What follows is a set of essays; at the same time, it is an open-textured, multifocal conversation whose beginnings, ends, and boundaries are always in question. This pre-text will play the role of an introduction in several respects. First, there is a narrative of aspects of Kristeva’s life and work, with some cross-reference to the sections in which we discuss her texts. This is followed by a provisional consideration of her engagement with questions of women and of feminism, and of some possible objections to her views. Next is a preview of the essays to follow, in the order of their presentation, and then in several alternative orderings and thematic groupings (in order to underscore their mutual interaction and synergy). Comments on the production of the essays and the style of their presentation then clear the way for the main course.

1

Julia Kristeva was born in Bulgaria in 1941. Accounts of her early years are enigmatic or inconsistent. (Leon Roudiez says, “She received her early education from French nuns. Then came the inevitable Communist Party children’s groups, and, later, the party youth organizations. . . . [S]he worked on a newspaper for communist youth while pursuing literary studies at the university” (Desire in Language 1 f). A note (n. 7) to Marilyn Edelstein’s essay in this volume comments on these topics and raises some questions about Roudiez’s account.) Of her religious background Kristeva herself says, “I am not a believer, but I recall having been born into a family of believers, who tried, without excessive enthusiasm, perhaps, to transmit their faith to me. . . . [In adolescence] my macabre thoughts [about faith and death] soon gave way to erotic daydreams” (In the Beginning Was Love 23 f).

She began graduate study in Paris in 1966, the year of Jacques Lacan’s Écrits, the year before Jacques Derrida’s Of Grammatology and Writing and Difference, two years before the spontaneous and abortive revolution of French workers and students in May 1968. Her orientation to Paris was facilitated by her fellow Bulgarian, Tzvetan Todorov, who had
arrived a few years earlier. Todorov played a key role in acquainting her with the work of the Russian discourse-theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, which had a major part in shaping her thought.

So much of Kristeva's work responds to the agenda and the framing of the issues in Bakhtin that it may be helpful to look at a few of his themes. Todorov has published a small book on Bakhtin, which is both a helpful and, for Kristeva studies, a particularly appropriate source. First of all, Bakhtin proposed to consider as the object of his analysis not the language as a system, but the practice of discourse, especially as it is found in texts. Much of his attention is directed to the novel, a focus Kristeva follows.

Bakhtin held that the human subject is not an original and autonomous entity, but is constituted socially and above all by language. He criticizes Freud because, as Todorov describes it, "Freudianism . . . conceives of the unconscious as preceding, or external to, language. Yet, the only access we have to it is mediated by language" (Mikhail Bakhtin 31). Todorov quotes Bakhtin, in a passage that could be from Lacan except for its clarity:

"The motifs of the unconscious revealed during psychoanalytic sessions by means of the method of 'free association' are verbal reactions of the patient, as are all the other habitual motifs of consciousness. . . . What is reflected in these verbal utterances is not the dynamics of the individual soul, but the social dynamics of the interrelations of doctor and patient." (31)

The following passage from Bakhtin is addressed to communication theory, but its application to psychoanalysis is clear, and corresponds to Kristeva's (and Lacan's) later account:

"In reality the relations between A and B are in a state of permanent formation and transformation; they continue to alter in the very process of communication. Nor is there a ready-made message X. It takes form in the process of communication between A and B. Nor is it transmitted from the first to the second, but constructed between them, like an ideological bridge; it is constructed in the process of their interaction." (55f)

Even more Lacanian are the following: "The other is necessary to accomplish, even if temporarily, a perception of the self. . . . The image I see in the mirror . . . provides me with the archetype of self-perception; only someone else's gaze can give me the feeling that I form a to-
tality’’ (95). ‘‘There are events that, in principle, cannot unfold on the plane of a single and unified consciousness, but presuppose two consciousnesses that do not fuse; . . . whose essential and constitutive element is the relation of a consciousness to another consciousness, precisely because it is other’’ (99).

This last comment is written to characterize the relation between the subjectivity of the narrator and the subjectivity of the character within the structure of a novel. It is Kristeva who recognizes the homology between the Lacanian divided subject and the Bakhtinian duality in the work of fiction and makes fruitful use of it as she interweaves psychoanalytic and fictional (and religious) narratives in her explorations. Indeed, it is precisely the way in which the religious narrative reflects at the same time the multiple dynamics of fictive subjectivity and the exigencies of the desiring and suffering subject of psychoanalysis that leads Kristeva to incorporate religious materials in the discussion and that thus provides a principal gathering point for this group of essays. (Kristeva’s own discussion of Bakhtin is most accessible in ‘‘Word, Dialogue, and Novel’’ in Desire in Language 64–91; reprinted in The Kristeva Reader, 35–61). This and other aspects of Kristeva’s relation to Bakhtin are discussed in Edelstein’s essay.

While Todorov played an important role in Kristeva’s entry into Paris and her engagement with Bakhtin’s work, Roland Barthes (himself influenced by Bakhtin) was her principal teacher. She also did considerable work with the linguist Emile Benveniste and worked for a while as a research assistant in Claude Levi-Strauss’s Laboratory of Social Anthropology. She published early essays in the radical and postmodern journal, Tel Quel, becoming in time one of its inner circle.

