

Between the Two

Between the Two:
A Nomadic Inquiry into Collaborative
Writing and Subjectivity

By

Ken Gale and Jonathan Wyatt

**CAMBRIDGE
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P U B L I S H I N G

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by Ken Gale and Jonathan Wyatt

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FOREWORD

BRONWYN DAVIES,

PROFESSORIAL FELLOW, MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY

This is a beautiful and astonishing book. The authors take up and develop the concepts that Deleuze created when working with others like Guattari, Foucault and Parnet, precisely in order to make possible the experimental and deeply moving writing found here in this book. No longer difficult-to-grasp abstractions (as they were when Jonathan and Ken first took them up), the Deleuzian concepts they work with here take on an intensely lived materiality within the flow of words between these two men talking and writing.

Jonathan and Ken tell the story of, or more accurately, they live within the writing of, their developing friendship with each other and with Deleuze. They enfold each other and unfold into their relations with each other, and also with those human (and non-human) others around them. I found myself, as reader, drawn into the folds and plateaus of their relationality, first as an outsider looking in, curious about what it was they were allowing me to see, then slowly taking up my existence within the *space-in-between* that was generated in their writing. They write about writing as an act of love, and I as reader, found myself embraced in that love. I found myself in love with and immersed in their words, with their struggle, with the space-in-between they were creating.

Understanding the concept of the space-in-between is important for entering into (and being undone by) what it is that Ken and Jonathan have generated here in this writing. It involves the dismantling of two separate subjects whose essential selves pre-exist the writing, and who are separated by an unbridgeable gap or space between them. Although the specificity of each still exists (and perhaps even exists more vividly), with each of their separate histories and separate social and spatial contexts, the focal point, the source of energy and change, is the movement-in-between, in which each becomes someone in relation to the other—each exists in the unfolding relation with the other, and in the *lines of flight* into the not-yet-known that open up between them.

Central to the generation of this space-in-between are the capacity for listening, and the use of writing as a method of inquiry. Jonathan and Ken demonstrate in their writing to each other, both their finely tuned capacity for listening and also the struggle to listen--the difficult and complex task of listening—each finely tuned into his own affect, each finding words to speak the specific truth of that moment of being, each able to speak, to be so tuned in, precisely because their separation from the other is undone in the mutual acts of writing and listening.

In this moment of being, where affect and words and connection work to make the moment and the movement-in-between possible, a *haecceity* or thisness, opens up new possibilities that lie beyond that which any separate “I” might grasp. In this present-day over-controlled, over-surveilled neoliberal world, such moments and movements are profoundly important. We can (almost inevitably) become the rule-following products of elaborate surveillance systems, obedient to the endless, never sufficient production of whatever the system demands of us. Or we can do the kind of work that is being done here to open up new and exciting, life-generating possibilities. In this Deleuzian universe, the “I” is no longer the central agent. In its place is the *body-without-organs*, the body whose borders are not bound by skin, whose agentic possibilities lie not in their individuality, but in their relation to others (including non-human others), and in lines of flight that open up new thought, and new modes of being.

One of the many reasons this book works so well is that it includes the moments when things do not go well, when they don’t understand each other, when they don’t “get” Deleuze, when they can’t hear each other. These troubled and troubling moments enable the reader to enter the struggle to know differently *with* Jonathan and Ken—rather than being bowled over by their erudition and their beautiful writing, rather than being envious of and baffled by their perfect relationship. In this sense it is a profoundly pedagogical text, a text that opens up the Deleuzian concepts for use, and that opens up the practice of collaborative writing as a method of inquiry.

Methodologically the book is significant, combining Deleuzian concepts with collaborative writing as a method of inquiry, and drawing on collective biography, in order to make visible the break with the positivist, evidence-based inquiry so beloved of neoliberal managerialists. It shows instead how a new and complex philosophy can be explored in practice, giving rise to new insights, new lines of flight, new ways of being. Ken and Jonathan don’t *tell us* about Deleuze and his concepts, they bring Deleuze to life in their own documented practices in such a way, that we as readers can also bring them to life in our own everyday life and research

practices. Innovative research methodologies are paid lip-service by current neoliberal managers, but they quail before actual instances of it, wedded as they are to measurement and to the already-known. For that reason this is a courageous book, since there is a good chance that those with control of research funding will not be able to comprehend its significance. For that reason, perhaps more than any other, we should be provoked to explore what it is that is revolutionary here, and what we might learn from it.

