stories of migration so, in a circuitous way, I have an access to the spiral that any continuing history inevitably/invariably is. The history of parents and grandparents who immigrated to Rhodesia is woven through the histories of the women in my study; the stories of why they left Africa; the life they have encountered in Australia. Hence, it is an effortless operation here to move on to the review of experiences of immigration into Australia.

Among the large literature surrounding autobiography of Australian immigrants, I find Eva Cox’s essay, ‘What Ethnic Identity?’ where she tells of her immigration experience as a child. She describes her struggle with her ‘new’ identity—the identity she takes for herself of ‘New Australian’; she writes of her joy at being in a place she can call ‘home’. But, the identity attributed to her was of ‘reffo’ and ‘Jew’ so, the place becomes one of confusion, and she discovers “… my main sense of identity now was as an outsider” (Cox, 1992, 63). Lolo Houbein, an
immigrant from Holland, reflects on the search for her identity in Australia. In *Wrong Face in the Mirror: An Autobiography of Race and Identity*, she combines her autobiographical exploration of immigrant life in Australia with gentle criticism of the people she found here—the white Australians. She defines her use of the words ‘white Australians’ when she comments that, when she settled in Australia “… the Australians … were not only white, but specifically Anglo-Saxon, Scottish and Irish” (Houbein, 1990, 37, 93-94). Drusilla Modjeska as immigrant and emigrant in her ficto-biography of her mother, *Poppy*, offers a history that is also autobiographical. She draws deeply on the tropes of identity, place and time. Her writing moves from space to space, identity to identity and time to time with a fluidity that resonates with my own story (Modjeska, 1996). In a later essay ‘*Writing Poppy*’ she reveals that, when writing the biography of her mother, “I pulled at the threads of memory until I found the life, or maybe only the tension in them. I began the work of remembering, weaving thoughts and feelings onto a loom …” (Modjeska, 2002, 73). And, in relating memory to time, she finds herself endorsing the realisation gleaned from popular science, “…that time bends and curves, and from Eastern religions that it’s fluid and we can change our consciousness of it in meditation” (Modjeska, 2002, 62). Where immigrants have written (in Australia) about their home country (or the home country of their parents), the evocation of memory is extraordinary, and I signal here, that this is significant in my hypothesis (Dell'oso, 1991; Gunew, 1991) and, from South Africa, Andrea Durbach (Durbach, 2000). By contrast to the many texts of immigration into Australia, I note that the works of emigrants from Australia are generally those of high profile women, academics and intellectuals, such as Jill Ker Conway, Germaine Greer, and Lily Brett—a migrant into and
from Australia, who comments that “[From a distance] Australia looks very beautiful and very comfortable” (in Lewis, 2001). Therefore, by intersecting the two, immigrant and emigrant, I add lustre to my search for history, identity and memory.

If the image of immigrant autobiography is cast cameo, I find the writing of Australian emigrants as intaglio; for instance in the work of Jill Ker Conway. The Road from Coorain, originally published in 1989, tells the story of Ker Conway’s childhood and troubled transition into maturity in Australia (Ker Conway, 1989). The final chapters offer insights into her reasons for leaving Australia. I read this book soon after it was published and long before I set out to write this thesis. Memory tells me that I found it difficult to identify with the author but, on re-reading it for the purposes of this study, I find points of reference that escaped the person/identity I was then. So, in this way autobiographical narratives written by Australian women become for me reflections on memory and identity.

There is, indeed, enjoyment in the images/reflections present in Morag Fraser’s review of Jill Ker Conway’s When Memory Speaks: Reflections on Autobiography. She comments on Jill Ker Conway writing about autobiography and looks at this writing of the self as being something we all do in our own inner conversations. The voices of reviewed and reviewer seem to meld as Fraser writes of her belief that such inner autobiographies “… no matter what language we use [are] fundamentally philosophical or theological” (Fraser, 1998, 8; Ker Conway, 1998, 178) Thus, she understands that Ker Conway is “… interested in the constants of autobiography [and] in the ways it mutates when taboos slacken and
writers, particularly women, find voice and courage to speak publicly of experiences they once would have kept private, hidden, or deflected into another genre that would have left them unimplicated…” (Fraser, 1998, 8). Morag Fraser draws attention to Ker Conway’s distinguishing between “... the persistent archetypal life scripts of men from those of women” (Fraser, 1998; Ker Conway, 1998). The male form is usually that of the odyssey—whether (heroic) external or of the inner consciousness, whereas women’s voice, where it exists at all, is more concealed. The notion of women not wishing to be implicated in their own story may account for the resistance of some of the women in this study to talking about themselves. The preferred focus was, instead, husband and/or children—and sometimes their own experience added as an afterthought, not given importance unless validated by the experience of the family. I consider, perhaps, that this was defining themselves by default. According to Ker Conway, the tradition of women’s autobiography originated in religious establishments: “… in narratives about the autobiographer’s relationship with God” women become instruments of experience rather than conscious agents “… [T]hings happen to them, not because of them” (Fraser, 1998, 8; Ker Conway, 1998, 14). Because the author places such significance on memory, and because remembering and forgetting are such integral parts of my research, I find the concepts she introduces useful and thought provoking. The significance for me of Morag Fraser’s review of autobiographies, and Ker Conway in particular, is the emphasis on memory, and the character of memory, when it is drawn on for the purposes of autobiography. She writes of autobiography being ‘compulsive but also dangerous’ and she justifies this by saying, “Mnemosyne may speak when you
call her but she may not say what you want to hear. You may be able to suborn memory but you can also be laid bare by her, and in your own words” (1998, 8).

Drawing the notion of immigrant and emigrant autobiography into the realm of white Rhodesian women writing, I find, with few exceptions, the little autobiographical literature there is on the topic of white women immigrating to Rhodesia, that it is either ficto-autobiography, such as Sally in Rhodesia and Martie and Others in Rhodesia, both by Sheila MacDonald and published in 1927, or of an historical nature, such as the journals of Marie Lippert, the Jewish wife of a German financier. Marie Lippert was not strictly an immigrant, she accompanied her husband to Africa where he was working on contract. She kept a journal (in English) and wrote letters to her mother in Hamburg (in German). Frau Lippert later published these writings. The very few copies that were printed were published in German as Zur Erinnerung an Marie Lippert, Ihre Reisebriefe und Skizzen aus Matabeleland, 21 September bis 23 Dezember 1891. (No place), 1897. Needless to say, this volume is extraordinarily difficult to obtain, as many copies were destroyed by the Nazi Regime. In my search for women’s autobiography from Rhodesia, I find that Doris Lessing is the exception to my experience of the scarcity of writing. Her autobiographical writing covers her immigration to Africa as a young child and her life in the colony until her emigration—return to the United Kingdom—as a mature woman Under My Skin: Volume one of my autobiography to 1994, and her visiting and revisiting Rhodesia/Zimbabwe African Laughter: Four Visits to Zimbabwe published in 1992. In her 1957 book Going Home, Doris Lessing writes of her experience in 

returning to Rhodesia after a long absence. Passages of Going Home are
evocative and nostalgic, particularly when she reminisces about her childhood on an isolated farm. Seldom does she mention any personal interaction with black African people, mostly she writes of her interaction with the racist white population—and generally to their detriment. Doris Lessing’s observations of Southern Rhodesia from 1924-1949, in the first part of her autobiography, and her commentary about conditions from the point of view of a farm child, are articulate and appealing to me. I find a similarity with much of my own experience as a child brought up on a Rhodesian farm. However, both Sheila MacDonald and Doris Lessing, polar in social and political belief, show I believe, an implicit understanding that, although they are (or were) living in Rhodesia, it is/was where they lived ‘for the time being’, because ‘home’ was England (Lessing, 1957; Lessing, 1992; Lessing, 1995; MacDonald, 1927b; MacDonald, 1927a).

Other literature historically pertinent to historical section in this thesis is generally biographical or based on letters and journals, such as the account of Mother Patrick by Professor Michael Gelfand: *Mother Patrick and Her Nursing Sisters: Based on Extract of Letters and Journal in Rhodesia of the Dominican Sisterhood, 1890-1901* (1964). This is the story of the Dominican Sisters who trekked into Matabeleland – the south western province of [what was to become] Southern Rhodesia and the primary reason for the book was “… to place an important section of Rhodesian medical history on record when for about a decade the Dominican Sisterhood was given the nursing care in three of the main centres of Southern Rhodesia (Gelfand, 1964, Preface). I have mentioned the difficulty in obtaining copies of these historical texts, and among the most difficult to obtain
was one referred to in Professor Gelfand’s book. This is a history of the Dominican Sisters in Rhodesia written by ‘A Dominican Sister’, and titled: In God’s White-Robed Army: the Chronicle of the Dominican Sisters in Rhodesia, 1890-1934 (that can be tentatively dated 1947). These books, journals, and letters used to be available in the National Archives in Salisbury (Harare) but, due to the present circumstances in Zimbabwe, this availability has terminated. In many cases I have had to refresh my own memory of place names and historical events by using (Encyclopaedia Rhodesia, 1973) and (Tabex Encyclopedia Zimbabwe, 1987). The latter volume was given to me as a Christmas gift on a return visit to Zimbabwe in 1996, and I will draw on this presentation in chapter seven, Memory and the myth of the eternal return.

Originally published in 1924, and available (by dint of a thorough search) in a 1971 facsimile reproduction, is The Real Rhodesia by Ethel Tawse Jollie, a woman of eminence in Rhodesia. Ethel Tawse Jollie first visited Rhodesia in 1904 with her first husband, Archibald Colquhoun “a writer and explorer … who had served as the first Administrator of Mashonaland until 1892”, and, after he died in 1914, she returned to Rhodesia to settle and, in 1915, remarried “… J. Tawse Jollie of Melsetter, a former policeman turned farmer” (L.W.B. in Jollie, 1924, i-ii). She was the first woman elected, in 1920, to the Legislative Assembly in British Dominions. According to the Encyclopaedia Rhodesia (1973) she became, “[i]n 1923 … the first woman Member of Parliament in Rhodesia, and the first woman to sit in an Empire Parliament” (Encyclopaedia Rhodesia, 1973). In the introduction to The Real Rhodesia, Ethel Tawse Jollie gives “two main objects” for writing the book; the first to defend Rhodesia “from the libel that has
smirched her reputation … that she has been a bad bargain for the Chartered Company” and, more significantly for my purpose, her second object “… is to try to give a true picture of a British community which is unique in many of its conditions of life, both politically and socially” (Jollie, 1924, xv). To connect this text with those of Doris Lessing and Sheila Macdonald, both of whom are fervent in their assertions of affection for Rhodesia (the weather, the countryside), Ethel Tawse Jollie also professes her love of Rhodesia but continually refers to ‘home’. This is clearly illustrated in this short excerpt:

The reader of this book will not need to be told that it is written by one who knows the back veld and loves it. Unless that love is somehow ingrained in man or woman Rhodesia will be to them only the second best—their fate but not their choice. For there is nothing that a Rhodesian town or village can offer that cannot be had better at home or in some other part of Europe, except, perhaps, the sunshine and the cheap native labour … (Jollie, 1924, 192).

In some respects Ethel Tawse Jollie would appear to be an incipient model for feminists—perhaps from the same mould as ex-British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher—but, as can be seen from the above excerpt this is not necessarily so. And this consideration is ameliorated by her freely expressed opinion of women that is condescending to say the least, “Give them [women] a little love, and the feeling that they are indispensable to the welfare of the family, and most women will not only carry the burden gallantly, but will never own that it is a burden”. And she adds to this when she writes scathingly of the “real tragedy of the Superfluous Woman, who need by no means be a spinster” and offers her solution that, “On the back veld no woman is superfluous …” (Jollie, 1924, 205). Women coming to the colonies ‘husband hunting’ and women being brought in to marry settlers are matters addressed in Deborah Kirkwood’s Settler Wives in Southern Rhodesia: A Case Study (1984) and other essays in (Callan, 1984) and also in
The preserve of contemporary autobiographical writing from Rhodesia opens with Peter Godwin’s 1996 volume, *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa*. The evocative nature of this volume—in which he talks about events I remember, places I know, people I know—allows me the space to validate my own experiences, my own memories. His notion of Rhodesia as home is clearly set out. Godwin writes of the insight when he realised (being a Rhodesian) “… how we appeared to the outside, of just how far we had strayed from our mother culture and mutated into this quite separate people” (1996, 197). The notion of England being ‘home’ is still available but qualified. Godwin observes in the next sentence, “And I realized that was why my parents would never really consider going home to England, because England wasn’t home any more, even to them” (Godwin, 1996, 197). More recently the 2002 autobiography of Alexandra Fuller, *Don’t Let’s Go To The Dogs Tonight: An African Childhood*, gives an insight into the Rhodesia (and Zimbabwe) that more recent emigrants have left behind. The tendency to ‘heroic’ autobiographical writing is altogether absent and the wonderful remembering of the quotidian details in the life of a young girl are entrancing and provocative. In this excerpt she tells of how she waits for her mother, who is a volunteer reservist in the British South Africa Police, and the vitality the minutiae impart to the story is delightful:

I sit under the frangipani tree on the spiky, drying police station lawn with its ring of whitewashed stones and aloe vera flower beds, and I poke pieces of grass into an lion traps to the little ant lions leap up with sharp claws in anticipation of an ant meal … And then Mum
comes out and says, ‘Bobo’! And then, ‘There you are. Look, you’re all dusty’ … ‘come inside now. It’s time to rest.’ (Fuller, 2002, 64).

I can recollect doing the same thing when I was a young child and, as an adult, I yearn to reclaim that warm, dusty, idleness waiting without expectations, for something or someone.

Continuing the exploration of autobiographical writing and the African experience, I find much of historical interest in Peter Rainier’s autobiography of his life in Africa, My Vanished Africa, (published in 1940). Written in the early twentieth century, it brings to the fore not only the entrenched stereotypes of the age but also emphasises Ker Conway’s observation on ‘heroic’ male autobiography. Rainier stereotypes not only women, but also black Africans, Afrikaners, and the Portuguese. His observations of some of the native people, especially the Pagans in Nigeria and his detailed descriptions of cannibalism and other tribal customs are entertaining to say the least! The ‘Boy’s Own’ nature of the adventures contain in retrospect a certain innocence and charm. In the tales he tells I recognise many stories I heard as a child growing up in Rhodesia. Some of the anecdotes I recognise from when I lived in the manifestly white-male-dominant environment of Main Camp in the Wankie Game Reserve. Whether Rainier’s autobiography is the true origin of these stories, or whether he also heard them and adopted them for his own, is a moot point. As a social statement and when taken in context, Rainier’s writing is rewarding. His tendency to promote himself is entertaining, and such self-aggrandisement is not unusual in many of the men I’ve met in the African bush (Rainier, 1940).
The theme developing from the autobiographical narrative is identity, and thus the problems of self-representation and the situation of the (postcolonial) subject moving (migrating) from one postcolonial locality to another as elucidated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in an interview with Angela Ingram, ‘Postmarked Calcutta, India’. The placement of the women in Africa and in Australia and the political ambiguity of being white and a postcolonial subject broaden the locus to include notions of assumed and presumed identity, memory, and returning ‘home’. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in this interview, talks of the problems of representation, self-representation and representing others, and the situation of the post-colonial subject. In the interview, Angela Ingram, who is British and claims she lived for some time in Rhodesia, states how contemptuous she was of our [Rhodesian] way of life. She says to Gayatri Spivak, “When we lived in what used to be “Rhodesia”, I was glad I hadn’t been born there …” (1990, 83). The subject arose in their discussion when Gayatri Spivak spoke of having two “mothers”: India where she was born, and the United States of America where she lives and works. The issue this raises is, where does her assumption of a place being a ‘mother’ leave people, like me, who are ambivalent about their birthplace, i.e. people who did not belong there for various reasons and who have little knowledge of their antecedents? In relation to this, Gayatri Spivak is scathing about those searching for their roots. She speaks of her ‘contempt’ and ‘distrust’ for “... anyone who can conceive of looking for roots, [they] should be growing rutabagas” (1990, 93). When someone is so confident in their background, perhaps they can afford to feel like that. For those of us who do not have that luxury, it seems harsh and not a little arrogant. Angela Ingram adds that “... everyone has roots, we carry them around, they’re right here” (1990, 93).
Carrying one’s roots around is one thing, but knowing them is another question altogether! If, as I choose to understand her statement, she is referring to our roots being reflected in our physical appearance, our cultural habits and so on, this is, in a circuitous way, one of the key arguments of my hypothesis. We come into Australia and are mistaken for someone other than who we are; it is a situation that is complicated by our not knowing what is expected of us (as ‘new’ white Australians) and confusion as to where we are placed in the society because of our similarities to white, Anglo-Saxon Australians—the roots we are carrying around. It is this, the absence of obvious differences, that requires us to find, or perhaps invent, an Australian identity. The metaphor that comes to mind is the exterior of a house. There is the part you can see at a glance from outside but the interior, the hidden space, is the exploration of the differences that separate us from the Australian ‘look-alike’ women—until we assimilate (by camouflage or other means) and (possibly) eventually integrate. Reverberations of the rites of passage are evident within this metaphor. Another metaphor that comes to mind is that of ‘pentimento’, the gradual wearing away of the paint to allow inceptive images to show through—but this speaks more of the hidden identity—hidden even from the individual herself.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak comes from a high-caste Brahmin background of which she seems alternately proud and ashamed. Madan Sarup (Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World) delicately criticises Spivak: he comments that, “She has strong views on the search for roots … I can understand her view that it is important for people not to feel rooted in one place, but I wonder: why is she so unnecessarily emphatic?” (Sarup, 1996, 163). Sarup comments on Spivak
referring to herself as a “post-colonial diasporic Indian who seeks to decolonize the mind” (1996, 163): for myself, I wonder, in her self-assumed role of ‘decolonizing the mind’, whose mind it is she seeks to decolonize? Hers or mine? I find the notion of what I consider to be a British sense of entitlement clearly illustrated in this interview. Angela Ingram is British and appears confident in her powerful historical background; the sense of entitlement that many people, usually of British background and/or close descent, possess. Possibly, because I take exception to her louche remark about being glad she wasn’t a “filthy colonial born in Rhodesia” (Spivak, 1990, 83), my perception is that she somehow requires postcolonial subjects to be distinctly ‘other’, distinctly ‘different’, perhaps distinctly ‘subaltern’. How does this impact on my own search for identity and the research for this thesis? It seems that I am to be placed in the precarious position of having no ‘postcolonial’ identity—in the terms of her implication, and certainly no sense of entitlement. Following the questions initiated by my paper ‘The Ambivalent Neophyte: Immigrant to Integrant, an exploration of some English speaking immigrant women in Western Australia” presented at the Undisciplined Thoughts conference at Curtin University in November 2001, I gained a valuable insight into the differences between my experiences of immigration, and those of the women in my study who are of British descent. It seems the sense of entitlement that I have indicated is something that many British people possess, and this is evident in much of the literature examined for this review. It seems that, for many British immigrants, there is no lurking feeling of not belonging, or not being welcome in the new country. For these privileged immigrants there is no peering over one’s shoulder and waiting to be told, “you are not wanted here”, a feature that is clear in Eva
Cox’s essay (already cited), and in my own experience. My insight regarding ‘entitlement’ arose from a question/remark from a Scottish woman in the audience following the presentation of my paper. She said that [for her], “Immigration was not particularly traumatic and that one could go ‘home’ any time one wished” (Personal Journal, 2001). I reflect on my 1997 Honours Dissertation entitled When “Back Home” isn’t England: making visible the memories, lives and experience of some white women in Rhodesia in which I found that, for many immigrants, there was no ‘home’ to return to. In terms of entitlement, the British sense of entitlement in immigration is nowhere more evident than in Sheila Macdonald’s ficto-autobiography already cited (Venables, 1997).

Notions of identity and memory are embedded in postcolonial discourse. Situated within the colonial and postcolonial literature reviewed for this dissertation are the works of Homi K Bhabha. The projection of many of his writings such as ‘The other question: the stereotype and colonial discourse’, and ‘Interrogating Identity’ into this and other themes in my thesis (particularly those of memory and identity), makes situating him in the structure of this review complex (Bhabha, 1987; Bhabha, 1996). Therefore, as I prefer to keep the form fluid, I flag Bhabha here and cite him elsewhere where appropriate. Similarly, Trinh T. Minh-ha’s writing segues into much of the thesis. Relations between coloniser and colonised define Edward Said’s book Culture and Imperialism (1993) and, although there are elusive similarities with Albert Memmi’s The Colonizer and the Colonized (1965), and Julia Kristeva’s essay ‘What of Tomorrow’s Nation’ in Nations Without Nationalism (1993), the differences are (to me) more
conspicuous. Expanding the spectrum to include the notions of migration, exile and foreignness that spring from coloniser and colonised, there appears a reflection, a mirroring. The similarities of displaced emigrants exist between Albert Memmi, writing from the perspective of a colonised Tunisian (and an entirely male experience); Julia Kristeva, writing as a ‘cosmopolitanist’ born in Bulgaria and living in France; and Edward Said who grew up in France, Britain, and the United States and, who in his own words says, ‘Although I feel at home in them, I have remained, as a native from the Arab and Muslim world, someone who also belongs to the other side’ (Said, 1993, xxiii). And in his essay ‘Reflections on Exile’ (2001) he proposes that the discussion of nationalism and exile “without reference to each other” cannot be neutral. He writes, exile is unlike nationalism because it “… is fundamentally a discontinuous state of being” (Said, 2001, 177). It is necessary, however, to take into consideration that Memmi’s book predates Kristeva and Said by nearly thirty years. The refraction of the images presented in these texts warrants an exploration of the minutiae within history, and within individual experience. I speak of the paradox of postcolonialism that fails to address those who belong neither to the colonised nor the coloniser. Issues of identity and notions of colonialism and postcolonialism distend and collide with incipient identity in the arena of migration, exile, and foreignness. Migration itself can become a metanoia that enforces changes, not only on the way of life, but also in the character and spirit of an immigrant. This notion is embedded in the liminal space of the rites de passage—before moving into the integrative stage. Within the paradigms of my research, invoking the spectre of colonialism that informs the paradox of a postcolonialism, becomes an exploration of personal history. The concepts that inform migration, exile, and
foreignness, within the ambiguity of time, location and history, integrate with notions of ‘otherness’ and identity.

These notions of postcolonial identity in colonizing and decolonizing, are salient to the examination of migration made by psychiatrists Leon and Rebeca Grinberg in their comprehensive study, *Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Migration and Exile* (1989). Migration as a mental health and trauma issue has a wide literature. Grinberg and Grinberg define migration thus, “In general, migration (emphasis in original) has been used in its strict sense to refer to the geographic mobility of people who move from one place to another … for the purpose of settling there” (Grinberg and Grinberg, 1989, 16-17). The authors explore the experience of emigration and immigration from a psychoanalytic perspective. The detailed definitions of the terminology and the pathology of immigration, together with case studies, permit relevant analogy to the words of the women in my research. Grinberg and Grinberg examine those people forced to relocate and those who relocate for other reasons. In relation to my research the point that Grinberg and Grinberg make and to which I respond is; while some people are forced to leave a country as refugees, others immigrate to places that are distant geographically but where the social conditions are similar to the country of origin, “… before the change took place” (Grinberg and Grinberg, 1989, 19). The lives of the women in this research fall overtly into the second group. However, for some of the women in the study it was the fear of having to leave eventually, that often precipitated the emigration. The notion of emigration by choice is posited by Grinberg and Grinberg who call this category of emigration ‘sedentary migrations’ and define them thus, “… to leave a place so as to be able to remain in the same place … to
leave in order not to change” (1989, 19). The authors categorise the ‘tendency to emigrate’ in two groups: ocnophilic, that is, those morbidly attached to familiar faces and places, and philobatic, those who tend to lead an independent life, seek pleasure in adventures and especially in new emotions (1989, 21). Looking at the history of the white settlers in Rhodesia, and the women in my research the adventurous spirit seems likely. The interviews from which I draw my conclusions will show this is often the case.

Connected to the notion of migration is the issue of ‘exile’ and exile may be sought by a person as an immigrant, and may be felt only by the immigrant. Exile can be, and often is, forced upon a person or upon a whole community. According to Grinberg and Grinberg, exile is defined as separate from other migrations: “for the exile, departure is imposed and return impossible” (1989, 157). Madan Sarup comments that to be an exile means “… someone who is obliged to stay away”. He expresses this view in his critique (already cited) of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who says that she does not feel that she is an exile (Sarup, 1996, 163). The area in Bulgaria my paternal grandfather’s family came from (Thrace, now in Greece) was, according to notes written by him, settled by refugees, exiles, and wandering people; people whose homes and livelihood had been taken from them in forgotten wars. He writes of the mournful songs he heard as a child, sung by descendants of these people, who are also my people, and I reflect on a minor detail, that my blood group (B+) is common in people from the Russian Steppes and China but relatively uncommon in Northern Europeans; indeed, according to the statistics, in Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, this group occurs in only eight or nine percent of the population (NBS, 2001; Red-Cross,
The picture that emerges is of the eternal movement of people, and this is illustrated in the words of South African president Jan Smuts who wrote in his state paper to the League of Nations in 1919, after the First World War: “The very foundations have been shaken and loosened, and things are again fluid. The tents have been struck, and the great caravan of humanity is once more on the march” (in Blake, 1977, 183).

Julia Kristeva demonstrates the significance of situating migration in history and she gives an overview of the history of immigration and foreigners (Kristeva, 1993). In her writing, the spiral of history winds through and around the scenes of migration. She writes of the confusion, the geographical and ideological restrictions of, and toward, foreigners and emigrants, throughout the world and throughout history. In the essay, Kristeva has selected moments in history where she challenges the various historical solutions applied to immigrants and foreigners. She begins her examination with immigrant women, the Danaides from Greek mythology; proceeds to Paul from Tarsus; and Ruth the Moabite. Parallels can be drawn with almost any migration trends, and the movement of the women in my research is no exception. Her ‘distant ideal’ is that of “… a world without foreigners” (1993, 35-36). The challenge, Kristeva maintains, is to realise we are all foreigners and are all, “… a resource in the search for new forms of community among individuals that are different and free” (1993, 47). The notion of ‘foreigner’ and ‘migrant’ together are not necessarily equivalent, or indeed connected. But, as I understand Kristeva’s concept of ‘foreigner’, it is that of not speaking the same language as the dominant group in the host country, of differences in food, physical appearance, dress, and so forth. I ponder if this is, in
today’s political climate, seen more acutely between, for example, the English and non-English, French and non-French etcetera? The notion of any immigrants to countries such as Australia being seen as foreigners by indigenous Australians, that is to say, the original inhabitants of Australia—the Aboriginal people, is not often addressed. Indeed, in Australia it is an issue that is generally avoided, or if spoken about, not acted upon. To be ‘foreign’ in Australia, therefore, is an ambiguous position; a question of identity with a multitude of answers (Ang, 1995; Bottomley, 1991; Gunew, 1990; Gunew, 1994; Houbein, 1984; Papastergiadis, 1998; Stratton, 1996; Vasta, 1991).

The historical nexus of exile is multilayered for, in the Athenian democracy, exile was seen as harsh punishment. Today, exile caused by violent upheaval is seen as having serious consequences with the segregation of “sectors of the population from national life, [thus] forcing them to adjust to unwanted, hurtful, and frustrating situations” (Grinberg and Grinberg, 1989, 157). In directing the notion of exile into my thesis, I find that elements of exile are present but the extremes: “exile flattens and crushes one’s life…” (Benedetti in Grinberg, 1989, 158) are, overtly, absent. In pondering the notion of exile, I find that, if it is a state of mind, perhaps the seed lies in the feeling of connection to the home country, and the memories we retain. If this is the case, the individual’s response to emigration and/or exile is rooted in something other than material goods or lifestyle. The notion of identity and reassembly of identity in exile is elegantly addressed by Edward W Said through the use of poetry, particularly the “… earlier poems Mahmoud Darwish, whose considerable work amounts to an epic effort to
transform the lyrics of loss into the indefinitely postponed drama of return” (2001, 179).

In the notion of *rites de passage* there is the moment of separation, the initial movement into the *limen*. I find that moving from what the *liminal persona* is familiar with and into the unknown, there is a point where, for some people, grief begins. I ponder on my own grief at leaving my country of birth and this leads me to ask, “When does the grief associated with emigration ease”? Perhaps after a trip ‘home’ and being confronted once again with the reasons for leaving in the first place (Ferrari, 1998, 41). There is, in this grief, the connection to remembering: re-membering home, family and friends, and consequently, the myth of the eternal/successful return. And there is, perhaps, in the sadness, the sense of abandonment—abandonment of the homeland and the abandonment of self. So, what are we left with but the memories.

In his book on the study of memory, Daniel L Schacter acknowledges that remembering and memory are not the objective material that many cognitive psychologists would wish. He comments that previously the study of memory did not include the subjective experience of remembering. Schacter says ‘we now believe with some degree of certainty that our memories are *not* just bits of data that we coldly store and retrieve computerlike’ (my emphasis) (Schacter, 1996, 4). He says, “We cannot separate our memories of the ongoing events of our lives from what has happened to us previously”. I wonder why? Does this mean that as we remember we stop remembering the event and just remember the memory? Eviatar Zerubavel concurs but comments that “… there are certain things that one
should forget also underscores the normative dimension of memory, which is typically ignored by cognitive psychology”. He goes on to comment that “… remembering is more than just a spontaneous personal act, as it also happens to be regulated by unmistakably social rules of remembrance that tell us quite specifically what we should remember what we must forget” (emphasis in original) (1997. 84). The depth of social memories and where they begin is interlinked tacitly “… in the way we begin historical narratives” implicitly consigning memories that preceded this arbitrary yet conventional starting point, to a place of unimportance, a place that can be forgotten (Zerubavel, 1997, 84-85). Thus begging the questions: who determines the timing where this rule of social remembering forecloses on preceding memories? And, who/where are those people who have memories of before the beginning of the conventional historical narrative? Therefore, in the context of my hypothesis, I believe where Barbara Myerhof, in her book, Remembered Lives, speaks of links with the past and the need to re-member “… to forge a link with the listener, to retain one’s past, to find evidence of sense—above all it is an assertion of unextinguished presence” (Myerhof, 1992, 240), is the nexus where we may begin to touch the nerve point of memory.

In Michael Ondaatje’s biography of his parents, Running in the Family, he writes of his memories of Ceylon—Sri Lanka, his family and his family history. The evocative nature of his poetry opens the doors of homesickness for any migrant who cares to read it. To illuminate this I have chosen an excerpt from one of his poems; he writes in the final part of the poem ‘Light’:

These are their fragments, all I remember,
wanting more knowledge of them. In the mirror and in my kids
I see them in my flesh. Wherever we are
they parade in my brain and the expanding stories
connect to the grey grainy pictures on the wall,
as they hold their drinks or 20 years later
hold grandchildren, pose with favourite dogs,
coming through the light, the electricity, which the storm
destroyed an hour ago, a tree going down by the highway
so that now inside the kids play dominoes by candlelight
and out here the thick rain static the spark of my match to a cigarette
and the trees across the field leaving me, distinct
lonely in their own knife scars and cow-chewed bark
frozen in the jagged light as if snapped in their run
the branch arms waving to what was a second ago the dark sky
when in truth like me they haven’t moved.
Haven’t moved an inch from me (Ondaatje, 1989, 5).

After a trip ‘home’ to Zimbabwe in 1996, in the confusion of my memories not
fitting the reality, I wrote in my journal ‘Maybe I misremember?’ But now I
ponder on what Bhabha says, ‘Remembering is never a quiet act of introspection
or retrospection. It is a painful re-membering, a putting together of the
dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present’ (Bhabha, 1994, 63).
And Mary Douglas writes of “forgetting [which] includes different kinds of
selective remembering, misremembering and disremembering” (Douglas, 1985,
13). It is the returning that was painful—so the issues of grief at leaving and
sadness on return are both salient in respect to memory. I reflect on the memories
of Africa and the early days of my immigration in Australia—where is the
connection? Is it the relinquishing of the pre-liminal persona—and how does that
happen? Each return to Africa emphasises the changes in the country and in the
self. I notice each time I return how real Africa seems, and how indistinct
Australia. The feeling of identity being connected to place is explored by Marilyn
Strathern, who argues that: “Moving between locations can [thus] seem an act of
disorientation. Indeed, Western geography combines with a perception of
individual mobility to partition the sense of place” (Strathern, 1991, 117). There is indeed a disorientation, the disorientation of living in Australia and heeding my past in Africa. Is it necessary to confront the silence, challenge the mirror with the question, where do I fit? And I ponder on where my place is. I find this entry in the journal I kept when revisiting Zimbabwe in 1996 and I reproduce it here as I wrote it, structured (almost) like a poem:

Homesickness. 22/12/96
It’s the terror you see—the terror of feeling home is going to forget me.
Or me forget home?
That’s what this kind of homesickness is.
It is quite different from the homesickness which brought me back to Africa.
Africa is so much more REAL than Australia.
One more thing
I have not remembered one dream since I’ve been here.
In Australia, all my dreams are of Africa.
In Africa, there is no need to dream?
Or, no need to remember dreams?
Is Australia really the place of dreaming?
Does Australia cease to exist when I’m in Africa? (Personal Journal).

Marilyn Strathern discusses the concept of the ‘cosmopolitan anthropologist’ returning home: “Images of neither integration nor fragmentation convey what it feels like to have returned home. Neither trope adequately indicates the nature of presences that impinge” (Strathern, 1991, 23). The implication is that the ‘cosmopolitan anthropologist’ knows the whereabouts of her/his home. There is an expectation that the home that has been left behind (the people, the place) will remain the same. On returning, there is a jolting awareness that the home/place has changed and I have changed. Then follows the renegotiation, and reintegration, of role and of identity. The sanctuary becomes the people who remember as I remember. The sanctuary is myself, my memories. The
rootlessness becomes self-perpetuating and is perhaps a sanctuary in itself? It is the significance, the strength of homesickness, that often accounts for the myth of the eternal return.

Whether there is evident metanoia in the immigrant, or whether the subject, the immigrant, is unaware of any transformation in her or his identity, the action of relocating into a new society compels an altered perspective on life. It is in this liminal space that the exploration of ways of being (and ways of being seen) for this research, opened me up to aspects of my own identity, previously unacknowledged. The interview process triggered a similar experience for some of the women in my research, a discovery of fragments of character of which we were unaware. Understanding unfolds that there is a perception of personality, and hence identity, often attributed to white Rhodesian women in Australia, that may or may not be appropriate. In the liminal period of my own relocation, the attribution of a racist identity led me to assume a camouflage that, on reflection, became the metanoia of my experience of immigration. Knowledge of how we reinvent ourselves as Australians and how that reflects on self-assumed identity leads me, as researcher and author, to understand the complexity and depth of insight required in any process of self-examination. In this place I am aware of the responsibility I have assumed of speaking on behalf of the women in my study, and the logical extension of that responsibility which is, as posited by Sneja Gunew, who reads this and from where (Gunew, 1993a, 7). The significance of identity and representation in the postcolonial sphere is discussed in the Angela Ingram/Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak interview, already cited. Spivak considers the problems of representation, self-representation and
representing others, and the situation of the postcolonial subject (Spivak, 1990, passim). The overwhelming impression is the struggle between identity and nationality, and that is reflected in my own experience of immigration. The question I ask myself is, “Am I this or am I that or am I something else entirely?” given that I have no distinguishing language, racial or cultural markers that stamp me as different from other white Australian women.

A part of being an immigrant with no distinguishing markers, save perhaps a moderately distinctive accent, tends to make me think of my own background in Rhodesia. The desire to sound British, to be British, is reflected historically in the thesis. There was already in 1912, only a few years after white settlement in Rhodesia, concern about accent – and by extrapolation about national purity – being expressed by the Director of Education. A warning was circulated to the parents of high school scholars about the standard of English pronunciation, and the purpose is clear:

You have undoubtedly realized that the youth in this country are at a disadvantage in the manner of learning the correct pronunciation of the English language. More often than not their ears are accustomed to variants of the English language far from pleasant to hear and which, if acquired, would in later years betray a lack of cultured training (Gann, 1969, 315).

This admission, albeit by omission, that not all settlers were English speaking was, most likely, directed at the Afrikaans settlers from South Africa. In my experience, acquiring (the Rhodesian equivalent of) a cultured English accent was important to achieve social status in Rhodesia. In this context, there is a connection to Lacan’s notion that the effect of mimicry is camouflage, “not a harmonization of repression of difference, but a form of resemblance” (in Bhabha,
1994, 90). The similarity is smoothly extrapolated to Rhodesian migrants in Australia. The idea that even unquestioning compliance with the dominant culture confers acceptance on the immigrant is attractive—but the literature shows this is not necessarily the case. For instance, Frank Clements writing of the Greek community in Rhodesia cites the example of a Greek who

gained one of the most distinguished Rhodesian records as an Air Force pilot in the war; shortly after his return he applied to join the Salisbury Club and was blackballed. No reason was given, of course, but ‘dagos’ and ‘yids’ were as unacceptable to the normal memberships as were ‘coolies’ (Clements, 1969, 73).

Thus, the Greek was good enough to fight for the British, but was unacceptable in the colonial society because of his ethnicity. Bhabha speaks of “the major trope of social and psychic identification”, when the Other only becomes “one of us” in death. “He was one of us” reveals the fragile margins of the concepts of Western civility and cultural community put under stress” (Bhabha, 1994, 174). No doubt, had the Greek been killed in action, he would have been “one of us”! The postscript to Frank Clements’ anecdote reads: “The Greek announced that he had in consequence returned his medals and decorations to the Queen. This incident was remarkable only in that it was publicized” (1969, 73). The paradox is that the dominant culture requires compliance but seldom confers acceptance. It may be that it is in the performance of compliance that the notions of assimilation and mimicry originate.

The notions of *rites de passage*, of assimilation and integration, that follow from this are grounded in the historical events of white settlement in Rhodesia. I expand this, with our experiences of immigration into Australia, into the
Australian locus. I return to the work of Peter Godwin and his statement of unremarked integration into Rhodesian society: that the mutation happens, that curious divergence from the mother culture whether British, Rhodesian, or Russian, the identities becoming “this quite separate people” (Godwin, 1996, 197).

While there is a tendency to reiterate material in the methodology (in the preceding chapter), I find that the literature that influenced the research process, both the fieldwork and the writing can be situated here. The literature includes the experiences of ethnographers, historians, feminists and other researchers. The methods I use to meld the sense of history and the rites of passage in immigration, and to establish my own connections with autobiography, identity, and memory—and to situate the whole in a theoretical framework—are drawn from a multitude of sources. I work as the insider’s voice and as the author’s voice. Ruth Behar, ethnologist and poet, has inspired my research. Her book The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart and her essay ‘Writing in My Father’s Name: A Diary of Translated Woman’s First Year’ are articulate and her voice is authentic. She does not shy away from the emotional and stressful situations that occur. In this respect, Anne Marie Fortier’s paper, ‘Troubles in the Field: The use of personal experiences as sources of knowledge’, has also proved valuable and, when I have had to (often reluctantly) step away from the research as an insider, and use the authoritative voice I am comforted that my emotional investment is not unique (Behar, 1995; Behar, 1996; Fortier, 1996). Trinh T. Minh-ha, whose work I initially found ‘too difficult’ has become more familiar to me now. I had to learn to read her in small bites/bytes. She says, “Writing, in a
way, is listening to the others’ language and reading with the others’ eyes. The more ears I am able to hear with, the farther I see the plurality of meaning and the less I lend myself to the illusion of a single message” (Minh-ha, 1989, 30). What does that mean to me as the author of this text? It is, I think, the understanding, and appreciation, of being able to configure all the research I’ve done into something others can read and endow with meaning—mine or their own. I have read Judith Abwunza; in her ‘Conversation Between Cultures: Outrageous Voices? Issues of Voice and Text in Feminist Anthropology’ she addresses the complexity of speaking about women while avoiding the tendency to speak for them. She is passionately aware that we only hear women’s voices because ‘I was there!’ (Abwunza, 1995, 255). The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures (1989) situates the overall theory in a postcolonial paradigm—and pushes me to research further (when, really, I should be writing and not reading) (Ashcroft, 1989). Shulamit Reinharz’s seminal text Feminist Methods in Social Research (1992) and Donna Haraway’s essay ‘Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective’ (1988) have been (are) necessary adjuncts to the research (Haraway, 1988; Reinharz and Davidman, 1992).

Edward Said writes in his introduction that colonisation was ‘about the notions of bringing civilisation to primitive or barbaric peoples ... “they” were not like “us” and for that reason deserved to be ruled” (1993, xi-xii). I understand where this applies in Kristeva’s writing of foreigners and exile (1993) and in Memmi’s notions of colonizer and colonized—but it is, I believe, too general for the women in my study. Although my sample base is small, there is diversity in our
backgrounds. In the event it is my own experience that has led me to explore—within the discourses of postcolonialism, feminism, *rites de passage*, and postmodernism—and to determine where these immigrants’ sense of dissimilarity and division between themselves and within Western Australia is located. Reflecting on the multiple identities inherited in nationality and historical background, I reiterate the autobiographical content of the work. Situating the research in context from the beginning (or a beginning), in the following chapter I discuss the history of colonisation in Southern Rhodesia in the early twentieth century and the placement of white settlers not of British descent.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{1}}\] Mashonaland: the central and north-eastern parts of Rhodesia.
\[\text{\textsuperscript{2}}\] Melsetter: farming area in the Eastern Highlands of Rhodesia, near the border of Mozambique.
Chapter Three

The Beginning is not at Perth Airport.

In this chapter, which takes the form of a prologue to the main thesis, I address white immigration to the British colony of Rhodesia in the early twentieth century. I draw on notions of colonialism, and postcolonialism as an inversion of colonialism and, in this context, I am able to discuss the history of colonisation in Southern Rhodesia in the early twentieth century. By drawing on personal family history and examining the positioning of ‘foreign’ immigrants in British colonial society I am able to extrapolate from this experience to the positioning of white, English speaking immigrants in Western Australia. In this process I am better able to embrace the immigration experience, both currently and historically. In this way the reflections and memories of people in other times and other places reveal how memories intersect with the twisting threads of ‘new’ life and ‘new’ identity in Africa and in Australia. Therefore, I am able to signal from the very beginning that the context of this work is autobiographical; that the research, writing, and thesis are embedded in personal and family experiences. The themes
and tropes flagged in this opening chapter are the first images of the deeper reflections that follow.

I discuss my writing about the history of Rhodesia in this thesis with a colleague, an ex-Rhodesian. She questions the necessity of going into the historical sphere in Rhodesia when my thesis concerns the identity, positionality and experience of some white immigrant women in Western Australia. My explanation to her (and subsequently to myself) is that it is necessary because, for the sake of my narrative, there needs to be a beginning and Perth—or even Harare—airport are not that beginning, just as when my grandparents left Eastern Europe to go to Africa, that was not the beginning. Therefore, by positioning myself (and this thesis) historically and currently, I celebrate time as a presence, a prescience that ebbs and flows, circles and spirals. Notions of time are visited throughout this work and tendrils of time wrap around ideas and issues in shadowy (smoky) embrace. Viewing time as fluid, the similarities and differences between migrant identity in colonial Rhodesia and migrant identity in postcolonial Western Australia can be shown in an intimate and transparent manner. I find that, by looking at the minutiae of experiences, issues arise for exploration that otherwise might not have been accessible; areas that otherwise might not have been seen as pertinent, become integral to the work. Therefore, as the thesis progresses, the context becomes clear, and the notions, lucid. I reiterate, the content of this thesis is substantially autobiographical.

So, in this chapter I look at the situation of immigrants into Southern Rhodesia who were not British by birth or close descent. I relate this position to issues of
gender and social stratification within the colony. I initiate the theme of assimilation (or otherwise) in the case of ‘foreign’ immigrants into colonial society and flag here an integral part of my thesis which defines (for me) the difference between assimilation (which may be seen a strategy for survival for the immigrant), and integration. Exposure of the accepted history of Southern Rhodesia occasionally surfaces in this exploration with the proviso that the events are seen from my own (and my family’s) worldview. Therefore, the chapter tends to be biographical and deals particularly with my paternal grandparents, who were brought to Southern Rhodesia from Eastern Europe in the early years of the twentieth century. Interviews with my aunt, who was born in Southern Rhodesia in 1914, and the use of notes that she has kept over the years concerning family history allow me to situate the non-British colonial. Expanding from my own experiences, and the experiences of other family members, the minutiae of familiar history are available to expand and fill the margins where such identities are situated. Personal memories of half-remembered conversations (and half-forgotten conversations) with my mother and father, both long dead, begin to reassemble the narrative of colonial Rhodesia with which I am/was familiar. So, from this internal/insider perspective I look at the situation of immigrants who were not of British descent in colonial Rhodesia. I touch on the assimilation (or otherwise) of ‘foreign’ immigrants into this particularly British colonial society. I reflect on my grandparents’ experiences, their gradual transit from conscript to immigrant; from immigrant to integrant. Following, indeed embedded in, this are my own experiences as immigrant to integrant in Australia—vastly different perhaps, but with points of reference that touch and, when they do, burn with recognition of shared experience across time, distance, and culture.
The motif of the *rites de passage* is evident from the beginning, with separation from the familiar, the homeland, the matrix; isolation and seclusion in strange surroundings as the liminal space unfolds; and the eventual integration (or otherwise) into the new society.

Without doubt, the British as colonisers of Rhodesia maintained strong social divisions. The broad racial division occluded the more subtle social divisions that were common in colonial Rhodesia. For those white immigrants drawn from non-English speaking backgrounds, acceptance into the community was difficult—if not impossible. Historian Robert Blake discusses the inequities of status as commonplace in the historical context, not least the gender/black/white issues. He states that the only white people of any importance in early Rhodesia were English men. ‘The truth is that Rhodesia was a white male-dominated society’ (Blake, 1977, 159). In my reading of the literature, I find that the belief in the supremacy of the English male is so strong that most writers only mention race or nationality if the men referred to are not English. However, it is interesting to read that the first white woman who entered Bulawayo after the conquest of Matabeleland was Jewish, as was the first white child to be born in Bulawayo—a girl. Her name was Lily Tempofsky born on the 4 April 1894 (Kosmin, 1973, 205). The Jewish woman mentioned by Kosmin is unnamed but could have been Marie Lippert, wife of a German financier, who kept a journal (in English) and wrote letters to her mother in Hamburg (in German). As I have indicated in the previous chapter, Frau Lippert later published these writings (in German as Zur Erinnerung an Marie Lippert, Ihre Reisebriefe und Skizzen aus Matabelelund, 21
September bis 23 Dezember 1891, Leipzig 1897). Because of Frau Lippert’s Jewish antecedents, it is presumed by the antique book dealers I have been in contact with, that most were burned by the Nazi regime during WWII. The few copies that remain are in private hands and in the Archives in Zimbabwe (Kane, 1954, 79). Therefore, although ‘foreigners’ such as Jews, Greeks, Afrikaners, and the like, were significant in the settlement of Rhodesia, they were, nevertheless, held in contempt by many of the British colonisers. There was a tendency to treat ‘foreign’ immigrants to ‘their’ colony as interlopers invading a select club and this metaphor is reflected in chapter two of this thesis where I cited the circumstances of the Greek war hero who was blackballed when he applied to join the (elite) Salisbury Club (Clements, 1969, 73). It is ironic, therefore, the value that is now placed by ex-patriot settlers on these historic writings and on the exploits of the original ‘foreign’ Rhodesians, not to mention the homogenisation of what little white society remains in Zimbabwe at the time of writing. The main divisions among the people of Zimbabwe, both black and white, are political and economic.

So, who are the ‘foreign’ immigrants into present-day Australia, and who are real Australians? On a spring day in October 2000, I was sitting at the North Cott Café, looking out over the Indian Ocean and I overheard a woman at the neighbouring table say to her friends, “He’s a real Aussie, from the bush!” In my mind, I keep returning to this phrase. It is the perfect stereotyping of the Australian as a white male, from the bush, and the implications of laconic, steely-eyed masculinity are too delightful to pass. The fact that it was spoken in a group of women ‘doing lunch’ in a fashionable eating place, in a fashionable suburb,
makes the notion even more delectable. This stereotyping in Australia, by (I presume) Australians, encourages me to flag the argument of postcolonialism as an inversion of colonialism.

In comparing the treatment of non-English white people in Africa to the representation of ‘foreign’ immigrants in contemporary (twenty-first century) Australia, begins my speculation of postcolonialism as an inversion of colonialism. I reflect on the overall identity of ‘Australians’ because it is necessary to define whom I am speaking of, or to, when I refer in general terms to ‘Australians’ and ‘Australian culture’. So, this is my discourse; I recognise that the notion of homogeneous ‘Australian culture’ is problematic, as is the reductive notion of ‘the Australian’ *per se*. Therefore, for the purposes of this project, when I refer to ‘the Australians’ it is to the white Anglo-Saxons. Other immigrants to Australia have also defined Australians thus, “… the Australians … were not only white, but specifically Anglo-Saxon, Scottish and Irish” (Houbein, 1990, 37, 93-94). Indeed, it is those white Anglo Australians who have customarily assumed for themselves, and attributed to the few, the mantle of the ‘real’ Australian. (The image in the mirror becomes less murky!) I return to this trope throughout the thesis, expanding and contracting; changing and rearranging.

The notion of ‘real’ Australians being white and male is reflected in notions of white male dominance in colonial Rhodesia. Rhodesian barrister and judge, Sir Robert Tredgold, in his career as the Minister of Defence during WWII, Federal Chief Justice and acting Governor General, was noted for his liberal views. His autobiography reveals a consummate presentation of how the English male
dominated life in Rhodesia. Sir Robert was born in Bulawayo in 1899. He led an
enormously privileged life—even for a member of the white population in
Southern Rhodesia. His autobiography, perhaps typically for the time, is
characterised by the invisibility of women, family or strangers, white or black.
His wife, Lorna, is mentioned twice, and appears (unnamed or, occasionally, as
“my wife”) in two or three photographs. However, he mentions his dog on a
number of occasions! There is a picture of Lady Tredgold, Sir Robert, the Queen
Mother and Tim—the dog. The caption reads ‘With the Queen Mother and Tim in
1957’ (Tredgold, 1968, 224). The prejudice between white people of different
backgrounds is reflected in Sir Robert Tredgold’s story about an old Afrikaner
friend of his (Tredgold’s) father who said “I hate the English but I have never met
an Englishman I did not like” (1968, 67). This begs the question of how the
English felt towards the Afrikaner and other white minority groups.

Frank Clements directs our attention to the inflexible social stratification evident
in colonial Rhodesia, a stratification which depended on origin rather than class
or education. The divisiveness extended to the Afrikaners, Jews, Indians and
Greeks, particularly the traders, whom Clements considers the most ‘vulnerable’
and who were held in contempt by the other marginal groups. Clements writes of
the “deep resentment at the arrogance and scorn shown by the whites of British
birth and close descent, who repulsed every effort made by the Greeks to be
accepted as unqualified members of the elite” (Clements, 1969, 73). This view of
the British considering themselves as the only ‘real’ people is reinforced by other
writers of the same period, although not self consciously. A sense of déjà vu
arises in me when I read this passage in Clements’ book, a feeling of ‘revisiting’ a
situation—as an Australian immigrant—evoking childhood memories of not belonging, of being on the outside, in the margins, invisible.

The social hierarchy in Rhodesia extended, of course, to the wives of the settlers. Deborah Kirkwood writes that even in 1897 it mattered where one lived, certainly in the towns (Kirkwood, 1984, 148). Within this hierarchy, the placement of settlers (and their wives) from different backgrounds is barely mentioned by authors and historians, thereby adding to their invisibility—so it is from my own family history that I draw examples. In exploring the subject of the wives of the farmers settling in Southern Rhodesia, the literature focusses on English women and their social values and mores. There is little or no mention of those farmers’ wives—a minority group within a minority group—who were isolated not only through distance, but also by the lack of a common language. Their cultural background, social skills and values separated them not only from the dominant white population but the indigenous people too. The issue of isolation as an individual and as a family is revealed as the work progresses, and the relevance to the rites of passage, particularly the central, liminal stage, is developed.

In a general sense, the comparison with contemporary Australian attitudes to waves of immigrants from areas other than Britain may, at first glance, seem superficial, possibly spurious, even banal—nevertheless, on reflection upon my own experience, I find the comparison valid. I question the overt differences between colonial Rhodesia and postcolonial Australia, and this thread appears again and again throughout the work.
In the review of the literature I commented on the dearth of writing by women, about their lives in colonial Rhodesia. Whether it is because of the perceived triviality of the books, or because of the subsequent history of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, that they have not been archived is a moot point. Among those I have been able to obtain, the British bias is obvious (MacDonald, 1927b; MacDonald, 1927a). In the Review of the Literature I have also devoted some time to the literature surrounding the experiences of the Dominican nuns who arrived in the territory around about the same time as the Pioneer Column, and where it is relevant, I draw on these texts (Dominican, 1947; Gelfand, 1964). As I have mentioned, the literature pertaining to immigration and life experience in Australia is extensive so, to expand my view, and seeking a simulacrum to the Rhodesian experience, I read the work of white women who have arrived in Australia from backgrounds other than British. Some arrived in Australia when they were children and some as adult women, for example: (Cox, 1992) and (Houbein, 1990). I find elements of similarity in our experiences that open out the trope of connections over time and place. Eva Cox reflects on her immigration (as a child) to Australia and the feeling of being somewhere she could call ‘home’. She was willing to do whatever necessary to assimilate (perhaps integrate?) and belong in her new home. She writes, as I have indicated on page 27 of the Review of the Literature: *Themes already formed*, “But I was not allowed to belong: I was still defined as a reffo and a Jew and I wondered what it all meant …” (Cox, 1992, 63). I ponder, Where does the reassembly of identity begin? In the progression of my hypothesis and drawing on theories expounded by van Gennep and Turner in the *rites de passage*, the themes flagged in this chapter on the historical background begin to emerge with finer detail/distinction. The ebb and
flow of identity, placement, assimilation and integration merge, submerge, and separate—and shadowy images of me, fashioning the work—appear and disappear.

As early as 1904 the chauvinism and xenophobia of many of the British settlers were apparent. Many of the English colonists were certain that ‘Greeks, Hindoos and Chinamen’ were a danger to the security and economy of the territory and therefore should not be granted trading licenses (Kosmin, 1977, 46). The Chartered Company (the British South Africa Company) ruled Rhodesia from 1890 (the arrival of the Pioneer Column) until 1924. The Company was the main employer in the colony and, in 1907, to reduce the country’s dependence on imports and raise the value of the Company’s own assets, they decided to begin growing tobacco in the country. To this end they recruited farmers from Thrace and Anatolia, areas well known for the quality of Turkish tobacco. ‘They brought fourteen Hellenes from Turkey (Thrace and Anatolia) and apologized for so doing as they had been ‘unable to obtain responsible Europeans’ (Kosmin, 1977, 46). The men were recruited by a British South Africa Company employee, G M Odlum—who was ‘the Company’s’ agricultural expert—while on a trip to Turkey and Greece to learn more about Turkish tobacco. The men were engaged “for service in Southern Rhodesia, some of whom later settled in the country to take up tobacco-growing on their own account” (Gann, 1969, 170). It is one of these fourteen Turkish and Greek ‘settlers’ or ‘conscripts’ who is relevant to this thesis because, among the fourteen men who arrived in Southern Rhodesia in 1908, was Kiriaco, my paternal grandfather. In 1909 his wife Rosa (my grandmother) and
infant son George (my father) arrived in Salisbury to join him. Chronologically, this is less than twenty years after the Pioneer Column arrived in 1890.

The history of white settlement in Rhodesia began in 1890 with the arrival of Cecil John Rhodes’ Pioneer Column in Mashonaland. This was the beginning of the formal colonisation of the territory and the raising of the Union Jack in Fort Salisbury took place in September of that year. The Pioneer Column was dispatched from South Africa by Cecil John Rhodes’ British South Africa Company. The group of 196 Pioneers, and some 800 other men, were led by Dr Leander Starr Jameson, and guided by the hunter Frederick Selous. Historian Robert Blake suggests that the men in the Pioneer Column were mainly drawn by the lure of gold (Blake, 1977, 68-69). Earlier, in 1867, the gold seekers in Matabeleland were warned by Moselikatse, the founder of the Matabele nation and father of Lobengula, “… on no account to bring with them a woman, a cow, a ewe or a she goat, because the permission is to carry away stones (gold), not to build houses and towns in my country” (Mackenzie in Kirkwood, 1984, 143). Clearly, the presence of women implied different purposes for the land to the Matabele king, and while this may have seemed implausible to the gold-miners and trophy-hunters taking part in the initial forays, hindsight shows that Moselikatse read the situation with keen perception.

The women who came into Rhodesia in the early days of white settlement, prior to the Pioneer Column, were generally missionaries and the wives of missionaries, “They were the earliest white women to settle in Rhodesia, arriving during the 1850s” (Kirkwood, 1984, 144), and, for the most part, they tended to
be overlooked by the historians. For example, Hugh Marshall Hole, an eminent early Rhodesian wrote: “There was said to be a white woman somewhere in the camp, but she must have remained in purdah for we never saw her” (in Kirkwood, 1984, 144). However, it is worth mentioning that Deborah Kirkwood, herself, omits any mention of settler’s wives who were not English or of British extraction. The relative position of the missionary women is indicated by historian Neville Jones who writes that: “While it is hardly correct to describe these worthy missionaries as settlers, I should be sorry to miss this opportunity to do honour to brave men” (Jones, 1953, 8). No mention of honour to the few (three) brave women with them. As an aside, the Foreword to this book is written by Sir Robert Tredgold and in his remarks about Neville Jones says, “Mr Neville Jones has served Rhodesia long and faithfully, as a missionary, as an archaeologist and as a historian” (Tredgold in Jones, 1953).

However, between 1890 and 1896, it is true that the white population was predominantly men seeking gold. In 1895 Mashonaland and Matabeleland were united under the name of Rhodesia (Caute, 1983, 10). After being crushed in the Mashona and Matabele rebellions in 1896 and 1897, the Indigenous African people were effectively silenced politically. Whoever was going to determine the political future of Rhodesia, Blake observes, “... they would not be black. With remarkable speed after the rebellions the Africans ceased to count politically ... [they] became literally a silent majority for more than half a century” (Blake, 1977, 155). Throughout the colonisation and white settlement of Rhodesia the disproportionate power held by the small number of whites is remarkable. The comparison with other British colonies is commented on by Barry Schutz who
observes, “Perhaps of all the British colonies with established settler populations, Rhodesia has had the fewest in numbers both absolutely and relative to the indigenous population” (1973, 5). To understand the significance of this statistically, the white population in 1960 peaked at 223,000, under 8 per cent of the African population (Blake 1977, 243). The era during which my grandparents arrived in Southern Rhodesia was one of significant demographic change. The white population rose from 14,000 in 1907 to 20,000 in 1910 (Blake 1977, 166-167). Statistics given for 1911 show an increase to 23,606 white settlers of whom 15,580 were men (Kosmin, 1973, 206).

The history of my grandmother, Rosa, before her immigration to Africa gives some indication of the reasons why she (and my grandfather) left their homeland. Rosa was born in 1875 (or thereabouts) in a village near Odessa in the Ukraine. She was one of the younger children in a large family of thirteen or fourteen and her parents were illiterate—hence her birth was never registered. As an adult Rosa learned to read and write Russian but she never went to school. When she was old (and she lived until 1967) she would reminisce about her childhood in Russia and I, a child of Africa, who had never seen snow or a frozen river, would listen entranced. She told me that as a small child, in winter, she was sent to fetch water for cooking and washing and had to break the ice on the river to fill the bucket. She told me that the old grandma slept on the stove where it was warm. I assume that Rosa was a rebellious and adventurous child as she left home to work in a cigarette factory in Odessa at a young age, but this could have been for many other reasons as the family was poor. However, it was during her time working in Odessa that Rosa met Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. I believe meeting Lenin influenced
her strongly and, indeed, she was inspired to join the Bolshevik movement. Rosa became a leader in her group and was imprisoned by the Tsarist Regime for some years for organising strikes. She met my grandfather, Kiriaco, while working at the cigarette factory in about 1905. Kiriaco was very young, probably only twenty years old, but already a seasoned revolutionary. He had fled to Russia from Bulgaria (Thrace, now in Greece) because of being wanted for assassination attempts on prominent Turks in the administration. Rosa and Kiriaco fought together during the manning of the barricades in the 1905 Bolshevik uprisings. Because of Kiriaco’s revolutionary activities in the Ukraine he had, once again, to flee—this time from Russia and returning to Bulgaria. Back in his own country he soon set about inciting the people in the villages around his home village of Ksanty to rebel against Turkish oppression, Greek religious domination, and for better work conditions. Rosa, by this time heavily pregnant, followed him to Bulgaria and, in 1908, my father was born in Sofia.

Joining the British South Africa Company as a recruit (conscript) to work in Africa made good sense with the Turkish authorities closing in on Kiriaco. How do I know these things that happened so long ago and far away? Well, my grandmother and I had a close bond and she would tell me stories. When I read Doris Lessing comparing the Russian and African themes, she refers to Tolstoy and writes, “[It is] astonishing how often Russian experience is relevant to Africa” (Lessing, 1992, 204). And I reflect, Did Rosa find her Russian experience relevant to Africa? Perhaps to an Englishwoman the experience happening to another is relevant or, more likely, romantic—but to a Russian peasant undergoing the experience—somehow I doubt it! Do I find the notion of people
fleeing repressive regimes reflected in current Australian experience? Yes, there are points of comparison, but there seems to me to be more a parallel experience; perhaps because of time, perhaps because colonialism has inverted itself (or has been inverted) into postcolonialism. Perhaps the Australian postcolonial experience is harsher on the refugees who are ‘too foreign’? In the current situation (2002 and 2003) the Australian Commonwealth government has camps for illegal immigrants, refugees and ‘boat people’. When I consider the processing of these so-called ‘illegal immigrants’ by the authorities I realise that, had my grandparents in some time warp arrived in contemporary Australia, they too would be incarcerated in Woomera or the equivalent. And, as known trouble-makers and revolutionaries would not, in all likelihood, have been granted asylum.

Memmi writes that a European in the colonies, whether he wishes it or not, is received as a privileged person by the institutions, customs and people. ‘From the time he lands or is born, he finds himself in a factual position which is common to all Europeans living in a colony, a position which turns him into a colonizer’ (Memmi, 1965, 83). Freund writes that “Settlers rarely came to Africa intending to live from their own and their families’ labour alone, although there were a few exceptions in the Portuguese and Italian colonies. Elsewhere they aspired to be capitalist farmers requiring vast outlays of land and the subordination of a great deal of cheap, initially coerced labour” (Freund, 1984, 122). Doris Lessing, writing from an English background, states that “As soon as one sets foot in a white settler country, one becomes part of a mass disease; everything is seen through the colour bar” (Lessing, 1957, 18). This widespread assumption, and
generalisation, reproduced here by Freund and, to a lesser extent, Doris Lessing, serves to reinforce the invisibility of other minority groups of settlers in British colonial Africa. I think that what annoys me about these generalisations are the assumptions that we, as minority groups, either do not exist or, if we do, are not worth naming. It is, once again, the invisibility, the marginalisation, that I became accustomed to as a child.

Albert Memmi’s notion of a colonial (as opposed to a coloniser) is clear:

A colonial is a European living in a colony but having no privileges, whose living conditions are not higher than those of a colonized person of equivalent economic and social status. By temperament or ethical conviction, a colonial is a benevolent European who does not have the colonizer’s attitude toward the colonized ... Let us say right away, despite the apparently drastic nature of the statement: a colonial so defined does not exist, for all Europeans in the colonies are privileged (1990 (1965), 76).

By this definition, Kiriaco and Rosa were colonials, certainly by comparison to the British colonisers. When they originally came to Southern Rhodesia, they were not privileged and the colour of their skin was irrelevant to the British settlers—the significance of their skin colour to the colonised, the indigenous population, is debatable, but cannot be attended to here. There is only one reason for this and that is the total dearth of information. No one in the family speaks of the relationship between Rosa, Kiriaco and the Indigenous Africans and the subject is seldom broached—apart from when I speak about it and am met with silence. In her old age my grandmother was cared for by Johnny, her servant of many years, and she often referred to him as her son. If this is any indication of her early relationship with the Indigenous African, I would have to say that it was more familiar than the accepted ‘master and servant’ model that prevailed in
colonial Rhodesia. As for my grandfather and his relationship with the Indigenous Africans, I can only hazard a guess, but, because of the silence that surrounds racial issues within the family, and because of his early history in Rhodesia as an itinerant worker living with the Indigenous Africans, I am tempted to believe that the relationship was egalitarian, at least until the obsession to become ‘English’ took hold.

As Rosa and Kiriaco’s story unfolds and the transformation into coloniser begins, Memmi’s definition becomes sound. In the beginning in Rhodesia, Kiriaco was contracted to receive £5.8.0 a month, payable at the end of the first year. The contract was written in English and he signed it, although at that time he could not speak, read, or write English. The contract stated that he receive £6.6.0 a month for the second year and £7.4.0 a month in the third—the money only to be paid at the expiration of each completed year. Although he could have cash advances “if the Company’s representative shall seem fit” (Original Contract)iii. The contract was for three years after which he would get a pre-paid return ticket to Turkey. By comparison, an Englishman, James Owen Armistead, engaged at the same time to do a similar job, was contracted at £500 per annum during the first year. His salary increased to £550 per annum during the second year and £600 per annum during the third year, plus sustenance allowance when travelling (Original Contract, NAZ)iv. Regarding the comparison between Kiriaco’s wages and that of the African labourers with whom he worked, I am not certain, but my grandmother told me they lived in similar accommodation (pole and dagga huts) with furniture made from empty paraffin boxes. This remained their way of life even after Kiriaco withdrew from his contract and travelled the country working
for farmers in the capacity of a tobacco ‘expert’ but, more likely, as an itinerant labourer, much the same as the African men did.

Looking at myself (and my small family) as immigrants to Australia in the early 1980s, our search for employment, our search for a sense of belonging, I see again the inversion of colonialism into postcolonialism. I am fortunate to speak English, and have an adequate educational background, a good work history—but no Australian history, no Australian background. In this context, my education seemed to work against me when I applied for jobs: “over qualified” was a common response. I recollect how often I thought of my grandmother and the obstacles she had to overcome in Africa and thought how puny my struggles were by comparison. I came to Australia as an immigrant, not a coloniser; my grandmother went to Africa as what? Surely not to colonise? My aunt, who was born in Southern Rhodesia in 1914, told me: “Of this first year [in the colony], I do not recall being told very much. My mother [Rosa] told me that when she arrived to join Papa [Kiriaco] he was using newspaper in his shoes in place of socks, and cardboard placed in the soles which were worn out in places”.

During the early years the family laboured in the back blocks of Southern Rhodesia. Money was scarce and, while poverty was not new to them, the whole situation must have been alien. Coming from the Ukraine and having fought at the barricades in Odessa, my grandmother’s view of the African landscape can only be imagined. When there was transport, it was usually a scotch-cart, that is a wagon pulled by donkeys or oxen; or a bicycle. My aunt remembers being told by her father that he had to cycle some seventy miles to buy the staples of tea, sugar,
salt, and flour. They were not given any farm produce on most of the farms where they worked, and had to pay a shilling for a (whiskey) bottle of milk. They had few clothes, and those they had were sewn by Rosa. Aunt tells me, “She would get a bolt of khaki and from that make Papa his longs, and shirts and shorts for [her brothers] George and Pete. A bolt of some cotton made her and myself a couple of frocks each”.

Aunt tells another story, “I remember well being told when Mama was seriously ill with black-water fever. They had to catch a train into hospital in Salisbury. They must have been in Lydiate at that time for they had to catch the train at Norton Siding. As they arrived by scotch-cart, the train was already leaving and Mama had to wait for the next train. She had to rest next to the railway line under a grass shelter until it arrived. In the hospital, in the bed next to her, was a Polish lady married to a Greek, her name was Mrs Cambitzis. They could understand each other’s language and became friends for the rest of their lives.” I remember my grandmother often spoke about this meeting with Mrs Cambitzis. She told me that before they met, that for one full year she spoke only to Kiriaco and her children, and the sense of isolation and aloneness in her story breaks my heart.

This issue of belonging and not belonging is paradoxical. To fit in, to belong in the society, and equally, to fit in, to belong in the text. Where and when does an immigrant begin to ‘belong’? The ‘new’ society seems to demand it of you but, paradoxically, seems also to block each attempt. For example, I have already cited Eva Cox being categorised as a “reffo and a Jew” and I mention here that this categorisation led her to try and join the group into which she was
pigeonholed that is, the Jewish community of Sydney’s Eastern Suburbs. However, the process led to her awareness that she did not identify with the Zionist youth group she joined and so she ended up drifting “in the margins of the many worlds I half knew, and, in doing this, wondered whether I would ever experience a sense of belonging … Even if it did not identify with me, it was all I really had, were I not to be always an observer in other people’s lands” (Cox, 1992, 63). Psychiatrists Leon and Rebeca Grinberg discuss the notion of identity and integration in the immigration discourse. They speak of the “requisite’ of developing a feeling of belonging to become integrated and thus ‘maintaining one’s sense of identity” (Grinberg and Grinberg, 1989, 28). In the issue of belonging, I find again a point of reference that touches and burns with the recognition of shared experience across time and culture.

What is the Australian equivalent of my grandmother’s experiences of making friends, of understanding (or not understanding) another language? What happens when I take these stories out of their historical context and bring them into my own experience of migration? I puzzle over the metaphor—for that is what it becomes. I find the notion of meeting people, making friends who speak the same language, significant. In other words, is the English I speak the same language as my Australian friends speak? The differences are many: my conversation is coloured by my history, by my experiences, my life story. When I speak to my Australian friends what do they hear—through the filter of their own history, their own experience, their own life story? Are we really speaking the same language? Where is the point of understanding? Again, I ask, is this a point of reference that touches and burns with the recognition of shared experience across time and
culture? I develop this theme throughout the work and in doing so, find authentic connections to the three stages of *rites de passage*, a theory previously presented by Arnold van Gennep and latterly elucidated by Victor Turner. Through the middle stage of *rites de passage*, the liminal, the incorporation of the notion of habitus as embodied history and other theories mooted by Pierre Bourdieu are effective. Bourdieun theories of doxa, orthodoxy, heterodoxy and change support and maintain the central thesis. I define and embrace these theories in the context of this dissertation as the narrative unfolds.

Between the years of 1908 and 1918, the family in Southern Rhodesia spoke only in Russian. They worked diligently to save the money for the return fare to Russia. Aunt told me, “They always wanted to go back to Russia. The idea was that when they’d made some money they would go back.” However, whether or not the onset of the Russian Revolution was the turning point, it seems that sometime during the final years of the Great War, but probably in 1919, my grandparents decided the children would have better opportunities in Rhodesia. With the money saved for the return ticket to Russia my grandfather purchased a small farm on the outskirts of Salisbury (now Harare). He built a house for the family and autocratically decided that from that time on they were to speak English and only English till they could speak it “without an accent”. I have referred, earlier, to the obsession Papa had about ‘becoming English’, and realise that this is where it began.

I asked Aunt about the languages the family spoke at home:

Eleanor: Was your home language English?
Aunt: We only heard Russian, and it was when George went to school ... he had to learn English. Papa tried to teach him a bit, because Papa was learning too ... that's when we
started learning English. Papa always ... and its a pity in a way, but at that time this is what happened, Papa said, “If we are staying here, we must learn to speak English without an accent!” and so they stopped us speaking Russian.

So, to initiate this instruction my grandfather bought an English newspaper, and this was the tool he used to learn English and teach it to the three children and his wife, until they could speak it without an accent. My father, being the oldest child, was the focus of this regime. He was eleven or twelve years old—although I remember him telling me he was at least fourteen—when he first went to school, the local school where English was the only language. In my experience, acquiring (the Rhodesian equivalent of) a cultured English accent was important to achieve social status in Rhodesia, and I surmise this was the reasoning behind Kiriaco’s decision. My grandmother never acquired an English accent. As she aged, her Russian accent became so strong her speech was difficult to understand—unless you knew her well. I don’t know about my grandfather’s accent because he died in 1944, before I was a year old and, when I ask my older brothers or my older sister, or my aunt, “Did Papa lose his accent?” their replies are not helpful, and vary from person to person and from time to time. Memory fades, memory changes, and perhaps the re-membering is of his accent at different times in his life.

As an immigrant in Australia, I have found that my accent is usually the way people pick me as being ‘non-Australian’. Many times I am taken to be a ‘pom’ (English immigrant) and, when first I arrived here, that was unsettling for me. At other times I am mistaken for a South African and, as a new immigrant, I would carefully explain the difference between Rhodesia and South Africa. However, as
time has passed, I no longer take issue with being mistaken for South African, ‘pom’, or, on one or two occasions, as an Indian from the subcontinent. I asked some of the women in my sample if they had experiences where their accent was used to identify them as Rhodesians:

Eleanor: Do you find that people do pick you out on your accent?
Betty: Yes, even now it is a problem. When I played golf … I played a whole round with one lady. We got to the 18th hole she said, “where do you come from”? I thought you poor lady; you have been battling all the way round trying to work out where I came from.
Eleanor: Yeah, English that’s what I got.

The reverse of this is also relevant; certainly as a new immigrant I can remember that, when I heard an Australian accent, (as spoken in Western Australia) it needed some negotiating before I could properly understand, and it took a long time before I was able to identify the vocal nuances that represent class and education: my initial concern was that some Australian accents were more difficult to understand than others, and when I asked the women in my sample about this, I found some of them had also had problems:

Eleanor: I found it very difficult to understand the Australian accent.
Sarah: It took me six months to understand the news, because my ear, I didn’t listen very often, but my ears wasn’t attuned to the way they spoke and the accent—there is nothing like the country accent—which is really pretty broad.

In retrospect I find that this is the real beginning of the theme that was fortuitously triggered when I asked Robin, my Australian friend and colleague, to help me transcribe the interviews, and which I clarify in the following chapter *Leaving and Landing*. However, I flag here that notions of language and accent have helped colour my hypothesis in general, and Robin’s transcription in particular. The development of connections between language and identity, accents and assimilation, and accents and integration occurs throughout the work
and the theme is interwoven into the *rites de passage*, from the separation, through the liminal and assimilation and into incorporation/re-aggregation.

Thus, the association between conscious strategies to integrate and belong, and learning English, may be seen as significant in the sequence of immigrant to integrant in the colonial society. The sense of belonging may not arise even when the language is the same—perhaps it is the shared history that builds up over time that brings about the belonging. The points of connection between immigrant and resident, between colonial and postcolonial, become closer, and the inversion of one into the other, more clear. Reflections and memories of people in other times and other places reveal how these memories do intersect with the twisting threads of ‘new’ life and ‘new’ identity—reassembled identity. The movement from the ‘separation’ stage of *rites de passage* into the ‘liminal’ is not clearly marked in the experience of immigration and neither is the movement into the final stage of ‘integration’. I signal here, in the history, that the stages fold back on one another and time twists and turns too. Thus, I am able to write that, as in any history, there is no final ending, indeed, it is the continuation that binds me/us to the past—perhaps the smoky tendrils of time and memory have more power than appears in their intangibility.

To draw this chapter to a conclusion it is my personal experience that I turn to. When Aunt told me (in 1996) that my grandparents’ firm plan was to return to Russia, I was truly shocked. I reflected on her words for some time. As I pondered their decision to remain in Africa, the notion of process from conscript to immigrant to integrant took hold of my imagination. The provocative questions
their decision raised in my psyche have since led me to explore a multiplicity of theories and histories that are fundamental, not only to the thesis of my doctorate, but to my own identity and my positionality in Australia. I regret the fact that the protagonists are long dead and I cannot ask them how their story came about. But, the imbrication of experiences over time and space still occurs to me each time I invoke my grandmother’s name—contrasting her experiences as an immigrant from Russia to Africa in 1909 with, nearly eighty years later in 1982, my own experiences as an immigrant from Africa to Australia. Therefore, in this chapter, I have positioned myself and this thesis both historically and currently. By determining that the starting point for my narrative precedes arrival in Australia (or even Rhodesia) and examining the background of white settlement in Rhodesia I begin to have insight into the prescience of time, ebbing and flowing, circling and spiraling. By contrast and comparison, the immigrant in colonial Rhodesia and the immigrant in postcolonial Australia start to become accessible, and the continual reassembly of identity, transparent. Therefore, in the continuing spiral of time I start another beginning, the beginning of leaving. In *rites de passages*, separation is the first act and, for immigrants, the separation begins before we leave the homeland and in this way the first panel of the triptych is formed. Therefore, in the following chapter I examine the overt and covert actions/rites and the crucial decisions that accompany the resolve to transplant our lives from Africa to Australia.

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Some of the material in this chapter was used in my Honours Dissertation (1997) ‘When "Back Home" isn't England: making visible the memories, lives and experiences of some white women in Rhodesia’, School of Social Sciences and Asian Languages, Curtin University of Technology.

The Original Contract is in the keeping of my Aunt, Kiriaco’s youngest child.

National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ).
The First Panel

Separation
Chapter Four

Leaving and Landing

*Migration is an upheaval which shakes the entire psychic structure* (Grinberg & Grinberg).

In this chapter I begin the metaphor that being an adult immigrant is like transplanting a mature tree. The metaphor has the potential to signify the turmoil that accompanies the separation from the homeland. In this analogy, the gardener (who may be the self) first has the difficulty of digging the tree out of the earth, the matrix—that in which anything is embedded as ground mass and, as the chapter proceeds, this image clarifies the separation process that is the initial stage of the rites of passage.

In the preceding chapter I explored (and reflected on) aspects of migration and experience in colonial Rhodesia, and drew some parallels with corresponding issues in present-day Australia. I now intensify the focus on *rites de passages*, and situate the first panel of the triptych on which metaphor I have based my thesis. This, the first stage of the *rites de passage* is classified as “[The]
preliminal rites (rites of separation)” (brackets in original) (van Gennep, 1960, 11). Therefore, in a general study of immigration as a rite of passage this is the period in which potential immigrants, for whatever reasons, make the decision to leave their homes, their family, and their friends to resettle in another country. In the particularity of my study I focus on the motives for immigration and the experiences of separation peculiar to the women in my research and, once again, flag the autobiographical content that underpins the thesis.

The common understanding of migration is “… to refer to the geographic mobility of people who move from one place to another … for the purpose of settling there” (Grinberg and Grinberg, 1989, 16-17). Disregarding the reductionist implications inherent in this statement, I embrace this inexact view of migration as a starting place to access and explore the *bricolage*, the fragments of experience, that configure migration. Thus, in this chapter I examine the motives for emigration from Southern and Northern Rhodesia in their significance (and insignificance), and I look at the minutiae of their ordinariness and how this may have led to the choice of Australia as a preferred destination. For some of the women in this study the move to Australia came after a succession of migrations within Africa and elsewhere in the world. The notion of migration as an unacknowledged *rites de passage* allows me to evoke the trimerous theory posited by Arnold van Gennep and developed by Victor Turner (Turner, Victor, 1977c; Turner, Victor, 1977b; van Gennep, 1960). In this paradigm I find that emigration and immigration—the leaving of Africa and the arrival in Australia—fit satisfactorily into the separation stage. I begin to explore more deeply the ideas of homesickness that I pre-scribed in the review of the literature, and consider if
they may be interwoven with feelings of guilt. I speak of the guilt that is associated with leaving family, friends, and the country of birth and it seems this feeling occurs to some extent among all the women in the research. I contemplate and consider the concept Gemeinschaft in some immigrant communities, and the lack of Gemeinschaft in this immigrant community. I am referring here to the idea of social ‘solidarity’ that seems absent or, at best, feeble among the immigrant women from Rhodesia. The questions I ask myself when I contemplate this thread follow themes indicated by the colonial background we share with many white Australians. The connection of Gemeinschaft to the theme of rites de passage becomes apparent if I follow the parameters delineated by Victor Turner and Arnold van Gennep before him; those being that the neophyte requires some sort of assistance from those already initiated and presumed to be ‘adept’, ready to move from the separation stage into the liminal.

Pursuing the metaphor of the thesis as triptych, and the overall image of rites de passage, this chapter lies to the left of the central panel—the panel in which the experience and life of the liminal persona are identified and interpreted, the place that Victor Turner calls ‘betwixt-and-between’ (Turner, 1979). So, this chapter recognises the act of immigrating as the separation stage of the liminal process. It is here that I signal the discovery that entry into the separation stage for the liminal persona is essential, but completion of the rites de passage (in the context of migration) the incorporation, that is, integration, may not be achieved, indeed, it may not be required; and that the temporal frame is nebulous—no chronological rules apply or can be applied. In concluding the chapter, I find the need to understand where the notion of our identity relates and connects the liminal
persona in the separation stage to the second stage, the limen, or margin, of the rites de passage. Therefore, how the process of separation from our home country impacts on our identity as neophyte Australians is flagged and is enlarged upon in the centre panel of the triptych, the chapter that addresses the middle stage of rites de passage, that is the liminal.

How much of history is connected to stories of emigration and immigration? How many exiles, refugees, adventurers and explorers are contained in any one person's antecedents? I have revealed parts of my own history, and queried the unusual blood group that I have in common with Mongolian people; I ponder what this signifies about my ancestry, my roots. I ask myself, what reason or reasons lead a person or a people, to separate from all that they know and enter the daring displacement of this rites de passage? This is not an overt rites de passage if compared to those tribal rituals studied by Victor Turner. This rite of passage is an arcane process and, for each neophyte, each migrant, it is an individual experience that is not ruled by any formal observances—other than the bureaucratic. Knowing when it is time to leave the matrix – the home country – is associated with the notion of anomie, and this ‘knowing’ may be an epiphany or a drawn out process of judgement that makes the decision inevitable. But, once the decision has been made to separate from the home country, and for whatever purpose, the first steps into the liminal space have been taken. Transformation to a new identity has begun.

Recent events in Zimbabwe (in the early years of the twenty-first century) have shown that the notion of white immigrants from Africa being seen as refugees or
exiles is problematic in Australia. For some reason the incentive to leave Africa preempts, even prevents, debate about white emigrants being seen as a refugees or exiles—whether by themselves or by the host country. However, the individual immigrant’s internal and unspoken feelings of exile foreground the (often) counter-perception of the people in the host country, in this case Australia. Thus, in a contrasted form, the anomie induced by living in a decaying, war-torn, possibly corrupt society, that is part of the incentive to leave Africa, accompanies the migrant into Australia. In the process of relocating, the sense of anomie changes and may subsequently take the shape of bewilderment, depression, and fierce homesickness. Within this nexus and closely associated with anomie in the new country, are feelings of guilt. Leaving the home country, beloved family is also abandoned, among them, often, aging parents who are unable or unwilling to uproot and resettle.