Pedagogically this book is profoundly important. It shows a new way of teaching—through affect, voice and relationality brought together in one moment, and one movement. It potentially frees student and teachers from the isolation, competition and powerlessness that are the hallmarks of neoliberal education systems. To make visible and comprehensible how we exist in relation, how new ideas and ways of being become possible within those relations is probably the single-most important contribution that can be made to educational philosophy and practice at this point in history.

Jonathan and Ken escape, through this work, all the constraining, containing categorisations that might have held them fixed. They cannot be read within any of the old clichés of gender, or nationality, or age, or sexual preference. Their lines of flight dismantle these narrow categories, and in their place offer an ongoing *differenciation* of themselves-in-relation, not just in relation to each other, but to those others they encounter, including the readers of this book. This book is a profound gift to every reader. I predict that it will be read from cover to cover, and then read again, for the pure pleasure of it, and also for the possibilities for life that it opens up.

—Bronwyn Davies
July 2009

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Thank you all.

INTRODUCTORY SPACES

WRITING SPACE ONE

WHAT IS THIS BOOK? WHAT IS IT FOR?

Between the two, between-the-tuos

This book has developed out of the joint dissertation that we produced collaboratively while undertaking the Doctor of Education programme at the University of Bristol, UK between 2004 and 2008. When we originally decided to write together, we were motivated to enquire into our different writing styles. We tell more of this story later¹. In our first writing² we reflect upon these different writing styles: on the one hand there was Ken, the serious-minded, inquisitive thinker, engaged in conceptual analysis, eager to inquire and to present ideas in a dense and detailed ‘academic’ style; and, on the other, we found Jonathan, the storyteller, exploring the subtleties and nuances of the heart through narrative accounts of loss.

This interest in styles was our first intersection, the point at which desire was sparked, a desire that soon pushed, pulled, teased and taunted our writing in different directions. As we began to write with and to each other we began to be aware that we were writing in a different way. As Deleuze describes his work with Guattari,

“You know how we work—I repeat it because it seems to me to be important—we do not work together, we work between the two.” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p.13)

This passage, as a way of describing what we do, is central yet intangible, the heart of our *body-without-organs* (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004b). As we were writing the final stages of this book, Jonathan wrote to Ken, in an annotation to an earlier draft,

“Between the two—it’s become so important to us and yet at times I don’t quite know what it means.”

¹ See *Who Are We? Of Multiplicity and Connection*, pp.12-24

² See *Inquiring into Writing*, pp.50-66

This somewhat troubled remark encapsulates the emerging nature of our work together. As the living, breathing heart, our ‘between the two’ is also elusive and mercurial. We are still trying to search it out, our epistemological sensibilities creating our intrigue, our intellectual wonder, at what this is. We search for its *logos* and trouble ourselves with the use of elaborated codes, plying our trade as writers and applying words from our lexicon. But this shifting spectre of essence that troubles us is constituted by the hegemony of the Kantian noumenon: it *must* have body, it *must* have form, it *must* be a thing in itself. The desire to define, to express the all-embracing denotative utterance, can have pre-occupying effects; the need to colonise meaning becomes obsessive. Foucault (2002) warns against such inclinations, suggesting that they encourage fabrication, knowledge construction and the creation of their own objects of inquiry. In such a way we think we come to know what ‘between the two’ is; we give it a meaning; we make it a thing. This is what we have learned, what we have been taught. Our intellectual selves have taken on board the nature of the academic pursuit: we need to know what it means. We need to pin it down, to establish it, to be able to say, ‘This is what it means’. After all this time writing together, we are still sometimes troubled by those all-pervasive epistemologies that provoke us to search for foundational knowledge. We have learned to need to know.

But in this book we are learning to work between the two of us. We have shifted the emphasis of what we do away from the logic of rationality and reason toward what Deleuze calls a *logic of sense* (Deleuze, 1990). We have *sense* of what this writing is but we are unsure of what it *means*. The ‘between the two’ that we have worked within has provided a space in which our writing is *becoming*: it “implies movement, agency and continuity” (Etherington, 2004, p.15). As MacLure (2003) might put it, the space between the two of us is “the gap across which desire might spark” (p.3). Or, to use another figure from the work of Deleuze, it is in the space between us that our writing has *stuttered*. Deleuze uses the word ‘stutter’ to describe a form of expression that we see as being creative and which is bound up with the use of language as performance:

“This is what happens when the stuttering no longer affects preexisting words, but, rather, itself ushers in the words that it affects; in this case, the words do not exist independently of the stutter, which selects and links them together. It is no longer the individual who stutters in his speech, it is the writer who *stutters in the language system (langue)*: he causes language as such to stutter. We are faced here with an affective and intensive

language (langage) and not with an affection of the speaker.” (Deleuze, 1994, p.23)

Deleuze’s figurative use of stuttering provides us with a way of describing not only the becoming of our writing but also the dynamic nature of our relationship, and in so doing exemplifies the intricate and changing multiplicity of this book. We write, we respond, we re-write, we comment, we re-order. This very paragraph is stuttering. Its impediment is its life: we are constantly producing meaning and changing it. In our state of becoming we are writing both for and against ourselves; we stutter all the time.