Dr Clara Espinosa, a Bolivian immigrant to Australia, says, “Migrants starting a new life in their adopted country travel through the three stages of grief—shock due to the loss of their old way of life, preoccupation with that loss and resolution of the conflict” (in Ferrari, 1998, 41). In my experience, there appears a different perception for a migrant coming from an ostensibly similar country, a country such as Rhodesia. We come in to Australia as immigrants speaking the same language and with a similar cultural background, a culture that is grounded in British colonialism. Our lack of racial markers, together with cultural or language differences combine to render us, immigrants from another British colony, invisible. Therefore, looked at from the outside, it often seems to a casual observer, that white immigrants from Rhodesia and Zimbabwe have not
undergone much in the way of upheaval at all. For those white African immigrants who are fortunate enough to arrive in Australia with substantial financial resources, the notion of angst/upheaval may seem laughable. And money does cushion the change; the metaphor of a transplanted tree affirms comfort and growth with the addition of compost, water, and stakes to support the new shoots. In my experience there is a connection here to notions of hubris whether actual, perceived, or attributed. From time to time these more affluent immigrants are seen, by some Australians, as arrogant and, indeed, some of them are! For other immigrants this presumption of hubris and the phrase “white South Africans are arrogant” is insulting. I remember a Chinese-Australian woman telling me, after we had made friends, “And I thought all South Africans were pompous!” My response was, “Some of us are”. However, whatever the nationality of the migrant, trauma may still be present and the anomie derived from guilt, fear, and the loss of social certainty/status cannot be denied. Within the sample of the women comprising this research, there were those who arrived here, in Western Australia, with little or no money, no employment, and no family or friendly support. For others, there was family already here, financial means and a familiarity with the country garnered from reconnaissance trips. The notion of pride, as opposed to arrogance, for the women in the research is overt, especially when issues relating to Australian Social Security arise. It is a source of pride to most of them that they have ‘paid their own way’. While the issue of hubris remains, I find the question of arrogance becomes irrelevant in the context of this chapter, but flag it here for inclusion in the discussion surrounding identity.
The overt reasons for emigrating may seem trivial and sometimes the reasons are rehearsed for the careless question, “So, why did you leave Africa?” that is often posed in a social setting. The covert reasons for emigrating may be from fear that the politics and the socioeconomic conditions are deteriorating making the homeland a place of danger and insecurity. In this project, when I ask the participants their reasons for migrating, some of the women say they left Africa for the sake of their children; and this is sometimes my own public justification. For the others, when I ask them, “Why Australia?”, the answers I receive are as follows: Vivian followed her husband, Sarah followed a dream, Marlene came with her parents, and Clare, my colleague at The University of Western Australia, having left Rhodesia for England when she married, fled the unfamiliar cold, wet English weather. The notion that people who emigrate by choice “tend to seek other places which may be far away geographically but nevertheless seem to have similar social conditions and characteristics to those of the country of origin before the change took place [may be characterised as] sedentary migrations … to leave a place so as to be able to remain in the same place … to leave in order not to change” (my emphasis) (Grinberg and Grinberg, 1989, 19). The integrity of this statement is layered; the belief or the expectation that a distant land will be the same as home seems superficial, and while the notion of life without change is ludicrous, the tenet may, very likely, be subconsciously available/agreeable for the immigrant. Therefore, in the conception of a ‘new’ life without change from the ‘old’ life, I find the theme of immigration reflects on itself to become a return—a return to a site/situation before the change took place—a site paralysed in time, and this foreshadows the theme in chapter seven: Memory and the myth of the eternal return.
The process that confirms the decision to relocate from one country to another, that is, knowing that it is time to leave, foregrounds notions of anomie as it pertains to this specific sample group. Feelings of hopelessness are often felt by an individual when they perceive the system they live in is breaking down, the loss of belief and sense of purpose in the world that they know engendering the climacteric that provokes the decision to go. For many immigrants the feeling of hopelessness may be unmistakable, perhaps manifesting in depression, and this intensifies the motivation to leave. The upheaval a migrant feels on leaving is very often carried over, in the separation, to the new country. Therefore, the awareness of when it is the right time to leave may be linked to the anomie, albeit unconsciously. The anomie that arises—perhaps already present in a new immigrant—may be revealed in homesickness, in a sense of not belonging, a state of “betwixt-and-between” (Turner, 1979). I flag here that this impression of being betwixt-and-between is addressed in the second period designated in *rites de passage* as the liminal stage; in the shaping of this thesis as triptych, it forms the central panel: *The Ambivalent Neophyte* (chapter six). I have linked the crucial decision of leaving to notions of anomie, and now I introduce the motif of ‘knowing when it is time to go’. I recall that when first I recognise this ‘knowing’ is relevant to my thesis occurs when I am in the process of interviewing and transcribing the interviews. During this time I recruit my colleague and friend—Robin—who is an Australian woman, to assist me with the transcriptions. The multiple layers of researching and writing this thesis are nowhere more evident in what transpires from this request/recruitment.
After Robin helps me with the transcription of some of the tapes, her interest in
the experience of migration to Australia from Africa (a place that she knows little
about, apart from news reports and popular fiction) is kindled. So, we talk. She
asks me, “How did you know when it was the right time to leave?” And then we
talk about that knowing, knowing when it is right time to leave a place like
Rhodesia. The dialogue becomes a time of reflection for me. I begin to formulate
my thoughts and ponder the values that underlie some of the dilemmas and
uncertainties that have haunted me through the months and years. In our
conversation we discuss the English/British attitudes in, or to, colonialism,
looking at them as being predominantly patriarchal on a macro level. I reflect that
employing servants in the colonial society of Rhodesia, while I lived there, was
similarly patriarchal, on a micro level. I tell Robin of the obligation I felt as an
employer to feed, clothe, house, and educate my servants and their families—the
obligation becoming a self-imposed responsibility as a parent/authority figure—
not only because my skin was white and theirs was black, but also because of my
privileged position. The privilege that is inherent in colour, class, education, and
the colonialism of the Rhodesian society, emphasises the fact that I was, indeed,
advantaged in that society. So, when does the recognition of this privilege become
part of my knowing, and in/under what circumstances?

In the conversation I tell Robin how the realisation of injustices starts so
gradually it is barely noticeable. Initially, before the conscious awareness of
injustice, I performed actions which, in retrospect, I see as subverting entrenched
injustices. I recognise now that the process of realisation may embody a period of
justification; remaining in the country, and employing three, four, or more
servants “because, otherwise, they don’t have a job or a home”. When I reflect on this now, I see that it is an explanation, but more likely, social guilt, for staying in Africa. Perhaps it was this unspoken guilt that led to the realisation that, although born and raised in Rhodesia, although Rhodesia was the only home I had ever known, I no longer belonged. That, for me, is/was the ‘knowing’ it was time to leave. I have discussed this insight with other ex-Rhodesians and ex-Zimbabweans. A casual acquaintance at a social gathering said, “When you know it is time to go, there is no explanation.” The move becomes imperative—almost an obsession—whatever the cost financially, whatever has to be left behind; friends, family, property, identity. In my journal I draw the parallel with the quest for enlightenment, for complete awareness, for when the epiphany occurs, it is not a case of sacrificing anything, it becomes what happens. Remaining attached brings only grief and pain. Aspects of anomie in this process are transparent and, as the migration runs its course, as the rites de passage takes form, the anomie begins to become part of the process.

What, then, are some of the incentives that lead to the awareness it is time to leave, and to initiate the leaving of Africa for Australia? I pose this question to the women in my study, and when I consider their replies I reflect on how much we are prepared to relinquish in the quest for a life that we anticipate may be better than that which we know. I hear nostalgia in Amy’s voice when she speaks of ‘home’. Amy arrived in Australia in , the final years of white domination in Rhodesia. In 1998, during an interview, she talks about how it might have been different had she stayed in Zimbabwe, and she contemplates whether there really was a necessity to leave Africa and come to live in Australia:
Eleanor: I hear quite a lot of nostalgia in your voice?
Amy: Yeah, I do. Sometimes I think to myself what would happen if we’d stayed there. And probably we would have been fine. I’ve still got some good friends there you know, [in] our age group. The kids still have good education there and so on. And I think we could have stayed there and we would have been alright. At the time we didn’t know it, but we could have been alright.

Besides the near impossibility of remaining objective about leaving the homeland, the practicalities of emigrating from Africa to Australia are intricate and challenging. The evocative nature of the word ‘safari’ captures the essence of emigration from, and within, Africa. A dictionary definition of ‘safari’ describes it as a long expedition involving difficulty or danger and/or requiring planning. Anyone who has undergone the migration experience will concede that it is indeed a long and difficult expedition, sometimes dangerous and always requiring planning! The number of Rhodesians (and later, Zimbabweans) who have been prepared to take the risks associated with this life changing ‘safari’ with all the implications of being exiles, refugees, and strangers in a strange land necessitate the exploration of the motivation to relocate. Therefore, it is timely to examine the situation in Rhodesia as it was in the final years of minority white rule, the fourteen years from early 1965 after Ian Smith and his Rhodesian Front party declared UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) (11 November 1964), until qualified independence in 1979, just prior to the assumption of power by Robert Mugabe and ZANU (PF) (Zimbabwe African National Union [Patriotic Front]) party in 1980.

Throughout white settlement of Rhodesia the disproportionate degree of power held by the small number of whites is remarkable. Therefore, to clarify the situation relevant to emigration from Rhodesia, I reiterate the comment by Barry
Schutz that: “Perhaps of all the British colonies with established settler populations, Rhodesia has had the fewest [white people] in numbers both absolutely and relative to the indigenous population” (Schutz, 1973, 5). And, as I have already mentioned, the white population of Rhodesia, even at its peak, was only eight percent of the African population. This imbalance/disparity of power is characteristic of colonial societies and has been noted by a multitude of postcolonial writers, for example: (Bhabha, 1994; Bhabha, 1999; Memmi, 1965; Minh-ha, 1989; Nandy, 1983; Said, 1993; Spivak, 1999).

Drawing on statistics and integrating them into the context of my own emigration, and that of the women in my study, I find that from around the mid 1960s there has been an exodus of white Rhodesians (and later Zimbabweans). In 1979 (the year that heralded the end of white rule) the white population in Zimbabwe/Rhodesia is given as 232,000 and over the next decade it dropped to 80,000 in 1990 (Godwin, 1993, 315). Around the time I left Rhodesia, early in January 1977, whites were starting to leave the country at a rate of about one thousand a month. Historians Godwin and Hancock state that 18,882 Rhodesians left in the twelve months between October 1976 and November 1977 (Godwin, 1993, 207) but fail to state if that was a net loss. The white Rhodesians who remained (for whatever reason) referred to the people who left during this period as taking ‘the chicken run’. Reflecting on the reasons for leaving and the invective directed at emigrants by members of the government and many of the whites that remained, I quote from an email exchange with a colleague, also researching the immigration into Australia of women from Southern Africa. What is not apparent in the exchange is the spasm of hurt that I felt when I first read her
words, “I see you took the chicken run …”. I presumed that, after many years in Australia, this tactless accusation would not be something that affected me—and when it did I was taken by surprise. I composed my reply to my colleague cautiously, even now I did not want her to realise that I found her “tongue-in-cheek” remark offensive and hurtful—because, as I had to acknowledge, it was the truth, we did take the ‘chicken run’. In the event, the outcome of this email exchange was worthwhile in terms of the content of this chapter, and the self-examination it encouraged has been productive:

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<tr>
<th>Clare (22 September 1999)</th>
<th>Eleanor</th>
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<td>I see you took the 'chicken run' to SA in 1977 which was at one of the worst stages of the war! I'm most interested in how you did it, because according to Godwin/Hancock, people were considered 'traitors' to the cause if they left. So, tell me a bit about it.</td>
<td>We left at the beginning of 1977. We were fed up with the 2 weeks in the army, 2 weeks home and the marriage was under some stress. We were not particularly concerned about what other people called us, common sense told us that our lives, Kathy's education etc. etc. was of more concern than what a bunch of (bigoted) people thought about us.</td>
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<th>Clare (23 September 1999)</th>
<th>Eleanor</th>
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<td>Anyway... I was a little concerned that I had been less than tactful about the so-called 'chicken run' but happy that you took it in exactly the spirit that it was meant to be taken. I had my tongue firmly planted in my cheek. You were more than sensible I think. I would have done just that with a small child, and even without one. You had been through the worst I imagine. Reading this book Rhodesians Never Die (Godwin/Hancock) it is marvellous for bringing back all the sentiments about life in Rhodesia that one had forgotten. Godwin is expert at recalling 'the Rhodesian way of life' and how deluded they were, yes, and bigoted!</td>
<td>(no reply)</td>
</tr>
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Emigration being seen as “… what the ‘true’ Rhodesians condemned as the ultimate selfish and unpatriotic act …” (Godwin, 1993, 287) was in my
experience a widespread response. Longtime friendships foundered when one or
the other families took ‘the chicken run’. Clare’s email gives me cause to reflect
on those last days in Rhodesia. I remember the turmoil of the war—terrorist war
to some, war of liberation to others—the resulting danger for all of us and for
Roland, the continual and preposterous demands of ‘call-ups’ into the Police
Reserve—a division of the regular BSAP (British South Africa Police)—two
weeks away in the bush followed by two weeks at home and work. The impact of
the war on our relationship, employment, on every aspect of our lives was, and
probably still is, incalculable and lasting. The intolerable circumstances in the last
few years in Rhodesia may, indeed, have shaped the Zimbabwe of the twenty-first
century. I read about “…[the] side effects of war which affected the entire nation:
an economy virtually bankrupted by the cost of the war, a growing crime rate, a
refugee population, the breakdown of government services; abandoned farms,
broken marriages, rising alcoholism” (Meredith, 1979, 369). And I know that is
how it was.

I don’t remember them, but now I read about the Rhodesian politicians’ abusive
speeches; one, P K van der Byl, said he had “nothing but contempt for those who
left because they were afraid, or were tired of call-ups” (in Godwin, 1993, 207-
208). The call-ups into Operational Areas were fraught with danger—not only
from the opposing side, but also from the inept security forces. The danger
implicit in the lack of communication and aggravated by the service rivalry
between the police, the air force, and the army, resulted in disorganisation and
was the cause of a number of casualties within the forces. As the situation
worsened more white people left the country; the age for call-ups into active
service increased and by 1976 had reached fifty years old. My mind goes back to Roland’s ‘stick’ of bank-clerks and salesmen, untrained ‘townies’ not soldiers, some elderly, some trigger happy, most unused to the bush—let alone bush warfare. So, never knowing exactly when (or if) he would be returning, I’d drive to Hard Square at Police HQ each fortnight to wait for the convoys. Two weeks later, the return trip, to leave Roland there at Hard Square. We never spoke much during that journey. Kathy might ask, “where’s my daddy going?” but what reply could we make? For this time and place I am not homesick; Hard Square, the milling Reservists, all dressed in dark blue boiler suits or dingy camouflage; nobody seeming sure of what they were doing or where they were going. The air of desperation and suspense and, it seems in my memory, always to be dusk when we said good-bye. And then finally the catalyst, the day that made us determined to leave Rhodesia.

One day, in August 1976, the police arrived at Roland’s place of work and arrested him. Roland, only recently home from call-up, phoned me at my workplace. I could hear the urgency in his voice as he asked me please to hurry home and let them—the police—in to search the house. I asked if they had a warrant and he told me they said no warrant was required: he was under arrest and would be imprisoned (indefinitely) if we refused them entry. The police officers said the house must be searched. I can remember how my heart was racing as I drove home. What did they want, what were they looking for? All our firearms were licensed so it couldn’t be that. Had they found out about my ‘hoard’ of foreign exchange—the equivalent of one hundred and fifty (Rhodesian) dollars in Swiss Francs? A small amount, but there had been cases of people
being arrested for foreign exchange deals involving as little as $500.00—and later committing suicide (Godwin, 1993, 376). But no, I arrived home and the purpose for the search emerged; not one but four (white) police officers had come to hunt for copies of Playboy magazine.

Due to the war and subsequent dearth of foreign tourists, in 1975 Roland’s safari business had collapsed. One of his American clients had, unbeknown to him, subscribed him to Playboy magazine. Ironically, he had never received any copies of the magazine because, as we were to find out, they were all confiscated by the police from the mail. So, when one of the young police officers produced a tattered, well-read copy of the magazine—he held it up in front of us like an old-fashioned school-master admonishing delinquent pupils—and said it was ours, we were confused; the more so when the magazine disintegrated in front of our eyes. Censorship in Rhodesia was strict, not only where political (subversive) literature was concerned but more particularly for literature that was deemed pornographic. In 1975 the Rhodesian Board of Censors had instituted a blanket ban that covered Playboy, Penthouse and Screw magazines (Godwin, 1993, 142). Thus, to be in possession of one of these magazines was a criminal offence. The police officers proceeded to scour our home. The country falling to pieces around us, my husband risking his life fighting for the pig-headed and corrupt Rhodesian Front government, and these smug and self-satisfied four, these young, healthy police officers, one of whom I recognised as a member of the Rhodesian Rugby Union team, shamelessly, even arrogantly, raiding our house looking for non-existent copies of Playboy. As I write this I feel, once again, my sense of outrage and
disbelief, and I can feel again my anger rising. For this, I am not homesick. From this one bizarre experience, I know why we left Rhodesia!

Within a week Roland had resigned from the Police Reserve—citing his South African citizenship—otherwise there was no exemption from serving in the security forces. He handed in his uniforms and weapons and never served another call-up. He resigned from his job and we put the house up for rent; less than five months later, in January 1977, we were living in Cape Town in South Africa. And it was from Cape Town, four years later, we applied to immigrate to Australia.

It was quite common when I arrived here in the 1980s for many Australians to have the delusion that getting out of Africa was difficult; that the South African government did not allow people to leave freely. It was some time before I realised that, when my new colleagues said, “you were lucky to leave!” they meant; “you were lucky to be allowed to leave”! They did not mean what I understood—that not only was I fortunate to leave the South African political situation, but that I had been accepted into Australia. The reality was, and still is, that in bureaucratic terms, it is easy to leave Africa and extraordinarily difficult to get into Australia. However, the physical transportation of self, possessions and money is seldom straightforward, simple or without peril. In recent years, since 1998, there has been a proliferation of officially registered Migration Agents who purport to assist potential immigrants through the legal and bureaucratic processes of entering Australia. Many of these agents specialise in particular geographical areas and particular groups of people: for example, emigrants from Singapore, the United Kingdom, and of course Southern Africa. Frequently representatives from
the agencies will travel to the target country to generate business. It is tacitly acknowledged that the targeted clientele are people with financial means—not necessarily for immigration purposes but to meet the fees charged by the agencies.

We did not have an agent when we applied to immigrate to Australia, and our first application (in 1980) was denied. A year later we applied again, writing a long and passionate letter that we attached to the official forms. I cannot recall the full declaration but I do remember writing about our desire to live in Australia; our record of being able to settle successfully in a new environment, and our willingness to work hard, to give Australia the best we could offer. This time our application was successful, we were accepted as residents in Australia. The first step into the separation stage of *rites de passage* had been taken—or had that been when we left Rhodesia? As I ponder on this question I realise the ambiguous boundaries of stages in those *rites de passage* that are not a traditional and formal ceremony and that there are multiple points of entry. However, on a mundane level, our tentative steps toward passage to Australia had to follow bureaucratic pathways, signalled by copious amounts of red tape. There were interviews with the Australian consular representative—for all three of us together—Roland, Kathy (aged 13) and myself; medical tests, worry about passports because mine had expired and Rhodesia, as such, no longer existed, following its own transformation becoming Zimbabwe. We had to sell the house and make decisions about what to bring and what to leave behind. For reasons I forget, I destroyed most of my journals and burned many of the letters I had kept through the years, peeling away the past by casting out each memento. Unconsciously, but
as decreed in the initial stage of a traditional and ceremonial *rites de passage*, I was fulfilling the purification *rites* albeit in a modified way: the stripping away of the life, the identity we were leaving, the separation stage that “… detach(es) ritual subjects from their old places in society …” (Turner, Victor, 1977c, 36). As individuals and as a family we were entering the margin and becoming “transitional beings” liminal *persona* (Turner, 1979, 237).

In terms of exile, the difference between voluntary and involuntary emigration is not necessarily clear. Sometimes the overt reasons for leaving Rhodesia, or even Africa, seem prosaic. Only one woman in this project speaks of wanting to leave Rhodesia for fear of becoming a refugee. In my own story the fear of leaving Africa as a refugee was a factor but not until now clearly acknowledged or stated.

During our talks, Betty repeated her desire not to have to leave Rhodesia as a refugee a number of times, each time with different emphasis, a different determination:

Betty: As I say, I don’t want to be without, and I never wanted to be a refugee. That was my big fear that I would be a refugee.

Betty: I still have some control over where I go; some choice. I don’t want to be a refugee with everything I own in a suitcase, getting through a border and [being] dependent upon others.

Betty: Well, we had seen the Congo. We had seen people arriving at the Congo border with their trucks. But their trucks were taken away from them. And they were not allowed to bring them into the country. There were the most horrendous stories of what they had actually managed to salvage, losing it, and having nothing, absolutely nothing.

Betty: I was so desperate to get out, as I say my fear of being a refugee was so huge, I just said, “we’ll come over here, we haven’t got a lot”, I said, “[but] that's all right, we will cope”.
Remembering the Congo, remembering Tanzania, Mozambique, and Uganda.

‘Maybe I’ll even confess the truth, that I rode in with the horsemen and beheld the apocalypse…’ (Kingsolver, 2000, 9). And for us, was the apocalypse situated in colonisation, or was it in the end of colonisation?

Robin, my Australian colleague, helped me transcribe this interview with Betty. She seemed deeply moved by Betty’s words. When she handed back the transcript, she included a letter to me. She wrote:

Just some notes on issues that came up for me whilst transcribing the tape. First, I couldn’t help but feel at the end that being in Betty’s position—and no doubt, yours as well; it seems like what people describe when they lose a limb. They can still feel it and have a memory of it, but the reality is a memory [because] the reality is, it is gone. They are not whole but still have a memory of the part that would make them whole. Is this a trick of the mind or a deep-seated longing for a missing part one psychological, one emotional? Is this how it feels leaving your home country to migrate to another?

Robin’s transcribing of the tape became important in the analysis and interpretation of Betty’s interview and of the project generally. I have flagged this in the previous chapter and I re-articulate here that it is the notion of the use of language and accent that has coloured and skewed the transcript. Sometimes the misinterpretation was amusing and sometimes nonsensical. Occasionally I was bewildered by Robin’s reaction, it was as if she heard an unfamiliar word, found an association she was familiar with, and went off on her own fantasy. What does her imagination tell her about me, about women from Rhodesia? As I read her transcriptions of the interviews I find unusual meanings given to ostensibly straightforward remarks, trying, perhaps, to make them make sense to herself? The ‘mistranslation’ of the tapes becomes more significant when the notions grounded in the Bakhtian theory of heteroglossia are applied. Very briefly, the
theory infers the diversity of language and the interaction of dialogue between different worldviews. My interpretation of heteroglossia and its relevance to this thesis is this; as I talk to another, I am positioned in my own history—with all the associated epistemology—the voices, experiences, and knowledge—that are rooted in my culture and in my own psyche. It is through this ‘filter’ that I speak and hear. The other, in this case Robin, hears me from her place—through the ‘filter’ of her history, experiences, and knowledge. The question arises, is she hearing what I am saying, or is she hearing (and struggling to make sense of), something that is so remote from her experience and so coloured by her own epistemological environment that it cannot be comprehended. Working with this perhaps idiosyncratic interpretation of heteroglossia allows me to examine the significance in the misunderstanding between people speaking the same language but coming from different backgrounds. The notion of situated knowledge permeates this thesis and, occasionally, becomes visible in surprising and challenging ways. The theme surfaces again in the following chapter where the liminal stage of the rites de passage is explored.

Leaving home is sometimes a circuitous journey, and the detours are tricky. Sarah’s story illustrates that determining time frames for rites de passage is futile. Her term of separation took many years, and many factors influenced the successes and failures of the passage. Sarah told me about leaving Zambia (Northern Rhodesia) for South Africa. She arrived in Pietermaritzburg alone and with three young children to support:

Sarah: I went to Pietermaritzburg. And I was really cut off. It was really rough. From being wealthy, I had no money, nothing.
Eleanor: is that when you got a divorce?
Sarah: Yes, three years later I got a divorce. I hadn’t even got a work permit. I used to go and sell language courses door-to-door at night. Leave my kids alone at ages two and a half, six and seven.

Eleanor: Because you had no option?

Sarah: I had no option. I didn’t have anything to fall back on. He just said he couldn’t get the money out because of the political situation [in Zambia] at that time and I left a lot of money behind. So it was pretty rough and I learned hard right from day one… I didn’t like South African politics. And I never felt at home in South Africa. [I was there] twelve years and I never ever regarded myself as a South African. I was there to educate my kids and in the back of my mind, I still kept it in my mind that I would go to Australia. So, when I came here [Western Australia] it was a piece of cake. Except no one spoke to me for the first year.

Sarah came to Australia after spending twelve years in South Africa. I asked her about her experiences with the Australian authorities when she decided to immigrate. In the incident described below, she was visiting Australia as a tourist and doing reconnaissance for her future move. In our interview she describes some of the obstacles she had to overcome:

Sarah: I came across in 84 thinking it is time to emigrate [from South Africa]. And I went to [Australian] Immigration—I couldn’t get in. I didn’t qualify, I didn’t have a degree. I had no qualifications. I hadn’t worked in the workforce like you have to, for five years. I did not make the points. I realised that I had to look to go to one of the areas they wanted to develop.

The drive to immigrate to Australia continued for Sarah and she worked hard toward that end. She told me of her next trip to Australia:

Sarah: I came back again in 88 and I came to Perth because Perth was the place that I liked. And I realised that I still couldn’t come into Perth but by then I had saved enough money in Europe to come as an investor [business] migrant. I’d been working the [stock] market in London while I was in Cape Town to make a full business migrant allowance. From very little and I did pretty well.

Eleanor: That’s incredible, yeah.

Sarah: I aimed in this direction for fourteen years. I never lost sight of my goal.

Thus, when the opportunity presented itself, Sarah committed herself to buying a farm in the south west of Western Australia. The commitment was made more by default than because that was what she wanted to do:

Sarah: And my brother had made an offer on a farm in Denmark and he couldn’t honour it, and it would stuff up my application [if he reneged] so I ended up buying the farm. I thought I would use it as my [collateral] … I managed to get the permit from Canberra to buy the farm. Instead of six weeks I managed to get it in three days!
Betty’s experience also originates from her determination to leave Rhodesia; but where Sarah’s decision was made autonomously/independently, Betty had to convince her husband that it was the best move. As I have already indicated, she was strongly motivated by the fear of becoming a refugee and I think, in this respect, she did influence her husband. I believe that the effect of this had ramifications on the way she coped once they settled in Western Australia, and these become clear in the liminal stage of her *rites de passage*. There were unpredictable events and several obstacles in the process of separation for Betty and her family in leaving Africa and settling in Australia. Betty talks of several reconnaissances trips before the final decision to leave Rhodesia (by this time renamed Zimbabwe). On his return from an early reconnaissances trip, Betty’s husband told her that he was unimpressed by the house of ex-Rhodesian friends. Betty said, “He looked at how they were living and he said he didn't want to live like them.” She continued, “The thought of leaving everything and coming to a very uncertain and difficult future, he felt he wasn't prepared to take that chance at that stage. So he came back and we carried on in Zimbabwe.”

For Betty’s husband, the change of mind—of heart, came when the government of Robert Mugabe came to power in 1980. She explains the circumstances and emphasises the political as opposed to the racial aspect of their motivation to emigrate:

Betty: And it was only when the Communists took over, that was the crunch! We had actually decided it wasn't a race problem, it was philosophical, [we asked ourselves] where did we want to go, how did we want our children to be bought up. We just couldn't see that in the communist ideology, [and] we could not see [in the communist ideology] a future for Zimbabwe.
Betty: So at that stage Martin suddenly changed his mind, but he said he couldn't move unless I had actually seen what we were coming to. He felt I was the one who was going to have to make the major adjustments, being the housekeeper.

Following the change of mind, Betty and Martin visited Australia together. As Betty explains, the process of immigration was already finalised, so the trip (she calls it a ‘holiday’) was possibly a confirmation of the necessity she felt to emigrate. The issue of gender in the decision making process is evident in that once Martin made up his mind to leave, the process of immigration was set in motion and, by the time of the joint visit, was “more-or-less completed”:

Betty: We had come on a holiday, with Martin to see if he could find a job. We had more-or-less completed our immigration but it was subject to Martin having a job. When he got here he was actually offered three jobs, and he didn't even go to the third interview because he said “I’m making a choice on something on which I really have no idea at all, which firm I should be joining”.

Once the move was certain, Betty told me, “We came on a one way ticket.”

The packing up in Zimbabwe was designated as Betty’s task. She told me that Martin came over to take up the position he had been offered:

Betty: Martin came three months ahead of me because he got a job and they wanted him urgently. I started selling up everything and packing and collecting kids and that type of thing.
Eleanor: From Harare?
Betty: So he actually came three months ahead of me
Eleanor: So you had all that [packing up to do by yourself]?
Betty: I did all that by myself. But then, he came to the job by himself [and] he had to get started [by himself]. And I would say that they wanted him from November and I came towards the end of January, so he had three months to earn a bit of cash.

Packing up the home was not the only task Betty had to complete before she immigrated to join Martin. Her roles as home-maker and mother grew to incorporate factory manager. She told me:

And I also had to run a factory, a woodwork factory in Zimbabwe. My father in law started it with family funds and then it wasn’t making anything, and ran into difficulties. So he and his wife departed and I was the only one that was sitting at home and not working. I actually ran that for four years. When we had to pack up, I didn’t only pack up the house. We had to sell the furniture and the woodwork factory!
The theme of separation runs through Betty’s experience. When the question is raised, she is non-committal and when I comment on the disparity of her experience compared with that of Martin, she elides her own contribution. The repercussions I signalled previously begin to appear.

Strangely enough, for me, the actual departure from Africa was not difficult. Leaving from Cape Town (where we had lived for five years) perhaps we got caught up in the excitement of the journey. Perhaps, because we flew from Cape Town to catch the connecting flight, it was staying overnight in Johannesburg—sleeping on the lounge-room floor at a friend’s home. Perhaps it was the mad dash to the airport through the horrific Johannesburg rush-hour traffic. Whatever it was, there was no clue, no forewarning of the relentless homesickness that started almost immediately we arrived in Australia. The homesickness I felt was not only for Rhodesia, not only for Cape Town, but for Africa; perhaps for my life and an identity that was now fragmented and displaced. It occurs to me now, as I write, that the separation, the transplantation and fragmentation is something I inflicted on myself; even the homesickness and ‘my’ own identity was a self-transplanted [ad]venture and it was me who stripped myself bare of all I knew and I reflect: What awareness allows me to fathom this knowledge, now. This is, clearly, the separation stage in the rites de passage where the neophyte puts aside all things of the past: “They [the neophytes] have no status, property, insignia, secular clothing, rank, kinship position, nothing to demarcate them structurally from their fellows” (Turner, 1979, 237). And in a metaphorical way, in a metaphysical way, that is precisely what happened. If this was the same for the other women in my study, they did not tell me.
But to emigrate is always to dismantle the center of the world, and so to move into a lost, disoriented one of fragments (Berger, 1984, 57).

Contained within the separation from Africa is the arrival in Australia. In this space I again compare migration (as an adult) to transplanting a mature tree. The arrival in Australia is analogous of the turmoil inherent in transporting the tree to a new location, with the unwieldy branches shuddering and root system dangling uselessly after being hauled out and suspended above the matrix, with the soil falling away; but attachments that are rooted in a lifetime of experience and memories are not so easily breached. The experience of loss, the grief that is felt when surrendering a lifetime forged around family, friends, things, and places; and the perceived danger of losing part of oneself is not calculable by money, weights or measures. There may be an element of detachment, possibly denial, but to be consistently objective in the turbulence of emigration is hardly conceivable. The effect of the change is likely to provoke the attachment to memories and affections (Grinberg and Grinberg, 1989, 26). Associated with these ruptures is the feeling of guilt. There is the guilt of leaving family, elderly parents who the emigrant may feel she is deserting, but who are unwilling to risk, at their time of life, a new start in a new country. There is the guilt of leaving servants often of many years standing—and it is a reality that in Rhodesia servants played a considerable role in our lives—who stand (in my memory) bewildered and forlorn that the person responsible for their security of home and income, is leaving. It is in the grief of leaving that a sense of guilt first appears. Grief at abandoning the place that holds the heart; guilt that is ambiguous and refuses to be named. Guilt surfaces again and again among the women in this
study, but for the most part is tacit and well concealed. The conjecture that underlying guilt is resentment, and underlying resentment is anger is a conception that needs to be addressed. Is it the thought that had I stayed, I could have made a difference? Is this the manifestation of the anomie that forms the process that drove us? Dr Clara Espinosa, the Bolivian immigrant I cited at the beginning of this chapter, speaks eloquently of her sadness and guilt at leaving Bolivia. I perceive again the anomie that is, perhaps, significant in any immigration process:

I can remember my country without crying and without yearning so much. I think that to survive I keep telling myself I did resolve my guilt, but it’s probably something I will never ever resolve (in Ferrari, 1998).

I asked Amy about her parents, both of whom have died since she has been in Australia. When she speaks I hear the sorrow in her voice, not only for their deaths but for the actual physical distance between them in Africa and herself in Australia before they died:

Amy: Though of course, my mum and dad always said they would never come and live here because they didn’t want to be a burden on their family. So they would only come and visit. And then when things got too bad for them there and when they got really very elderly, and my dad quite frail, it was too late for them to come then. Amy: And so that was always a terrible wrench for me. You know having my mum and dad there and you [me] here. I mean you know it don’t you? It’s an awful wrench, you feel so guilty. And that was really one, I think that was, one of the hardest things. You know, especially when my parents got more dependent on us and you know, having to continually go over and do your best for them yet knowing you had to come back here and that was really very difficult. Eleanor: So by staying there they ended up becoming even more of a burden? Amy: In a way, yes but then you never know how they would have settled [in Australia] because my mum and dad were very Africa orientated. And there was something about Australia. I think my mum used to find it a little umm, crude. And I think that sort of put her off any idea of coming here.

As Amy and I spoke, I told her about my feelings on leaving and revisiting my mother in Zimbabwe—and Kathy’s grandparents on her father’s side in Cape
Town. The associated feelings of grief and guilt are clear as I reflect on this conversation:

Eleanor: Yes I sometimes feel Kathy is well, resentful that we took her away from her grandparents. Well, my father was already dead, but Roland’s dad and my mum and that. But I do agree about the guilt because I definitely had that. Especially after when we came here mum became very senile. Well, she got Alzheimers.

Amy: Yes …
Eleanor: And not only did I feel awful about that, but [also] that Marie had to carry the burden.
Amy: Yes. Yes.
Eleanor: Because, I mean my brothers were fine and everything and they didn’t mind putting their hands in their pockets, but they weren’t there as people for poor old mum. That was horrible.
Amy: Yes. When did she die?
Eleanor: 1987. She turned eighty in … We went over [to Zimbabwe] in 1986 for her eightieth birthday. And she didn’t really remember me. She remembered Roland, but not me. But that’s what Alzheimer’s can do.

The return to Zimbabwe, on holiday or for other reasons, after time spent living in Australia raises questions that become part of this thesis. Earlier in this chapter I cite in the interview with Amy that she said, “perhaps things would have been fine” if she and her family had stayed in Zimbabwe. In my own experience, after each return visit I discover a longing to return permanently to that matrix of what was known; the life that, at holiday level, seems almost unchanged. And, embedded in that is the homesickness felt so intensely by myself and many other ex-Rhodesians and ex-Zimbabweans to whom I have spoken. Inherent in this homesickness is the recognition that thoughts of Africa still clutch at me. In my daily journal I find the following passage, written so recently I hesitate to date it:

Sometimes, in the morning when I wake up and the air in Perth feels like the air in Africa, there is an overwhelming homesickness. A homesickness that penetrates me and has no knowledge of the practicalities of life (Personal Journal).

The pungency and the immediacy of Africa is elegantly (and ephemerally) captured by Barbara Kingsolver, writing in the character of a visitor, a
missionary’s wife/widow in Africa; she writes as a mother who experienced the loss of a child—not because of war of independence—but at the beginning of the wars of independence in the Congo/Zaire and her words resonate/echo [with] my own memories of Africa. She says:

Once every few years, even now, I catch the scent of Africa. It makes me want to keen, sing, clap up thunder, lie down at the foot of a tree and let the worms take whatever of me they can still use. I find it impossible to bear (Kingsolver, 2000, 99).

I realise that it is part of me, part of my being, to know how Africa feels, smells, and is—and that this is something that cannot be dismissed or diminished because I live in Australia. And the knowledge is shared with this American woman whose writing about Africa is, by her own admission, based on memory and “…many people’s accounts of the natural, cultural, and social history of [the Congo/Zaire]” (Kingsolver, 2000, ix).

Most of the women in this project have made the trip ‘home’ to Zimbabwe, to Africa, on at least one occasion. When we meet here in Perth, returning to Zimbabwe is one of the main topics of conversation. I notice that, on the few occasions when we do meet socially, the first question we ask each other is, “When were you last there?” [in Zimbabwe, in Africa]. We meet so seldom as a social group that I begin to question the sense of our origins in the same country. Some of us—the women in this study—knew each other in Rhodesia; others have never met, either here or in Africa, and there is no sense of community among us. I address this under the concept of Gemeinschaft. I reiterate that the context in which I use Gemeinschaft is that of social solidarity, and that this social solidarity is absent among the immigrant women from Rhodesia who comprise my sample.
I find the failure of the women to form a cohesive group in Australia worth exploring. It is almost as though the notion of grouping together within the new country is counter to our beliefs, perhaps our values? It seems when we do get together we enjoy talking to each other and catching up on news. However, not one of us makes an effort to organise regular—or even occasional—social meetings. The last time some of us met as a group the meeting was organised by the Old Girls Association of the senior school we attended in Salisbury. I ponder, does the ambiguity of our physical resemblance to white Australian women make it unnecessary for us to have or maintain contact with people (women) from the home country? Is the lack of contact between us due to unconscious recognition of our geographical isolation, our sense of independence—or perceived autonomy? Is it because we speak English? The ongoing and escalating problems in Zimbabwe do not seem to change the attitude of the women about making more regular contact. I think in comparison about what I have heard from friends in the Chilean community in Perth—they seem to have a very structured community, and association, also very gendered—which comprises the patriarchal ‘chief’ who gives advice and tells people what they may and may not do. Maybe that is the difference, we have no such structure—probably because we feel we do not need each other’s support, or see it as interference, in our personal lives. We can find our support elsewhere.

In the interview process I discovered that most of us joined the ‘Rhodesia Association’ soon after we arrived in Perth. The arrival in the new country is probably the stage of migration when the liminal persona is most vulnerable, when the realisation occurs that the physical body is now situated in an unknown
space, and it is the time of crossing from the separation stage to the liminal stage. However, I also found that all of us who did join the association have left it for similar reasons—one of which is the ‘when-we’ syndrome among members. A ‘when-we’ is a derisive expression used by some ex-Rhodesians to describe other ex-Rhodesians (and South Africans) whose conversation comprises “when-we were in Rhodesia” [everything was bigger, better, prettier, more interesting]. Another reason for not remaining a member of the association seemed to be that most of the other members were actually ‘expat poms’ (a derisive term for ex-patriot British nationals) who had lived in Rhodesia for a few months or maybe a few years. One of the women in my research remains a member of the Rhodesia Association because she enjoys receiving the newsletter—a way to catch up on who has ‘gapped it’ from Zimbabwe. Roland and I never bothered to renew our membership after the one and only social occasion we attended. It is worth noting however, that there are now a number of websites on the Internet, including ‘Rhodesians Worldwide’, and, as a result there seems to be more connection—but only ‘virtually’. There remains to be addressed the ‘adept’ notion in the rites de passage: the adept who guides the liminal persona through the mysteries of the separation stage and into the liminal. Perhaps we, the women from Rhodesia, feel we do not need the assistance of other ex-Rhodesians or South Africans. Those who required and requested assistance in Australia received it from Australians.

I have, in this chapter looked at migration as the separation stage in an unacknowledged rites de passages, I have begun the exploration of homesickness and interwoven this with experiences of separation—leaving Africa. And, finally, I reflect on the notion of Gemeinschaft, and in doing so I discover another reason,
an intensely personal reason, that leaving Africa and coming to Australia implies. It is, I think, like leaving an insular and exclusive boarding school—like the one I attended in colonial Rhodesia—and discovering there are other people to connect with and relate to. Other people who remind me that, not only is it unnecessary to cling to the old ways, but doing so can be limiting and handicap the movement to integration—the third stage of the liminal process. Therefore, deeply within the process of migration as *rites de passage*, is situated the concept of a metanoia. The transformation that occurs in an immigrant may be driven by their perceptions of the new society and their identity as a member of their new society. Whether the immigrant is aware of any transformation in her or his attitude or identity, it is clear that the action of relocating enforces a modified outlook on self-identity and attributed identity. Thus, in the following chapter I discuss issues of identity and draw on the metaphor of non-reflecting mirrors to examine the notion of difference within similarity.

\[1\] The metaphor of an adult immigrant being like a transplanted tree was suggested to me by my therapist, friend, and colleague, Theresia Johnston – herself an immigrant, from Holland.
The Second Panel

Liminality
Chapter Five: Identity I

Being in the centre of my margin.

*So I am Australian because my lapsed passport says I am, and because this country offered me a place to be* (Eva Cox).

Eva Cox’s comment on her Australian identity is appropriate as an introduction to this chapter on migrant identity in Australia. The notion of being offered ‘a place to be’ necessitates the question “to be what?” or “to be whom?” and these are the questions I ask the women in my study. These are the questions I ask myself. Therefore, I begin this chapter by seeking to locate the moment that begins the self-questioning—questioning my own positionality as an immigrant in Australia and as an Australian and finding “the margin as a space of radical openness” (hooks, 1989). Previously, I have situated the women in the separation stage of *rites de passage* and discussed the separation from Africa. The incline that leads to the liminal section begins here, and I further the exploration of identity in this space. In the second section of this chapter I amplify my hypothesis of minimal difference and examine issues not usually associated with the attribution of ‘otherness’.
Examining the question of identity necessitates the defining of the word, and I choose to offer a variety of definitions, theoretical and observed, to mark what I consider to be the ambivalence of the term. In this chapter, the trope of immigration as *rites de passage* is reiterated in the discussion of assimilation and integration. The imbrication of identity and integration into Australian society is examined drawing on past experience of exclusion and belonging. Notions of identity and integration in the immigration discourse are well documented. In this chapter I draw, in the first instance, on the work of psychiatrists Leon and Rebeca Grinberg to define the paradigms of my hypothesis and to develop the implications/connotations in my use of ‘assimilation’ and ‘integration’. They speak of the ‘requisite’ of developing a feeling of belonging to become integrated and thus maintaining one’s sense of identity (Grinberg and Grinberg, 1989, 23). The significance I accord to this comment allows me to define and re-define the use of assimilation and integration in relation to my personal experience of immigration. Further, it allows a connection to the maintenance of self-determined identity as opposed to an attributed identity—attributed by the new or host nation. In the personal environment of the new immigrant, I advance some parallels between assimilation and anarchy in the context of self-determined identity. I find the notion of assimilation, in the context of the desire to belong, becomes consistent with compliance—and the performance of compliance. This, I believe, generates the notion of assimilation as anarchic and I will open up the topic of assimilation as camouflage, not as compliance but as the performance of compliance. The notion of integration that is introduced here will be advanced and expanded in chapter eight, where issues that embrace incorporation,
aggregation and reaggregation as the final part of *rites de passage*, are determined. The interweaving of threads on the attribution of the other derives from the sub-chapter that follows, i.e Identity II: *True Mirrors*; and this, as mimesis, supports and embellishes the theme of identity and reflection. The attribution of ethnic identity in Australia is examined in the light of ethnicity, *per se*, principally being applied to non-Anglo-Australians. In conclusion, I continue the exploration of who the *real* Aussie may be, and use this to reflect upon my own multiplicity of identities positioned, as they are, in the context of author and subject, immigrant and Australian.

The beginning of my self-examination of who or what I was came about towards the beginning of my life as a doctoral student. In the process of researching this work, in 1998, I had the opportunity to attend and present a paper at a Humanities conference in South Australia, *Postcoloniality/Cultural Studies: Representing Difference*. As the conference addressed issues of difference and postcolonialism, I heard a number of papers that addressed questions relating to people perceived as being situated in the margins. Most of the papers I heard were, in fact, *about* people in the margins—the (implicit) ‘Other’. I listened to many of these papers and it seemed that my critical mind heard a note of pious self-interest. The idea that the speaker was central and the subjects were situated on the periphery led me to ponder on the discourse that authorises a dominant group to talk about and for the ‘Other’ and, to consider how ironic it was that many of the papers presented, discussed this very issue. For example, one of the presenters spoke of ‘Captured Aboriginal Lives: From P.T. Barnum to the Present Sunday Times’; and another presenter addressed ‘Essentialism, hybridity and identity amongst
Arabic-speaking youth’. However, this is not to imply that any of the papers were inferior, and I am not criticising any particular presentation. But, it is worth reflecting on Trinh T. Minh-ha’s belief that “… [at least] the danger of speaking for the other has emerged into consciousness” and continues, “… [but] it serves as an excuse for … their reluctance to involve themselves in the issue” (Minh-ha, 1989, 80). While there was, at the conference, “inclusion”, *per se*, of Indigenous Australians (Aboriginal people), some as participants into the conference, and others as performers of Aboriginal dance and ceremony, I perceived a component of condescension, perhaps best described as an (unexpressed) attribution of subaltern ‘nativeness’ toward them that reflects Trinh T. Minh-ha’s observation cited above. To my eyes there were aspects of covert colonialism within, and informed by, the discourse of postcolonialism associated with the theme of the conference.

Paradoxically, I also saw attribution of otherness, albeit tacit, to people at the conference who did not appear different; that is to say, exotically different. To define my use of ‘other’ in this context; I originally considered using the word ‘outsider’, and the term is germane; however, as in much postcolonial theory, the sense of ‘outsider’ is incorporated in ‘other’, where issues other than that of foreignness, or of being an alien, apply. Therefore, using the precedent set in postcolonial and postmodern theory, I tend to use ‘other’ in preference to ‘outsider’ to convey the sense of being an outsider, but not a foreigner. Toward those delegates whose differences were less defined or, I could argue, irrelevant, there emerged as the conference progressed, an almost calculated discrimination, leading to separation and exclusion from the (networking) centre. I observed that
those delegates who were, to the naïve eyes of this first-time conference attendee, part of the dominant group (white, academic, Australian) but who had some insignificant difference, were informally excluded from certain aspects of the conference. For example, among the excluded delegates were the overweight, the eccentric dressers, the physically disadvantaged and so forth; different—but not different enough—or not different in a suitably exotic way. Now, when I reflect on the experience, I ask myself about the element of hypocrisy that I sensed and I ponder, was it my imagination? Was I able to see something clearly because I, myself, was in the margin? bell hooks writes of how she learned that marginality is not a mythic place, but comes from lived experience; she identifies the margin as a place of radical possibility—the radical margin. She sees the margin as a place of resistance, of being able to look “… from the outside in and from the inside out” (hooks, 1989, 20). Being situated in the margin, being on the outside to define the centre, is a place “… to struggle to maintain …” (hooks, 1989, 20), and is, therefore, a space not to be relinquished. For myself in the context of the conference in South Australia, the most significant sense of my marginalisation came from being a white immigrant from Southern Africa. I reiterate, the physical differences are not marked and there is no distinguishing racial feature. At the conference I dress as I usually do, in a conventional, if not conservative, way for a woman, so perhaps it is my accent that alerts people that I am different. Presumably, I do not reflect the required symmetrical image. I flag the notion of ‘symmetrical image’ here for concentrated examination in the following sub-section. For another diagnosis, perhaps I must draw on the notion of habitus—embodied history—as evidence of my difference; the way I move, sit, and stand, minor, insignificant difference that presumably accounted for my marginalisation,
but it was from within this locus that I was able, indeed am able, to observe the very place of marginalisation. And, in this radical margin I discovered that to be acceptable and accepted to the inner sanctum of Academe, it is better to be ‘very’ other. ‘A little bit’ other is not good enough. In other words, to be a white woman but not the same ‘white’ as the dominant (elite) group, additional issues come into play.

In seeking to find effective notions of identity to exhibit in this thesis, I explore the work of psychologist and philosopher James Hillman. Hillman examines the current definitions of identity and finds, in his terms, that ‘identity’, as well as ‘ego’ and ‘self’ “… are bare abstractions, telling us nothing of the human being they supposedly inhabit and govern. At best, these words refer to the unifying sameness of people while neglecting their unique differences” (Hillman, 1999, 8). The abstractions perceived by Hillman, and his recognition of the commonly accepted reductive theory of identity lead me to agree with his premise. In my examination of the individual lives of the migrant women of this discussion, in the context of their experiences of identity, the notion of a common identity is ludicrous. The recognition that they are individuals, and the particularities of their lives are what form their identity or multiplicity of identities. In the attribution of identity we do not always recognise ourselves. Sarah immigrated from Zambia, via South Africa in 1988. She started an emu farm in a small centre in the South of Western Australia. Her early days as an immigrant were not particularly auspicious. She found the local people unfriendly, even hostile. I asked about how she was positioned in the area and she replied that for the first few months, almost a year, nobody spoke to her in any friendly way. It was after her television broke,
and she needed to take it through to Albany that she discovered she had been attributed a name and an identity:

Sarah: I took the TV into the workshop and started to say, “My name is …” and he said, “Oh I know who you are!” but he still didn’t greet me. And I’d been going in and out of town for a year buying my groceries, and nobody greeted me. I was just the “emu lady” “the South African emu lady” that lived up there. And then the neighbours started saying, “Oh we live up the road, next to the emu lady.”
Eleanor: So, that’s where you say you became a landmark?
Sarah: Yah, my name was the emu lady and I went to Victoria as a consultant when I finished farming, and I was the emu lady there as well.

Reinforcing the argument of abstraction in the term “identity” is the observation that “[t]he concept of identity is based on the exclusion of difference, on a presumption of homogeneity. The word identity is derived from the Latin idem, meaning ‘the same’” (Bottomley, 1994, 65). Thus, identities are not only self-identification, or assumed identity, or re-invented identity, but also attributed identity and the recognition that each one of these is valid. The literature surrounding the topic of identity is extensive and I uncover a complexity of identity; a multiplicity of identity and, for me, it is only a small step inward – on a visceral level – to identify with many of the voices (Appignanesi, 1987; Sarup, 1996; Spivak, 1996; Suleiman, 1994) and (Nandy, 1983; Rapport and Dawson, 1998). bell hooks writes of “… the multiple voices within me” (hooks, 1989, 16).

It is in the sameness, the perceived symmetry, required by the self and, in a reciprocal way, by the ‘other’, that there arises a tendency to stereotype. In the case of the women in my study the confusion arises, I believe because the immigrant is so similar it becomes difficult to categorise her (or him), and the problem is resolved by stereotyping an attitude instead. For example, ‘all white Rhodesians are racist’ or, ‘all white South Africans (being racist) will bring their corrupt racist mores into Australia and infect the Australian society’. I have
amplified the notion of stereotyping and related it to identification in reflection of image, in the following sub-section of this chapter, Identity II: True Mirrors. The thread of the reflected image is woven through this thesis, stitching together the trope of immigration as *rites de passage*, even a reflection of *rites de passage*. It is in the ultimate stage of the *rites de passage* that the topic of integration becomes ascendant and it is timely, therefore, to begin the examination of my use of the term and why I dispute the term integration and favour that of assimilation particularly in the context of the initial stages of *rites de passage*.

The terms integration and assimilation are ubiquitous in this work and, to assist my defining of the terms, I use the following excerpts from an (email) discussion between a participant in this study, my colleague Clare, and myself. I reflect on the significance of the discussions I had with Clare, and many of my other colleagues, that at the time did not appear to be of any great consequence—but the succession of thoughts that many of these conversations provoked as I worked through the research and writing processes associated with this doctoral thesis—have helped me shape the final work. There is in this reflection a complexity that connects to my arguments regarding assimilation and integration because material spawned from these collegial discussions and conversations has, I have come to realise, been ‘assimilated’ in a visceral way that I flag now and draw upon in chapter eight: *A real Aussie [at last]* (Gunew, 1999, 146). The discussion that follows originated after Clare had read, at my invitation, the formal proposal for my candidacy. In a succession of emails we work to clarify what we mean, independently, when we use the terms ‘assimilation’ and ‘integration’:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clare’s email, Tuesday, 05 Oct 1999</th>
<th>Eleanor’s reply, Thursday, 07 Oct 1999</th>
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<td>You often talk about assimilation - my thesis has as a working subtitle – how females have integrated into WA society. My supervisor [and I] … discussed long and hard the difference between assimilation and integration and decided on integration as a more complete word for my thesis – I wonder at the reason you use assimilation and would be interested to hear from you on this.</td>
<td>Yes, I do use assimilation as opposed to integration and I’ll try and explain why. This is quite difficult … In 'assimilating' we camouflage who we are so as to look like the rest of a group (which is what I feel I do). In 'integrating' we actually do become part of the group. So, I suppose there is an element of anarchy? subterfuge? subversion! in assimilation – I know I'm not really part of the group, and the group knows I'm not really part of the group, but we both pretend I am – but I’m not sure why!</td>
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<tr>
<th>Clare’s reply, Sun, 10 Oct 1999</th>
<th>Eleanor’s reply, Mon, 11 Oct 1999</th>
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<td>Re assimilation and integration – this is why I chose integration – and what I wrote in my proposal &quot;Assimilation entails the adoption by the minority of the majority culture: integration refers to a blending of the two cultures in a some balanced fashion. So it will be argued that the word integration is more appropriate than assimilation in this context&quot;. Assimilation in my reading of history refers more to the White Australia Policy and as such is used in another way. I remember it all now and still think I prefer in my context, to use integration.</td>
<td>I suppose the assimilation and integration debate boils down to the fact that they are just words and we put our own interpretation on them. But, having said that, it makes me realise that I must define very clearly in my thesis what I mean by assimilation, and what it means within the context of my thesis. So, thanks for bringing it up and making me think about it!</td>
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Interpretation of the words ‘assimilation’ and ‘integration’ within the context of my thesis is crucial. However, I am mindful that the terminology is bounded by the meaning accepted as valid by this society—however ambiguous that contemporary meaning may be. Thus, when I move to distance myself from this problematical limitation, the need to define the words ‘assimilation’ and ‘integration’ is significant. To define the words I need to digress to notions of compliance, performance of compliance and the self-defined understanding of assimilation as anarchy.
The transformation from ex-Rhodesian to Australian is where these notions may be thrown into relief and become visible. The issue of a feeling of belonging in the new society is, as already commented on, a “requisite … [to] maintaining one’s sense of identity” (Grinberg and Grinberg, 1989, 23). The desire to belong, to be accepted, may compel the immigrant to acquiesce in behaviour that is not necessarily sincere. In other words, the attempts to assimilate may not be what they seem. My use of the word ‘assimilate’ needs to be defined further and the definition may serve to emphasise the significance of the immigrants’ experiences of passage into the Australian culture. So, to return to the trope of immigration as *rites de passage*, I choose the term assimilation in preference to integration because in the *rites de passage*, integration is what happens when the liminal stage is successfully completed—and that may never happen. My preference for the use of the word assimilation lies also in the conviction that an immigrant’s perceived assimilation may be a performance of compliance; a performance that masks the anarchic potential of compliance and the anarchic potential of assimilation. The terms of compliance in this context are defined by Kelman as “… public yielding to an influence attempt without private acceptance” (in Oskamp, 1977). Kelman asserts that the “… satisfaction derived from compliance is due to the *social effect* of accepting influence” (emphasis in original) (Kelman, 1958, 53). In the case of an immigrant, I would submit that it *is* the social effect motivating the compliance, the effect of a feeling of belonging in the society. And, in this performance of compliance by the immigrant, there is a pragmatic imitation of the dominant Australian culture. Thus, in this context, the imitation may be seen as camouflage. Consider assimilation seen as a camouflage that can be readjusted and renegotiated by the immigrant as the social environment
demands, much as an actor will perform on the stage, depending on the reaction of her or his audience. Therefore, seeing assimilation as a performance of compliance by the migrant, I understand it to be a necessary role, played for a sense of belonging, expediency, or even survival.

Allied with the concept of assimilation as anarchic and as a performance of compliance, is the immigrant’s recognition that she or he needs to change or modify her or his identity. This recognition of the necessity to change is a moment of clarity, an insight. The reaction of an immigrant to this insight is illustrated by one of the participants in my study. In an interview, I ask Marlene to talk about her Australian experiences and in her reply she is explicit about her awareness of the necessity to change. Marlene cites her use of speech and language as a place to describe the process and, in retrospect, I find the totality of her argument intriguing, but I can offer no interpretation other than that contained in the remarks she made in the interview:

Marlene: You just have to change. I found that when I came to Australia I had to simplify everything I said. I don’t only mean using big words, but just speaking in a less complex way. So, I found that I simplified everything. Instead of using one long word, I would cut down to shorter, simpler ones.
Eleanor: But isn’t that a little bit like selling yourself out?
Marlene: It is a bit, but it made me acceptable, to fit in, to blend in, to become part of our new home.
Eleanor: And that was important?
Marlene: That was very important. It is self-preservation I think. You just know what you need to do to survive. You have to behave in this way or that way so that you don’t stand out, so that you don’t attract attention. But, in your own private space, you can still be who you want to be (my emphasis).

So, Marlene's apparent submissiveness, her 'public yielding' masks the anarchic, non-compliant content that I hear in her words. Clearly, she is not all she appears to be. The sub-text seems to say, “I resemble you, but I know that inside I am not like you. I will use the words that you use, and that is so I can be accepted, or
acceptable, here. But within myself I know I’m not one of you, and I don’t know if I ever will be”. Perhaps what is occurring is, as Bhabha has suggested, an imitation of the dominant culture by the colonised (Bhabha, 1994, 90), or in this case, imitation of the dominant culture by the migrant, and I submit that this is the source of the anarchy. In this context, there is connection to Lacan’s notion that the effect of mimicry is camouflage, “not a harmonization of repression of difference, but a form of resemblance” (in Bhabha, 1994, 90), and this trope develops in an unexpected manner in the following sub-chapter Identity II: True Mirrors. Among the women in this research Marlene was possibly the clearest about understanding the necessity of changing her identity in order to belong, to comply. I mention here that she was the youngest woman I interviewed for the study. Marlene asked me to remember that she immigrated to Australia when she was only twenty-one and said, “… at that age, if I wanted to fit in and be able to blend, I had to find common ground. I had to find some way without, inside, giving myself away.” And I find that Marlene’s statement again emphasises the enigmatic attachment to her ‘previous’ identity and leaves space within her camouflage for anarchy and non-compliance, thus befitting my interpretation of ‘assimilation’ as a camouflage that can be readjusted and renegotiated by the immigrant as the social environment demands. Thus, the notion of assimilation as the performance of compliance achieves an effect that frees the neophyte, the immigrant, to live her own ‘inner’ life without prematurely sacrificing her previous identity—before her transit to the third stage of liminality—integration.

In this way, I am able to view assimilation as a camouflage that can be readjusted and renegotiated by the immigrant. This reassures me as to the appropriateness of
my choice of the term ‘assimilation’ rather than ‘integration’ in this context. It is
my conviction that assimilation is an adoption; a compliance; a camouflage, and
thus, a way to ‘be’ without attracting attention and I reiterate Marlene’s words:
“You have to behave in this way or that way so that you don’t stand out, so that
you don’t attract attention”. There are issues of power linked to this hypothesis
and it is, perhaps, one of the ways an immigrant can manifest some autonomy in
the adopted country, even if only in his or her own private space. The perceivable
lack of integration in this context, and the use of assimilation in my way of
definition, suggests the immigrant is on the periphery of the dominant group.
Being on the ‘outside’; being in the ‘margin’ but using the space as a centre of
possibility allows the mimicry, a performance that may forecast, ultimately,
integration.

“He’s a real Aussie, from the bush” (overheard at North Cott Café, October
2000).

The repetition of this quote that I first used in Chapter Three: The Beginning is
not at Perth Airport, signals a return to the notion of Australian identity that so
delighted me when first I (over)heard it and, once again, pricks the argument: just
who is this mysterious identity, this real Aussie that I, as an immigrant, should
aspire to imitate if I desire assimilation/integration?

The notion of performance mooted above raises the question; how do I explore
the element of performance in mimicry of the host nation (Australia) to hasten the
process of integration (that is, the third stage of rites de passage
integration/reaggregation’) when I enact the performance myself? I ask myself,
who are the ‘real’ Australians that I am attempting to mimic? I take on the role of ‘Australian’ but know that it is a performance, a role. My being an Australian only seems to happen when I am with people who are less Australian than I am—other, more recent immigrants—or when I am visiting relatives in Zimbabwe. So, speaking with my rendition of an ‘Aussie’ accent for example may deceive some people but ‘real’ Australians will know that I am a fake! I consider the immigrant women in my study and observe that none of them has developed an Australian accent.

The issue of ‘ethnic identity’ in Australia, as defined by the Anglo-Australians, seems never to apply to Anglo-Australians. The pejorative qualities I associate with the word ‘ethnic’, I assume comes from my antecedents, being considered foreign as a child in Rhodesia—with the ostracism and hurtfulness that entailed. And, more recently, I can remember the helpless fury I felt when an Australian woman with whom I worked when first I arrived in Perth insisted on referring to me as ‘the little ethnic’. The cause of my rage was not her identification of my alien ‘ethnicity’ but, rather, her condescending and sneering attitude and her pejorative tone. Once again, the feelings I had as a child surfaced and, once again, I had no place to go, no response that stopped or even restrained her. Indeed, whatever I said to deflect the indignity was fuel for criticism of my perceived alterity. Eva Cox asks, “What is ethnic identity?” The answer she gives is hardly ambiguous, for she writes:

A valuing of diversity and an appreciation of the value of difference makes sense, but within an understanding that we are still part of societies with dominant cultures. As a woman, I am colonised by Anglo culture. It’s about power and who defines values (Cox, 1992, 64). (my emphasis).
I reflect on the overall identity of ‘Australians’ because I have to define of (or to) whom I am speaking when I refer in general terms to ‘Australians’ and ‘Australian culture’. So, to reiterate my discourse as to who these ‘Australians’ are, and taking note that the notion of an homogeneous ‘Australian culture’ is problematic—as is the reductive notion of ‘the Australian’ *per se*; when I refer to ‘Australians’ it is to the white Anglo-Saxons. These white Australians are also referred to as Celtic-Australians by, for example, (Gunew, 1990) and (1994) and (Houbein, 1990) and others; hence their origin is manifest in their nomenclature.

It is those white Anglo-Australians who have customarily assumed for themselves the mantle of the ‘real’ Australian—unless, of course, *they* are referring to “… a real Aussie from the bush”. Where I speak of Australians who are not in this group, I acknowledge their alterity.

Historically, and continuing to the present, the popular press tells us that “Aussies are rebels. We are rebellious, adventurous and most of us believe rules are there to be broken” (Gora, 1999). The trope of the ‘larrikin’ is deeply embedded in Australian culture. There is the extraordinary situation where a convicted murderer becomes a national hero (in the person of Ned Kelly), but the reality of criminal activity is hardly supported. So, I reflect on the question: Is this is typical of how Australians see themselves? In the sub-section of this chapter I have considered the stereotyping of ‘other’ in comparison to stereotyping oneself, using the analogy of the True Mirror®, and discussed inversions in the process of self-as-symmetrical/faultless that I have observed in the course of my research. Returning to the Sunday Times newspaper article under examination I note that
among the activities the article describes as risk taking and being adventurous are, for example, eating ‘ethnic’ food, not mowing one’s own lawn, gambling, drinking to excess, and shopping on the Internet. The survey from which the published article is taken is described as “Australia’s largest consumer survey” conducted by KPMG Centre for Consumer Behaviour. However, in the cited article five people are interviewed (all of whom are local to the Perth area, and all are women) and their pictures are published. Of these five only one appears to be racially different or ‘ethnic’ in Australian terms. This interviewee says she is optimistic that Australia will develop as a multicultural nation and, taking notice of the date of publication, one of the other interviewees opines “Australians are laid back, and just go with the flow. We are willing to take everybody on board” (in Gora, 1999). In the environment of the subsequent refugee crisis and the recent [2002] Tampa debacle, I find her choice of words ironically prophetic. Another of the women interviewed is quoted as saying “To be Australian is to be proud, lucky and nationalistic. When I think of a typical Australian, I think of a man, drinking in a pub, watching football or having a barbecue” (my emphasis) (in Gora, 1999). So, the issue of gender enters the discussion of Australian identity at the popular level and, of course, the interviewee does not have to state that the man drinking in the pub is white! Only if he were not white would that need to be confirmed.

For an immigrant the question of belonging and not belonging is paradoxical and in my hypothesis closely linked to assimilation and integration. I return to my words in the introduction where I begin the reflection upon where I belong, my identity as author and speaking for the other. For me, as author, I seek not only to
belong in the society but also to belong in the text. My difficulty is weaving the threads of immigration, identity, and rites de passage together to create/author something that is rigorous, clear, and engaging. In other words, I want an audience for my work. My multiplicity of identity—ex-Rhodesian, immigrant, Australian, and academic, requires an audience. Iain Chambers talks about writing as travelling and this speaks to me on an intimate level. Writing “is to enter a space, a zone, a territory … everywhere characterised by movement: the passage of words, the caravan of thought, the flux of the imaginary, the slippage of the metaphor, the drift across the page … the wandering eyes” (Chambers, 1994, 10). He draws this imagery from Michel de Certeau (de Certeau, 1998). The notions of writing and identity, writing and research, writing and methodology combine to enrich the hypothesis. It is within the concept of authority and of speaking for ‘the other’ that I contemplate my own role—because of my history in colonial Rhodesia, and confirm that I, too, am implicated. The issue of authority extends to, and extrapolates from, my authority as writer of this thesis and I refer to this again because it is the underlying motif of the methodology and subsequent writing of this work. I believe it is critical for me to acknowledge the imbrication of authority [of the author] wherever it manifests in the narrative. There is also the dilemma of taking the moral high ground—a tricky place on which to balance and one that requires critical self-examination in the context of author/authority. I return to my own paranoia. I ask myself, is this why I cling to my notion of ‘assimilation’ without ‘integration’? Perhaps it is the desire to remain in the liminal—if the liminal is a margin of radical openness; an anarchic space where resistance is possible. And I ask
myself, when did Australia take on the semblance of ‘home’ and assimilation mutate to integration?

In this examination and re-examination of aspects of assimilation and the defining the differences between assimilation and integration, I have placed the women in my sample on the incline that leads into the liminal stage of *rites de passage*. I have examined questions of identity and indicated the ambivalence of the term. The trope of immigration as *rites de passage* is reiterated and the imbrication of identity and integration into Australian society examined by drawing on past experience of exclusion and belonging. In the personal environment of the new immigrant, I have noted some parallels between assimilation and anarchy in the context of self-determined identity. The connection of the notion of assimilation to that of compliance, and performance of compliance as anarchic formed an hypothesis that is repeated in following chapters. The interweaving of threads on the attribution of ‘other’ derive from the sub-section of this chapter, Identity II: *True Mirrors*, and this continues the theme of identity and reflection. Finally, I continue the exploration of who is the ‘real Aussie’, and continue to reflect upon my own multiplicity of identities positioned, as they are, in the context of author and subject. In moving to the sub-section of this chapter I amplify my hypothesis of minimal difference and examine issues not usually associated with the attribution of ‘otherness’.
Chapter Five: Identity II

True Mirrors

What does a true mirror do? The mirror “shows you what you look like to others and allows you to gain an accurate sense of yourself” (John Walter, inventor of the True Mirror®).

The key insight into the mirror world is that it is a “folded back” version of the real one. To the extent that a glove folded inside out is perceived as one of the opposite hand, the mirror world will appear opposite in handedness to our own (Gillies, 2000).

In this sub-section, Identity II, I explore the phenomenon of “True Mirrors” to suggest that the attribution of otherness, previously defined as incorporating the sense of ‘outsider’ where issues other than that of foreignness apply, occurs when we recognise in others minor distortions we fail to see in ourselves. Using this observation/definition as the point of access, I argue that Australians, particularly those of Anglo Saxon and British origin—the dominant majority—tend to position English speaking immigrants from non-British backgrounds as ‘other’. The situation of white immigrants in Australia, using the hypothesis suggested by “True Mirrors”, gives some indication of asymmetries; the illusions we hold
about ourselves as immigrants and Australians—and how we are seen by other immigrants and Australians. Therefore, this chapter presumes to examine issues not generally seen as attributing to ‘otherness’ and the notions of assimilation I have mooted are re-slanted, but remain germane. In the *rites de passage* modification (of identity) occurs in the liminal stage and, in this chapter, the peculiarity of reflected image signals the enigmatic passages of this transformation. My hypothesis arises from the concept that the recognition of self-as-symmetrical is deceptive and fabricates an illusory justification to name the ‘other’, with all the accompanying paraphernalia. Therefore, I define and describe what a “True Mirror®” is and what it can do—what it does—so that the analogy develops and connections may be made and the hypothesis determined.

To support my argument I draw on theories implied or defined by Jacques Lacan and Pierre Bourdieu. Both theories, with a minor degree of manipulation, are developed to illustrate and embellish the perspective that illusions of self-as-symmetrical lead to naming the ‘other’. Bourdieu’s concepts of doxa, orthodoxy, heterodoxy, crisis and change, lead me to recognise the influence that migrant women from Southern Africa have as agents of change—albeit in a modest way. Modest or major, the substance of change is there and, in this reflection, is seen as a fragment of the bricolage of society and the change initiated by immigrants from many lands; the modification, reshaping, tempering, of the way of life and cultural development in Australia. The attribution of otherness is not examined as one-sided; I acknowledge that the women in my study ascribe otherness to (white) Australians, and the attribution is, in my hypothesis, based in the same notion of self-as-symmetrical. This reflected indictment of otherness presages the
movement to integration, aggregation (sometimes reaggregation) which is the final stage of *rites de passage*. It is in this final realm of the rites of passage that the immigrant is likely to become recognised formally as an integrant. The failure to make the transition from immigrant to integrant is alluded to here and is examined further in chapter eight.

What is a true mirror? The first patent for a “True Mirror™”, was registered in 1887 in England by a Catholic priest, John Joseph Hooker. There is no evidence that Hooker ever built a true mirror and the idea is now in the public domain. However, the name “True Mirror™” is the trademark of American inventors, Catherine Walter and her brother John, who live in New York. A True Mirror®, as registered by the Walters, is two common mirrors joined in a box at a perfect 90 degree angle. The result is that the reflected image is three dimensional. The major difference between a True Mirror® and an ordinary mirror is that the reflection is not reversed, so an accurate description of the True Mirror® would be a non-reversing mirror. For example, when a person standing in front of an ordinary mirror raises her or his right hand, the image raises the left hand. However, when a person goes to shake someone by the hand, she or he generally presents her or his right hand as does the person being greeted. Ergo, it is the opposite hand! The mathematical, optical data providing an explanation for the effect of a non-reversing or asymmetrical mirror is beyond the scope of this thesis but, according to the literature, the theory of reflectivity of an asymmetric mirror may be determined using a set of equations: “These equations [will be] useful in the design of asymmetric mirrors and can be used to compare the trade-offs between the conventional, symmetric (quarter-wavelength), and asymmetric
mirrors” (Murtaza, 1996). In my research, the scientific purpose of the asymmetric mirrors is irrelevant: however, metaphorically the mirrors are relevant to my hypothesis, and the notion of ‘trade-offs’ between the symmetric and asymmetric mirrors is mimetic of the analogy I use—images within images.

The first of the two theories I have embraced to support my theme of self assumed identity, attributed identity and otherness in similarity is suggested in Jacques Lacan’s essay, *The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience*. In this essay Lacan reflects that, in the mirror stage of development in human behaviour (between six and eighteen months), a child begins to recognise his (sic) own image in a mirror, and then performs, “a series of gestures in which he experiences in play the relation between the movements assumed in the image and the reflected environment, and between this virtual complex and the reality it reduplicates – the child’s own body, and the persons and things, around him” (Lacan, 1977, 1). In other words, the child situates himself or herself in the reflection, distinguished (or distinct) from the surroundings and in the context of the surroundings. In my hypothesis it is in these initial experiences of looking in the mirror and identifying with the image that babies learn to allow for asymmetries in their reflected image, and become used to the reversed reflection. I argue that, from the first experience of recognising ourselves in a common mirror; that is to say, a reversed reflection, we begin in a comparable way to undertake the situating of ‘self’. Thus, the skewed (and asymmetrical) image in the mirror becomes our accepted view of ourselves. In Lacan’s drama of the ‘mirror stage’ there is a development of “… the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid
structure the subject’s entire mental development” (Lacan, 1977, 4). This unfolding of his theory leads me to hypothesise that the acceptance of the reflected image as symmetrical (or regular) becomes self-evident in mimesis. The axiomatic notion of self-as-symmetrical, in this sense, is to make ourselves in the world—and the world as we know it—seem the ‘natural’ order of things. Without wishing to labour the point, the recognition of radical distortions from what we, as individuals, may consider ‘normal’ is more easily understood than minor distortions that may (and probably do) reflect the distortions we fail to see in ourselves. This is, indeed, the essence of my hypothesis and, as I have posited in the previous sub-section of this chapter, Identity I: Being in the centre of my margin, the realisation takes place that being ‘a little bit different’ is not as acceptable in Australian society generally—and certainly in Academe, if my experiences in Adelaide are an illustration of the prevailing model—as it is to be radically different; for example black, or non-English speaking.

The notion of self-evidence introduces the second theory that informs this sub-section. This is Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of doxa, orthodoxy, heterodoxy, crisis, and change (Bourdieu, 1977). In defining these terms I draw on the work of Toril Moi, whose writing has been influential in the shaping of my doctoral thesis in general and this chapter in particular (Moi, 1991). Bourdieu’s theory of doxa is presented in the context of an entrenched society, stable and, to all intents and purposes, unchanging. Bourdieu states that “every established order tends to produce … the naturalization of its own arbitrariness … [the] natural and social world appear as self-evident … [the] established cosmological and political order is perceived not as arbitrary, i.e., as one possible order among others, but as a
self-evident and natural order which goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned” (in Moi, 1991, 1026). Therefore, in my understanding, doxa is the axiomatic, unquestioned acceptance of the perceived natural order. The axiomatic character of a doxic society is manifested by individuals in the society as a connotative cultural indoctrination of babies and children. To avoid heterodoxy (the effort to challenge the doxa) Bourdieu writes: “Between the child and world the whole group intervenes … with warnings that inculcate a fear of supernatural dangers …” (Bourdieu, 1977, 167). Therefore, it is not a huge leap to extrapolate from the notion of doxa, theorised by Pierre Bourdieu in a societal sense, into the individual context. The notion that orthodoxy is the effort to defend the doxa and that heterodoxy is a challenge to, a deviation from, or argument with the doxa, are concepts (in the context of the individual) which Toril Moi argues are more or less explicit to recognising the possibility of different arrangements; in other words the arrangements are not doxic (Moi, 1991, 1026). The dis-arrangement implied in the challenge/deviation is relevant to my hypothesis and will be revealed in due course, as will the significance of the theory to the analogy of True Mirrors. This chapter draws, indeed extrapolates, from both of these assumptions to the experiences (as immigrants into Western Australia) of these women from Southern Africa. And I reiterate, my own position in the group confirms that the autobiographical content of this dissertation is a given.

The progress of this thesis has shown that the group of women in my research share few similarities. However, those general characteristics we do share are that we are all white; none of us was born in Britain, we were born either in Africa or, in one instance, Greece; and all of us come from a privileged background.
Beyond these, and a few other random similarities, the differences between us are considerable. Our experience of immigration to Australia is diverse as are our experiences with Anglo-Australians. The notion, for example, of Australians stereotyping white Southern African immigrants as racist is as meaningless as Southern Africans stereotyping white Australians as idle convicts. The (generally) pejorative nature of the stereotyping leads directly into my hypothesis and the assumptions within which I am framing this chapter. In other words, it is the inversion of the attributed stereotype into the reflected image (of self) in the True Mirror® that marks recognition of the asymmetry of self. In the examples given where this process occurs, there is, it seems, an approval of similarity, and it is this approval of asymmetry that allows approbation. The similarity is (or can be) in the moveable place—or even be the moveable space—where the initiate becomes the liminal persona in the rites de passage. I think this is another take on the actual notion of ‘passage’ in the sense that it is movement. The incipient recognition of difference occurs when the immigrant women comprising my study first arrive in Australia; and I reiterate the imbrication of the stages contained/released, in and by, the rites of passage and forewarn/presage the complexity of passages within passages.

I find when I talk to the women in my study that the initial experiences with Anglo-Australians varies from helpful and friendly to out-and-out exclusion and ostracism. In my own experience the ostracism was usually based on the Southern African antecedents, supposed racist attitudes, and accusations of arrogance and I will elaborate on this in the course of this sub-chapter. Vivian’s first experiences
of living in Australia lie somewhere between the polarities of friendly welcome and thoughtless and inadvertent exclusion.

Vivian was in her thirties when she moved to Australia in the 1960s. She came to Perth with her husband and seven children from Rhodesia, via Canada and the United States, where the family spent some years. Vivian loved living there, in America. She loved the lifestyle, the positive attitude, the friendliness, and the climate and, as she told me, “… most of all the sense of excitement.” She said the city they lived in, in California “… was like Johannesburg used to be.” After the friendliness of the Americans Vivian found the Australians “cold” and the feeling she got from them was not a welcoming one. Vivian remembered an incident when a woman she met through her church when first she arrived told her (but much, much later) that the other women in the church group talked about her—this ‘new Australian’ and would say things like, “Look at all those well-behaved children…” Vivian said she asked her friend why she had never told her about the compliments when she was a new immigrant, as it would have meant a lot to her. I asked her what reply the woman gave but Vivian could not remember. Vivian insisted that, in her experience, this unwelcoming, exclusory attitude is not the case anymore and was inadvertent when it happened. She says that nowadays, compared to then, “Australians are becoming [have become] less parochial and less formal”. I wonder if her insistence that ‘Australians are less formal nowadays’ comes from the space where the image is inverted. The formerly derided traits become acceptable, axiomatic, part of the self-image and, ultimately, self-symmetry; in other words, ‘Australians are becoming more like me’; not, ‘I am becoming more like an Australian’. In examining this statement,
and reflecting that it is probable that an Australian looking at an immigrant thinks the same way—that is, ‘the migrant is becoming more like me’; not, ‘I am becoming more like the migrant’, the notion of an immigrant as an agent-of-change evolves. This thread becomes entangled and begs the questions, who is ‘an Australian’, who is ‘a migrant’?

In the 1960s, when Vivian immigrated, Australia was, according to the literature, a time when migrants were treated with a degree of suspicion and hostility—even those who spoke English, albeit with an accent—for example (Gunew, 1993b; Pettman, 1991) and (Modjeska, 1996). Vivian comes from a Greek-Anglo background and is fluent in a number of languages—English, Greek, Italian, French and German. Physically, her image is a reflection of a white Anglo-Australian. When I asked about her early days in Perth Vivian tells me that she found it very dull after the exhilaration she felt living in California. To contrast her experience of life in Australia to life in America, Vivian told me a story about her first Parents and Teachers (P and T) meeting in Perth. Having found what she thought was the correct venue, she looked through the window to make sure she was in the right place. She told me, “I saw these women in hats and gloves and big, fat, white shoes”. She said she thought it was a grandmother’s meeting so she went home. She remembered that on that day she herself was wearing “… Italian sandals and attractive shorts and top.” The detail of Vivian’s memory about clothes she was wearing some thirty years earlier reflects the significance of minutiae in women’s stories. If this detail is seen (metaphorically) as one of many bright tesserae, then it is these tesserae that create the mosaic of life and cultural
diversity in Australia and further, can be seen as markers of identity but not necessarily the identity the wearer chooses to claim.

The significance of clothing and the memory of clothing as points of identity in [or out of context] is reflected in Dorinne Kondo’s experiences as a Japanese American working in Japan. Her physical characteristics are Japanese but she is a stranger to the Japanese culture and is discombobulated when she is mistaken for a Japanese, for not knowing the implicit and tacit cultural mores. She says: “How could someone who looked Japanese not be Japanese? In my cultural ineptitude, I represented for the people who met me the chaos of meaninglessness. Their response in the face of this dissonance was to make me as Japanese as possible” (Kondo, 1990, 11). And, then she writes of her startling experience [of reflected image] while looking after the baby of her host family:

Mr. Sakamoto quickly tired of his grandfatherly role, leaving me to entertain Kaori-chan. Promptly at four p.m., the hour when most Japanese housewives do their shopping for the evening meal, I lifted the baby into her stroller and pushed her along ahead of me as I inspected the fish, selected the freshest looking vegetables, and mentally planned the meal for the evening. As I glanced into the shiny metal surface of the butcher’s display case, I noticed someone who looked terribly familiar: a typical young housewife, clad in slip-on sandals and the loose, cotton shift called “home wear” (hōmu wea), a woman walking with a characteristically Japanese bend to the knees and a sliding of the feet. Suddenly I clutched the handle of the stroller to steady myself as a wave of dizziness washed over me, for I realized I had caught a glimpse of nothing less than my own reflection. (Kondo, 1990, 15-16).

She goes on to say “Fear that perhaps I would never emerge from this world into which I was immersed, inserted itself into my mind and stubbornly refused to leave, until I resolved to move into a new apartment, to distance myself from my Japanese home and my Japanese existence” (Kondo, 1990, 16). Milan Kundera
writes of a similar occurrence of identity and reflected image in his novel \textit{Ignorance} set for the most part in Prague not long after the fall of Communism; I find the similarities to Dorinne Kondo’s experience astonishing. Irena, the female protagonist in Kundera’s novel, purchases a new dress in Prague and:

Then, walking by a big department store, she unexpectedly passed a wall covered with an enormous mirror and she was stunned: the person she saw was not she, it was somebody else or, when she looked longer at herself in her new dress, it was she but she living a different life, the life she would have lived if she had stayed in Prague. This woman was not dislikable, she was even touching, but a little too touching, touching to the point of tears, pitiable, poor, weak, downtrodden.

She was gripped by the same panic she used to feel in her emigration-dreams: through the magical power of a dress she could see herself imprisoned in a life she did not want and would never again be able to leave …” (Kundera, 2002, 31).

To connect Vivian’s experience and her remembrance of the clothes she wore to that of an Australian woman, I asked Julia, a [Western] Australian-born friend of mine who has often declared her interest in clothing fashions, her thoughts about European immigrants, especially when she was a young woman living in suburban Perth in the 1960s, the time Vivian arrived in Western Australia. Julia told me about her ‘New Australian’ neighbours, how sophisticated, romantic, and exotic she thought they were; their sense of style and fashionable clothes, and how much she wished to emulate them. It is worth noting however, that Julia’s mother would, from what she has told me, have fitted the stereotype coined by Vivian and quoted above of the women in “big, fat, white shoes, and gloves”.

When I ponder on this conversation with Julia, and consider the inversion of images, I realise that the pitfalls of stereotyping are endemic and I need to be vigilant, not only in my interpretation but, also, within myself. However, I
mentioned Julia’s experience to Vivian, when we were speaking of immigrants in the context of agents-of-change. While Vivian agreed with the general concept of ‘agents-of-change’, she was dubious about Julia’s perception of ‘sense of style and fashionable clothes’. She said that she when she came to Perth she found other ‘European’ migrants to be insular and often rude, “So bad mannered that they speak in their native language even if they have a guest who can’t speak their language.” The question that arises from this is, has the inversion of self-image between Julia and Vivian—Australian-born and immigrant who have never met each other—become the moveable, flexible, space I have already hypothesised? I suggest that it is in this arcane space that the mimesis of images and reflections of images are situated and, therefore, without manipulation I can suggest that the thread of the immigrant as an agent-of-change is situated in this nexus, and the trope is palimpsest in the text.

Marlene’s experiences as a new immigrant were more pleasant than those of some of the other women in this study. Marlene was twenty years old when she immigrated here in the early 1980s with her parents and sister. She said that when she arrived in Perth she found the Australians, “Great, very, very friendly. Extremely friendly and helpful.” She gave the example that, although the family knew no one here, their house was fully furnished by everybody else—Australians and ex-Rhodesians:

Marlene: We had nothing because our furniture hadn’t arrived or anything. People lent us dinner sets, beds, furniture, everything until our furniture arrived. So, there was this huge amount of trust in us, which we found unbelievable because I don’t know if we would have done the same for them in Africa
I find it curious that Marlene was dubious about ‘trust’ not being available to Australians had they been immigrants to Africa and consider that, perhaps, her perception is due to the stereotyping, common in Zimbabwe and South Africa, of Australians being criminally inclined, a stereotype brought about, I suspect, no doubt because of white Australian antecedents as a convict colony and the suspicion of atavistic behaviour that are sometimes attached to the tendency to stereotype.