We work via e-mail—we live many miles apart, Jonathan in Oxford, Ken in Plymouth—exchanging writings as email attachments in a form of *interactive interview* (Ellis & Berger, 2003). Mostly, we take turns, one of us responding to the other. We have come to term these sections of this book, after Deleuze (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002), as our *between-the-tuos*. Our between-the-tuos have evolved: one of us might ‘spin off’ from our own writing, taking what Deleuze might call a *line of flight* (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004b; Deleuze & Parnet, 2002), so two or more, in a series, will be sent before the other responds. In some writing spaces our between-the-tuos experiment with form, drawing from Richardson’s proposal that working with form offers different avenues of inquiry (Richardson, 2007, 1997a). In Therapy and in parts of Alterity 3, we use play script and fiction respectively; in Alterity 2 we offer poetry. In each case it is possible (if not always easy) to identify our individual voices in these alternative between-the-tuos; our voices change, metamorphose, the one into the other or into something different.

Our fictions have not yet allowed us fully to inhabit other bodies: although other characters are present, ‘Ken’ and ‘Jonathan’ are always there. We have not yet fully let go of ourselves.

The first person plural, the ‘we’, of this book is both of us, Ken and Jonathan—or Jonathan-and-Ken-ing, or Becoming-Ken-Jonathan. This voice has entered our work towards the end of the process. Each of us has taken responsibility for spaces where we use this voice, writing a first draft that the other has then read, commented upon and/or added to. Writing these spaces has been different to our between-the-tuos. Writing this, here, now, for example, feels a different process. *This is Jonathan writing, at this point in this space thinking as much as I can of how ‘we’—our ‘Becoming-Ken-Jonathan’—see/s this; and I feel that I am positioned facing towards you, the reader, with Ken alongside. No, within.* It is possible to indicate, within each ‘we’ space, whose hand has held the pen, so to speak, but that would be only one response to the question of who

wrote it. Increasingly, as we note during this book, our senses of self have become fluid: stutterings, movements, verbs, becomings through writing. Even when one of us is writing we both are writing.

Our writings are often not linear. They follow lines of flight, they sometimes go unexplained, and they might evoke and sometimes revel in the ambiguity of many meanings. As Deleuze writes about his work with Felix Guattari:

“We were never in the same rhythm, we were always out of step: I understood and could make use of what Felix said to me six months later; he understood what I said to him immediately, too quickly for my liking—he was already elsewhere. From time to time we have written about the same idea, and have noticed later that we have not grasped it at all in the same way.” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p.13)

We have grown into this writing. Increasingly we have found that our writing is both a method of inquiry (Richardson & St Pierre, 2005) where, as we write between-the-twos, we discover and construct new meanings and sensitivities, and a lived, embodied experience: writing becomes us. We are both researching through (and into) writing and becoming through writing. The dense multiplicity and interconnectedness of the work of Deleuze provides us with an articulation of our between-the-twos and the becomings that these involve. The figurative nature of a Deleuzian logic of sense suggests that they can be seen to operate on what he refers to as a ‘molecular level’. He argues that this molecular level takes over from the merely animal or the merely human.

“(T)he affects of becoming-dog, for example, are succeeded by those of a becoming-molecular, micro-perceptions of water, air etc. A man totters from one door to the next and disappears into thin air: “All I can tell you is that we are fluid, luminous beings made of fibres (sic).” All so-called initiatory journeys include these thresholds and doors where becoming itself becomes, and where one changes becoming depending on the “hour” of the world, the circles of hell, or the stages of a journey that sets scales, forms, and cries in variation. From the howling of animals to the wailing of elements and particles.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004b, p.274)

Our intention is that our between-the-twos operate at the “thresholds and doors where becoming itself becomes”.

So, what is this book? What is it for?

This book as rhizomatic writing

We draw upon the work of Deleuze to provide us with an appropriate figure that will give sense to the way in which the form and content of our book unfolds. The figures created by Deleuze reject the arborescent structure that books traditionally use: the tree with its branches and leaves reaching out for light (enlightenment) and its system of roots around the central tap root probing down into the earth searching for stability, working to establish strong foundations. In place of this traditional model, with its central core and firm trunk-like body, Deleuze proposes, through the application of principles of multiplicity, connection and heterogeneity, a model of the *rhizome*.