However, Marlene’s experience shows that there may be some kind of approbation prior to the attribution of otherness and, when first immigrating to Australia, many of us see reflected in the white Anglo-Australian white people similar to those in the home country; and white Anglo-Australian may see an (approved) reflection of themselves in us. After all, the physical differences are not marked—there is no distinguishing racial feature and we speak the same language. The notion of ‘othering’ is not, as I have pointed out in the course of this chapter, one sided. Clearly, the white Rhodesian immigrant is just as likely to be hostile to negative aspects that she sees in the Anglo-Australian as when the Anglo-Australian sees the metaphorical non-reversed image of herself in the immigrant. Therefore, when we recognise in ourselves the same characteristics that we despise in others, we may very likely react by shunning the person, or people, who reflect that part of us. For when we see reflected traits that we may deny in ourselves because of the ‘self-as-symmetrical’ neurosis, it is conceivable that feelings of animosity and hostility emerge and the doxa is challenged—a silent heterodoxy. I believe that these feelings, which may become actions or words, are activated in defence of the doxa, i.e. the unquestioned acceptance of
the perceived natural order—the self-evident or, by my explication, the self-asymmetric. And, pursuing this thread, I invoke Bourdieu’s interpretation of orthodoxy, (the defence of the doxa) that may take the forms of exclusion and resentment against the unwitting perpetrator; and, I suggest that the beginning of the ‘othering’ of those that are so similar is located in the defence of the doxa, i.e the orthodoxy.

So, if my hypothesis is sound, where and when does the schism become apparent? I would argue that, when aspects of the ‘reflected image’ (either the immigrant by the Australian or the Australian by the immigrant) are seen as arrogant, racist, criminal or, perhaps, indolent, we see the reflection of an aspect of ourselves that is disturbing. Drawing again from Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage in a child’s development being formative of the function of the I, we become used to seeing ourselves in a certain way—symmetrical and, to a certain extent, faultless—and now, in this stranger, we see (and recognise, albeit probably, without awareness) the reflection of ourselves as something else. This reflected image is not necessarily whether we are thin or fat, beautiful or plain, but the overall image—the habitus; the embodied history—what people like me should look like. According to the literature on non-reversing mirrors, many people are thrown off balance the first time they see themselves, their reflection, unreversed in a True Mirror® (Holt, 2000; Murphy, 1999; O'Mara, 1998; Walter, 2000). Therefore, when we see ourselves with all of our asymmetrical flaws, as in a non-reversing mirror, we tend to recoil and cannot believe that it is a valid representation. I submit that this is the point where, in the crisis that occurs, the schism happens; change is signalled and otherness attributed.
The spiraling development, from doxa, orthodoxy, and heterodoxy to crisis and change, follows from the schism where otherness is (or may have been) attributed. The axiomatic nature of self-as-symmetrical seen as the doxa (unchanging, established) is shaken when the individual recognises her or himself in the reflection. It is, therefore, in this context that my analogy of the True Mirror®, the non-reversing mirror, appears as the heterodoxy—the inadvertent challenge to the doxa. Although these incidents of heterodoxy are, more than likely, latent, it is threatening to the doxa, the accepted, self-evident view. This manifests in the widespread reactions of hostility and resentment. Thus, following orthodoxy, through the spontaneous reactions of defence already mentioned, I believe that the challenge in the situation is implicit. The heterodoxical challenge lies in recognising the distortion in the notion of self-as-symmetrical and it is in the paradigm that a crisis occurs. It is this crisis “… that is a necessary condition for a questioning of doxa …” (Bourdieu, 1977, 167). The crisis that is necessary to question the doxa is the moment, I believe, that jolts the individual into some form of self-examination. In my experience, the occasions (and there may be many) of crisis and change are individual, solitary, and may be unremarkable in any discernible way; the remembrance of the process may only enter the awareness after deliberate reflection or, in the case of the women in my study, having the notion drawn to their attention and provoking self-examination. So, the question and answer that introduce this chapter take their place at this junction; “What does a true mirror do? The mirror “shows you what you look like to others and allows you to gain an accurate sense of yourself” (Walter in Murphy, 1999).
Thus, using the True Mirror® as an analogy for an event that provokes the self into seeing its own image/identity as asymmetrical—not the habitual, ‘taken for granted’ reflection in an ordinary mirror—inspires the crisis necessary for change. Toril Moi, in defining Bourdieu, explains the transit as from acceptance to challenge: “For Bourdieu, crises also provoke a redefinition of experience, giving rise to new forms of language. When the everyday order is challenged by an insurgent group, hitherto unspoken or private experience suddenly finds itself expressed in public, with dramatic consequences” (emphasis in original) (Moi, 1991, 1027). The trope of migrants as agents-of-change anticipates some of the extensive changes that have occurred in the two decades since I immigrated to Australia. I arrived in Western Australia in 1982. In my first place of employment (The University of Western Australia), I was ostracised by some of the employees (Anglo-Australians) who chose to see me as an advantaged white supremacist, personally responsible for apartheid, discrimination, and exploiting the black Rhodesians. And, in a less general sense, I was guilty of some of those things but, in my defence, I had come to see the inequities and injustices inherent in white supremacist rule and, as best I understood, had made amends. My ‘excuses’ for being a white Rhodesian went unheard for, each time I approached this elite and sanctimonious group, they would exit or turn their backs on me!

However, since I have lived in Western Australia, attitudes have changed. The self-as-symmetrical/faultless image that (to me) was so prevalent in the early 1980s has shifted. Nowadays I find that many Anglo-Australians recognise that they do not have an unblemished record in inter-race relations; that the situation of the Aboriginal people constitutes—and continues as—a social and political
disgrace. On reflection, the Anglo-Australian descent from the moral high ground of inter-race relations has had the effect of easing my personal process through the rites of passage. Somehow it is a less formidable challenge to integrate into a society where I do not have to perform the role of compliance inherent in my explication of assimilation, and apologise for being who I am and/or who I was. The descent from the moral high ground is compounded in the continuing refugee crisis that began with the Tampa incident in 2002, and I believe that it has brought about some self-examination by Australian society. The cynical exploitation of the situation as a political exercise has been widely discussed—praised by many and condemned by some. To relate this to Bourdieu’s theory there are, in the propensity for the subject to be denied, shades of a doxic attitude that will not allow exposure, and I submit that this is, in effect, fear of change. Orthodoxy (the defence of doxa) is, in this context, manifest: as Bourdieu comments “… the official way of speaking and thinking the world, conceals another, more radical censorship: the overt opposition between “right” opinion and “left” or “wrong” opinion, which delimits the universe of possible discourse, be it legitimate or illegitimate …” (emphasis in original) (Bourdieu, 1977, 169). The continuation of the refugee story may, very well, support the successive components of Bourdieu’s theory, that is, heterodoxy, crisis and change. However, it appears that the metaphor of a spiral that I have used previously is still appropriate, as all the elements theorised by Bourdieu appear to be taking place concurrently.

When an individual faces a metaphorical True Mirror® as an adult and asymmetries are recognised or become apparent, for many people there is a moment of disequilibrium. In my own experience, I remember a moment of crisis
that made me question and reflect on my identity, my image of myself, as a white woman and a member of a minority ethnic group, in Rhodesia. This event took place nearly thirty years ago, in 1976, on a tourist bus in Greece—somewhere between Athens and Delphi. The poignancy of the experience is sharp, even in memory, even after three decades. An Austrian man sitting next to me on the bus was highly skeptical that any white people who were not of British origin or close descent had settled in Rhodesia. I remember how hostile and defensive I felt that this stranger could, so arbitrarily, dismiss my background. This bewildering sense of being unseen, feeling unseen, is an experience Adrienne Rich expresses as psychic disequilibrium: “When someone ... describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing” (in Rosaldo, 1989, ix). So, this remembered experience of mine goes beyond the reflected image in a non-reversing mirror being asymmetrical—to there being no image at all—invisible. However, the experience of not being seen, or seeing oneself differently than expected, seems to segue here because there is an image and the image is of another, the other. And, in this there is a further disequilibrium and apprehension, even terror; with apologies to the cartoon character, Pogo, “I have seen the enemy and she is us”.

In the imbrication of the two theories defined above; Lacan’s mirror stage as formative of the function of the I, and Bourdieu’s doxic quintet; I have interpreted the axiomatic, self-as-symmetrical as fabricating an illusory justification to attribute otherness where asymmetry is observed. It is, therefore, the unpleasant, uncomfortable recognition of the asymmetry of self in the reflection that engenders—or provokes—the attribution of otherness. The attribution of
otherness has not been examined as one-sided; that is, Anglo-Australian to white immigrant, and the theme has been developed to incorporate the inversion of attribution. The question of Australians stereotyping white Southern African immigrants and Southern Africans stereotyping white Australians has been discussed as the point of inverting the reflected image (of self) in the True Mirror®. The recognition of the asymmetry of self when this process of inversion occurs seems to engender an approval of asymmetry that permits approbation. I have situated the process in (and as) a moveable place where the initiate becomes the liminal persona in the *rites de passage*. With the use of the analogy of the True Mirror®, as a site for self-examination, seeing ourselves as we are, or how we appear to others, I reflect that the consequences may be unexpected. The continuation of Bourdieu’s concepts of doxa, orthodoxy, heterodoxy, crisis and change, allowed me to see as palimpsest, the nuances of migrant women as agents-of-change—in the microcosm, tempered by the major changes in social and political Australian society wrought by immigration. It is awareness of the self in the ‘other’ that leads to assimilation and, finally, integration—and the discovery needs to be reciprocal between immigrant and native. Thus, recognition of the substance of change as a fragment, or fragments, in the bricolage that is this society has been, and is, initiated by immigrants from many lands. The subsequent modification and reshaping of the way of life and cultural development in Australia becomes, in this event, a dense and complex mosaic of colour and beauty. And it is in this mosaic that the boundaries between the three sections rites of passage are concealed.
Chapter Six

The Ambivalent Neophyte

After the Russian invasion in 1938, since they [the Hungarians] had no inkling of communism’s eventual end [they] believed they were “inhabiting an infinity (Kundera, 2002, 13).

But to emigrate is always to dismantle the center of the world, and so to move into a lost, disoriented one of fragments (Berger, 1984, 57).

This section begins with a chapter that explores the central stage of the *rites de passage*, and *habitus* (as embodied history) in the context of migration. The nexus between *rites de passage* and Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* becomes the locus for the discovery of minimal differences—minimal but significant in the justification of my thesis. The notion of the immigrant as a liminal *persona* and what separates her (as neophyte) from the Anglo-Australian becomes the metaphorical province of the arcane procedures of *rites de passage*. Notions of research methods and methodology arise in this context and are examined as an integral part of the overall work. The interrelationship of the actuality of the work and the procedure of writing the thesis, in this central chapter, become visible. So,
it is here that, once again, there are glimpses of the history behind the thesis, the writing of the thesis and where, once again, the scaffolding supporting the structure of the thesis becomes apparent. In their revelation is the discovery of the semi-separated and occult triptych, the fragmented and detailed tesserae that make up the aggregated mosaic within which the sections of *rites de passage* are concealed. And it is the recognition of this section of the mosaic that becomes the (transient/incessant) moment of moving into the next stage of the *rites de passage*. In the broad structuring of this work as triptych I find it is the interconnection and interaction of embodied history and the stage in the *rites de passage* described as liminal, that sustain this, the central panel. The left panel (process/separation) and the right panel (incorporation/integration) of the triptych are indistinct when the lens is directed at the centre. Nevertheless, the nuances of past memory and prescience that they cast over this, the central panel, shade/shadow the work. The processes of transformation/metamorphosis or metanoia that reshape and modify identity and life/worldview protrude from both the left and right panels. I repeat that the stylistic idiosyncrasy, the passage between words and worlds, is indicated by the use of a slanting line—a forward slash—and that forward slash situates me as the author. I discover the use of textual symbols is not an entirely original concept because Nikos Papastergiadis has used the hyphen as a bridge; he has used the hyphen to indicate a cut in the time of transition and he designates this use when he writes of migration and identity in Greek-Australian literature (Papastergiadis, 1992, 149).

To continue the metaphor that compares the migration experience of an adult to the transplanting of a mature tree, it is here in the liminal stage that, once the
transplanted tree is in place, the gardener finds the pared back root system takes
time to adjust to the new conditions, to reach down into the earth for nourishment
and stability. In this time the foliage of the tree may suffer and droop so that the
branches must be trimmed back before, in due time, the whole tree starts to regain
health and the promise of further development. And here, inhabiting the infinity
of the limen, Kundera’s quotation at the start of this chapter is manifest.

I continue to meld the historical and contemporary and the masculine and
feminine interpretations of *rites de passage*. As these coalesce, there is the
discovery that the differences (in interpretation), while minimal, begin to inform
the discord that small differences can generate. This is reflected in the explication
of where the minimal differences may occasion conflict between white, English-
speaking immigrants and white, English-speaking locally-born Australians. The
overall structure of the thesis as a metaphorical triptych is not lost, because, in the
feminine model, rites of passage tend also to follow a threefold pattern (Rutter,
1994, passim). I reiterate that these parts consist of “enclosure, metamorphosis (or
magnification), and emergence” (Flinders, 1998, 152), and this feminine/feminist
contribution to rites of passage is, as I have already indicated, not entirely distinct
from the male initiation patterns of separation, liminality (transition), and
[re]incorporation but, in broadening the theory to incorporate these terms, I
believe these feminist inspired nuances tend to colour this work with a deeper
hue. In reworking the suggestion that as immigrants we “… become a metonymy
of [my] past” and, that as immigrants, we “… [grow] a second skin wrapped
around my self another self” (Kamboureli in Gunew, 1993b), the magnification or
metamorphosis period evokes the notion of pentimento, where the second skin is
scraped away to show “my self”. The image presents itself that the ‘second skin’ is, indeed, the chrysalid process of the imago in metamorphosis.

The chapter continues as the women in the study begin to find their placement in Australia balanced with (and/or against) their previous placement in Rhodesia (and/or Zimbabwe). I consider the impact of inconsistencies in the pre-liminal identity on their liminal identity as they struggle to find separation and acquire ‘legitimate’ Australian identity. There are, in this sphere, flashbacks to life in colonial Rhodesia that serve to augment the experience in Australia and, as I have flagged in the introduction to this thesis, I examine the likely causes for isolation and sometimes self-isolating behaviour relating it here to the seclusion that is part of “…[the] rites of preparation for union …” (van Gennep, 1960, 21) in some traditional initiation practices.

In his identification of *rites de passage*, Arnold van Gennep discusses the ‘Territorial Passage’ and in the language of the day (early twentieth century) remarks that only ‘seemicivilized tribes’ indulge in any form of *rites de passage*. He writes of the “…symbolic and spatial area of transition [that] may be found in more or less pronounced form in all the ceremonies which accompany the passage from one social and magico-religious position to another” (van Gennep, 1960, 18). The semantics of van Gennep’s words give me the opportunity to illuminate some of the processes undertaken in researching and writing this thesis. In this chapter, as I discuss the “mixing up the field with my life” (Behar and Gordon, 1995, 77), I extrapolate from the notion of ‘seemicivilized tribes’ to my own experience of researcher, author, and subject.
Having explored the initial stages of separation, peeling away layers of history and narrative, to come to this point of the migratory process allows me the space where I can, again, refine the distinction between assimilation and integration; the liminal stage being conducive to assimilation in the meaning that I give it. In the enigmatic passages of liminality I introduce another twist to the notion of assimilation and this repeated defining and refining of the terms ‘assimilation’ and ‘integration’ continues in the final stages of the *rites de passage*, incorporation/emergence. There is an intersection within this discourse that allows me to connect the liminal with the notion of *habitus* as embodied history. Working with theories of assimilation as mimicry and as a performance of compliance—the mimicry used as a method of camouflage—enables the process to loop around to touch on the temporal features (and the lack of paradigm) of this stage of *rites de passage*. In this context, I choose to use the analogy of *Times Arrow* (the second law of thermodynamics: whereby increasing entropy is seen as being inevitable) and this influences my examination of the lack of a temporal paradigm. The theory underlying *Times Arrow* is associated with the flexibility I attribute to time in the liminal/transformation period. Thus, time, problematised and fragmented, reflects the metaphor of mosaic and segues into this panel of the triptych.

The notion of passages within passages, where the liminal persona may be seen as neophyte/novitiate and integrant within the same space, gives me the scope to yield to the metaphors of mosaic, palimpsest and bricolage. The focus on the minutiae that I consider essential to this work becomes intense as separate tessera
are examined. It is in the liminal, a place so astutely described by Victor Turner as being ‘betwixt-and-between’, that we intersect, subjectively, with the marginal spaces I have discussed in the preceding chapters and, as in that context, the liminal as marginal is a place to observe the centre. Indeed, by drawing a bead on the limen and the margin I am not breaking new ground. Victor Turner’s comment that, “If our basic model of society is that of a “structure of positions,” we must regard the period of the margin or “liminality” as an interstructural situation” (Turner, 1979, 234), and this ‘interstructural situation’ can be read in a variety of ways. The model of society we use to position ourselves places the transitional persona in an alternative interval, that is, not (yet) part of the society. Further, while the limen is marginal (to society), it is central to itself and in the internal, interstructural positioning, the neophyte may sometimes be perceived as being supraliminal. However, the threshold being negotiated in this rites de passage is formless and that which is ‘within’, that which is being ‘structured/shaped’ is mysterious and invisible/intangible; indeed, Turner describes this transitional interval as being, “… structurally, if not physically, ‘invisible.’”(Turner, 1979, 235), and the awareness of the novitiate may not be activated, the limen remaining concealed. Thus, I uncover the thresholds within thresholds, the passages within passages, and margins within margins—these spaces identify the esoteric (and often solitary) bewilderment of negotiating liminality.

The liminal stages in rites of passage, as presented by Victor Turner and Arnold van Gennep (Turner, Victor, 1977c; Turner, 1979; Turner, 1982; van Gennep, 1960) are mostly based in the ritual ceremonies of tribal peoples. Certainly, in
Victor Turner’s examination of Ndembu puberty rites there is often physical modification (for example, circumcision) and a degree of isolating the neophytes for long periods without clothing, and sometimes without food (Turner, Victor, 1977b, passim). To connect these examples of symbolic and ritual procedures to the immigrants in this work, I rely on the metaphorical context. Therefore, while there is no overlord or elder decreeing physical modification, cold nights in a lonely shelter, or even ceremonial dances round a campfire for us as immigrants and liminal *persona*, there may indeed be an experience of cold nights in a lonely shelter but in this context it is metaphorical. The physical modification is not self-conscious but may be self-imposed—the *habitus*, the embodied history that, on an arcane level, may need to be adjusted, and readjusted, before the liminal *persona*—the transitional-being—is allowed to integrate successfully into the host society. I have already indicated in the previous chapter that the adjustment of embodied history may, indeed, be shaped by imitation (or the mirrored reflection) of the host by the immigrant, and the reverse is also relevant vis-a-vis the immigrant as an agent of change. Within the movements between separation, limen, and integration, there is a fluctuation in self-identity and identity of self as belonging in the new society. This movement is recognisable as that of “not-boy-not-man” (Turner, 1979, 235) in the traditional model of initiation rites; thus, not-Rhodesian-not-Australian in my hypothesis.

The possibility of developing a feeling of belonging in the liminal period of *rites de passage* seems not only to be a requisite for becoming integrated into a new country, but also for maintaining a ‘personal’ sense of identity through this ‘betwixt-and-between’ stage. After the initial shock of arriving in a new society,
stepping onto the metaphorical threshold, one of the first sensations felt is that ‘I
don’t fit in, I don’t belong’. The layering of personal narrative with the view
expressed by psychologists Grinberg and Grinberg is indicated by the comment,
“The migrators (sic) experience accentuates for a time the feeling of not
belonging. One ceases to belong to the world one left behind and does not yet
belong to the world in which one has newly arrived” (1989, 23). And, in this
phrase, is the suggestion of the metaphorical doorway that the liminal period
represents. Indeed, the root of the word ‘liminality’ is limen, from the Latin for
threshold. Therefore, Victor Turner’s notion of liminal time being a time of
“betwixt-and-between” is appropriate in the psychological sense. The often
enchanted meaning attributed to doors, to the limen, both mystifies and attracts.
Opening a closed door or closing an open door seems intriguing even to a small
child; the frisson of excitement that accompanies crossing the threshold of a new
home, a new job, or into a new country, is loaded with implications. What lies
beyond the doorway can only be discovered by stepping through it, “… doors are
the beginning of ends, as evident in the etymology of “limit” and “threshold,”
which both refer to the limen of the door” (Metcalf, 2000). And this, as a
metaphor, reveals that the liminal stage is (only) a passage from one place to
another, but what mystery, what excitement, what challenges, take up that space.
The enchantment associated with the liminal persona is equally arcane. Victor
Turner writes, “The symbolism attached to and surrounding the liminal persona is
complex and bizarre” (Turner, 1979, 235). Thus, the combination of mysterious
space and “complex and bizarre” identity foreshadows a conflict/tension between
existential and metempirical processes, particularly in the context of liminal
personae who are unconscious of their role. To become supraliminal, or aware, in
the role of liminal persona is something that may take place spontaneously or may be searched for by different methods.

At the deepest level, change or transformation in therapy involves an experience of death and rebirth: the death or sacrifice of an old way of being that allows a new way to be born (Rutter, 1994, 89).

The interpretation of the mysterious ‘middle’ period in the transformation from neophyte/novitiate to integrant given by the feminist psychotherapist, Virginia Beane Rutter, is that of metamorphosis. Some neophytes/immigrants, choose to take the route of psychotherapy to ease the symptoms of initiation, and have for their initiator, or mentor, a professional therapist, who in the traditional model of rites of passage would be an ‘advent’, an ‘elder’, or an ‘instructor’. The instructor is, according to Victor Turner, part of the “interstructural character” of the liminal and is often authoritative. The instructor in these models often has “… complete authority and complete submission” and “… is in a sense the personification of the self-evident authority of tradition” (Turner, 1979, 237). In the case of a woman undergoing therapy to facilitate her movement through the liminal, the role of the therapist is, in my experience, more likely to be that of a guide. In viewing the liminal period as existential, the choice of a professional guide through the modification period may seem paradoxical but I, personally, have found the process of transformation becomes extraordinarily profound and, through developing awareness of the process when assisted by the therapist, the experience is enhanced and becomes something in which to take delight, something to be enjoyed. The tension between what is empirical/existential and what is (in a manner of speaking) metempirical remains but the more vividly the
metanoia is perceived, the deeper the experience. And, it is in this and from this self-proclaimed, self-positioned vulnerable space of an acolyte, seeking guidance in transformation, that I am able to sufficiently access the methods and experience of researching this thesis and to present it in a transparent, conscious way.

_Foolish, foolish is the anthropologist who mixes up the field with her life_ (Behar, 1995, 77).

Van Gennep’s statement regarding _rites de passage_ being limited to ‘semicivilized tribes’ throws into relief my participation in my own research as subject. Conventionally, ethnological research was done ‘to’ people, holding them under a magnifying glass so-to-speak, and giving the ethnologist or anthropologist what Donna Haraway calls the “… power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation … the god trick of seeing everything from nowhere …” (Haraway, 1991, 581). This is why, and how, the total authority for the work remained lodged with the researcher and (his) interpretation, (his) voice, (his) analysis. Whereas, approaching my work from the point of view of feminist social research, I tend to look at myself as a member of the ‘semicivilized tribes’ spoken about by van Gennep and endeavour to hold the magnifying glass up, just as closely, to myself. I reiterate the three goals for feminist ethnography as described by Shulamit Reinharz, “(1) to document the lives and activities of women, (2) to understand the experience of women from their own point of view, and (3) to conceptualize women’s behaviour as an expression of social context” (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992, 51). Therefore, as is evident throughout the work, I _am_ incorporated in the research, it is as much about me as about the women with whom I am working and I restate the
autobiographical content of this work. Thus, this liminal stage of the *rites de passage* becomes not only a voyage of self-discovery, but also a quest into memory and history.

For the white, English-speaking woman from southern Africa, the ambivalence of immigration is compounded, somehow, by the lack of physical and visible cultural markers. Sometimes, when we first arrive in Australia, we white women from Rhodesia are not recognised as immigrants. There is an expectation/assumption that we understand the language, the cultural mores, and are often identified as ‘Australians’ before we know what that identity entails. There is an equivocation around the notion of identity that develops in this context. I ponder the question: is the source of this confusion of identity being [mis]-taken for an Australian before our liminal, the central stage in the *rites de passage*, is completed? Being in a position of not knowing your position is where the shaky ground of liminality tends to be disconcerting and turbulent and, in peripheral vision, can feel like being situated in an etching by M C Escher; doors open onto themselves and passages bring you back to those same doors. For example, it was my experience that, having been spatially adept for left and right when I lived in Africa, when I arrived in Australia the capability of knowing left from right vanished, and only returned many years later but much diminished. Ironically, when I return to Africa my confusion is with the points of the compass, and knowing left from right returns. In the centre of the central stage and being a liminal *persona* these small idiosyncrasies add to the differences that are not physically apparent and, in addition, they shape self-identity in an indirect way.
It is, however, the lack of markers of cultural identity in our physical appearance and occasionally in our language that is, perhaps, the cause of the unexpressed hostility felt by some white Australians toward us—and *vice versa*. And, it is this locale of minor difference that requires, I believe, the acknowledgment that we are in a state of transition. From whom does the acknowledgment come? The concealed nature of the liminal process for immigrants in contemporary Australia means acknowledgment needs to be sought. For acknowledgment to be sought, the liminal *persona* needs to be aware of the process, and therein lies the dilemma. Cultural differences, albeit small, shape our transformation and, exponentially, shape our transformational identities; so, within this incremental negotiation/drama of change the acknowledgment may need to be generated from the self. Therefore, as the (conscious or unconscious) search for acknowledgment transpires, the minimal cultural differences of the immigrant begin to emerge (with nuances reminiscent of pentimento) and with this, the evolution of identification-of-self in the new society.

How do elusive cultural differences shape personal identities within a ‘different’ society? As I mention in the introduction, sometimes we are recognised as different when we speak, but this is an unreliable marker. Sneja Gunew, in her essay on multiculturalism comments on the use of language [and/or accent]; she writes, “… [it] is certainly often a signifier of cultural authenticity” (Gunew, 1990, 112), but in the case of my research sample, where the cultural authenticity is ambiguous, and is perhaps isogenous, this needs to be qualified: not every Australian has an ear for accents, and many white ex-Rhodesian women have English or indefinable accents. This is where the Bourdieuan concept of *habitus*
as embodied knowledge and the Bakhtinian concept of heteroglossia (as previously defined) begin to prove useful in interpreting the elusive qualities of minimal difference. It is in the examination of linguistic patterns (i.e. accent) and cultural and behavioural patterns where, possibly, the imbrication of assimilation, mimicry, and camouflage occurs. The transformation from ex-Rhodesian to Australian, in other words the liminal stage, is where these intangible features may be thrown into relief and become visible. And, in exploring this, I find, again, that the efforts to assimilate may not be what they seem.

I return to my use of the word ‘assimilate’, which needs to be defined further in the context of my hypothesis. The unravelling of the word assimilation by defining and redefining, serves to emphasise the significance of these immigrants’ experiences moving into the Australian culture, and is, therefore, closely linked to the liminal period in rites de passage. Assimilation is, I believe, a necessary part of the immigrants’ rites de passage and precedes integration. Integration is what happens when the liminal stage is successfully completed (if it ever is), and is the third stage, the ‘aggregation’ or ‘incorporation’ stage of rites de passage. My preference for the use of the word ‘assimilation’ in the context of the liminal stage lies in the anarchic subtext that I discern; that is, the ‘practice’ of assimilation as a performance of compliance. Sometimes, assimilation as the performance of compliance, may take the shape of camouflage. There are two ways of considering camouflage; in the first place it can be a way of disguising oneself to deceive, and secondly as hiding by rendering oneself indistinguishable from the background. Taking both of these meanings as accurate, it is this performance that camouflages the anarchic potential of compliance/assimilation. The adoption of
language and behaviour that is not necessarily habitual is, in the definition of compliance, because the individual “… expects to gain specific rewards or approval and avoid specific punishments or disapproval by conforming” (Kelman, 1958, 53). Therefore, the performance of compliance is, as I have suggested earlier, a (sometimes necessary) camouflage; a role played by the immigrant for expedient social survival. In other words, the performance of compliance (as assimilation) may be seen as camouflage in the liminal environment. Thus, assimilation in this sense becomes a [self]justification for a sense of belonging, a convenience, and a strategy for social survival and, as I have already argued in the process of defining assimilation, there are implications of anarchy embedded in the actor’s (immigrant’s) role. The recognition that one needs to comply to survive is a moment of clarity in this stage; indeed, it is one of the defining moments in liminality. I have already quoted Marlene, one of my participants, who told me, “you just have to change, to fit in, to blend in, to become part of our new home …You have to behave in this way or that way so that you don’t stand out, so that you don’t attract attention” (pages 124 and 125). The nuances and the implications of camouflage are indisputable in her words.

To foreground notions of camouflage as a tool of expediency in personal survival, and habitus as embodied history in the liminal stage; and evolving my defining of the difference between assimilation and integration, I recognise that the liminal immigrant has an element of clandestine secrecy or deceit about her. This is unmistakable in the definition of camouflage in the previous paragraph as ‘a way of disguising oneself to deceive’; and is closely linked with self-attributed
identity. This trope has been examined in the preceding sub-chapter, Identity II: True Mirrors, devoted to reflected self-image and non-reversing mirrors.

Popular ingenuity is often invisible. Occasionally, when gathered into political action, it becomes visible. The rest of the time it is used daily for clandestine personal survival at the practical level of dodging, picking up, hustling: and at the psychic level of turning in circles in order to preserve one’s identity (Berger, 1984, 63).

I recognise that, once again, I am talking about the difference between integration and assimilation especially cognisant of my notion of assimilation as anarchic. In the passage quoted above, Berger, calls it ‘ingenuity’ but I read it as how a person ‘is’, for expedient survival. It is the word ‘visible’ that nudges the notion of image. To me, ‘visible’ sounds like an image, maybe a reflection. This doubled, indeed trebled, reflecting of the textual, the actual, and the structural has been explored in the preceding sub-section, Identity II: True Mirrors, and linked to notions of self-symmetry. These enigmatic tesseræ of text reinforce in my mind the connotations of mimesis within that theory, thus augmenting the anarchic constituent inherent in this theme.

The notion of the performance of compliance raises the question; how do I explore the element of performance in mimicry of the host nation (Australia) to hasten the process of integration (i.e. the third stage of rites de passage ‘incorporation’, ‘aggregation’) when I enact the performance myself? I ask myself the recurring question, “who are the ‘real’ Australians that I am attempting to mimic?” When I take on the role of ‘Australian’ by imitating the accent, I know that I am acting/pretending. Being a real Australian only seems to happen when I
am with people who are less Australian than I am—other, more recent immigrants. So, speaking with an Aussie accent for example, may deceive some people, but real Australians ‘from the bush’ will know that I am a fake! I consider the migrant women in my study and find none of them has an Australian accent.

I have already flagged that an integral part of the research for this thesis has been the participation of Robin, my Australian-born colleague, who has helped me with transcribing one of the interviews on to a floppy disc. Robin has, in addition, provided me with commentary on many of the topics and themes I have researched. It was Robin’s ambiguous feelings about ‘translating’ the transcript, and her explanation of her own indeterminate reading of the dialogue—that is, in interpreting the Rhodesian accent on the tapes—that led me to explore Bakhtin’s theory of heteroglossia. At first I saw Robin’s [mis]transcription as a complication hindering my research and I was oblivious to the significance of her mis-translations. I began to re-transcribe the tape myself, and it was only after I had almost completed the exercise that I mentioned what had happened to my supervisor, Dr de Reuck. She immediately saw the richness in the episode and pointed out the possibilities it held for my study. Armed with Dr de Reuck’s encouragement and a list of potential readings, I enthusiastically began my exploration of heteroglossia, and considered how I would be able to use the theory in this dissertation. In an email to Barbara, my colleague in Melbourne, I told her about how the event impacted in the construction of this thesis, and further, how it illuminated my perceptions of how small differences—in accents and meaning—can contain such extraordinary misunderstanding. By writing about the incident to Barbara I was able to begin unpacking and teasing out the
theory and, consequently, to clarify my use of the term *heteroglossia* in the interpretation and analysis of the research – stated and unstated. The examples I use of the mis-translations are unearthed from re-listening to the taped interview and my unreliable memory as I re-read the transcription. I reiterate, that the methods I use are transparent and reveal through the narrative and in the text, images designed/devised to intensify the work.

Eleanor, October 1999:
Funnily enough, I think I’ve got the handle on *heteroglossia*, but only if I make a picture in my mind! The connection with my thesis is that (and this is the explanation) I talk from my history—all the voices, experiences, knowledge that are mine and rooted in my culture and in my own psyche. The Australian hears to me from her same place—from her history, voices, experiences and knowledge. So, is she hearing what I am saying (and *vice versa* of course) or is she hearing and understanding something not very like what I’m saying at all? This goes beyond slang terms, local words etc. What brought it home to me was, I think I told you, when Robin my Aussie friend was helping me with the transcribing. When I went through the tape she had transcribed I was amazed at the understanding she had of it, and the words (and meanings) she had changed to ones she could understand from her own experience, minor words usually – but also when we [Betty and I] were talking about the attitude of Australians to immigrants and how the education system in Rhodesia differed from the Australian – things like that. Her words fitted but changed the whole slant of the topic (Personal Email).

When I listen again to the tape I am surprised at how similar Betty’s voice sounds to mine and perceive that would be an additional confusion for Robin. I discover an unexpected aspect to the transcription when I hear and read it now, and this subtle example is an illustration: Betty said “Martin left three months ahead of me” and Robin transcribed “Martin came three months ahead of me” and I realise that that is indicative of Australia being Robin’s home, therefore the migrant *comes* in—whereas Betty is leaving her home and that is where she *left*. Again, after living in Perth for a year Betty heard that her husband had been transferred to Kojonup; she said, “in this time we had found a house which we bought” and Robin heard it as: “in this town we had found a house which we bought”, thereby moving Betty to Kojonup before she even knew where it was as is evinced in this
excerpt: Betty: I said to Martin, ‘where is Kojonup?’ He said ‘I don’t know, we will have to look at the map’”. On another occasion I asked Betty about making friends in Australia and to ascertain her reply I said, “… and they were Aussie women?” Robin transcribed this as “… and they were older women?” and I have reproduced the error in this dissertation where I’ve used the quote. Another example is an excerpt where Betty’s husband decided to invite the partners in the law firm to dinner. I hear the dialogue like this:

Betty: Martin came home and said, ‘you will have to get the partners around [for dinner]’. And they came and we gave them dinner but they never asked us back, and I found that really strange. I think they were so busy, themselves, to even stop and think what it must be like for someone to transplant to a completely new environment, leave everything behind, and start again. Robin heard something similar but where Betty mentioned the partners being “so busy, themselves,” Robin inserted “with themselves”, and that does give the incident a different meaning. There is another reason that I have used the above quotation, and that pertains to notions of assimilation. The connection between assimilation and food was brought to my attention when I researched the literature in preparation for this chapter. In a critique of the 1950s film No Strangers Here, produced by the Department of Immigration, Sneja Gunew comments: “The film signals assimilation in certain ways, notably linking it to the digestive model from which the term derives” (Gunew, 1999, 146). So, by using this meaning of assimilation allegorically the (unreciprocated) dinner party held by Betty and Martin, was an unconscious attempt to assimilate and the allegory lends support to my notion of assimilation as a precursor to integration and not as a form of integration itself. Ironically, during the interview Betty told me about an occasion when she was teaching; how she mis-understood an Australian accent. She said: “We both appeared to be speaking English but we were actually talking about something else”. 
Then there is the linguistic component; eminent linguist, B. L. Whorf has commented on the affinities between cultural and behavioural norms and linguistic patterns (Whorf, 1941, 78). His comment relates to large-scale linguistic patterns but, drawing on the observations in this research, and the examination in the previous paragraphs, the link to the way I use heteroglossia and habitus becomes clear. If it is the difference in our patterns of speech, our behavioural norms, and the way in which we comport ourselves, then this time of metamorphosis, of being betwixt-and-between is, undeniably, a time of transformation that touches the essence of our identity. Not only do we change the way we move, initially perhaps for reasons of camouflage and deceit; we may begin to change the way we think—perhaps because our memories of previous homes, previous experiences, move to the background; and we also, unwittingly, begin to change the way we view the world. If this reflection is fitting, it is in this indistinct frame of liminality that the transformation from immigrant to integrant begins, and begins to end.

“Philosophy is really homesickness, it is the urge to be at home everywhere.” (Novalis).

So, I ask myself, how were we placed in Rhodesia? Is our feeling for Africa any less because we are white? Why is it that, because of the colonial history in which we were involved, the validity of our feelings for our land of origin is somehow negated? Is this existentialist conception a relevant observation or an apparition I have dredged up out of my psyche, my own paranoia? Or, is the paranoia part of the displacement, the step into the discombobulation of the liminal stage? The
tendency to determine the past by present standards needs to be unpacked. The notions of placement and displacement, vis-a-vis Africa and Australia, are integral to, and complicated by, the determining that occurs during the liminal period. In this section of the chapter I set out to explore the placement of white immigrants and the reasons for their placement in Australia from their own point of view. The notions that surround feelings of the guilt associated with leaving family and friends have been covered in the preceding panel of the triptych: Migration and Separation: Leaving and Landing. The guilt associated with having lived comfortably in the colonial regime and the tacit and subliminal feelings of disruption, dislocation, and not belonging, seem to belong here, in the liminal stage. It is the fundamental placement, in an historical sense, that seems so insignificant until the loss of all we know as familiar leaves us to search through our memories for our own identity, or to construct a new identity, a legitimate Australian identity. And, this happens here, when we are betwixt-and-between, and before we know what Australian identity means—or may mean. I reiterate my argument from the beginning of this chapter that, in this moment the liminal persona is [in traditional initiation] “not-boy-not-man” (Turner, 1979, 235) and in my hypothesis, not-Rhodesian-not-Australian. What does the neophyte do in this liminal stage of the rites de passage to experience herself or himself as an initiate—as an Australian? Where is my Axis Mundi now; the new matrix that, as a liminal persona, a neophyte, and an immigrant I search for most of all? Where do I belong? Where am I placed? The questions continue because that is how it is in the liminal stage, fluid, enigmatic, and timeless. In the passages that unconstitute the eternally inchoate liminal, the future and the past impacts on the novitiate. Where am I placed … now? Where did I come from … before? How
am I to find the way to be at home ‘everywhere’? Kristeva has commented that subjectivity is always constituted within dialogue, and I ask myself: What does that mean in the context of this thesis? I read through my journal and keep finding the same phrase, “What am I doing?” (Personal Journal, 2002). This subjectivity intrinsic to (my) personal dialogue is, perhaps, rooted in the “strategies of reference which throw us back into everyday conventions, into the materiality of how to get from here to there, from the lived to the discourse” (Probyn, 1993, 86). The meaning of Kristeva’s statement and my questioning of my quest, becomes transparent, momentarily, but then is lost again in the existential dialogue within my ‘self’.

The confusion of guilty feelings about race and status in one form or another, is one of the concealed issues in the liminal stage of emigration from an ex-colonial country. Among many women privileged by colonialism there appears to be a desire to be seen to be earnest and egalitarian about race and class. The issues of guilt associated with leaving behind aging parents, close family and friends are not elided but are not addressed in this section. However, I recognise that there are elements of guilt associated with all of these.

When I handed my supervisor an early draft of this chapter, I wrote that I was grieved about how much had been lost to my nieces (still living in Zimbabwe at that time) in the Rhodesian experience. Without much deliberation, I wrote, “Carol and Lauren born in 1977 and 1979, never knew Rhodesia, never knew the country had a white Prime Minister, a white police force, and they are adult women! It grieves me”. My supervisor queried this and said, “… in order not to
valorize ‘whiteness’ clarify what does so, [grieves me] and why, before continuing” (Annotation, de Reuck, Jennifer). In the following email, where my ex-Rhodesian friend Barbara and I discuss aspects of our perceived ‘ownership’ of our country of birth, the meaning I give to grieving is exemplified and clarified. The unforeseen repercussions of our dialogue are shaded as a sub-text in the thesis and surface more distinctly in the final chapter: Reprise.

<table>
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<th>Barbara, 3 August 1999</th>
<th>Eleanor’s Reply</th>
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<td>We had some people over for dinner, and one of them was talking about their trip to Zim and how much they’d enjoyed it and which camps they’d gone to and their black guides and so on and so on. And I thought: this is MY country they’re talking about and yet they ‘own’ this experience and what they were talking about seemed far more real to them than to me. It sounded like a foreign country. Which I realise it is. And suddenly I started feeling like a ‘stolen child’, like they’d stolen my country away from me. They being ‘the Africans’. And I felt this absolute incandescent RAGE about it. Is this how the Aboriginals feel? Is this how you feel? Went for my walk yesterday and tried to sort my head out on the African situation. ’Cos I know how horribly racist this all sounds. The thing is, I don’t ‘approve’ if that's the right word, of the way things were run before. But I sure as hell don't approve of the way they are now. My ‘home’ no longer exists. New names for everything, new social structure, etc. It really pisses me.</td>
<td>Thanks for your email. I have similar feelings! Roland too. ‘They’ for me, are the smug, materialistic white Zimbos who belittle those of us who have moved on. The kind who told me when I was there in 1996, “You Australians (ex Rhodies) are so boring!” I agreed whole-heartedly that I was boring and didn't want this particular person to think of me as anything else. The tourists who go for a visit, they’ve stolen it too. The sad bit is, the way Zim is spoken about to us now (Roland and me) by Australian tourists, excludes us, as though we have no knowledge, no experience of it! Yet I lived there until I was thirty-three. But then, Marie will talk to me about it as home, as though I should know it but I don’t! Because the experience of living in Zimbabwe (where I never lived) is different from the experience of living in Rhodesia. The minutiae of our lives, then, has been erased, the rich detail deemed dispensable and made to seem corrupt. It grieves me.</td>
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So, the grieving is for the loss of repetition of the cycle, the spiralling and intertwining of home and family; and the loss of the rich detail of our lives. The grieving is not for the white colonial government. The cycle that buries, erodes,
and replaces that domestic, private arena for which I grieve, ignores the history, the personal history, the fragments, and the minutiae that formed the mosaic of our lives; prohibits them and casts them out. And we are left with our children and grand children not knowing great grandmother’s name, not knowing the matrix from which we spring. This grieves me; this and leaving the writing of history to those who remove the minutiae that validates our place and our identity.

The ownership of how we were and of how we lived in Rhodesia segues into this. My supervisor annotated an early draft of this chapter saying, “Remember the wealth/affluence experienced by many of your subjects in their country of origins could be seen to have been gained by [an] exploitative/racist political regime[es] that owed its position to colonial oppression” (annotation, de Reuck, Jennifer). And it is the guilt associated with this—even by failure to act, or oversight, that I am implying. In religious terms, sinning by omission. Kristeva discusses, wryly I think, that within the notion of British subject, and I presume she includes the colonial and ex-colonial in this broad term, is the apparent tolerance of ethnicity and religion. This, she writes, “... does not invite them to share an *esprit général* but claims to respect their particularities ... [it] ends up immobilizing the latter and perpetuating the racial or religious wars that are shaking up the Commonwealth as well as the United Kingdom”. The irony is evident when she then observes that “... even the European integration continues to upset British political circles ...” (Kristeva, 1993, 12). I ponder, if the subject (British or other) speaks about tolerance and acts in an intolerant manner, a racist or oppressive way; is a characteristic of paternalism/colonialism? The answer may shape the ‘guilt by association’ that is tacit in some of the subjects of my study.
One of the changes that seems to transpire for the women comprising my study pertains to material belongings. Betty remarked on this subject and connected it to moving from Africa to Australia:

But I suppose that’s another thing about moving away, I am terribly aware that material things … that I want to be comfortable, but I don’t want to be tied down now. Whereas, before, I think maybe material things might have meant more to me. Not anymore, not now.

Amy and I discussed the materialist behaviour of many white people who remained in Zimbabwe, and their attitude toward the black Zimbabweans. When I reflect on our discussion, I find that it illustrates the paternalism implicit in colonial behaviour that continued in Zimbabwe until fairly recently and reframes some of the material from the separation panel of the triptych:

So, as I say it’s very much based on that extraordinary materialistic colonial sort of thing that still exists there.

I suppose it’s got to go on for a time anyway, because umm, if people didn’t continue with their servants they wouldn’t have a job would they?

Well, yes sure.

So it has got to go on.

Yes, in that respect, but there are other things involved, I mean [for example] Marie, when she came over, it broke her heart to say goodbye to her gardener. She knew he had AIDS and that he wasn’t going to last long when she wasn’t there to look after him. She spoke to me about it and I said to her, “Look, he’s an adult. He takes responsibility for himself. He follows his culture”, which is how he got AIDS anyway. Because his brother died of AIDS, and according to Shona customs, he had to then marry, take his brother’s wife in, and then he would cohabit with her. Of course he got AIDS pretty quickly. But, because he worked for Marie, and she is very particular about what her servants ate and so on… Because he had good nutrition and so on. His health was ok when she was still there.

Sarah tells me that she misses the African people. She says that when you live in Africa, there are always many, many people. She found her first years in country Western Australia bleak and lonely without the ubiquitous presence of black Africans. Sarah’s style of speaking reflects something that may appear to be offensive, however, what she is saying needs to be seen in the context of the
experience of colonial Africa. She tells me about the loneliness and isolation that she felt in the first weeks in Western Australia:

Sarah: I’d go sometimes for days without seeing a human being. In Africa you see Africans, they might not have thought they were human in the old days but you saw a human being, or hundreds every single day of your life. I didn’t see a single human being.

Betty said that she had felt isolated in Australia and signalled the ‘tyranny of distance’ as being the cause. We spoke of not having family to call on the occasions we might need transport, and how, in the early days it is just the immediate family, clinging together—and inherent in this is the isolation from the society in which she found herself:

Eleanor: What it boils down to it was just the five of you.
Betty: Yes, absolutely.
Eleanor: Yes, I was very similar.
Betty: We’ve all been there. And in a way we’re still there. Because sometimes Martin can’t do something and I need transport, [I call a] taxi and that's it.
Eleanor: This is the sort of isolation from blood relatives, really.
Betty: Yes, because distances are so huge we really are isolated.

It is in the liminal persona, the transitional-being, that the recognition of what has been left behind and lost takes new meaning. In the requirements of traditional rites of passage, it is in this transitional (transformational) stage that the liminal persona is stripped of “status, property, insignia, secular clothing, rank, kinship position, nothing to demarcate them structurally from their fellow. Their condition is indeed the very prototype of sacred poverty” (Turner, 1979, 237). In the case of emigrants, it is often the rich trappings of history and life experience that are stripped away, leaving the (metaphorically) naked transitional beings to reclothe and reinvent themselves.

_Eleanor: So, you were in a position where you re-invented yourself as Betty – Australian?_
Betty: Right!
Eleanor: And Betty coping ...
Betty: ... coping in Australia (Betty’s interview, April, 1999).

Sometimes the leaving of status and property is manifest. When Betty arrived in Perth in 1981, all of her furniture and household effects were still in transit. The shock of arriving in Perth on a scorching hot day without belongings, save what is carried, and without any idea of what is in store is very much in the tradition of a neophyte stepping into the liminal space:

Betty: I was jet-lagged and thought what have I come to … of course we had nothing except what we had in our luggage. None of the stuff had arrived. Martin had been to the Salvo’s, or one of the second hand op-shops, he bought mattresses, which we put on the floor with some sheets, they were clean, but that was it. Just while we were waiting for things to come. I'd bought a few plates and things with me. I hadn’t brought saucepans and things. We were lent one saucepan so I cooked in one saucepan I don’t know how.

The immigrants who arrived in Western Australia with somewhere to go, someone to ‘look after’ them, often family who had migrated earlier, nevertheless enter a liminal frame that is, to some extent, mitigated. For example, Amy told me, “We were lucky because my sister lived here and she was established here and she sponsored us to come over.” Amy’s husband was transferred so the stress of finding employment was reduced. Later in the same interview Amy reiterated how lucky she felt in having family in Australia:

Amy: And, of course, I had family here. I mean I had two sisters and a brother who had already immigrated. So I was very lucky.
Eleanor: So you had the support?
Amy: Yes, I had the support. I had my elder sister who was living in Bunbury. She and her husband were at a big school there. He was head master.
Amy: And then Annie was a nurse here at Royal Perth and Rob my younger brother, he lectured at Edith Cowan all these years. So, I had this lovely network of family. So, I was very lucky. And [I also had] some cousins who had emigrated here sometime before.
The idea of transformation while not always spoken, is implied in this excerpt from the interview with Marlene. I asked her to comment on her reaction to being asked to participate in the research and she replied:

Marlene: Just the impressions that really struck me, the thing that I wanted to say about coming to Australia is that I could forge my own identity here. I mean you could shed your skin and become whatever you wanted to be. Whether that is just because it was Australia or whether it was just another country, but I think Australia has a freedom we didn’t have [in Rhodesia]. So, I was able to become what I wanted to become, here. And without the restrictions of what you should be when you grew up, you become your own person here. And Australian society, because they were so accepting of people, allowed me to do that.

Marlene was twenty-one when she immigrated in 1980. The notion of migration as metamorphosis is clear in her words. How long did the liminal period last for Marlene, for me, for any of the women in this research? That is what I will address now.

If time is problematic in the liminal stage, how can the problem be resolved? According to Genevieve Lloyd in her discussion of St Augustine, it “… is resolved through finding unity amidst fragmentation … articulated through metaphors drawn from the unity of speech, and acted out in autobiographical narration” (Lloyd, 1993, 20). My own notions of time/space in the liminal are best described by the illusion/allusion of time and/or the absence of time in the etchings of MC Escher. His beguiling depictions of time/space spiralling back upon itself, going nowhere and everywhere, captivate me and I attempt to follow the steps to return to where I am. The fragmentation is inherent in the liminal or transformational period because this is when the identities (assumed, attributed) disintegrate, possibly to be reformed. Victor Turner says “Since liminal time is not controlled by the clock it is a time of enchantment when anything might, even should happen” (Turner, Victor, 1977a, 33). Therefore, there is in the formal
sense of *rites de passage*, a sense of time/space being magical and, being situated (metaphorically) in one of Escher’s paradoxical and illusionary etchings, the numinous aspects of liminality are (perhaps) something to revere. I reflect on the fragments of mystery and enchantment in my own experience of immigration, some of which did not seem (particularly) exquisite when they occurred but, in retrospect, the magical qualities sometimes start to appear; “… the lived experience of time – with transience, with the sense of self as fragmented, and of the past as lost” (Lloyd, 1993, 8)

The notion of *Times Arrow*, the second law of thermodynamics is conducive to how I can think about time when passing through the liminal or metamorphosis. Notions of progressive disintegration and entropy segue into the fabrication of time underpinning the liminal. The idea that, in the linear way we think about time, the original is ‘whole’ or ‘ordered’ and that *Times Arrow* points inexorably to entropy, that is disorder or disintegration; even this does not give a rigid time for the movement/passage of wholeness into chaos. In the example of a coffee mug being smashed, time is quick, sudden. In the example of a mug of coffee left to cool, the time it takes is, in the words of my mother, “as long as it takes”. According to recent scientific research by prominent American physicist, Lawrence Schulman, there is evidence that time can, in certain places and circumstances, run backwards (in Chown, 2003). It is this phenomenon that I connect to the liminal or metamorphic time. It is the seemingly ordered state from which we start, be it as Rhodesian, Zimbabwean, Greek or Briton, we are supposedly ‘whole’ in that identity. Immigrating is a separation from that ‘wholeness’ followed by movement into the liminal; that is, we step into the
doorway, and somewhere in this locus, we—our identity—begins the process of
disintegration; shifting into entropy. As the process of disorder and disintegration
takes place, somehow there begins a new ordering as identity re-forms, time
begins to re-verse, the poetical connotations are deliberate, and so is the re-turn to
another seemingly ordered state—with the important distinction that the
subsequent ‘whole’ is not the same as the first. Parallel perhaps, but not a
duplicate, not an identical identity. In this imbrication of Times Arrow, the
liminal, and transformation, there is, I believe some indication of why this period
is indefinable in any quantitative way. The temporal aspect of liminality as I have
cited it at the start of this chapter is: “… liminal time is not controlled by the
clock” and [it] “is a time of enchantment” (Turner, Victor, 1977a, 33), gives the
pliancy, indeed the volatility, I associate with this arcane place of displacement.
So, reflecting on the nature of time and the re-verse of time in rites de passage I
find these words in T S Eliot’s poem, Burnt Norton:

    Time present and time past
    Are both perhaps present in time future,
    And time future is contained in time past.
    If all time is eternally present
    All time is unredeemable (Eliot, 1963).

And, in the liminal context, I perceive this to be a relevant notion of the
eccentricity of time. Reflections on past identity, recognition of present identity,
and anticipation of future identity are all required when a liminal persona moves
into the third stage of rites de passage. As immigrants to Australia, we will
always have our memories of Africa that do not fit in to the Australian context or
relate to local understanding. We negotiate our place in the community on a daily
basis, as most people do. But the moment we, as immigrants, step over the
metaphorical threshold and begin to reflect on what we were—and on the validity of our present Australian identity, *that* is when the process of integration and incorporation begins. And, for me, that is the moment I move into the third frame of the triptych that comprises my thesis.

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1 In Chapter Eight: Integration: *A real Aussie [at last]*.
The Third Panel

Incorporation
Chapter Seven

Memory and the Myth of the Eternal Return

*Yesterday is a tree with great spreading branches, and I lie in its shade, remembering* (Pablo Neruda).

The theme of a tree recurs. In the beginning, it is the transplanted tree. It is there, in the chapter on migration, and here it is again but now it is a tree to lie under and dream of yesterday. So, in this chapter, I begin by exploring memory and how we remember, I question the notion of remembering as knowledge; who remembers the ‘truth’ and how that is related to gender, to our socially reproduced role. The themes in the chapter are the remembering of Africa, the remembering of Australia and the locus where the two blend—bringing together strands of memory, dreams, and experience. I explore the memories of women who came to Rhodesia in the early days, the women who have come to Australia, and reflections of home in Rhodesia and home in Australia. The remembering of our transplanting into Australia and transition into Australians is reflected again and again, until fragmented into the minutiae that shape our identities and our lives.
An element appears in this chapter of nostalgia and even sentimentality; I think of the poem about latter-day Zimbabwe that I found on the Internet: I printed it out and gave it to my sister-in-law (newly arrived in Australia) to read. I found it grossly sentimental but she wept as she read it. It seems that the subjective notions of memory for the individual remembering are evocative and poignant. By allowing elements of the research methodology to thread through the narrative, I move the memories into a locus less contaminated by sentimentality—or perhaps this a strategy I use to distance myself from my own grief at seeing a beloved matrix destroyed. However, the use of my own journal in researching and writing this chapter emphasises the evocative and subjective nature of memory, remembering (and forgetting). And I find that there is another space to situate the notion of remembering in the *rites de passage*. I suggest that, within the transition/transformation from liminal persona to integrant, is an auxiliary locale. It is here, in a place that may be one of pathological nostalgia, that the notion of crippling homesickness is situated particularly if the transition is incomplete or not successful.

Integral to the notion of the immigrant’s remembering is homesickness and the nostalgia that dwells in the homesickness felt by the immigrant—leading to the longing to return ‘home’. The concept of home being the *axis mundi*, the matrix from which we are never entirely separated is explored in the light of memory and
homesickness. There is an infernal, internal, voice that says, “Surely things weren’t as bad as you think you remember?” and in this sphere notions of time in memory segue into the second part of the chapter and I examine the myth of the eternal return; the persistent longing to ‘go home’. Translating the fantasy of ‘going home’ into reality, the costly (not only in financial terms) return to the home country is often called the immigrants’ disease and I contemplate that it is often the remembering and misremembering that sends the immigrant ‘home’ and then ‘home’ again. Theories of remembering, misremembering, and forgetting serve to connect this to the multiplicity of experience and impression.

The notion of memories being ‘passive’ or ‘literal recordings of reality’ stored in an album as we might store family photographs, is, according to psychology Professor Daniel Schacter, a longstanding myth. Previously, the study of memory did not include the subjective experience of remembering, “We now believe with some degree of certainty that our memories are not just bits of data that we coldly store and retrieve computerlike” (1996, 4). Therefore, the subjectivity of memory has credibility. The humanness of our remembering, the knowledge that “… we do not store judgement-free snapshots of our past experiences but rather hold on to the meaning, sense, and emotions these experiences provided us” (Schacter, 1996, 5), allows me a different way of interpreting the data that is not only remembered but is also written, perhaps from memory. I ask, how much of remembering therefore, is remembering (or misremembering) the memory? In this context, the notion of mnemonic socialization “…a process that normally takes place when we enter an altogether new social environment [including] when we emigrate to another country” (Zerubavel, 1997, 87) leads me to ask: how do
we bring the memories, not only of migration but also of childhood, into our present life? Is this process, as Zerubavel posits, a tacit occurrence of “… listening to a family member recount a shared experience which […] implicitly teaches one what is considered memorable and what one can actually forget” (1997, 87). In this concept, the nostalgic component of the recollection of feelings and remembering of memories may indeed be partially mnemonic tradition, that is: a tradition of recollections and memories passed on within a family and within a society—but even in this model Zerubavel acknowledges the recollections are only “reinterpretations” (emphasis in original) (1997, 87). However, I believe there are other components—components that may be as random as the audience to whom the remembering is narrated that inform/misinform the memory.

I reflect on a conversation I had with a woman, Philippa, an immigrant to Southern Rhodesia. At the time of our conversation, 1996, I was doing fieldwork in Zimbabwe and conducting interviews with women who were born in, or who had immigrated to, Southern Rhodesia before the Federation of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland was formed (in 1953). In the course of the interview Philippa told me the story about her journey from Turkey to Southern Rhodesia with her parents when she was three years old. I ponder on how, as an adult, she makes sense of the experiences of a small child, and her insight that she is remembering the memory and not the event. She remembers the memory of a feeling and she is aware that that is so. In the conversation Philippa told me the adventurous journey to Rhodesia from Turkey happened in 1939 “when the war broke …”. She said there was a mass exodus of British and
Americans and “everybody else” and, as they couldn’t come down through Suez, they had to come overland by car:

**Philippa’s remembering of a memory:**
I know we went to a place called Basra, I think it’s on the river Euphrates. This I remember because I had never seen a one-legged man before. They were bringing in soldiers who had been wounded. Flying them in on flying-boats. These planes were landing on the river ... I was sitting in the garden of the hotel watching. And this one English soldier with one leg, he was hobbling along on crutches. Obviously fond of children, he came up and offered me a sweet, and I was terrified. I had never seen somebody with one leg before and I ran away. And I cried and then I felt ... I remember feeling mean afterwards when my mother told me what had happened to this poor man ... I remember feeling nasty for having run away from him afterwards. I don’t know if I really remember feeling nasty about it, but I felt ... that I shouldn’t have run away, in a sort of funny three-year-old way.

Eleanor: It’s amazing that you can remember feelings ...
Philippa: I don’t know if I remember that feeling or whether I remember remembering it, because I always felt guilty for a long time afterwards when I saw somebody with one leg. I don’t know. Perhaps I don’t remember that, feeling bad about it at the age of three, but perhaps I remember remembering all along the years.

So, when do we stop remembering the event and start to remember the memories, and does the insight change the memory? Perhaps we have a tendency to misremember the source of our memories, but when I talk to people about remembering, they seem sure of their sources. Somebody has to be remembering something and perhaps that is why memory needs to be subjective; because, although we might misremember our sources, the memory is valid for the rememberer. It is not unusual for people to remember events from childhood that may have been told to them as part of family lore. These memories may become part of our remembering although, like Philippa, we are remembering a memory, something that has been told to us through the years. The *mnemonic tradition* suggested by Zerubavel gives credence to this (1987, 87). The subjectivity of, and connection to, memory in ethnographic writing (in the context of Philippa’s memory and of this work generally) is my own situation within the study. This, I believe, speaks to/of the textuality of my work. Elspeth Probyn comments,
“Ethnography then is seen as a possible way into the personal, a potential grasping of the individual’s specificity” (1993, 62). Therefore, each remembered memory is re-membered and the sense that is made of it is contextualised in the time and understanding of the reader/audience.

I turn again to my 1996/97 research trip to Zimbabwe and find this note in my journal:

[My brother] Graham says to me ‘Don’t believe Aunt Kay, she has got it all wrong. She’s old. She’s lost it. She remembers nothing right!’ I realise Graham has assumed the traditional role of patriarch, of dominant ‘elder’. This being the case, he is adamant that what he remembers is right, what Aunt Kay remembers is wrong, chiefly because it does not correspond in every detail with his memories. His memory is the historical ‘truth’. Ironically, Aunt Kay is the real ‘elder’ in the equation. She is the only surviving member of the original family. She was born in Rhodesia in 1914 (Personal Journal).

Exploring Graham’s self-designated role of family patriarch, and my own part (as researcher but also in the role of ‘little sister’) in the interpretation of his words, I consider the explanation that “socially reproduced role-holders can be such awkward customers, rejecting their upbringing, fighting one another and even appearing to change the course of events ...” (Tonkin, 1992, 103). Perhaps it is this manipulation of events that serves to fashion the social reproduction of role-holders—if not the (socially accepted) hierarchy within a family group. In my fieldwork journal from this time I comment on the notion of attributed roles within the family—within my family, and my inability (at that time) to remove myself from the role attributed to me:

The thing that gets me every time that I come back [to Zimbabwe] is the assumption that I am the same as I was twenty years ago before I left [Rhodesia]. I am immediately re-placed in the same category as I was when I was thirty years old! And I’m fifty-five years old now! I’m not the same! (Personal Journal).
It seems I am not the only one who resists being re-placed in an outdated and attributed category. Marlene talked about how her experience as an immigrant has changed her and said, “We had one friend [from Rhodesia] visit us about four or five years ago, and we had him round to dinner. And he said to me, “Oh, you haven’t changed a bit!” and I found that really quite … I mean it was complimentary I suppose in a fifteen year gap, but I said, ‘You don’t know who I am anymore!’ He has no idea how much I have changed, and yet he just saw me as the same person.” I hear the indignation in her voice and I ask myself, is this sense of umbrage Marlene’s personal point of view or does her affront at the ‘compliment’, in itself, indicate change—part of the transformation that came about during her liminal stage—to a previously unacknowledged, albeit latent, feminist perspective; so that when someone pays a misplaced (misguided) intended compliment based on physical looks, it provokes antagonism? I believe, in this case, it was an indication of Marlene’s liminal ‘modification’, combined with an insidious condescension in the ‘compliment’, a condescension that is rudimentary to assuming to know how another person is; and this layering of meanings made the remark presumptuous and therefore offensive.

I reflect on the question as to whether we remember ourselves differently to how others may remember us and, following this thread, whether this, then, leads to perceptions of dominance (and gender) in misremembering—and to connect with other notions of remembering. In this context, I find Donna Haraway’s conception of situated knowledge relevant. The complexity inherent in situated knowledge seems to fit the arcane topic of remembering and what may be seen as
the gendered division of ‘important’, correct memory and ‘unimportant’, incorrect memory. It is, as Donna Haraway points out, that “… for the complex category and even more complex people called ‘women’, A and not-A are likely to be simultaneously true” (Haraway, 1991, 110-111). It is, therefore, justifiable that memory and remembering are included in the motif of situated knowledge; the perceived ‘exact’ objective memory in collision with the perceived ‘inexact’ subjective memory. Perhaps it is the ambiguity, the seeming inconsequential and quotidian minutiae of women’s rememberings that colour our memories and remembering, that make them imperfect to the obligatory exactness required by the dominant patriarchy. It is the ‘A and not-A that are simultaneously true’. In the broad historical sense these rememberings, women’s rememberings, are seldom the acceptable and accepted view or the codified account. The small rememberings are, of course, not confined to women. The scholar and author Madan Sarup, albeit reluctantly—or it would seem so—now and then includes a memory of his childhood and his family in his writing. His words when he writes about his father are touching, the self-abrogation as to the triviality of his words adds poignancy to his reflection and it is his mention of the supposed triviality that evokes his father, the substance of his father. Sarup writes:

I remember very little about my father. A strong, well-built man, I know he enjoyed walking. I also remember him showing me an electric gadget for making hot drinks: a little element that fitted into a light socket, which heated the water in a cup. Why do I remember such trivial things and not anything important?’ (Sarup, 1996, 116-117).

I wonder that he considers this appealing memory ‘trivial’. Such memories are vivid fragments, inflections of brightness that give purpose/meaning to the whole and I believe they must be valued as such. I return to the allegory of mosaic
because this illustrates the importance of each detail to the overall image; inasmuch as each tessera may seem trivial when viewed individually, the final image depends on the inclusion of each detail.

I remember the wedding … Half way between Colombo and Kegalle we recognised a car in the ditch and beside it was the Bishop of Colombo who everyone knew was a terrible driver. He was supposed to marry them so we had to give him a lift (Ondaatje, 1984, 36).

So, what of the stories that are hidden in remembering, the memories/stories that become family legends? These are the myths that unite and bind the family and are all the more potent for being a subliminal connection; so that the ritual words, “remember when” draw us in, and return us to that (precarious) family/familiar nucleus with a pretence of constancy. But nuclei, memories, and family myths are frequently changeable/unstable; the shared and familiar history is often of small, inconsequential rememberings; small reminiscences that are positioned in vast, political, and world changing affairs, but these minutaie of ‘remember when’, these are the fragments that we hold and bequeath. Maybe we pass on these memories as stories told as family myths—not by writing them down—because we know we will remember them. It is the events that are deemed ‘important’ that get written down; histories of wars and treaties, and lists of kings and queens, but when we re-member or ask for memories from others—mothers, fathers, grandparents, strangers on the bus—the rememberings we hear are of incidents, (often) subjective vignettes, that make up the life of the story-teller. The wars may be there, but only as points of reference for the rememberer.

‘Do you remember the outbreak of the Korean War?’ I asked.
‘Yes,’ she said, ‘I was pregnant with May.’ … It seemed to me then that Poppy still spoke as if the whole world ran according to Mrs Dale’s Diary … (Modjeska, 1996,64).
Family myths, in common with the grander scale of religious and cultural myths discussed by Ashis Nandy, allow us “… access to the processes which constitute history at the level of the here-and-the-now … They allow one to remember in an anticipatory fashion and to concentrate on undoing aspects of the present rather than avenging the past” (Nandy, 1983, 59). The anticipation of forging myth/memory is, therefore, set to occur at the time of recollecting other memories.

How do we know when to tell the memory? Often the time to recount a family memory/story (and to forge new memories) is linked to the calendar—birthdays, weddings and funerals, anniversaries, or the liturgical year. Perhaps this is because it is the time when families traditionally gather together—perhaps after being apart for a long time. Certainly, when I visited Zimbabwe in 1996/97 it was the first time my siblings and I were all together for a Christmas celebration since 1974, the year my father died. This time we gathered at my aunt’s house for Christmas Eve and, in my research journal, there is a record of a story remembered and retold:

Doris told us about when she and Uncle Pete got married (in 1940). They asked Mama and Papa (her new parents-in-law) for Christmas dinner. She said “I was very nervous and wanted everything to be just right”. She described how she carefully laid the table and lit candles. When Papa arrived he said, “Aren’t the lights working?” and flicked the [light] switch. When the lights came on he said, “Well, Good luck!” and blew out the candles. Doris said she was so mortified she did not have lit candles on the dinner table for the next twenty-five years. She told us, “Papa related candles with poverty” (Personal Journal).

In pondering on this memory, I remember when Doris told us it seemed as clear to her as if it had happened the previous year. All of us at the table had heard the
story before but still we waited with anticipation for “Well, Good luck!” and then Doris’s analysis of why Papa said it, “Papa related candles with poverty.” This incident becomes part of my family remembering too although it happened before I was born. No doubt I will pass it on to my grandchildren when the time is right, probably at a Christmas dinner. Will it be the same story because now it has been written and the words are there for other eyes to read? Professor Daniel Schacter refers to a system called episodic memory, that is, memory “… which allows us explicitly to recall the personal incidents that uniquely shape our lives” (Schacter, 1996, 17). When, therefore, did this Christmas story become ‘my’ memory, and when I relate it, what is it I re-member? I never knew my grandfather, he died the year I was born; nevertheless the memory is personal to me, too. The term ‘re-membering’ is defined by Barbara Myerhof as being “… purposive, significant unification … The focused unification provided by re-membering is requisite to sense and ordering. A life is given a shape that extends back in the past and forward into the future … Without re-membering we lose our histories and our selves” (Myerhof, 1992, 240). Therefore, her comment that, “A life, then, is not envisioned as belonging only to the individual who has lived it but it is regarded as belonging to the world, to the progeny who are heirs to the embodied traditions …” (Myerhof, 1992, 240) brings the lives (of my grandparents), as memories (or myths), into my personal re-membering and into the family lore. Therefore, the perceived importance and magnitude of the memory is not significant; life shaping incidents that enter our remembering may be as insignificant as Doris’s dinner party and, supposing that this is the way memory works, the memory of Doris’s dinner party is, for me (as her niece), a re-membering of someone else’s memory until it becomes my own. The evocative nature of remembering the
Christmas dinner party in 1996, and the conversations that took place around the table become part of my own memory-bank, and are intertwined with the original dinner party held before I was born and, in my refreshing and retelling the memory, I am able to bequeath it to my daughter and granddaughter.

Therefore, to expand the primary discourse of this chapter, re-membering stories and myths allows me, indeed provokes me, as author, to use my ‘long drawer’. A colleague mentioned (in passing) ‘the long drawer’. He was speaking about Bakhtin’s custom of ‘drawing’ on material that he had written many years earlier. The play on the word ‘drawer’ (I imagine the material was kept in a bureau of some sort) and ‘drawing’ upon it, befits the way I work and research and remember. These things I keep: letters, essays, and notes; I write down dreams, conversations and memories of conversations; I keep journals, diaries, taped interviews, lists, and newspaper clippings—many of which I draw on at various stages in my work. In the paper written for presentation and later published in the electronic journal *Outskirts* I said this:

My researcher persona seldom takes a holiday. Conversations I have, books I read, events I participate in or observe, becomes intrinsic to what? My life? My thesis? Whatever it is, it is stored away—sometimes in memory, sometimes in writing, sometimes on tape or in pictures, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, but is there to be drawn on when I need it! Does not a feminist ethnographer have to work like this? And is it really a problem? (Venables, 1999).

Where does it begin? I find in my ‘long drawer’ journals and diaries that go back forty years or more; scraps of paper with notes are even older. I remember the journals and letters I destroyed when I left Africa and regret that I was so imprudent and impulsive in burning them. The papers and letters I did keep take
on a meaningfulness that makes me realise I was an historian, an ethnographer, an anthropologist, before I knew what the words meant. Among the treasures that remain in the cache, my ‘long drawer’, are my father’s handwritten notes of the eulogy he gave at his mother’s funeral in 1967—the year my daughter was born—and just by seeing his handwriting I feel and savour the threads that link the generations: I remember the fountain pen he used, I remember my grandmother’s funeral, and most of all, I remember my father. The richness of the material gleaned from the women who participated in my research for this study are added to my long drawer. The correspondence and conversations with friends, relatives, Australians, Zimbabweans, and expatriate Rhodesians is evident and the anonymous others whose words and conversations, overheard, are stored for retrieval when I need them. In the long drawer, past impacts on the present and the present on the past and, once again, traces of autobiography are spoor to draw in the reader.

To bring the focus onto the question of memories and nostalgia, I ask some of my protagonists about their remembering of Africa. First, I ask Sarah about her feelings for Africa. Her reply shows layers of remembering and a pentimento effect occurs as she scrapes through the memory/picture and brings other, older, pictures to the surface. So, the small question I asked her, lets her African memories lace together her more recent remembering in Western Australia, and even evoking the future:

Eleanor: And when you think about Africa, the nostalgia that you feel, what sets it off? Sarah: I used to think I missed my friends, but now I don’t really think I do. But what I do miss, which sounds very strange with the upbringing we’ve had, I miss the Africans. I really, really enjoy the African humour and I’m obsessed with the bush and wildlife. [In Australia] I’m getting a four-wheel drive because the best beaches, in that little town I was in, Denmark, in spite of all the work, I used to endurance ride. I’ve ridden the forest
on motorbikes and horses. I have ridden in places that people don’t even know exist. I knew more of the Denmark district than people that had lived there always. I knew waterfalls and pools and I just love the bush. I’ll go round Australia in a few years time. I’ll get a campervan, even if I go alone.

I ask Marlene, “Are you ever nostalgic for Rhodesia?” She replies. “Not now, not so much”.

How do we remember our first days in Australia? Sarah said, when she arrived here in 1988, “When I first went to Albany, the first Saturday morning I went there, I was doubled up with mirth and people said to me, “What are you laughing at?” and I said “I’ve just had a time warp, I’ve just seen the clock set back thirty years!” and Betty said, “You know, I actually don’t know how I survived that first year. When I look back on it and think, ‘how did you do it?’ I wonder now how did I even have the time to cope with what I was doing [and] I have no idea.

*I do not stand in time like a rock in a river; what is true of my duration must be true of me. If the moments of my duration can be separated it must also be true that I myself will cease to exist in the lack of an external cause* (Lloyd, 1993, 49).

It is necessary to bring into the discussion notions of ‘time’ as a factor in memory. In psychologist James Hillman’s work on aging, and elsewhere, I read about perceptions of time as mythical and that mythical time is cyclical (Eliade, 1954; Hillman, 1999). In other words, the argument that ‘history repeats itself’ and that, exponentially, the assumption is that memories will too. Our (Western) cultural perception is that our lives move not in mythical, cyclical time but in secular or linear time, that is, regular time. “We do not see that the new is the old come around again, and that to understand the new we must return to the old” (Hillman,
To situate the idea of memory in time, one solution is seeing it as “imagining qualified by time … [M]emory is always first of all imagination, secondarily qualified by time … [T]he sole difference between imagining and imagination on the one hand, and remembering and memory on the other is this added element of time” (emphasis in original) (Hillman, 1999, 89). Using this statement as a starting point, it would seem that the notions of time and memory are critically interlocked and I find that I cannot write about memory without writing about time. In the context of my hypothesis of *rites de passage* in immigration, the sacred and mythical component of time and memory are inextricably embedded. The word component is wrong, it is too hard edged for this soft and unstable topic. Nancey Murphy suggests that ‘Memories exist as dispositions, not as permanent states or files’ (Murphy, 1998, 15). I reflect on this and come to understand that, in their own context, there is probity in these ideas—even though I find in them a tendency to be glib and plebeian. The notion of a past that is contemporaneous with the present has been suggested by Deleuze; Genevieve Lloyd interprets this contemporaneousness as being “… not, as we are accustomed to think … two successive moments, but rather two elements which coexist …” (Lloyd, 1993, 107). This interpretation comes closer to my premises of the time factors in *rites de passage*, and, in fact, I would enhance the designated two coexisting elements into multiple coexisting elements. This leads me to the question already posited, that is, when do we stop remembering the event and start to remember the recollection of the event? I think of photographs, old and new, that capture faces that much later activates memories—memories that may belong to someone else.

And this is my Mother and her brother Noel in fancy dress.
They are 7 and 8 years old, a hand-coloured photograph, it is the earliest picture I have. The one I love most (Ondaatje, 1989, 4)

Remembering people, significant people—mother, father, siblings and so forth in the country of origin can provoke more than nostalgia. In the (unfinished) book he was writing just before he died, Madan Sarup adds vulnerable observations, memories about himself and his family, at the end of some chapters. The power of his memories of his father are such that, toward the end of the quoted annotation he writes, “I am crying as I write this …”

When, a few years ago, my eldest brother Rashid stayed at my house for a night, he said to me: ‘You are just like your father – your gestures, even your life-style’. I was astonished, and wondered how this could be, as I had not really known him. But I think he was right. I can feel my father’s influence all around me. I am crying as I write this …’ (Sarup, 1996, 117).

This, to me, eloquently demonstrates the subjectivity of memory and the fact that time becomes meaningless in the face of pathos. This is the convergence of the minutiae of memory; what was it about Madan Sarup’s gestures and life-style that provoked the remark if not the delicateness, even preciseness, of Roshan’s remembering? However, I notice that it is only after the chapters that are not extensively engaged in theoretical discourse that Sarup adds his annotated comments, all of which are to do with his memories and some of which are unashamedly emotional and poignant and, indeed, reduced me to tears on occasion.

This is a memory of an event that occurred before I was born, an event that I became aware of for the first time on my return to Zimbabwe in 1996/97 and that I have flagged in the historical background. The discovery that my paternal
grandparents (Mama and Papa) fully intended to return to Russia in 1919 was unexpected and startling. Why I had never heard this disconcerting news before I am unsure. When I ponder on this now it seems an anecdote of this nature would have—should have—entered family lore, embellished, maybe, and told to the children. I consider, is this an act of forgetting that makes space for another remembering; selective forgetting that “...is quite different from ignorance” (Douglas, 1985, 13)? I think about the reasons behind ‘forgetting’ about this dramatic (to me) change of plan and assume it was a political decision; that the commitment to leave the Russian/Bulgarian influence behind was paramount to their integration into colonial British society and is, I believe, closely linked with the decision to speak English ‘without an accent’. The story of the aborted return to Russia was revealed to me while I was talking with my Aunt Kay. Her memories of the early days in Rhodesia both from her own experience and from remembered family tales are extensive, rehearsed, and detailed. Aunt said to me, “And they always wanted to go back to Russia. The idea was that when they'd made some money they'd go back. When that happened, and they had enough money, they decided the children would have a better opportunity here [in Rhodesia]. So they stayed. That's when my father built that house in Parktown—with the money they were going to spend on the tickets, he built that house”. My aunt had carried this memory from when she was five or six years old. She said, “It took a long time for them to amass some money”.  

The bit that really spun me out was that Mama and Papa fully intended returning to Russia when they had saved enough money. Where would I be now? 
Who would I be now? 
Would I BE? (Personal Journal).
Adding credibility to my assumption as to the reason for ‘forgetting’ is that it was the decision to remain in Rhodesia that compelled the determination to learn English as my Papa said, “without an accent”. But for me it was one of life’s defining moments to know how close it was, that my life history (if I had been born at all) would have been so completely and utterly different. That I was over fifty years old when I discovered this ‘secret’ is astonishing. That I had never considered that there might have been such a plan gives me cause to consider, again, my grandparent’s attachment to Africa, the dichotomy of living and loving one place and yet yearning to return ‘home’. Now I question my surprise at their desire to return to Russia when I think that I, too, often yearn to return home.

And, as a family, at the end of 1991, supposedly to emigrate, we did go ‘home’—only to come ‘home’ to Australia in 1992—auspiciously on 26 January, Australia Day. The action of return may be seen as an historical reflection of the desire of Mama and Papa to return to Russia. In retrospect, for me it was probably a craving to return to the past. Even after our abortive return to Africa in 1991 with the intention of resettling there, I find a note in my research journal written shortly before I left Australia on a field trip in 1996 which reads:

I reflect that once again I find the desire for a return ‘home’. That is what I am doing too, coming home to Africa, and not for the first time (Personal Journal).

And in Australia from 1992 to 1996, the dream remains. The continuing dream to go ‘home’, even when common sense tells me that the ‘home’ that I visualise is a fantasy, a memory, a myth.

*It’s right to love your home place, but first ask, “Where is that, really?”* (Jelaluddin Rumi).
There is an enigmatic saying among many immigrants, not only to Australia, that there is the ‘expensive migrant sickness’ (also known as the ‘twenty thousand dollar cure’). I first heard about this sickness from my cousin Bistra who emigrated from Bulgaria to Canada some years ago. We talked about our experiences of immigration and she spoke about this ‘expensive migrant sickness’. At first I was unsure what she was talking about, but then she explained, and I soon recognised that we had also succumbed to it. The prognosis is this: after the initial euphoria of migrating, of being ‘allowed’ to immigrate—be it to Australia, United States of America, Canada or to some other perceived Utopia; after taking the first steps in the adventurous ritual of *rites de passage*, there comes a period of dread and homesickness. This period of feeling a sense of loss, homesickness, displacement, with no behavioural guides, may appropriately be defined by the Durkheimian concept of anomie. Julia Kristeva, Madan Sarup, Ashis Nandy, and others address the issue often from a personal platform (Kristeva, 1991; Nandy, 1983; Sarup, 1996). Psychologists Grinberg and Grinberg, citing Menges, posit that homesickness is mainly evident in people who have “limited success in [their] mental development toward individuation” and “… unresolved childhood problems arising from a conflicting relationship with the mother” (1989, 20). Berger mentions “To the underprivileged, home is represented, not by a house, but by a practice or set of practices” (1894, 64). Be that as it may, many immigrants do suffer from anomie related to homesickness. There is a yearning to return to one’s home, to return to one’s matrix.

Writing about aging, philosopher James Hillman tells us about the ‘myth of the Eternal Return’. The expression originates with Mircea Eliade, writing of ‘archaic
ontology … and the ancient cultures of Asia, Europe, and America” (Eliade, 1954, 3). However, I contend that there is a connection from that archaic ontology to this thesis. It adds, perhaps, insight when I adapt the theory for my own purpose. I find there is an authenticity in this archaic ontology when I apply it to my own story and to that of the women in my project. According to Hillman, the route to this ‘mythological place’ be it Home, Paradise, Heaven, Eden or the Elysian Fields, [is] by death of reality “and by ending the flow of time” (Hillman, 1999, 126). I would argue that the return home for the immigrant is also a myth and is situated in mythological, illusory time. The ‘old country’ is not the same country we left; time has passed there equally with time in the new country. The reality is that time has not stood still in the matrix, in the old country. It is not set in amber like an insect from the Palaeocene and there is no atavistic persona available. I seek to situate this experience of ‘desire to return to the past’ within the paradigm of the \textit{rites de passage} and discover that because of its chimerical quality, it slips easily into the (multiple) passages between liminality and integration and thus serves multiple purposes of being situated in the meta-thesis of this writing; in the domain of time and memory, and in the \textit{rites de passage}. The passages within passages of this section of the \textit{rites de passage} are explored as they arise and more fully in the chapter on integration that follows.