“A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organisations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialised languages. There is no ideal speaker-listener, any more than there is a homogenous linguistic community. Language is... “an essentially heterogeneous reality”. There is no mother tongue, only a power takeover by a dominant language within a political multiplicity. Language stabilises around a parish, a bishopric, and a capital. It forms a bulb. It evolves by subterranean stems and flows, along river valleys or train tracks; it spreads like a patch of oil. It is always possible to break a language down into internal structural elements, an undertaking not fundamentally different from a search for roots...a method of the rhizome type... can analyse language only by decentering it onto other dimensions and other registers. A language is never closed upon itself, except as a function of impotence.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004b, p.8)

The figure of the rhizome is central and recurrent in the work of Deleuze and provides a valuable means of understanding the synthesis of form and content to be found in his work. Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* is an example of a rhizomatic book, where, instead of a series of chapters delineating the logical progression of the book from introduction to its conclusion, it takes the form of an ‘open system’ of plateaus.

“It does not pretend to have the final word. The author’s hope, however, is that elements of it will stay with a certain number of its readers and will weave into the melody of their everyday lives.” (Massumi, in Deleuze & Guattari, 2004b, p.xiv)

It is possible to enter and leave the book at will and not follow an enforced linearity. We intend our book to be rhizomatic, to be—to an extent—an ‘open system’, in that there are links and connections across ‘writing spaces’ (as indicated by footnotes). The linear order in which we present it (about which more below) is one, but not the only, sequence in which it is possible to read it.

This book as a *body-without-organs*

The spirit of the rhizome and its structural implications can be found in another important figure that Deleuze, drawing from Artaud, evokes: the *body-without-organs* (Deleuze, 1990; Deleuze & Guattari, 2004b). This figure helps to exemplify the way in which the form and content of our book has emerged.

“The body is the body / it is all by itself / and has no need of organs / the body is never an organism / organisms are the enemies of bodies.” (Artaud, in Deleuze & Guattari, 2004a, p.9-10)

Deleuze uses the body-without-organs (BwO) as a means of rhizomatically expressing freedom, of releasing the potential of the body from the constraints of habit, character and affect. In this respect the BwO involves an active experimentation with the unrealised potential of the body, perhaps through the destabilisation and transgression of traits, features and ways of doing that have tended to construct the body in particular ways, limiting its potential within a recognised organisational form. The BwO exists beyond the organism:

“We come to the realisation that the BwO is not at all the opposite of the organs. The organs are not its enemies. The enemy is the organism. The BwO is opposed not to the organs but to that organisation of the organs called the organism.” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988, p.158)

We can think of the body-with-organs as having extension or being extended in place and time and the body-without-organs as expressing the intensities that exist in and between these organs in this space and time. What is crucial to us in using the BwO as a figurative representation of the way in which our book works is that Deleuze sees the potential of the body as being realised through multiplicity and connection. As we follow lines of flight and flee from the forces that might be seen to constrain us, we engage in nomadic inquiry; we are becoming *nomadic subjects* (Braidotti, 1994), territorialising spaces and allowing

“(T)he BwO (to reveal) itself for what it is: connection of desires, conjunction of flows, continuum of intensities. You have constructed your own little machine, ready when needed to be plugged into other collective machines.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004b, p.179)

So we understand the BwO as not rejecting the organs that might be seen to constitute it, but rather as rejecting the type of organisation that encourages it to exist in particularly narrow, fixed and stable ways. This writing is experimental, it is transgressive; it expresses a desire to be curious, to destabilise and to trouble the givens of accepted discourses, knowledge constructions and ways of thinking and doing. We are encouraged by the multiple, connected, social nature of the BwO; it seems that the becomings of our between-the-twins exist on *planes of immanence* (ibid.). It is on and within these planes of immanence that desire, the desire to produce, to enable and to create, exists. Our desire is productive. It is this that encourages us to think about our book as a BwO as an intensive nomadic inquiry in and through writing, which follows a logic of sense, working rhizomatically with sensation as a means of inquiry, transgression and creativity. Unlike the organism which establishes concepts and ideas as organs in fixed and established ways, we see our writing as both creating and containing multiple, interconnected assemblages, *haecceities*³, within a logic of sense and sensation, as the basic units of our work.

In using the thinking of Deleuze as a way of dissolving the binary of form and content we are also drawn to the work of Pelias (2004), who talks of a “methodology of the heart” as a means of displaying the

“(R)esearcher who, instead of hiding behind the illusion of objectivity, brings himself (sic) forward in the belief that an emotionally vulnerable, linguistically evocative, and sensuously poetic voice can place us closer to the subjects we wish to study.” (Pelias, 2004, p.1)

We are also attracted by the embodied nature of Pelias’ approach that seeks to “foster connections, opens spaces for dialogue, and heals” (ibid, p.2). We feel, therefore, that the ‘body’ we present as the culmination of our work together up to this time, is not simply a ‘body of knowledge’ but a living, breathing testament to our work together. We hope that this book sets off other lines of flight, intersects with other worlds and creates concepts which then dissolve in the emergence of other fields of thought and feeling. It is our view that, in making a proposal for a methodology of

³ We offer an extended take on Deleuze’s figure of haecceity on pp.91-93

the heart, Pelias' work corroborates that of Deleuze and the figure of the BwO. In an early section of his book entitled *Part 1- The Missing Body: A Sentence Concerning What is Absent in Scholarly Writing*, Pelias responds to his title by posing the inducement: "We could say the heart" (p.2) and provides a number of different images of the heart: "the one exposed, raw, deep inside the operating theatre's ribs...the symbol of desire...the swollen orb...that voracious fruit that cannot be picked" (pp.2-3) and so on. He continues with his inquiry into the "missing body" in a similar vein by posing a number of suggested ways forward and, for each, suggesting different ways of looking: "or, perhaps instead, we could say the hand", "or we could say the groin", "or we could say the bones" (p.3) and so on. The playfully ironic way in which Pelias builds up these dimensions, these levels of inquiry, offers a powerful deconstruction of the formal conception and organisation of the body and in so doing provides a clearly illuminated representation of the BwO. In his writing he encourages us to see the heart, the groin, the bones, etc. in multiple ways. He offers multiple opportunities for re-constructing the body, for experimentation and transgression: a methodology of the heart, a beating heart that lives in the intensive reality of a body-without-organs, responding to multiple vibrations and rhythms in sensitive and ever-changing ways.

This book as (writing) space(s)

We borrow the term *writing space* from hypertext literature (e.g. Bolter, 2001; Joyce, 1987; Kolb, 1994; Moulthorp, 1992), and from the hypertext software Storyspace (Bolter et al., 2001) in particular. In hypertext writing, readers have choices to move, rhizomatically, from one passage of text to a number of others and back again, or off in a different direction, should they wish. These passages of text, 'writing spaces', suggest to us a liminality, a sense of in-between places, intangibilities, which are congruent with what we seek to achieve.

We have used electronic tools, including our primary *modus operandi* of using email to exchange our writings as attachments. We are with Cavallaro (2000) in wishing to destabilise the stereotypical boundary between the mysticism and irrationality of the narratives of *mythos* and the rational, scientific and measurable world of *techne*. We feel comfortable with her assertion that

"(Therefore) technology is informed by mythology, insofar as it is an *artistic* practice, and mythology is informed by technology because *construction* is its fundamental purpose." (Cavallaro, 2000, p.42)

We are drawn to the innuendo of fiction that exists in Foucault's constructivist use of *fabrication*, where that which is made is also made up. We wish to emphasise the technology of hypertext as a creative metaphor for Deleuzian conceptualisations of *rhizome* and *nomadic*. The term 'writing space' also helps to encourage a shift away from linear to associative thinking (Morgan, 2000).

In this we are drawn to the structural and conceptual antecedents of Deleuze and Guattari's *plateaus* (2004). We are alert to Foucault's (1986) view that:

"The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein." (Foucault, 1986, p.22)

We are also aware of Gibson's (1984) view that the *cyberspaces* we populate and inhabit are consensual realities, where meanings, identities and knowledge are continually being discussed, negotiated and contested. Our inquiry seeks to dissolve the binary of inner and outer space, characterised by the world of the internal and the external, the subject and the object. So, later in this BwO, as we write about the 'actual', 'real' places where we write, we begin to find ourselves, in the writing, characterising these 'places' in terms of our feelings and our emotions⁴. Where we write becomes what we write; what we write becomes where we write. So, as nomads, we write and we inquire, we find ourselves transgressing the boundaries and certainties of the *logos* of *striated space* and opening up an irreverent and metamorphosing patois in the *nomos* of *smooth space*. Here we are working with Deleuze and Guattari's (2004b) notion of smooth space characterising places of becoming, where our movement, our wondering and our wandering, our process, perhaps, is given precedence over our arrivals. We wish to offer a *poetics of space* (Bachelard, 1969) in which we find ourselves re-visioning our worlds and creating a shifting but welcoming landscape of inquiry. We find these *heterotopia* (Foucault, 1998a) in our nomadic inquiries. They become us and in them we become: as we are drawn by their 'utopian' allure we also draw them.