In conceiving the memory of ‘home’ as a myth, I consider the notion of selective forgetting in the context of immigration. Perhaps the quirk of selectively forgetting wretched and regretful circumstances and events in Rhodesia is a form of defence, or psychic survival in Australia. The good things come to mind unbidden, and, as with so much of memory, are often related to small and
seemingly insignificant events and occasions and sometimes it is like remembering a Utopia. No place is wholly Utopian as no place is wholly Dystopian—except in remembering, mis-remembering, and forgetting. Milan Kundera finds words in many languages that link homesickness, memory and nostalgia with the pain of not experiencing what is longed for (Kundera, 2002, passim). In the event, it seems the context of the remembering is crucial, and who it is that is doing the selective remembering (or selective forgetting). The knowledge that accompanies the remembering, mis-remembering and forgetting must, indeed, change. In the context of the integration/aggregation period in *rites de passage* the knowledge of the new and adopted ‘home’ will, using this hypothesis, be created from the elements of previous knowledge of ‘home’. Papastergiadis cites Mircea Eliade who defines the traditional home as the axis point, the *Axis Mundi*, that secures the unity between the domestic and the spiritual, “a link that connected the individual vertically in time to ancestry and horizontally in space to kin…”. He refers to this point in the axis as “the ontological reconciliation” (Papastergiadis, 1998, 5). The vertical/horizontal (or ontological reconciliation) identification of home as being where the spiritual and domestic spheres meet, is reiterated by John Berger. He places the space of home in the crosshairs, at the core of the world, when he defines home as “… being the center of the world because it was the place where a vertical line crossed with a horizontal one” (Berger, 1984, 56). And I reiterate my question from the previous chapter: Where is my *Axis Mundi* now; the new matrix that, as a liminal persona, a neophyte, and an immigrant I search for most of all?
Drawing on my research and writing experience, the myth of the Eternal Return relates also to the temporal paradigms that inhabit my work and how I am able to move between them like a time traveller—because I am the author and I have the power to do so—and because moments in time are contemporaneous, being “[Not] … two successive moments, but rather two elements which coexist …” (Lloyd, 1993, 107). Issues of time as a trope are appropriate in this chapter on memory because it is, often, memories that we are pursuing when we return to our place of origin; when we return ‘home’. Time reckoning systems are generally conventional, that is to say, socially constructed, “Despite our common tendency to reify them, they all represent unmistakably sociotemporal (rather than strictly physiotemporal or biotemporal) arrangements and are therefore by no means inevitable” (Zerubavel, 1997, 106). Schacter refers to remembering as being “mental time travel” and notes that it is “… truly remarkable [that] as rememberers, we can free ourselves from the immediate constraints of time and space, reexperiencing the past and projecting ourselves into the future at will” (Schacter, 1996, 17) and this is affirmed in the Deleuzean interpretation already posited. But the immigrant who suffers from ‘expensive migrant sickness’ takes the mental time travel into the physical and there are few who are not disappointed.

Returning home for the immigrant is, of necessity, a return doomed to failure. In the *rites de passage* (which is the trope of immigration in my hypothesis), there is no return. Once the process of passage has begun, there is no return. While there may be a physical return, spiritually as the change continues, there is none—any more than an old woman can become a young girl again, or a dead person rise up.
“After the migrant leaves home, he never finds another place where the two life lines cross. The vertical line exists no more…” (Berger, 1984, 56). There is no more original *Axis Mundi*, the axis does not immigrate with the immigrant. Does there exist, in this hypothesis of immigration as *rites de passage*, a way to re-cross the ‘two life lines’ and recreate an axis? Perhaps, in the complex auxiliary section of *rites de passage* between liminality and integration, a place where there is a “… temporal interruption […] This is the integration of the individual across the time span of the life cycle, so that a retrieval of a sense of personal integration is achieved” (Myerhof, 1992, 187). Thus, I reiterate, the myth of a return home fits well between the liminal sector and re-aggregation, a space that has been flagged earlier. There are other issues that arise during this period that need to be teased out.

The use of the term matrix is [re]considered. While matrix is ordinarily a mathematical term it is a word that can be used in other ways. The dictionary definition conjures up ideas: *the cavity in which anything is formed; that in which anything is embedded as ground mass; a mould* etcetera (Chambers 20th Century Dictionary). In the sense of the matrix as cited above, and possibly on a conscious level, this is a yearning to return to the *ground mass*. The geographical, the real, the physical ground mass. Look further and find it is not only the ground mass but the whole context of our origins, “… we are all pre-written to a great extent, born in a specific place, to specific parents, within a specific historical context, with particular physical characteristics. We have no control over these accidents, yet they pre-form our life trajectories…” (Bottomley, 1994, 64). The memories of the sights, smells, and sounds of the homeland are often felt viscerally, and these
memories are invoked at slight stimulus as has been eloquently recorded by the French novelist and critic, Marcel Proust. I have noticed that, even when I read stories set in Southern Africa, that it is as evocative as smelling the smells and hearing the sounds, and my emotional connections to my matrix re-surfaces.

I can hear the men around the camp fire singing softly, taking it in turns to pick up a tune, the rhythm as strong as blood in a body … and there is the sweet smell of the African bush, wood smoke, dust, sweat. My bones are so sharp and thin against the sleeping bag that they hurt me and I must cover my hip bones with my hands. I make a vow never to leave Africa (Fuller, 2002, 184).

We do leave, and then some of us pine to return. Alexandra Fuller lives in the United States now. For Marlene the urge to return came suddenly, when I asked her if she had every longed to return she replied, “I did, it suddenly hit me when the kids were little. I really had a longing to go back, I had a longing.” Marlene spoke about an “ache, probably about ten years after we had been here, there was this real ache to head back to Africa … Not that I had anything to take me back, we had no family or anything there, there was just this ache for Africa. And yet I don’t have it now. But, you know, it was the smell of Africa, the animals. It’s the feeling, I don’t know. But you know it is where you’re born, it’s what you know, it’s the familiarity.”

The emotional component—the subjectivity—of homesickness is undeniable. Of course the ‘expensive migrant sickness’ is homesickness. The expensive part comes when, the immigrant, or immigrants, in this case my husband and I, decide to return to the old country. How do we justify this to ourselves? In retrospect this is confused and I can only think we were befuddled with homesickness and vivid, albeit selective, memories of ‘home’. Amongst our arguments I can remember
how we discussed over and over again the fascination Africa held, memories of exotic events, continual change, and the danger that made life in Australia seem banal and dull. What were the reasons we left Australia? We found that life in Perth did not hold the excitement we remembered in Africa. There was none of the vivacity we knew from home—or if there was, we didn’t recognise it as such. Life was routine, get up, go to work, come home, cook, eat and watch TV, and then go to bed. Many of the things that attracted us back to Africa were, I can see now, reasons why we left in the first place. But, we chose to restructure our remembering because we wanted to return home to the time/period before we had left. On reflection, perhaps that is how some misremembering is evoked. Perhaps this acting on the fantastical remembering is trying to make the “mental time travel” manifest; in any event, our return to Africa was doomed to failure.

Although we had, more than once, returned to Africa on holiday, the big move, which took place in 1991, was a disaster. As we landed at Harare we knew that we had made an extremely silly move. There was joy at being back in Africa but in my heart I knew we could not, would not, stay. This was not home, I had no memories of this new place, it was no longer my axis. I ponder, now, on what we were expecting, really expecting. Did we imagine that we would return to a time before we had left? That our house would be waiting with all our bits and pieces intact? Long dead pets waiting patiently at the gate? How naïve of us if that was the case. How fanciful and how solid the—how do I describe the qualities of memory?—imperceptible qualities of remembering had seemed. As I have previously suggested, home, especially in Africa, is not set in amber like an insect from the Palaeocene. In the event, we remained in Africa (Zimbabwe and South
Africa) for four months before returning home to Australia on Australia Day 1992. The exercise did cost us upwards of $20,000 (thus fulfilling the ‘twenty thousand dollar cure’) that we could ill afford and, when we returned to Australia, we had to start again. That is the financial part of the expensive migration sickness. However, good things also came from the experience. I learned a lot, I changed my direction in life, and it is easier now to block the impulse to return to Africa. Usually I can anticipate the urge, I know the triggers (the weather, photographs, news of old friends) and use them to examine my process. I did return in 1996/97 to do field work for Honours; but I doubt that I will ever return to live in Africa.

About the impossibility of returning home after emigrating the compelling words written by John Berger echo our experience. He writes, “Every migrant knows in his [sic] heart of hearts that it is impossible to return. Even if he is physically able to return, he does not truly return, because he himself has been so deeply changed by his emigration” (1984, 67). But, you do it all the same, even if it means scrimping and saving for the fare, selling your home for below its true value—because it doesn’t matter what other people may tell you—the impossibility of returning home is something you have to find out for yourself. There is poetry in the yearning, and beauty too …

We woke up in a friend’s house where there was a piano. We had slept on a mattress on the floor. The piano was in the room below. The two children of the house were playing an exercise before going to school. An exercise for four hands. Sometimes they stumbled and began the phrase again … Waking up to that music played lightly and dutifully by the children before going to school was the nearest we shall ever be, my heart, to waking up at home before we left (Berger, 1984, 99).
Psychologists Grinberg and Grinberg comment that often the desire to return ‘home’ is when the migrant discovers that his (sic) integration in the new country can never be one hundred percent. They say “It is at that juncture that he (sic) toys with the fantasy of going back to his country, in search of lost roots” (1989, 176). It is this disequilibrium of identity where, as a migrant, one is neither part of the old country nor, yet, part of the new that this dilemma serves to instigate a persistent state of anomie for many migrants. I question where, in the *rites de passage*, this notion of anomie fits and find that is in this shadowy, auxiliary space that I have added, this is where the success or failure of integration may take place. For some immigrants, the state of anomie and depression (or is that a manifestation of the underlying anomie?) seems to take the place of continually and morbidly remembering Africa. For some, what appears to be a pathological loathing of Australia is evident. I ponder if this correlates to the comment that “Exiles look at non-exiles with resentment. They belong in their surroundings, you feel, whereas an exile is always out of place. What is it like to be born in a place, to stay and live there, to know that your are of it, more or less forever?” (Said, 2001, 180-181). In retrospect, I am reminded of how I was in Rhodesia. It was the place I where I was born and for most of my young life, it was the place I ‘knew’ I would stay, live in, more or less forever.

The preceding form of obsessive remembering (as anomie) is illustrated among the migrant community (such as it is) where there is a clique that continually remembers Rhodesia—to the utter boredom of everyone else. These people, as I have described them on page 111, are generally called ‘when-wes’, as in, “When we were in Rhodesia …”. It seems that the when-wes are not confined to
Australia for Sarah, who experienced Albany as being in a time warp, when speaking about a return trip to Harare said, “I went back to Harare for a Rotarian luncheon, and they’ve put the clock back thirty years. They have not progressed mentally, physically or in any way whatsoever. Those colonialists, the when-wes, are still there at Rotary”. So, the unattractive propensity to reminisce *ad nauseam* about the past is happening there as well!

How do the women in my study feel about returning ‘home’ to Africa, to live, or to visit? I asked Sarah if she ever wanted to go back to Africa to live. She replied, “I never want to go back to Africa [to live]. That’s the difference, because the good in Australia outweighs the bad:

Eleanor: But do you miss Africa?
Sarah: Oh, terribly! I go back virtually every year. Well, for three-and-a-half years I never took a break when I worked on the farm, and then from the time they told me I was going to be in a wheelchair, I thought I’ve got to get away; I’ve got to get away from everything and clear my mind. It all starts with my mind. So, I went to the farm where I was born and brought up, my brother’s place in Zambia. And I stayed there for five weeks, I could only walk fifty metres when I got there, but I could walk five kilometres when I left. The doctors in Perth didn’t want to let me go but it was the very best thing I ever did.

I asked Marlene if she had been back to visit Zimbabwe. She was animated in her response. She said, “I haven’t been back. I haven’t been back so I’ve no idea of what it is like now. I’ve visited the airport on that round-the-world trip and burst into tears when I landed there, just because of the smells and everything. But I’ve never been back to see what it’s like now. No, no.”

Betty said, “When I go back to South Africa, I actually feel quite alien. I truly feel that I have moved on, I have gone in a completely different direction the things that are important to me in my life are not important to, even my brothers. I find
huge differences, huge, almost to the point where we have almost lost touch, which is really sad.”

When I interviewed Amy, she asked me when last I had been in Zimbabwe. I told her, “I was there for Christmas of 1996 and I came back to Australia in January 1997. I was there for about six weeks. It was really weird because I was by myself. All by myself! And back into my core family and just sort of being a sister again … going back as a single person you know. And everybody, all my family, tried immediately to categorise me as the person who left there so many years before. And I wasn’t that person at all. It was very difficult; I spent most of the time in tears.”

Those individuals who make up parts of a diaspora, have been referred to as “passengers in a project” (Papastergiadis, 1998, 5). And I find that there is a similarity, being—or feeling like—a passenger and being a visitor, returning to one’s homeland. I recollect how I referred to myself during my solo return visit to Zimbabwe; each time I was offered a choice of activity or of destination, I would say, “I am a passenger here, the choice is not mine!” Of course, in this situation is the issue of returning ‘home’ to a place that is now strange to me and not ‘home’ at all. I did not have any memory of the new places, and new names for places I did remember. I did not know where I wanted to go. In the context of returning as a visitor, albeit to do field work, I find an echo of my fieldwork trip in anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston, who also returned ‘home’ to do research. Hurston’s return to her home town “… had such an impact on Hurston’s psyche that she could not simply transcribe the material uncovered there as though it were only scientific data. It was vividly connected in her mind to habits of being
and a way of life” (hooks, 1990, 141). In her words, I find a reflection of my pilgrimages into the past—into the mythological area of ‘the eternal return’. I ponder on this, and I find that more deeply felt is the realisation of the infinite complexity of the present—that can only be as it is because of the past.

Eventually the return visits, the ‘expensive migrant sickness’, and the rest, become memories. Recollections we can remember, mis-remember, and forget. The yearning to return fades as we begin to share a history with the people around us. There is a place for us now we can remember events here—we can say to our neighbours, “Remember when!” and they know about the event; a shared history. The liminality of our position shrinks as we make the transition from immigrant to integrant. When it happens, we can successfully make the separation and can integrate into Australian life so this becomes home. For our children and grandchildren Australia is home, and for many of them it is the only one they know. Africa is no more their home than the places my parents knew before I was born are mine. I wonder what they will re-member of our memories of Africa? The stories and memories that are passed on to them, tales told at Christmas, weddings, births and deaths; “Remember when …”. It is only in the recounting that the memories are evoked, it is only what I’ve been told, and what I have chosen to imagine that I can tell.
Chapter Eight

Integration: A real Aussie [at last]

To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul (Simone Weil).

He made it clear that though proud of his roots, his migration had been a mission accomplished (Obituary notice, West Australian newspaper, 17 January 2003).

The final stage in the *rites de passage* is that of integration. Having persistently defined my hypothesis of the differences between assimilation and integration in earlier chapters, the notion of integration as the final step in *rites de passage* culminates/consummates the process. However, elements of assimilation remain and sometimes the final step into integration does not happen, leaving the liminal persona faltering on the threshold, in a locale—an Escher-like space—within the passage that I have referred to as assimilation in liminality.

In this chapter, I examine rites of integration—of recognising self-integration and becoming an ‘Australian’. I determine the experiences the women in this study have had of the official processes involved in gaining Australian citizenship and
the validation bestowed by a public ceremony. I discuss whether the subsequent aggregation is an integration recognised by the Australian-born as well as by members of the immigrant community, and the polarities within this confirmation. To support the hypothesis of reciprocal recognition (or lack of reciprocal recognition), I draw on some parallel occasions that occurred during the white settlement of Southern Rhodesia. Among the parallels explored are issues of ‘ownership’ of being an Australian (as previously defined), or a ‘Rhodesian’ in the colonial sense and I look at who is excluded from being/belonging, and why. The examination is general, and the material are drawn from sources that include the literature of white settlement in Rhodesia and my own perceptions of migrants in both Rhodesia and Australia. The topic of ‘not making the cut’ segues into this failure/reluctance to integrate—which may be self-imposed or ascribed by the host society. More overtly and in a general way, the reasons for exclusion of ‘ownership’ are likely to include language and obvious cultural differences.

The topic of the myth of eternal return that I explored in the previous chapter, and reflexivity (in postmodern terms) is apparent, pentimento, in this chapter. The official/bureaucratic recognition of integration, that is, naturalisation, takes place after a number of years of residency. All the immigrant women in this study have completed the naturalisation process for various reasons and these become apparent as the chapter unfolds.

The epigraph that leads into this chapter comes from an obituary in the West Australian newspaper (17 January 2003). The obituary is for Joseph Fenech, an
immigrant from Malta in 1954 when he was a teenager. One paragraph in the obituary is of particular interest to me and relevant to this chapter; “On trips back to Malta … and while hosting family visitors from the island, he made it clear that though proud of his roots, his migration had been a mission accomplished” (Cornish, 2003).

The success of the transfer from the liminal stage of the *rites de passage*, to integrant, may not always be successful. Occasionally the longing for home and the idea that things were better in the old country persist. The grieving process mentioned by Bolivian immigrant Ms Espinosa and psychologists already cited (Ferrari, 1998; Grinberg and Grinberg, 1989) is, for some, pervasive and enduring. The acceptance of being in Australia for Ms Espinosa came only after she returned to Bolivia and realised the reasons for leaving in the first place (in Ferrari, 1998). There is, in her experience, an echo of my own. The initial stage of incorporation can, as I have indicated, be seen as a passage within a passage. Arnold van Gennep attempts to define these ambiguous spaces, and in his words, the metaphorical bricolage again appears. He writes of “ceremonial patterns where the transitional period is sufficiently elaborated to constitute an independent state, [and] the arrangement is reduplicated (van Gennep, 1960, 11). For immigrants, the negotiation of integration is continual, and the activities fluctuate spatially and in time and attitude. Many neophytes make complex and unpredictable arrangements in their attempt to cross the (multiple) boundaries from an ambiguous, transitional, “independent state” to a permanent inclusion/incorporation in the new society. For others, if the totality of becoming an Australian is, or appears to be, unattainable, and the severing from the country
of birth is palpable, the attachment to the matrix remains—in dreams, secret grieving, private thoughts—and if these do manifest it may be in the pathological diagnosis of depression.

Immigrants may see the continual/persistent crossing and negotiation of boundaries as being imposed on them by the dominant group in the host society. Thus, the comment that, “… *immigrants* had to be made aware that they were crossing boundaries and that, indeed, they would never stop crossing boundaries all their lives” (emphasis in original) (Gunew, 1990, 111), is consistent with my hypothesis. However, I suggest that the inversion of this statement is also relevant. By this I mean that the pre-settled host (the dominant group in the host society) has also to negotiate boundaries vis-à-vis the immigrant. These negotiations are necessary to retain/maintain the status quo. I suggest that these (usually) covert and devious negotiations are a double-edged blade because the process of acculturation that occurs over time (using a linear model of time) shifts the boundaries, willy-nilly, until the previously well-defined boundary is obscured.

One of the questions that arises from an immigrant’s continual negotiation of boundaries is this: what happens when immigrants want to integrate and are not allowed to by the attitude of the dominant group (in this case the Anglo-Australian) and does this reflect the colonial experience? Looking at the literature on the settlement of Rhodesia, I reiterate the following comment by Frank Clements who found the Greek community in Southern Rhodesia to be “vulnerable in the white society” (Clements, 1969, 72). And to illustrate my
hypothesis that acceptability is something that is conferred and not claimed, I re-examine Clements citation pertaining to the Greek war hero who was black balled from the Salisbury Club, with no reasons given but, by inference, “… because ‘dagos’ and ‘yids’ were as unacceptable as ‘coolies’” (Clements, 1969, 73). The cited episode draws into my hypothesis evolving notions of acceptability, assimilation, and marginalisation, and this requires me to return to the structure of my study. The layering of the material in/on the panels of the triptych—and of the triptych itself—is discernible (as palimpsest) throughout the writing and shows the imbrication of ideas, histories, memories, and identities. In these passages, the past returns as another nexus for acceptability, assimilation, and marginalisation. I ask myself, what constitutes the certainty that a person has been accepted into the society, and does the perception of acceptance differ between individuals? Is acceptance when a person can be mistaken for a member of the dominant culture, and wants to be? Is it when a person has embraced enough of the dominant culture for it to matter and be hurtful when unequivocal acceptance into that culture is not forthcoming? This is clarified by Clements’ example, cited above and elsewhere in this work, of the man who was good enough to fight for the British but was unacceptable to join the snobbish Salisbury Club and who was therefore, unacceptable in Rhodesian colonial society—because of his ethnicity. The dissimulation inherent in this attitude is evident and Bhabha’s comment that “… the Other only becomes ‘one of us’ in death” (Bhabha, 1994, 174) suggests that, had the man been killed in action, he probably would have been accepted and honoured. That the war hero returned his medals and decorations to Queen Elizabeth II was only considered remarkable in that it was publicised (Clements, 1969, 73). The paradox is, the dominant culture – whether in colonial Africa or
postcolonial Australia, always requires integration, but does not always confer acceptance. The notions of assimilation that I have previously indicated are, I believe, supported by this interpretation. In other words, if the immigrant can pretend to comply—a performance of compliance—the likelihood of being disappointed in integration is, thereby, reduced and the psychic identification mentioned by Bhabha—when the other only becomes ‘one’ of us’ in death—is not compromised.

There is no ‘real’ Australia[n] waiting to be uncovered. A national identity is an invention (White, 1981, viii).

It seems to me that the more the situation in Zimbabwe breaks down, the more Australian I feel. I meditate on this and consider; is this part of integration, this sense that the destruction of my matrix is discharging me to be someone or something else. During the years (since 1998) that I have been working on my doctorate, three of my siblings have immigrated (with their spouses) to Western Australia. During this time the rapid decline in living standards in Zimbabwe for both white and black Zimbabweans has been compounded by the denial of citizenship for white Zimbabweans: furthermore, personal danger, and the corruption of the government has accelerated. All these factors (and more) were the catalyst for their leaving Africa and moving to Australia. And, whilst I was never forcibly removed from my home, I recognise in their move many of the same reasons we left that country in 1977, and there is also the reflection upon the fact of my paternal grandparents leaving Bulgaria in 1907-8. However, the arrival of my siblings in Western Australia has allowed me to venture into exploring how much more Australian I am – have become – and how much less Rhodesian. In
exploring the discharge of my previous identity as connected to the deterioration of my remembered matrix, I asked my younger sister if she understood the feeling of becoming ‘more’ Australian as Zimbabwe deteriorated. I said to her, “The worse the situation gets in Zimbabwe, the more Australian I become” and she agreed with me, unreservedly. So, when I read the letter from my Australian friend Robin, who wrote to me after transcribing Betty’s taped interview, that “… [it] feels as though Betty is saying she has left the best part of her life in Africa”, I understand that the life that has been left behind belongs in the matrix, and it does seem, sometimes, to be ‘the best part’. But then I reread the words I wrote when reflecting on my undergraduate years at university in Australia, from 1993 to 1995: “The three years I spent as an undergraduate were the happiest of my adult life. This was the beginning of a continuing journey in awareness and self-knowledge’ (Venables; De Reuck and Ahjum, 2001, 239). So, for me, the memories of childhood remain in Rhodesia, and I know there is no return to that state.

Robin’s letter continues: “There seems [sic] to be no personal positive feelings about being in Australia – the positives are focused on the boys, and the positiveness of the decision to leave. They have no roots in this country and one could say they are ‘rootless’ but it seems they are firmly ‘rooted’ in Africa, does this inhibit a person from settling or is it an unsolvable?” (Personal Correspondence). From my own interpretation of Betty’s interview I tend to disagree with Robin’s analysis, and in considering this I realise it is because she, Robin, has never left her matrix, she has never been transplanted. The roots we send down when we immigrate to Australia are of a different consistency than
those that sink into African earth. Therefore, whether Betty has ‘taken root’ in
Australia is part of her own experience and, no doubt, the feeling of being
Australian fluctuates. Nevertheless, it seems that the very ambiguity of being an
immigrant is meaningful. There is no hard rule to say each day I feel like an
‘Australian’ or I feel like an ‘outsider’: it is the constant negotiation with the
society that confers the feelings of belonging, not belonging, or being an observer
in the margin. The negotiation of borders, whether marginal or central is, as Sneja
Gunew has posited, something that (as immigrants) we are required to do, and:
“By definition, to be a new Australian [was] to be a boundary crosser, a
transgressor, in the eyes of those who like to think that they had already been
t/here (emphasis in original) (Gunew, 1990, 111). The transient and migratory
nature of society appears in mimesis in quotidian experiences and I have come to
believe that this daily negotiation is not exclusive to immigrants.

What about the children and grandchildren that are born once the immigrants
have settled here? Children and grandchildren serve, I believe, to encourage the
blurring of boundaries between the pre-settled white Australians and the new
Australians, the immigrants. Connecting to people in the new society through the
immigrant’s children is illustrated in the Australian context by Anna-Maria
Dell’oso who was born in Australia of Italian parents. I find in her words a treble
image—Anna-Maria as a child assisting (albeit reluctantly) her mother to
connect, in this case with other Italian women; Anna-Maria as author re-
membering the connection, and the third image is of Anna-Maria as an
adult/author returning to school to re-learn the Italian language:
A “Sekon Langwide”, as the middle aged ladies who chatted with Mamma outside Woolworths would say to me, was a Good Thing to have … I’d scuff my heels into the pavement and scowl as Mamma worriedly confided that, yes, Anna-Maria’s English was good now but the family had difficulty getting me to speak Italian these days (Dell'oso, 1987, 26).

Anna-Maria Dell’oso’s critique of the enforced assimilation in Australia in the 1950s is reminiscent of the [self]-enforced assimilation that happened in my own family where my grandfather commanded his children not to speak Russian anymore, but to speak English “without an accent”. I have cited this incident in chapter three: *The beginning is not at Perth Airport*.

The pattern of acculturation through children is nicely portrayed by Marlene, who arrived in Australia in 1980 at the age of twenty-one, and unmarried. Marlene’s transformation into being an Australian began, it seems, after the birth of her two children in Australia. The epiphany/metanoia occurred when she took an ‘around the world’ holiday with her husband (who is also ex-Africa, from Kenya) and gave her cause to consider, if not her burgeoning Australian-ness, certainly her separation from her former Rhodesian-ness, which process had evolved stealthily as her memories of Africa faded into the immediacy of life in Australia. During our interview we spoke about Australian-ness and questioned how it felt to be ‘Australian’, and if we were ‘real Australians’ based on our own experiences of Australians in Australia.

Marlene: I rejected the Australian [identity] for quite a while, probably twelve or fifteen years. [I] really fought that. If people asked me, where are you from, I’d say I’m from Africa but I live in Australia. That’s really interesting.
Eleanor: So it is only fairly recently that you …
Marlene: Probably when I went overseas with John about three years ago [in 1997].
Eleanor: Was that your round-the-world trip?
Marlene: Mmm. That sort of opened my eyes and I thought gee, we are so lucky living where we live, because I had the kids and I hadn’t been overseas for fifteen years probably. So, yeah I really still felt we had the cringe factor here, if you know what I
mean. And yet when I went and travelled the rest of the world, I thought, no, we were the ones who had got it right. We’ve got a fantastic lifestyle, and that was when I finally thought, yes, I’m proud to be Australian.

There is a note of self-reflection in Marlene’s response when she remembers how she used to say “I’m from Africa but I live in Australia” and then she adds, as if surprised at her own words, “That’s really interesting.” This indicates to me that, although she had thought about this, she probably had not spoken about it before; and it was when I asked her if she felt ‘African’ or ‘Australian’ that she realised the significance of her transformation from immigrant to integrant. For myself and, seemingly, in this instance Marlene as well, the insight of having a self-recognisable Australian identity effects a beginning of belonging and this is how I understand the text. The conceit of those people who claim ownership of Australians-ness to exclude others is, I believe, similar to the arrogance of whiteness. By this I mean it is the unremarked self-assumed norm that names the other, it is the god trick that Donna Haraway describes as a claim of “… power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation” (Haraway, 1988, 581). So, when I research the literature surrounding Australian identity, I find multicultural writers writing of their experiences and defining Australian-ness, and self-proclaimed ‘Australians’ dismissing this as migrant writing (Gunew, 1984; Gunew, 1994), and (Andreoni, 1984) with the insinuation that it is not ‘Australian’. Where ‘Australians’ do take the opportunity to define themselves, there is a tendency to ridicule the idiosyncrasies of their identities: for example the recent 2002 and 2003 [docu]comedy Kath and Kim showing on ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) television. Of course, this begs issues of class, and is beyond the scope of this hypothesis.
The acceptance of integration as an overt position is demonstrated, again, by Marlene further into the interview, and she signals that the advent of children born in Australia seems to ratify the integration. In her response she compares her own disposition and perspectives on life and living, with different attitudes she has observed among Australians:

Marlene: There are Australians who have the same sort of attitude that I have. I will never become like some Australians but I will be like others. I actually would say that I’ve integrated now because my kids are Australians too. Yeah, we are Australians, and they are growing up the Australian way.

Eleanor: And they were both born here, so they are Australian.

Marlene’s observation acknowledges the multiple nature of Australian-ness, and this indicates further evidence of successful integration, because the necessity to imitate in order to assimilate has been resolved in the recognition of individual differences. Her impetuous, albeit superficial, comment that her children are “growing up the Australian way” is, I believe, an adoption/adaptation of what “the Australian way” means to her and her self-discovered identification with Australian-ness. Nevertheless, even in integration, there is a failure to claim ownership of Australian-ness, and I consider if this is because such claims are made on behalf of others—the real Aussies, from the bush?

A child or children born in Africa and immigrating with their English-speaking parents (or parent) to Australia also encourages incorporation/integration into the society. From my own experience, the age of the child at the time of immigration is significant in this respect. Generally speaking, the younger the child the more likely the mother (in particular) will be to make contacts and friends within the community, usually through school and sporting activities.
Betty came to Australia in 1981, having left Zimbabwe very soon after Robert Mugabe came to power, motivated by her fear of becoming a refugee and her husband’s aversion to living in a communist country. I asked Betty about her children and if having school-aged children had assisted her in meeting Australians and integrating into the society:

Eleanor: How many children have you got?
Betty: Three boys.
Eleanor: How old were they when you came to Australia?
Betty: Jack was eleven and Benjamin was nine and Aaron was just six.
Betty: And the women, I met quite a lot of women around, through school, through the clothing shop and I met quite a lot of women. And some of them had children in the same classes or something like that. And there were at least three or four from school who had been kind and I went round [to their homes] and they came to me and that type of thing. And there were the older (sic) women in Penguins [public speaking club] and they came and picked me up and I had some interesting trips you know, to listen to interesting speakers and things like that. The women were kind to me.
Eleanor: And they were older (sic) women?
Betty: Oh yes, absolutely!

Not long after arriving in Australia she moved, with her husband and two of her children, to Kojonup, a small town in the Great Southern district of Western Australia. Betty told me it had taken her some time to make friends and she spoke about acceptance, integration, and belonging:

Betty: But the people in Kojonup; we made lots of lovely friends there, although it took time. I felt like [Sara Dane]. I was watching Sara Dane on the TV at the time, she was having trouble with the women in Sydney who wouldn't accept her, and I felt I knew all about it. People were very friendly, greet you in the street. They’d say, “hello, how are you”, but that's where it stopped.

The active pursuit to belong – with or without Australian-ness – is evident in Betty’s experiences. To help ease her way into the community Betty took up golf and, she said, “I got very involved in the [Anglican] church and in Rotary. So, we got well involved in everything. I had a very busy time but it took me time to get into the groups.” However, there is little respite from the continual negotiation of
borders and the neophyte may falter on the brink of integration; Betty said to me, “After six months that's when it suddenly hits you, this is the rest of my life, hey, I don't know if I can go on like this.” And I understand this sentiment—from a deep, deep part of me.

I discussed with Betty the notion of immigrants from other lands coming into Australia and the impact on their children, the Australianisation of their children. She told me about an immigrant Italian family, neighbours at their first home in Perth, and the coincidences that surround their continuing friendship. Betty explained how the Italian family came to Australia with no English skills, “…they had huge trouble actually communicating in any form of English.” and few belongings, “…they had arrived with nothing, absolutely nothing [from Italy], a few things in a packing box. And their packing boxes were the basis of their furniture just about.” The coincidence of the Italian family purchasing a farm in Kojonup area meant that the friendship continued. Betty said, “We have actually kept contact with them, and then their grand-daughter was a student at Iona where I teach. And I mean the grand-daughter [is] absolutely Australian, totally—although I knew she had Italian, very Italian, grandparents.” There is a reflection in Betty’s story of Anna-Maria Dell’oso—her experience of growing up, feeling herself as an Italian (or Italian-Australian) without her original language (Dell'oso, 1987), and my father’s family in Southern Rhodesia, bereft of their original language, and that is my loss too.

My comment that the age of the child or children is significant in their assisting integration arises from the fact that my daughter was fifteen when we arrived in
Australia. In common with many teenagers, she wanted to be independent and to
discover her new milieu on her own. So, apart from dropping her off at school in
the morning, I had little contact with other parents and the parents of her friends.
In addition, the necessity to work long hours precluded much in the way of
socialising. My experiences are reflected in those of Sarah, who on arrival in
Western Australia, moved immediately to the country. Two of Sarah’s three
children had left school by the time they came to Australia. Sarah holds strong
opinions about private schooling and the standard of education in Australia. She
spoke of her reluctance to immigrate before she could afford to send her children
to private schools in Australia.

Sarah: I only wanted to immigrate when my second child had matriculated. So I got
accepted in March 89 but we only immigrated in January 90 when Maureen had written
matric. So I had two children out of matric. I didn’t like the [public] education system in
Australia, [and] I couldn’t afford to have three children in private schools. [Before I
immigrated] I managed to make a bit more money overseas and I could afford one in a
private school.
Eleanor: Three children? Three girls?
Sarah: No, two girls and a boy.
Eleanor: So when you came over in 1990 you went straight to Denmark? [in the Great
Southern of Western Australia]
Sarah: I went straight to Denmark.
Eleanor: And both your children who had finished school came with you to Australia?
Sarah: All three of my children came. It wasn’t easy for them. We had been here a week
and I put the girls in an apartment that I’d bought in City Beach. I booked one into Carine
[TAFE] to do hospitality, one into Edith Cowan University. And my son, I think we had
been here two days and he went to boarding school, to Hale, and I went to the farm. I
thought I’d see them more but 450 kilometres is a bit much. It had to be a long weekend.
We didn’t see much of each other. Every single holiday they had to work on the farm,
manual labour, with me.
Eleanor: Because it was only you! So you had to do it!
Sarah: Well, I’d never been without my kids. So they were left high and dry and I was
left living alone for the first time in my entire life.

I have already written of some of Sarah’s tribulations in Denmark and this excerpt
from her interview articulates the isolation she felt as a new immigrant separated
from home and family. I cite it here to reflect how the isolation sometimes present
in the liminal stage impinges on the progress towards aggregation and the
consequent situating of self in the Australian context. And Sarah’s story is a reflection/remembrance of a non-English speaking farmer’s wife in colonial Rhodesia: I remember, again, my grandmother’s story about when she lived in the bush, when she had nobody to speak to—and nobody to listen to—apart from Papa and the children. Her isolation was not self-imposed, it was because she had no way of communicating either with the indigenous Africans—her white skin and language were an impenetrable barrier—or the white settlers because she did not ‘belong’, her language and cultural differences were strange and therefore unacceptable to the colonial Rhodesians. These examples portray the fact that the immigrant’s passage to belonging is beset with obstacles, and strewn with undefined boundaries that continuously require negotiation (Gunew, 1990).

Vivian came to Australia in the early 1960s, via Canada and California. Seven of Vivian’s children were born overseas and two were born in Perth. Her husband left her when the youngest child was two-and-a-half and they had been in Western Australia for four-and-a-half years. She said, “I had a wonderful time being married to him and an even better time afterwards!” Her place while she was married to him, she said, was in the home. Vivian said that because she had children in school she was able to meet the other parents; she said she involved herself in things like “tuck-shop duty and the Parents Teachers Association” and this was part of her progress in integrating. Vivian says she enjoyed having a lot of children. As part of the integration process after her husband deserted her, Vivian revived her professional skills and established a consultancy with another architect. The irony is, as Vivian said, was that “I became a bigger and better architect than if he hadn’t left me”.

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Amy and her family spent some time living in Melbourne in 1976 and in Canberra from 1979 until moving to Western Australia in 1982. Amy chose to situate herself in the home and in our conversation she said, “I’m the kind of person who quite enjoys being at home”. Being placed in the home, Amy found having children (two, both of whom were born when in Rhodesia) a means of making friends. She had established family in Australia: “I had family here, I had two sisters and a brother who had already immigrated. And [I also had] some cousins who had migrated here sometime before”. This is possibly why she says she did not feel lonely “in Australia”:

Eleanor: And so when you arrived here [in Perth] Patrick would have been about eight?  
Amy: Yes he was.  
Eleanor: Did you find that, because of him being in school, that you could, that you made friends with the other mothers? Were you lonely?  
Amy: Yes. No I wasn’t [lonely] actually. I was, um, I was never very lonely in Australia, I think because the kids were just about going to school … I just got involved in school things. And, um, I’m the kind of person who quite enjoys being at home. You know, I don’t have to be out having a career all the time, I’m quite a ‘home-body’ so, um, so I was never really lonely.

Clare said “I have lived in Oz since 1969 though, so consider myself Australian now”. And, how do we come to consider ourselves as Australians? There is the important factor of bureaucratic recognition, the right to vote, and the advantage of a ‘real’ passport.

_Therefore to cross the threshold is to unite oneself with a new world _(van Gennep, 1960, 20).

The successful transfer into this, incorporation, the final stage of _rites de passage_ is marked in the following example, by festive celebrations on 26 January, Australia Day. Each year, shortly before Australia Day, I receive in the mail an
invitation to view the Lotto Skyworks, held annually on the banks of the Swan River, with ex-Rhodesian friends. The ‘Butler Bash’ (a ‘corporate’ picnic) is held on the Perth foreshore and a large number of people are invited—not all ex-Rhodesians and ex-Zimbabweans. Listed in the invitation for 2003, in ‘what to bring’, is “… as many friends as you wish, it is a great opportunity to share the wonderful feeling of being Australian with good friends” (my emphasis) (Personal Correspondence).

Once the designated time of residency in Australia has been fulfilled, there are incentives for most immigrants to take up Australian citizenship. The question is, is it solely a pragmatic exercise that motivates us, as immigrants from Africa, to take Australian citizenship? The reason I pose this question becomes apparent in the experiences of the women in the study and is augmented by stories and anecdotes I have collected from my persistent scrutiny of immigrants from Africa. The topic of integration shows that the ceremony of naturalisation fits neatly into the aggregation/reaggregation stage, also called the ‘incorporation’ and ‘emergence’, the final stage of rites de passage, elegantly noted as “[the] detachment of ritual subjects from their old places in society and return them, inwardly transformed and outwardly changed, to new places” (Turner, Victor, 1977c, 36). It is the ceremony of naturalisation, the conferral of citizenship that marks the official recognition of integration but, as I have already indicated, the temporal parameters are fluid. Nowadays, the Department of Migration and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) urges immigrants to take Australian citizenship. The banner on the government website urges “There’s never been a better time to become an Australian Citizen” (www.citizenship.gov.au) and the advertising
campaign appears on all television channels (2003). Linking this to the hypothesis previously mooted in this study that the satisfaction offered by compliance “… is due to the social effect of accepting influence” (emphasis in original) (Kelman, 1958, 53), indicates that compliance allows the immigrant to belong in the society. In the context of taking Australian citizenship, I believe that the tacit coercion present in the government’s persuasion is the perceived social effect motivating the process of naturalisation, the effect presented being that the immigrant will then belong in the society. Therefore, the nexus between coercion and compliance is clear, and the view of which one it is (coercion or compliance) depends on the observer. There is hidden in this tacit coercion an indication that “… people are induced to want to do what they must do. In this sense ritual action is akin to a sublimation process, and one would not be stretching language unduly to say that its symbolic behaviour actually “creates” society for pragmatic purposes …” (Turner, 1974, 56). The perception of public rituals being tacit controlling factors in the creation of society is reiterated by Terence Turner and the notion of reflected image is apparent in this passage:

[R]ituals are able to serve as mechanisms for exercising [such] control because they directly model, in their own structures, the hierarchical mechanism of control that forms an intrinsic part of the structure of the situations in question. The structure of ritual action, in other worlds (sic), directly embodies its own principle of effectiveness” (Turner, Terence S, 1977. 61-62).

Official recognition bestowed on the neophyte with the oath swearing ceremony, certificate of citizenship, and the celebration that follows incorporates the attendant public acknowledgment of the change of status. Comparing the Australian naturalisation ceremony with the traditional ceremonies of rites de passage, it seems that not much has changed and even the sophistication with
which modern ceremonies are imbued is reflected and when scratching the surface of the modern ceremony, there appear, pentimento, shadows of past rituals of passage and incorporation.

I consider my own experience of the naturalisation ceremony and, when I question the women in my sample about theirs, it is clear that many of the components concomitant to the completion of the rites of incorporation, are present. The recognition of integration that is granted to the neophyte in the ceremony of initiation/incorporation is as intrinsic in the traditional *rites de passage* as it is in the Australian naturalisation ceremony. The neophyte Australian must stand in front of authorised officials; the mayor; a member of parliament; civic councillors and other invited ‘witnesses’. The neophyte Australian must be seen by these witnesses to ceremonially make the move from immigrant to integrant by attending the ceremony in an authorised location; by swearing the oath of allegiance, and by receiving a gift that is a token of belonging. Besides Victor Turner and Arnold van Gennep, indications as to the relevance of ritual and ceremony in incorporation are noted, among others, in (Anderson, 1983; Connerton, 1989) and, obliquely, in (Douglas, 1983).

I asked the women in my sample these questions: “Why did you take up Australian citizenship?” and “When did you take up Australian citizenship?” and I note that all of us have completed the naturalisation process. I asked other immigrants from Africa the same questions and on each occasion, when they have told me their experiences, there is an air of relief/achievement that they have accomplished this important ritual that recognises their integration. The reasons to
take Australian citizenship vary from case to case and for some the reasons seem, at first glance, to be altogether pragmatic, an exercise in expediency. But, even for these somewhat cynical ex-patriots, there is evidence of the desire to ‘belong’ in the new society. Among the points that are relevant to belonging, and being seen to belong, are the responsibilities inherent in being an Australian citizen, and these are set out in the ‘citizenship application package’ obtainable from DIMIA, and for which the immigrant applies, prior to an interview with an official from DIMIA. I flag the interview procedure here and will elaborate on this in due course.