⁴ See Our Writing Places, Our Writing Spaces, pp.40-47

This book as story

We see this book as many things: as rhizomatic, as a body-without-organs, as exploring the space(s) between the two of us. We talk of following lines of flight, of wandering, of following a logic of sense in our investigations of subjectivities. We are nomads and we suggest, too, that the reader might also read us nomadically.

However, we have grown conscious that the pieces of writing we present here tell a story. As we re-read and re-draft our writings we become increasingly conscious of, and affected by, a sense of our developing relationship over time. We have come to see our writings differently as we have revisited them in the context of completing our dissertation, producing this book and looking to what might lie ahead for the two of us. Such a view of our relationship, therefore, is not linear, but is located, as Freeman (1998) describes,

“(In) a mode of time that is rather more like a circle or spiral, embodying a dialectical movement from present to past and past to present, at once. This movement is in turn conditioned by the future as well, in the form not only of hopes, expectations, and so on, but of the projected self that both emerges from and gives form to the landscapes of one’s history.” (pp. 42-3)

We have, in short, as we have read each other and written again about what we have read, become aware of our performance of narrative (Smith & Sparkes, 2008). A narrative of us. A number of narratives of us. A number of narratives of the writing of us.

This sense of our narrative performance(s) is symbolised in two interconnected ways: by our decision to present our between-the-tuos in chronological sequence and in the use that we make both of introductions to those writing spaces and of text boxes to interrupt them. The introductions and the text boxes serve as our *chorus*: commentaries on the ‘action’ of the unfolding drama, drawing the reader’s attention to what we notice in our writing, in our story, from the perspective of a different moment in time.

So, this book is our story. Not a modernist, linear story, but a multiplicitous, layered story, one into which we invite you in the hope that you, as readers, will, in turn, become our writers (Richardson, 2000a).

WRITING SPACE TWO

WHO ARE WE? OF MULTIPLICITY AND CONNECTION

Our reflexive desire in this writing space is to offer an(other) insight into the ‘we’ of this book, to enable the reader better to hold us as the embodied writers who work together on this book; to lay open something of our *prejudice* (Gadamer, 1980), the conditions whereby we arrived at this experience.

This is a story of how we came to be writing these pages. We did not simply appear, fixed, as the writers of this work. We have history. This is a “writing-story” (Richardson, 1997a): one tale of how this book came into being, how we “gave birth to ourselves” (Cixous, 1991, p.31). Fittingly, for a project that has been undertaken through the exchange of email attachments, it is the content of our emails themselves that we employ to relate this narrative.

‘Who are we?’ is a complex question that we wish, first, to trouble.

The question concerns who and not what we are (Cavarero, 2000). The what is easier, but duller; more identifiable but less telling; more commonsense, but reductive. The what—we feel its seductive pull—would tell the reader that, for example, we are Ken, in his 60s, Dad to Katy, Reuben and Phoebe, a university lecturer, sea-lover; one who loves to laugh and to dance and who laughs and dances in love. And Jonathan, counsellor and staff developer, coming up to 50, father of Joe and Holly, husband to Tessa, and land-lubber. The whats are endless, they tend towards the static, and they never satisfy: Ken reads and does philosophy, has always written diaries, and enjoys the music of PJ Harvey, The Rolling Stones, Prince, The Pixies, Leftfield, The Pogues, The White Stripes, Timarawen, Sun Ra, Mink De Ville, Faithless, Eddie Cochran, and Groove Armada. Jonathan lives for his one coffee a day and his twice a week game of five-a-side football, listens to (rather than reads) novels, wrote a diary for a few years in his twenties, and plays the French Horn occasionally—and so on. There are always further whats.

The meaning of ‘who’ is elusive.

We have come to see who as being always in process. In our writing we have come to place more emphasis on the *how* than either the *who* or the *what*. ‘How’ is the action of the ‘who’, the verb; the doing, not the emphasis upon the ‘person’, the noun, the status. We have spent time railing against the nouns that are incumbent, obsessing about the *doing* of the writing, its embodiment, its refusal in its performative form to be of the person, in a representative sense, but about also our process, our body-without-organs.

We wish also to consider the meaning of ‘we’. Are ‘we’ Ken and Jonathan, the humanist individuals? Do they constitute the ‘we’ of this story? We would argue to the contrary, that this book’s ‘we’ embodies an understanding that we are “in a constitutive relation with the other” (Kottman, in Cavarero, 2000, p.ix). This is a book written by Ken-and-Jonathan or, rather, Becoming-Ken-Jonathan: a process, a becoming, a body-without-organs, grass that grows between (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002), in smooth spaces (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004b). This diminishes neither our uniqueness nor our embodiedness. On the contrary, there are no intersects (Klein, 2005) without distinctness, no between-the-tuos without the one and the other; and for grass to grow between there have to be the rocks that flank it. We take up these questions, of what we mean when we say ‘who’ and ‘we’ throughout the book.

So how are we able to respond to the question, “who are we?”, given our questioning above? In embracing a Deleuzian notion of becoming and of always being in motion, we warm to Cavarero’s (2000) invitation to narrative, to endeavour through narrative to open the Becoming-Ken-Jonathan for view, in all this narrative’s partiality and situatedness (Gannon, 2006), all its transience and doubt. “(N)arration reveals the finite in its fragile uniqueness, and sings its glory.” (Cavarero, 2000, p.3)

We tell this narrative, of how we came to be writing together, implicitly, through our email correspondence over the years leading up to this book.

Our writing for this book has been produced primarily through the exchange of writings as attachments to emails. Elsewhere the emails themselves have remained invisible: here we bring them stage front. Our collaboration has been born out of and sustained by these emails and the writings they have carried.

The emails that follow were exchanged without a sense of ever having a wider audience. Rather than attempt to *tell* the reader who we are, we allow ourselves—our process, our ‘how’—including that which is most obscure to us, our birth (Cavarero, 2000), to appear through these

writings. Comments for clarification are added in italics to the email text. Other comments, written with hindsight, are in boxes.

By way of introduction to the first set of emails, we would like to take you to a cold February morning in Bristol, in the southwest of England, in 2004, when, with some twenty others, we began our first unit on the University of Bristol EdD programme. In the round of introductions, and not having met before, we each told the group that our respective families had guinea pigs. We remember that Jonathan reported how his guinea pigs were a source of irritation to him (all the clearing out, their lack of recognition of him as the one who fed them and kept their home clean), and that Ken might have mentioned how endearing he found his; but we can't be sure that this is how it was. Maybe those sentiments were expressed at a later time, but guinea pigs were certainly a first connection.

On the second day of the unit we 'found' each other further: we were two of a group of three that wrote together—in response to a paper about loss (Speedy, 2005)—and that shared its writing on the final day to its peers. Christine (Chris) was the third group member. Our (Ken and Jonathan's) email correspondence, which Chris was initially part of, began some three weeks after the end of that doctoral unit:

On Tuesday, February 24, 2004 10:19am, Jonathan wrote:

Hi Chris and Ken,

I hope that you're both well, and enjoying the reading and thinking (and writing?) about our assignments.

I am planning to use the experience of our collective response to Jane Speedy's piece as the focus of my paper. (*Jane Speedy was a tutor on this unit.*) I think that the theoretical focus will be on issues of evaluation of narrative research, reflexivity and positioning, and also on questions of what constitutes narrative research (was what we did narrative research in its own right?). I am a bit vague on this at the moment as you can tell!

There are also ethical issues, which is what has prompted me write to you. How would you feel about my using the material that you each contributed? I would like to present it in some form (in landscape? Or in a different way; I'm not sure yet).

I have yours, Chris, but I don't have Ken's: if you are ok with this may I have a copy? And does either of you have the flipchart with our collective 'conclusion'? I didn't pick it up.

Let me know what you think. Many thanks.

Jonathan

The next day, Wednesday 25 February 2004 at 10:54am, Chris responded:

Hi Jonathan

I'm most impressed that you have already worked out what you're going to do for the assignment. I had to use all last week for paid work stuff and am just getting my EdD files out this morning! I'm quite happy for you to use my material, no problem. I gave the flip chart sheet to Kim (*Etherington—a course tutor*) to hold up for us in the session, so whether she kept it or not I don't know, but I didn't think to keep hold of it. If you can't retrieve it perhaps we can try to remember what we said?

Good luck! Regards,
Chris

And Ken responded an hour later, Wednesday 25 February 2004, 11:51am:

Hi Chris, Hi Jonathan

Like Chris I am very impressed that you have managed to make a start on the assignment Jonathan. I have spent a great deal of time thinking about it but, like you Chris, have had to be involved in my day to day work stuff that I haven't managed to put pen to paper or to come up with any good ideas as yet.

I am happy that you use my material Jonathan: in many senses it partly belongs to you and Chris anyway because it came out of a situation in which a great deal of sharing and inspirational learning was taking place. If it wasn't for you...!

An early indication of between-the-tuos and of multiplicities, perhaps.

I will have to type it for you, as my handwriting is pretty illegible: I am hoping to find a 'window' on Friday morning and will e-mail it to you then. I am pleased that you might be able to do something with the material...who knows we might get a joint narratives research project out of it later down the line!!