Primarily, however, there is in the privilege of becoming an Australian citizen the international recognition of being a citizen of a ‘real’ country and, for an ex-Rhodesian, the knowledge that one is no longer one of the world’s pariahs. Associated with this affiliation is, of course, the convenience of having a passport that is recognised internationally. I found this aspect of taking Australian citizenship crucial in my own experience. I arrived here as a citizen of Rhodesia—a country which no longer existed—on an out-of-date Rhodesian passport (which, even if it hadn’t expired, was invalid almost everywhere in the world at that time with the exceptions of South Africa, Greece and Switzerland). The Australian Resident visa attached to the passport allowed me (and my daughter who was included on my passport) entry into Australia as immigrants. When we arrived here at the beginning of 1982 the regulatory period of residency, before applying for citizenship, was three years, thus making us eligible for citizenship early in 1985. In retrospect, I tend to think we assumed that the obligatory time of residency before naturalisation was the same as in South
Africa, that is, five years. However, early in 1985 the required time of residency in Australia (before naturalisation) was changed to two years and when this adjustment was brought to our notice (in the newspaper) we applied for citizenship forthwith. Once completed, this step would give us the right to vote, hold an Australian passport and be, to all intents and purposes, ‘Australians’ with all the privileges and attendant responsibilities.

The process after submitting the application for citizenship takes some time and, as a family unit, we were summoned to attend an official interview with a representative of (what is now called) DIMIA and which, I presume, was to ensure we were who we said we were, and that our residency credentials were bona fide. Prior to the interview we had been sent brochures that listed our rights as Australians and also the responsibilities that being an Australian citizen entailed and we understood that we would be questioned on these topics; this part of the interview felt like an examination and we hoped we had passed.ii

In researching this section of the chapter, I was struck by the scope implied in the name ‘Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs’. My interest was sparked by a passage in an essay on multicultural writing where the author comments: “In part the ambiguities surrounding the use of the term ‘multiculturalism’ centre around who is considered to be included … the term is restricted to those from non-English-speaking backgrounds so that Anglo-Celts are not included … By the same token Aboriginal writers using English (instead of being represented in translation) are also considered ‘ethnics’” (Gunew, 1990, 111). The incongruity of Aboriginal Australians being included with, perhaps as,
immigrants foregrounds the arrogance of assumed ‘real’ Australian-ness by the
dominant Anglo-Celt and Anglo-Saxon group, and this presumption is legitimised
in the pompous public nomenclature. The outsided-ness of Aboriginal Australians
is an extensive topic and one which falls outside of the paradigms of this thesis,
but the significance is noted.

I return now to the processes of ritual in the attainment of Australian citizenship.
Once we had ‘passed’ the interview and permission to take Australian citizenship
was approved, we waited for the City of Melville, our local council, to send us an
invitation to attend a citizenship ceremony in the Civic Centre. Relating this
process to the traditional final stage in *rites de passage* is not difficult. In Ndembu
tradition, for example, a sacred space for ritual may be indicated by a circle of
branches, “… to create a sacred space that rapidly achieves structure … in this
way a small realm of order is created the formless milieu of the bush” (Turner,
Victor, 1977b, 23). The Main Hall is clearly an ‘authorised location’ or a ‘sacred
space’ and the order is implied in that it is situated in the local seat of power—
that of the local government. We were allowed to invite three or four people as
guests: ‘witnesses’ to our transformation. There were many ‘new’ Australians at
the ceremony, from all parts of the world—a multicultural gathering. The
ceremony took place as planned and as our names we called, we stood and moved
to the front of the hall where we swore the oath of allegiance—in those days to
“the Queen of Australia”—on the Bible. If memory serves, the Muslims who
were present swore on the Koran, and those of other faiths, or no faith, on any
book or object of symbolic authority for them. The image of this “touching a
sacred object” to seal the oath is reflected in van Gennep’s comment “through
touching simultaneously or one after the other a sacred object” (1960, 29). After swearing the oath of allegiance, we received a gift from the Council; a corsage for the women and a pen for the men, and each couple received a bound Bible as did each individual. At the conclusion of the ceremony we were invited to partake of refreshments with the Councillors. Jokes about Vegemite sandwiches and pies were made as the participants stood, self-consciously, around the room.

This sequence of events seems to be the normal procedure at most of the naturalisation ceremonies I have attended in Australia—the ceremony, the gifts, the refreshments and the (weak) jokes. The informal ritual that takes place after the ceremony is relevant to the public acknowledgment of transformation from one state to another, and van Gennep’s words (already cited) illustrate this: “the rite of eating and drinking together … is clearly a rite of incorporation, of physical union, and has been called a sacrament of communion” (van Gennep, 1960, 29), and Sneja Gunew’s rendition of ‘assimilation’ as a visceral event imparts a droll spin to the occasion (Gunew, 1999, 146). However, because the participants are unknown to each other – most have never met before the ceremonial event, and while there is a faintly embarrassed air of conviviality, there is no indication of any comradeship; there is no cohort, and this is a departure from the traditional rites. However, on another level, this reflects the notion of the ritual [re]constituting the social structure and I reiterate (part of) the quotation previously cited: “The structure of ritual action, in other worlds (sic), directly embodies its own principle of effectiveness” (Turner, Terence S, 1977. 61-62). And, I posit that this part of the naturalisation ceremony is, in microcosm, an accurate reflection of the structure of Australian society.
The staff at my place of work at the bookshop, many of whom were by this stage my friends, planned a surprise party for me on 13 September, the day after our naturalisation ceremony. A huge cake decorated to look like the Australian flag was brought in to work, and I found the occasion to be highly emotional. Whether this was because of becoming an Australian or the fact that these people thought enough of me to plan such a treat is debatable, but when I look at photographs of that experience today, I find it difficult to relate to the woman in the picture that is me. Part of my memory of this event is a large lump of sponge cake with cobalt blue icing (that had stained the yellow sponge) that remained in the freezer for months afterwards, too emotionally valuable to throw away, but totally inedible. Perhaps it stood as a symbol of ‘belonging’ (at last) so how could I throw it out? I ponder, now, on the importance I invested in this mouldy piece of doughy cake, taking it as a symbol of being an Australian. Perhaps the official ceremony was not the final step into incorporation, perhaps the negotiation of boundaries was/is set to continue, indefinitely.

Did the official recognition of becoming Australian change me? The question is layered. In my own perceptions of my Australian-ness there was ambivalence, I didn’t know (and sometimes I still don’t know). Was my Australian-ness apparent to people who had known me ‘before’ – when I was, amongst other identities, ‘Rhodesian’? After taking up citizenship we registered to vote and applied for passports. The following year (1986) we visited Zimbabwe for my mother’s eightieth birthday. This was the first time I had returned to Zimbabwe since 1981 when I had gone home to say goodbye to my family before leaving Africa for
Australia. The remarkable thing I discovered on this first return visit to Zimbabwe after becoming an Australian citizen, was the curious way the people in Zimbabwe treated me. My accent was declared to be strongly Australian—after four years in this country. Many of the Australian stereotypes were applied to my husband, my daughter, and myself, and that was bewildering—after all, we were still doing that to real Australians ourselves. In retrospect, I consider that is part of becoming an Australian; the beginning of the ending of belonging in my country of birth; the end of the sense of belonging among my friends and family. So, now I can look back and see that at this stage I was never a Zimbabwean, no longer a Rhodesian, but not yet an Australian. At the beginning of this chapter I wrote about discharging my previous identity as if it were connected to the deterioration of my remembered matrix. I spoke about the feeling I had of becoming ‘more’ Australian as the situation in Zimbabwe disintegrated. I said “The worse the situation gets in Zimbabwe, the more Australian I become”. I understand now that this trip to Zimbabwe in 1986 was the beginning of the discharging of Rhodesian identity. Not arriving in Australia, not the citizenship ceremony, not living here, in Australia, for decades—but returning home and discovering that ‘I’ was no longer there.

To continue using the metaphor of the transplanted tree, in this case myself—myself as the tree—I had been placed in a new location but had not yet started to take root and flourish. I remember that, at the beginning of 1986 whilst we were in Africa, a general election was taking place in Australia and as citizens we were obliged to vote. At this stage, not having followed the politics in any informed way and having little knowledge of the voting system in Australia, I filled in my
postal ballot arbitrarily—not an intentional ‘donkey vote’ (or, as I would have called it then, ‘a spoiled paper’) but, nevertheless, a complete mish-mash. So this was how it felt, being a liminal persona in Zimbabwe; being officially recognised as an Australian by having the vote—having to vote—but, within myself, not quite accepting my newly bestowed Australian-ness there in Africa, nor, it must be said, when we returned, in Australia. Clearly, the stage of integration overlaps the liminal and the liminal stage overlaps the separation and the imbrication covers the entirety. These are the passages within passages, doorways within doorways, and these are the spaces that become areas and intervals of significance. Once again, it is the ambiguity of being an immigrant, and while being labelled ‘Australian’ by friends and family, knowing I wasn’t that, any more than I was a Zimbabwean. It is the constant negotiation with the society, wherever situated, that confers the feelings of belonging, not belonging, or being an observer in the margin.

I return to the questions I asked the women in my sample: “Why did you take up Australian citizenship?” and “When did you take up Australian citizenship?” Their answers are varied but the underlying structure is similar; sometimes the answer to the first question is embedded in the answer to the second. For example, Marlene told me about her Australian naturalisation ceremony in 1983. She said:

It was a fantastic ceremony, held in Melbourne. I received a wattle at the ceremony which we planted [when we lived] in Melbourne. The people at work all stopped work and the MD came and presented me with a folder they had made up about Aussie things, [and] a pie and a beer! I was so touched! After the ceremony, all our friends went out for dinner. They were so thrilled that some foreigner had taken out Australian citizenship – and I thought it was just for the passport! It was really very lovely.
There is an element of cynical amusement in Marlene’s words. The notion of becoming an Australian for the sake of getting a valid passport seems humorous to her now but, at the time, after struggling with Rhodesian, Zimbabwe/Rhodesian and other interim passports, the luxury of having a passport that was recognised internationally was most decidedly a prize. Taking Marlene’s experience (and my own) of the Australian celebration of immigrants taking citizenship I asked Robin, my Australian-born friend, her thoughts on the importance of taking Australian citizenship and the naturalisation ceremony. She told me:

I think many Australian born people have a greater respect for those that take out citizenship and this public ceremony makes the immigrant more visible to the community as now being ‘one of them’ albeit a ‘new’ one of them! Swearing allegiance to another country you have no history with is strange – bet they don’t stop cheering for SA or Zim in the cricket! Why would they? Their hearts and history [are] not Australian (Personal Correspondence).

Robin’s response and my own experience at the bookshop where my Australian-born colleagues were enthusiastic enough (about my naturalisation) to prepare a surprise party for me, leads me to believe that, by making this public commitment to Australia, the endorsement of fellow citizens is akin to the congratulations offered to the parents at the birth of a baby. In traditional *rites de passage*, once the final rituals are completed, the acceptance as a full member into the community is unremarkable. According to van Gennep, the final act in an initiation (which in his example includes a “special mutilation”) “… makes the novice forever identical with the [adult] members” (van Gennep, 1960, 75). Theoretically, that is the intention of the naturalisation ceremony, to make the new Australians “forever identical” with other Australians and, tacitly, in the subtext already discussed, the mimesis inherent in the relation between the society and the ceremony reinforces this hypothesis.
Sarah, from Zambia, had a number of reasons that motivated her to take Australian citizenship, and she told me about them in a recent letter:

I took up my Australian citizenship as soon as I qualified (i.e. two years to the day and the time it took to process!) It was an amazing relief to get it as I had been on probation with business migrant status for two years and now nobody could reserve the right to kick me out, and at last I belonged somewhere that I could vote for the first time in my life! Sadly, I then discovered that I did not want to vote for any of them, watching them performing like rude seals in parliament (Personal Correspondence).

In this letter, Sarah is clear about the feeling of security citizenship has given her. Her sense of belonging is stated openly in her desire to fulfill the responsibilities of an Australian citizen, particularly in being enfranchised to vote. The disillusionment she feels in the standards of political representation is worth commenting on: I believe that it is the image of an egalitarian Australia that is projected in the oath of allegiance, made by immigrants at the citizenship ceremony, that leads new Australians, such as Sarah, to envisioning/anticipating an idealised model of political representation. I flag here that the oath (or pledge) that is used now does not refer to the ‘Queen of Australia’, but to ‘Australia and its people’. I will elaborate on this in the following chapter: the final reprise.

Betty arrived in Australia in January 1981, and took up her citizenship in July 1984 when she was living in Kojonup. She said “we took the oath at the Shire Office”. The ceremony was held in the afternoon after the monthly Shire Council meeting and the participants had tea with the Councillors after the ‘swearing the oath of allegiance’ ceremony. Betty said she was not expecting there to be any other people taking the ceremony; she thought that they were the only immigrants in the area. However, there was a family from Katanning: the man worked as a meat worker in the abattoir there. Betty said she felt they had nothing in common with this family and she said “I actually felt quite uncomfortable about it, I had a
problem with this, to do with equality”. When I reflect on Betty’s words, I find
the notion of belonging, and wanting to belong, returns. I question whether she
wanted the Australia she now belonged to, to be a reflection of Anglo-Australia
and the Islander family from Katanning were, clearly, not Anglo-Australian.
Overall, in discussing the procedure, Betty said, “Although I was happy to be
made Australian, the oath swearing was just a formality to legalise how I’d been
living [as an Australian] and to get the passport.” The gift she received from the
council was a bunch of flowers and she told me she remembers feeling
embarrassed walking home afterwards, through the main street in Kojonup,
carrying this huge bunch of flowers “like a bride”.

Vivian, who travelled on a British passport, kept it for some years after
immigrating, until circumstances warranted her taking Australian citizenship.
Unfortunately, Vivian was reluctant for the circumstances to be examined in this
research. Her refusal allows me to reiterate that, in my interpretation of feminist
ethnographic research, the respect I have for the women in my sample is
sacrosanct and this is expressed in the following form, signed by my protagonists
at the very beginning of the process:

If I require certain parts of my history to remain confidential, I will
indicate this to the Researcher (Eleanor) and she will act accordingly
and discuss with me the means by which the information can be used
without personal implication, and she will abide by my final decision
(Form of Consent).

However, in a recent telephone conversation Vivian told me, again, how proud
she is to be an Australian citizen and how much she appreciates being able to live
here. It seems that the responsibilities of being a citizen in Australia are taken
seriously, not only by Vivian, but by all the protagonists in my sample as well as many of the ex-Zimbabwean immigrants I know in Western Australia.

In a letter, Robin (my Australian-born colleague) writes that she sees the naturalisation as a “Ceremony of acknowledgment/acceptance and one that provides the device through which the participant can be incorporated into Australian society.” The publicly witnessed recognition of the ‘transformation’ is positive according Robin; she continues, “[It] is Public—in front of family, friends, community and public officials.” I confirm that this public acknowledgment of citizenship follows that part of the reaggregation ritual in *rites de passage*, when the novitiate is seen to be accepted in their new identity—by a public proclamation and admission. This is the “… symbolic birth or reincorporation into society” (Turner, 1974, 53). In a more esoteric locus, this is the state of ‘Emergence’ that I have mentioned in the feminist psychological model of rites of passage that corresponds, in a tenuous way, with that of the more traditional (male-oriented) *rites de passage*. The three stages in the feminist psychological model are Containment, Transformation and Emergence, and the neophyte ends her “ordeal” when “…she has enfolded her experience within, and the veil is lifted. [And] finally she develops an affinity with other people who have been analyzed or initiated, an affinity based on a shared experience of depth or meaning that leads to a more conscious worldview” (Rutter, 1994, 172). I understand this to be the self-recognition of completion of the third stage of the rites of passage and I extend my understanding of this notion of ‘shared experience of depth or meaning’ in the conclusion of this chapter.
From her point of view as Australian-born, Robin tells me that she is, in some ways, envious of “these people” [immigrants] because “… they participate in a ritual that I can never participate in [in Australia] and, in some ways, are able to express a level of Australian-ness that I cannot”. She adds, “I think we born-and-bred Australians don’t have/make the opportunity to reflect on what it means to belong to Australia – we take our citizenship for granted” (Personal Email). In a recent citizenship ceremony I attended, the Mayor expressed a similar wish in her speech, and in fact, included in the ceremony an Affirmation of Australian Citizenship: “Affirmation by an Australian Citizen”. It is, however, the approval of the Australians present at the ceremony that validates the integration of the immigrant into the society. Nevertheless, both the Mayor’s and Robin’s desire to publicly acknowledge their Australian-ness are not unique, and are also apparent in Marlene’s story of the party that was given on her behalf when she took her Australian citizenship, and the celebratory Australian flag decorated cake given to me on 13 September 1985 the day after I took up my citizenship. Both celebrations were organised by Australian-born people. The popularity of Australia Day on 26 January gives many Australian people the chance to show their appreciation of being Australian. Is there, therefore, irony in the invitation to celebrate ‘our’ (ex-Rhodesian) Australian-ness at the Australia Day fireworks on the Perth foreshore? We each come to view this conspicuous display of patriotism with our own ideas of what it means to be Australian, and possibly for reasons that have nothing to do with Australian-ness at all. The issues that surround Australian-born people affirming their Australian-ness with ceremonial rites are addressed further in the following chapter: *Reprise*, and I will compare recent, smaller ceremonies with the major celebrations of the Bicentennial in 1988.
Robin asked me, “Have all the participants in your research been naturalized?” She mentions that she knows of people who have come to live in Australia who have chosen not to become citizens but does not elaborate. However, her reflection on immigrants refusing to take citizenship, or not taking citizenship for whatever reasons, segues into the part of my thesis where I suggest the presence, or rather, the vacancy of failed integration, or the denial of integration, or the unsuccessful passage from migration to integration for reasons that I have examined in the course of this study. The question of acceptance and belonging is not far removed in Robin’s reasoning and she asks the rhetorical question, “Is the need for acceptance greater in people fleeing from their country … I wonder what the reasoning is for not becoming an Australian citizen?” and she relates this ‘not becoming an Australian “… to those – e.g. Poms – who emigrate because they can and whose system of government and governance is still intact?” She concludes with the remark that echoes my question at the start of this chapter, “What I am asking is, what drives them [the women in this research] to take citizenship, are the reasons purely practical?” (Personal Correspondence), and I reflect on a naturalisation ceremony I attended earlier this year (2003) for my brother and his wife. When I compare their ceremony to ours, I am aware of how much more – grateful is the word that comes to mind – they were, when officially ‘initiated’. During the swearing of the oath of allegiance, both of them were moved to tears. I can’t remember feeling anything like that, I remember being concerned in case I had raised the ‘wrong’ hand.
The final conclusion is not one of conviction. The new Australian faces a continual negotiation of identity; the continual negotiation of boundaries, and the fluctuations between feeling integrated and belonging, against those of feeling forgotten, foreign/alien, and not belonging. There is also the privileged place of being an observer in the margin—a locus that I, personally, have learned to covet and relinquish only under duress—and all of these are present at some time, in some way throughout the rites of passage that we, as immigrants, undertake. But it is in the final stage, the integration/aggregation stage, the Emergence as ‘adept’ stage, that these elements become, albeit fleetingly, dramatic. The drama of fireworks on Australia Day, cakes decorated with flags, ceremonies and celebrations, gifts of Bibles and flowers, and then the mundanity of existence returns, I have likened the process of transformation, from immigrant to integrant, to that of ‘enlightenment’, and I return to that simile here. There is a poem written a millennium ago by an unknown Chinese Zen master, and this is what he wrote:

    Chopping wood,
carrying water
Magical power,
marvelous action!
Chopping wood,
carrying water

That is the discovery, that is the conclusion. As Rhodesians, before the immigration begins, metaphorically we chop wood and carry water, signifying the quotidian chores of existence—a metaphor within a metaphor—and after the celebrations – “Magical power, marvelous action” – that mark the final stage of initiation we resume the quotidian chores of existence: chopping wood and carrying water. As part of the process we begin to learn, to understand who we are; some of us may move ahead blindly, taking for granted the privileges and
benefits of life in Australia: but for others there is a metanoia, “a fundamental change in character, way of life … a spiritual conversion” (Chambers 20th Century Dictionary). The changes that occur in our understanding of the society and the community to which we belong may well be part of the integration/aggregation process, but could also be how we live our lives anyway.

In the following and final chapter, I resume the debate surrounding Australian identity and seek some form of closure within the paradigms of this dissertation. Thus, working from the flawed base of perpetual change and incomplete-ness, I seek to draw the many and complex threads together—from the method and preparation of this dissertation, the review of the literature, and the historical background that support and project into the first panel of the triptych. I revisit the central panel of the triptych—where the liminal personae tread and re-tread their own passages of transformation—and then re-member the memories that trigger the desire to return ‘home’. And, finally, I offer the reprise of integration to complete the mosaic (collage, bricolage) so that there is some conclusion, however elusive it may be.

1 This is the first mis-transcription of ‘Aussie’ as ‘older’ that I have referred to in Chapter Six: ‘Limen: the ambivalent neophyte’, hereafter signalled thus (sic).

2 There was a subcontext to this interview that I was aware of but that, even now, I am unable to translate. It seems that I am not the only immigrant who ‘tapped in’ to this meta-interview; apocryphal understanding amongst ex-patriot Rhodesians and South Africans has it, that, it is at this interview that the DIMIA official checks your ‘whiteness’ and ability to speak English, and I suggest that these beliefs are the projection of residual memories of colour monitoring during Apartheid in South Africa; or bureaucracy in colonial Africa; or, possibly, hearsay about the postwar White Australia Policy.

3 I have previously suggested that accents were (and are) an obsession in Rhodesia (and also in South Africa) and are seen as crucial in indicating the social status and antecedents of the protagonist.
From *Zen Forest*, translated by Soiku Sigematsu.
Chapter Nine

Reprise

*Australian citizenship – A sense of belonging*
(Logo on Australian citizenship pledge card: Affirmation by an Australian Citizen).

In this final chapter, I continue to explore the debate surrounding celebrations of Australian identity that I flagged in the previous chapter, and look at some contemporary commentary on the ‘ownership’ and the contested space of Australian identity. I establish some understanding, albeit speculative, of the issues. Following this final exploration of identity, I revisit the naturalisation ceremony from the vantage point of a research student and an Australian. I then return to the dissertation as a completed entity—with a beginning, a middle and an end—and I reprise from the beginning; moving from, and between, the method and preparation, the review of the literature, and the historical background. The separation stage of *rites de passage* begins in the first panel of the triptych and in this reprise I touch briefly on some of the points that were discussed. The supporting chapters for the central panel, Identity I and Identity II, expanded the
tropes of identity, assimilation and integration and these were further rehearsed in
the principal image of the central panel, the liminal. Further analysis and
interpretation occurred in the supporting chapter of the third panel where re-
membering the memories triggered the desire to return ‘home’. And, finally, I
revisit the trope of integration to complete the mosaic (collage, bricolage) so that
there is some conclusion, however transitory and elusive it may be.

David Armstrong, [the original] Director of the Australian Bicentennial
Authority, sees the aim of the 1988 celebrations as being ‘to find a national
identity’ (White, 1981, 171).

Seeking the real Australian has been a recurring theme throughout this
dissertation. As I research the literature, I find that I am not alone in this quest,
although my reasons appear to differ from those that predominate. However, it is
significant to my purpose to understand the predominant investigation, and to this
end I observe and strive to remember the 1988 Bicentennial that marked the
arrival of white Australians in Sydney, New South Wales in 1788. In my personal
memory, living in Western Australia, the Bicentennial did not seem an important
occasion. Indeed, many West Australians were sceptical, as David Hollinsworth
has remarked, of “… the equating of the founding of the nation with the landing
at Sydney [and saw the event] as arrogant as well as incorrect” (Hollinsworth,
1998, 193). The contested space of Australian national identity and, as I have
indicated, Australian national history, was thrown into the public arena. The
literature shows some magnificent discrepancies of who, and what, a real
Australian is considered to be, and this leads me to the understanding that Richard
White was correct when he stated, “A national identity is an invention” (White,
The politicians claimed then, and still claim now, an homogenised identity for Australians that I find is usually a transparent ploy to separate ‘Australians’ from the ‘others’. Paradoxically, when some people claim ownership of Australian-ness—specifically Aboriginal Australian-ness, they are held under the microscope, both by the media and their peers, and their antecedents rigourously examined. During the Bicentennial year, and subsequently, controversies surrounding identity were more noticeable than usual. This was particularly conspicuous in the Indigenous and academic literary spheres where, for example, the Aboriginal author, academic and critic, Mudrooroo criticised academic and author Sally Morgan for claiming Aboriginal heritage in her book *My Place* (1987) having clearly claimed his own ‘ownership’ of Aboriginal identity, for example when he wrote in response to a journal article on Aboriginality, “I stress here that I have been among many Aboriginal groups throughout Australia, not as a scholar, but as a member of the community” (Nyoongah, 1992, 156). Mudrooroo was, according to Maureen Clark in the journal, *Kunapipi*, “Acknowledged for over two decades as the arbitrator in matters of authentic Aboriginal writing, [his] was the voice of Indigenous Australia” (2001, 48). The subsequent events lead me to re-visit notions of the tricky situations inherent in taking a position on the moral high ground, and advance the idea that it is, more-than-likely, a hill of decomposing manure. The repercussions of this debate were still echoing in 2001 and the literature shows there was some stringent criticism when Mudrooroo was ‘unmasked’ in 1996, particularly pertaining to the emerging story that he had knowingly constructed his false Aboriginal identity (Clark, 2001, 48). This dialogue leads me to consider that, perhaps, claiming Australian identity and attributing Australian identity are
more closely related than first meets the eye. By this I mean when somebody says “He’s a real Australian, from the bush” they are attributing Australian-ness to an imaginary person; and when they claim (as I do) “I am an Australian” this is also an imaginary destination, because I really do not know if I am an Australian, or just pretending to be one. I can identify with Eva Cox when she says “So I am Australian because my lapsed passport says I am …” (Cox, 1992, 65). Thus, I believe that claiming Australian-ness in an offhand, casual, or humorous way signals no ownership of the identity, deflects criticism, and adds to the multiplicity of Australian-ness that has a disregard for political coercion that pushes for national identity.

The celebratory aspect of the 1988 Bicentennial was, I believe, a politically driven exercise for reasons of fabricating and consolidating an ‘Australian’ nationality. This is borne out in the literature surrounding celebrations and the manufacture of nationality; for instance, Benedict Anderson (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, and Paul Connerton (1989) in his *How Societies Remember*, in particular the chapter relating to commemorative ceremonies—where he evokes the commemorative rites of the National Socialist Party of the Third Reich in Germany (Connerton, 1989, 41-71). There is a reflection in this of my argument in the previous chapter, that the naturalisation ceremony is a way of coercing immigrants to comply and thus to join the society: I wrote, compliance allows the immigrant to belong in the society. I have already cited Victor Turner commenting that, “… people are induced to want to do what they must do [and this] symbolic behaviour actually “creates” society for pragmatic purposes …” (Turner, 1974, 56). The pragmatic
purposes of celebration to create society link, again, to my argument regarding the political agenda inherent in the nature of national celebration and, more particularly, individual naturalisation ceremonies.

*There’s never been a better time to become an Australian Citizen* (www.citizenship.gov.au) (Television advertisement, all channels) (2003).

I have determined, in my thesis, ways in which the transformation from immigrant to integrant may be achieved. I have situated the process by which the women in my study (and myself) have located ourselves in Australia, as Australians, within the paradigm of the *rites de passage*. Therefore, in this, the conclusion of my thesis, I, as an ‘Australian’, revisit the naturalisation ceremony that immigrants are required to participate in to become citizens. The validation bestowed by a public ceremony is incisive to the sense of becoming a citizen. The relinquishment of previous citizenship is a public affirmation of severance of previous allegiance and national identity. However, I flag here that this statement needs to be qualified, and the reasons behind this qualification are that, in the recent past (April 2002) the government of Australia has permitted citizens to hold dual nationality. This duality is effective only where other governments also approve, such as Britain and New Zealand. The extent of the evolution of the naturalisation ceremony became apparent to me recently, once again at the Melville Civic Centre, the same public venue where my family and I attended ‘our’ ceremony in 1985 and where we swore allegiance, received Australian citizenship and the certificates that are the proof of our Australian-ness. My attendance at the more recent ceremony was in the interests of this research and not as an invited guest or participant. My plan was to be positioned in the
wondrous place of non-participant ‘observer’; even, perhaps, the ‘god’s-eye’ place that I have previously denied/denigrated. In the event, I discovered that, for me, participation in one form or another, seems to be mandatory.

This is the scenario: I telephoned Melville council to find out when the next ceremony was due to be held and spoke to the Civic Functions Officer. I explained my request and my reasons for wanting to attend and he invited me to the [monthly] ceremony to be held the following week. We arranged to meet prior to the commencement of the proceedings in the conference room where the ceremony is now held. From the outset I begin to doubt my memory that our initiation was in the Main Hall. The conference room looks familiar although it does seem smaller. The room is decorated with symbols representing outback Australia – to reflect that 2003 is the ‘year of the outback’. The Australian flag is prominently displayed and an unpretentious portrait of Queen Elizabeth II is attached to the lectern. There are five or six rows of chairs, set in a semi-circle, to seat the 58 candidates and their guests – approximately 200 chairs altogether, On one side of the room there is a table and chairs for children; on it are colouring-in books “with an Australian theme”. On another table are the gifts for the participants. I asked the officer about the gifts and he explains that Bibles are no longer given, “because” he says “some participants have been offended at receiving a Christian Bible”. This requires me to reframe my conjecture in the previous chapter ‘Integration’ where I presumed that those of Islamic faith received a copy of the Koran as a gift – although this may have been the case in 1985. Nowadays, in the City of Melville, the gift presented to the ‘new’ Australians is the certificate of naturalisation, framed. After the ceremony when I
talk to some of the recipients, I discover that this gift is not necessarily appreciated because the current certificate includes the citizen’s date of birth. One woman explained to me, “Even my children don’t know how old I am, so I won’t be able to hang this up anywhere!”

I asked the Functions Officer about swearing the oath of allegiance, and what happens if the participant does not wish to use the Bible; he tells me that if people require another book (or object) on which to swear, they can be accommodated and the appropriate Bible or book will be provided, but usually there is no need and a symbolic object is not used at all. Therefore, I believe that there is a civility/consideration apparent in this desire not to offend any one of a number of ethnicities and that this has resulted in a more egalitarian ceremony less directed at the Anglo-Saxon Christian and serves to incorporate members of under-represented groups in the Melville City district.

At the appointed time the doors were opened and the participants and their guests filed into the conference room. I was able to speak to the representatives from the Australian Electoral Office who had set up a table directly outside the door (to enrol the ‘new’ Australians as voters as soon as they come out after the ceremony). I also spoke to the Mayor for a few minutes before we went into the room and she inquired as to my interest and presence at the ceremony. During the ceremony she introduced me to the audience as a research student from Murdoch University, which revelation destroyed my ‘gods-eye’ observer position but allowed me to approach some of the participants after the ceremony—and most of them were willing to talk to me about their experience.
In her introductory speech, the Mayor stressed the importance of the decision to take Australian citizenship and signalled the separation from the home country by saying: “You will be declaring allegiance to Australia by becoming a citizen and leaving the country of your birth behind” (Transcript of Mayoral Address). The most significant addition to the speech and symbolic of the evolution of the ceremony were these words, “We recognise the living culture of the Nyoongar People and the unique contribution they make to the life of the Melville region” (Transcript of Mayoral Address). Finally, the Mayor spoke of the reciprocal rights and the obligations of citizenship, “uniting all Australians while respecting their diversity” (Mayoral Address).

I have indicated that at the conclusion of the ceremony I was able to speak to some of the participants: I asked an English couple why they had decided to take Australian citizenship after living in this country for four or five years, and in their reply they mentioned dual citizenship. This, they said had been a deciding factor, as neither of them were willing to relinquish their British Passports. As I moved around the room, I found that, by permitting dual citizenship, a number of British and New Zealand citizens made the decision to take up Australian citizenship. Most of the comments I heard, however, were to do with the splendid singing from the *a cappella* male-voice choir and the delicious food supplied by the Melville Council. There was a general sense of relief that the formalities of the affair were now over, and we could go home and resume our lives as we had lived them before: “Chopping wood/carrying water …” and, on an esoteric level, resume the continual crossing of the boundaries between assimilation and
integration—negotiations that most likely depend on where we are and who we are with.

*Sometimes I say I had to write that whole book to find out what I wrote on that last day. Discovery and invention can lie very close to each other* (Modjeska, 2002, 94).

**reprise** (*Spens. reprize*) *ri-prîz*, v.t. to gain anew (obs.): to recapture (obs.): to renew, repeat, reissue (Chambers 20th Century Dictionary).

The structure of this thesis reflects the tripartite panels of *rites de passage* (as suggested by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner), and in exploring these *passages* I have found auxiliary/additional locations within them: passages within passages; meta-passages, and parallel paths. I have taken the minutiae of experiences from the narrative of the immigrant women in my study, and situated them in the passages and on the paths. In the introduction, I used the metaphor of a physical map because I believe that the flexible and enigmatic configurations are easily associated with *rites de passage* in immigration. This over-arching view of the process as a physical map, in this reprise of the thesis, allows me to reiterate that my own conformation is mapped too, for the stories of my life are also made visible. In this metaphor I am not presuming to inscribe the landscape of Australia, merely finding my own conformation within and upon it; although the thoughts that prompted this meditation had their genesis in the history of the original white settlers who reinscribed the Australian landscape as an “… unfettered exercise of mastery …” (Hollinsworth, 1998, 187). However, in my study as the allegorical map is ‘read’ there is a sequence—a continuity—that traces the transformation from immigrant to integrant to this point where, at last,
there is capacity to locate ourselves in Australia, and the potential to see ourselves as ‘Australians’ and it is likely that no ‘masterful’ inscription is made at all.

At this late stage of writing, the thought occurs to me that the triptych could be moved around: so the first panel becomes the central panel and the central panel replaces the third—which, in turn becomes first—or, indeed, some other permutation. But then I realise that in the written thesis that I have created the order is perfunctory/contrived and it is there for the practical purposes of having the conventional, standardised entity/structure of beginning, middle, and end. In the composite of the triptych I have created I have endeavoured to stack the panels atop one another and, even if read in no particular order, images and shadows of each panel are visible through the others.

In the first chapter I introduced the women in my sample and, as I am part of my own sample, I stated the autobiographical content of the narrative and this candour has been evident throughout the thesis. Further, throughout the work I have reminded, prompted, and reiterated information about the women and I have observed the goals of feminist social research, already cited and recapitulated here as: “(1) to document the lives and activities of women, (2) to understand the experience of women from their own point of view, and (3) to conceptualize women’s behaviour as an expression of social context” (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992, 51). I expressed my dilemma of being situated as the author[ity] of the research, as well as being a participant in the research; and clarified how I chose to deal with the predicament. In the introduction I explained the methodology and methods I use and the paradigms in/by which I work, and I indicated that these
boundaries are fluid. I defined my usage of names when referring to ‘Rhodesia’ and ‘Zimbabwe’, and the context in which they are used. Because of my desire for transparency in the writing of this thesis, I was frank in revealing some of the problems I faced during the research and used excerpts from my personal journal to illustrate these difficulties. The notion of transparency of writing and the layering of the sections was elucidated in the introduction and I signalled that the methods and the structure of the triptych are apparent throughout the work.

The literature review, although written and presented as a separate chapter, has not been restricted to that chapter, for I have expanded on it and, as an exploration, allowed it to unfold throughout the thesis. Therefore, using the inspiration of transparency in structure, in the review of the literature I indicated by use of the metaphor of a physical map, the outline of the ground that the thesis covers, and this has echoes in this reprise, notably where I discussed my own conformation within the landscape/map of Australia. The thought of a physical map as a suitable metaphor for the thesis and the literature review and the images of the curves and contours of the earth suggested notions of ‘matrix’ and Axis Mundi. Within the literature review I explored aspects of autobiography to exonerate the use of autobiography in this work. As a prelude to the following chapters I referred to (and quoted from) some of the poetic works that I see as inherent in the processes of memory and history.

Narrative in chapter three: The beginning is not at Perth Airport forms part of the background supporting the central panels. The chapter embraced stories and biography from my own family whose history as early settlers in Southern
Rhodesia reflects personal, present experience in Australia. Two significant themes in my thesis originated in this chapter: that of Australian identity, and that which contrasts the meanings attributed to assimilation and integration. The balance between personal and historical insights established the position from which the first stage of the *rites de passage*, that of separation, could commence. Thus, the separation from the matrix begins. The development and exploration of the events of this first stage of immigration are situated in, and are seen as being relevant to, the theory of *rites de passage*. In the disconnection and severance from the matrix that comprises separation, the tropes of homesickness and desire to return, arose.

The immigrants’ arrival in Australia prompted further questions of identity and the dilemma of being mistaken for Australian women added to the confusion. Ambiguity of identity was explored and connected to theories of compliance. Notions of compliance as a method of social survival were unravelled and I extended these to questions of and reflections upon multiple identity such as self-determined identity, assumed identity, and attributed identity. In this chapter I looked at the positionality of the subject and the privileged place of observing the centre from the margin. The topic of assimilation, seen through the prisms of coercion, compliance, and the necessity of ‘appearing’ to belong became a strategy of assumed assimilation that I presented as a form of camouflage and anarchy. The consequent process of sublimation is, I have posited, embedded in the liminal stage of the *rites de passage*. This assumed assimilation, I have argued, is symbolic behaviour and gives validity to the hypothesis that immigrants are agents-of-change, my premise being based in Victor Turner’s
argument that “symbolic behaviour actually ‘creates’ society for pragmatic purposes—including in society both structure and communitas” (Turner, 1974, 56); and I flagged the Bourdieuan concepts of doxa, orthodoxy, heterodoxy, crisis and change.

The discussion of identity continued with the metaphor of mirrors and non-reflecting mirrors to reflect difference. The theory I advanced to elucidate that minimal difference is less acceptable than radical distortion employed the metaphor of True Mirrors® that is, non-reflecting mirrors, and evoked Lacan’s essay: The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience (1977). To support this, I drew on Bourdieu’s theories of doxa, orthodoxy, heterodoxy, crisis and change and developed the argument to include habitus, understood here as embodied history. I argued that it is the minor distortions we recognise in others that often reflect the traits we fail to see in ourselves, and that this denial of asymmetry in ourselves encourages us to disparage those who closely resemble us. Within this paradigm I further developed the theme of identity.

In this thesis, the central panel of the triptych, introduced the immigrant as a liminal persona, and engaged with the subtle differences that separated her (as neophyte) from Anglo-Australians. The margin that is the liminal became the metaphorical province of the arcane procedures that shape the transformations in the rites de passage. In this central stage I uncovered aspects of feminine interpretations of rites of passage (Rutter, 1994) and discovered that there are additional aspects of assimilation and integration to be understood and
interpreted. The quest for a secure placement in Australia revealed the struggle to separate from previous identity thus allowing me, as author, a junction to reflect on life in colonial Rhodesia. Notions of time/space, and the understanding that “liminal time is not controlled by the clock” (Turner, Victor, 1977a, 33) reminded me of the similarity of the liminal space to the time/space in Escher’s etchings. In the liminal stage, I reminded the reader that, in my hypothesis, issues of time reflect the metaphor of mosaic and this simile is reflected in this panel of the triptych. The fragmentation that reflects the tesserae of mosaic, is inherent in the liminal period and, I argued, provokes the disintegration of identity so that it may be re-formed. I linked this disintegration of identity with the ambiguity of time attributed to the liminal/transformation period.

At the beginning, in the first stage of the *rites de passage* (Migration and Separation) I flagged the trope of homesickness and indicated that it was pervasive and continuing. One of the manifestations of homesickness, I have argued, results in the desire to ‘return home’ and this is the experience of many immigrants. The costly return to the home country invokes notions of time in memory and the significance of re-membering and forgetting. I have postulated that the belief that we can return ‘home’ creates a passage filled with confusion. I have situated the passage (filled with confusion) that I have conjured, parallel to, and circling, the passage from the liminal stage to the aggregation stage—the final panel of the triptych and of the *rites de passage*, and have, thus, connected the hypothesis to the overall theme of liminality and located it in the meta-thesis. I have explained that, while there the suspicion remains that things were not as bad as we remembered them to be, the return to the matrix is seldom permanent.
and therefore, it is likely that there is no successful return. I addressed the possibility that not all liminal personae are successfully integrated and this led into the final stage of the tripartite image—that of integration and incorporation. It is at this junction that I am able to signal the conclusion of my thesis. In the penultimate chapter I have drawn on some historical occasions in the white settlement of Southern Rhodesia where the conferring of integration was problematic. I have connected these issues to those of ‘ownership’ of being ‘Australian’ (or ‘Rhodesian’) and who is excluded and why. I have addressed the integration of the migrants into their adopted society and looked at their experiences of the rituals and ceremonies that are a part of becoming an Australian citizen. I have argued that elements of assimilation, as I have defined it, remain and that negotiation of positionality and identity continues. I have endeavoured to examine the rites of integration that include being recognised by others as an Australian and the recognition of ones own ‘Australian-ness’. The immigrants’ family, and especially the presence of children, has been flagged as significant in moving through the liminal and the postliminal to integration. The chapter concluded with my reflections on quotidian life pre-integration and post-integration.

In this, the final chapter, I have resumed the discussion surrounding Australian identity and drawn the tentative conclusion that claiming Australian-ness in an offhand, casual, or humorous way signals no ownership of the identity and because of that it deflects criticism and, moreover, adds to the multiplicity of Australian-ness that has a disregard for the political coercion that pushes for national identity. I discover, here, that this notion segues into the image that many
Australians have of themselves—be they native-born or immigrant—that of ‘larrikin’ disdainful of authority.

Finally, I consider how to conclude this dissertation in a way that is satisfactory to my audience, to myself, and ultimately to the women in my study. I have come to understand that, from my position now, my identities of self-proclaimed Australian, academic, and more personally, spiritual aspirant, an ending is, really, just another beginning. The negotiation of boundaries and the persistent doubts of self-identity, “who am I?” and positioning in Australia – not “where am I?” but, rather, “what am I doing?” remain – and are likely to do so within the delicate framework of Australian identity as it is presently conformed and contested.

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