Ken seemed aware of possibilities even at this point.

Do you have e-mail addresses for the whole group? I don't seem to have. It's good to be in touch and hope to hear from you both again.

Best wishes

Ken

A few days further on, on Monday 1 March 2004 21:38, Ken wrote to Jonathan:

Hi Johnathan,

We notice in these early emails how Ken regularly has trouble spelling Jonathan's name...

I have attached the 'written up' piece for you. It was quite interesting to write it up as I hadn't looked at it since we did the exercise together: I found a few fresh ideas lurking around my psyche, which I leapt upon, not having formulated a coherent idea for my assignment as yet!

I hope that the attachment is useful and I wish you luck and good fortune in writing your assignment. I am planning to start mine next week when I have shifted a backlog of marking. It would be good to hear how your assignment goes and to keep in touch. I hope that things are well for you.

Best wishes

Ken

On Thursday April 8, 2004, at 12:40pm, Jonathan sent writing to Ken and Chris:

Hi Chris and Ken,

I've had a first go at the essay and thought I would send it to you both. If you have time - and I know that you'll be up to your eyes in your own assignments, amongst other things - I'd value knowing what you think. Any feedback welcome. But, please, don't feel obliged - if you can't, no problem.

Thanks.

Hope it's all going well with you. If you want to run anything past me I'll be more than happy...

A first invitation to a reciprocal exchange of writing.

All the best,
Jonathan

Ken read Jonathan's writing and responded, on Wed April 14, 2004, at 21:33pm:

Hi Jonathan,

We began here to correspond as a pair rather than as a three...

I sat down tonight and read your assignment. I really enjoyed it on a number of levels and I feel good to have been a (small) part in its development.

It's almost mundane to say that I think that it is a really good 'academic' piece (that word that keeps dogging me!) I think that you should feel confident that it will achieve good marks at this level. I really like the way in which you have managed to blend so many important but different things together into a piece of writing that feels coherent, really well structured and very readable. You have pulled it all together through the careful and sustained use of a strong and passionate argument.

However, it wasn't just those things that made me like your writing. It was so full of life, whilst, paradoxically, addressing death. Reading your work, I was struck for the first time by the fact that you and Chris talked about the death of a father and a mother and that it was my mum and dad whom I had introduced to the group, through the photograph, who play such a significant part in my life generally and in being on this course in particular.

We wrote together about fathers and mothers in Gale and Wyatt (2008b) and write about fathers in 'Alterity 3'.

I felt exactly as you described in your writing: should I be here? What's the point? Is it worth it, all this time and money? I really liked the way in which you brought that into your writing.

Thanks for letting me read your work: I think that it is really good and I certainly enjoyed reading it very much. I haven't copied these comments to Chris but will do if you think that it is OK or that it is a good idea.

Best wishes to you
Ken

Years later, we sign off with 'best wishes' much less frequently but we are still unable – as men? – to find an acceptable alternative.

In May 2004, we attended our second unit–on autoethnography–following which we exchanged emails with Chris about how we were progressing with our assignments. Jonathan wrote his about the death of his father (Wyatt, 2005a) and sent a draft to Chris and Ken in July. Chris responded warmly soon after.

Having not heard back from Ken, on Monday, August 23, 2004 at 9.53am, Jonathan wrote:

Hi,
I've been thinking about you...concerned that you've gone quiet...
Hope you're having a good summer and that the writing went/is going well. Get in touch when you're ready to. Would be good to hear from you.
Best,
Jonathan

To which Ken replied three days later, Thursday 26 August, at 22:28:

Dear Jonathan

Thank you for keeping in touch. It was so kind of you to write after I had left it so long before I contacted you. I can't begin to say why I haven't written for so long but I have searched myself and know that it is not negligence. I had a real struggle to write the last assignment; not because of the writing itself but because I was really busy. When I actually found the time I actually enjoyed writing but it was really stressful trying to find that time.

I have just read your assignment and I can't tell you how moved I felt to read what you wrote. My dad died suddenly when I wasn't there: I was 30 miles away on a beach with a friend, laughing, playing, swimming, kissing, oblivious to what was happening to him. When I arrived home and heard my Mum's desperate voice on the phone telling me that he had simply died I cracked. Like you I had a crystal moment in a petrol station, driving to see my Mum and him. Tears pouring down my face, everything around me was vibrant, full of life, Cornwall on a bright sunny afternoon - I couldn't believe where I was or what was happening, it was all so sudden.

I think that in many ways you have been very brave to write what you have written and to put it out into a public place. I feel very touched and