Her first book, Semeiotikê, published in 1969 in the series ‘‘Collection ‘Tel Quel,’ ’’ is a collection of theoretical essays from this period, heavily influenced by Bakhtin, Barthes, and Benveniste. While it has not been translated into English, two of its essays, ‘‘The Bounded Text’’ and ‘‘Word, Dialogue, and Novel,’’ are included in Desire in Language. Almost all the other essays in Desire in Language were first published in Tel Quel, and all were collected in her book, Polylogue (1977), except for a 1980 preface for the English edition. (These 1970s essays, and that preface, are the center of much of Graybeal’s discussion of Kristeva.)

A trip by Kristeva and others to China in 1974 gave rise to the essay ‘‘Des Chinoises.’’ A part of this essay dealing (for contrast) with Judaeo-Christian culture is reprinted in The Kristeva Reader. It makes substantive observations on Biblical monotheism and Christian idealization of virginity, which none of us have elected to discuss in the present volume. She married Philippe Sollers (the subject of ‘‘The Novel As Polylogue’’
in *Desire in Language*; the birth of their son in 1976 appears to provide a personal background for her essay, "Stabat Mater" (but see Edelstein's essay for some reservations on its autobiographical status).

Kristeva's early work is heavy with theory, bringing Marxist, psychoanalytic, and Bakhtinian/Barthian perspectives to bear on central issues concerning the nature of discourse and the novel, and focusing increasingly on the dynamic interplay between the formal, public system of language (what Lacan calls the symbolic) and somatic, rhythmic, emotional functions that operate with their own logic and appear to have their roots in the preverbal stages of child development. Lacan, at this stage, recognizes only the imaginary register in which the child's identity is constituted by the mirror image, by the regard of the other, and the world is marked by iconic images rather than signifying signs. Kristeva, however, finds here a complex semiotics of tactile and kinesthetic differences, inscribed in a primordial *chora* (receptive space: Plato's term, from the *Timaeus*), that founds the experiential territory of the somatic dyad of mother and child. (David Fisher's essay gives central attention to the significance, for the question of ethics, of this conception of the *chora* and the semiotic register, especially as she developed it in her 1974 dissertation, of which the theoretical sections appear in English as *Revolution in Poetic Language*.)

The exploration of the semiotics of the *chora* led Kristeva to avant-garde literature, to the psychology of psychotic and borderline states, and to the dynamics of infancy. In all of these areas, the interpersonal construction of meaning Bakhtin had emphasized plays a crucial role, and the function of transference and counter-transference becomes critical. This, together with frustration with the abstract impersonality of literary theory and a disillusionment with then-current politics, led her to undergo and to qualify to practice psychoanalysis.

In an interview in *Partisan Review* in 1986, Kristeva says that Jacques Lacan was not only an intellectual influence but a friend, and that for those reasons and others she was not analyzed by Lacan, as is widely supposed (even the American dust jacket of her *Black Sun* says she was). In addition to the personal and intellectual relationship, she says, there was the fact that the Lacanians were very much politicized around their role in the psychoanalytic movement and around other issues of power. She also holds that a heterogeneity (plurality) of approach is essential in the clinical work of psychoanalysis. So hers was not a Lacanian, but a more mainstream analysis. Lacan's intellectual influence on her work is evident, but it is not initially or essentially brought into play through her experience and training in psychoanalysis. Rather, it preceded her analysis and was modified by it.
Lacan’s importance depends largely on his recognition of the structural analogue between the theory of signification in Saussure and his followers in structural linguistics and the account of signification of dream-elements in Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams*. For both Saussure and Freud, signs (dream-symbols) are a composite of a sensory signifier and a signified meaning; the relation of signifier and signified is arbitrary (idiosyncratic, in the dream); the structural relations, differences, oppositions among signifiers—rather than any inherent value of individual ones—is the basis of their achievement of effects of meaning. In Lacan, this extends beyond the dream to the symptom; and, conversely, the overdetermination of signifiers by the dynamics of desire is generalized by Lacan from Freud back into linguistics.

As a result, Lacan develops a distinctive psychoanalytic theory of the relation between the acquisition of language and the dynamics of personal development. Blocked by the father (not by any behavior of the father, but by the function, the position, the very existence of the role of the father) from total possession of mother’s desire, the child is forced to substitute other gratifications, other objects of desire, other roles to play or places to play them. This positional logic of substitution, of representing one thing by another, of displacing desire along a chain of representatives, is the foundation of the formal order of language, of what Lacan calls the symbolic order. Because of its origin in the displacement imposed by the paternal function, Lacan also calls this order the Law of the Father or the Name (*Nom*, homophonically with *non*, “no”) of the Father.

In Lacan’s theory, the infant begins in an incoherent plurality of sensations. At some point between six and eighteen months, the child sees itself in a mirror, or is mirrored to itself in the regard of the parent. This reflection provides an image of unity with which the child comes to identify. It is this imaginary self that is the foundation of the ego and that is signified in language once the symbolic order is in play. Thus, behind and beneath the symbolic order lies the imaginary order, characterized essentially by a self identified and unified by its reflection from the other and by iconic, nonsignifying modes of representation of the world. The interplay between the substitutionary unreality of the symbolic and the mirroring unreality of the imaginary, both always struggling against the exigency of the real—somatic intensity, as ecstasy and as pain; need; the inaccessible Other; death—is, constitutes the dynamics of life and of suffering. (“Real,” for Lacan and Kristeva, indicates the insistent, inescapable, heterogeneous; “reality” ordinarily suggests that which conforms to a consensual discourse about what is real. These issues are further elaborated and refined in Kearns’s essay.)
Kristeva largely accepts this Lacanian analysis but modifies it through a more extensive analysis of pre-Oedipal dynamics. Rather than an initial state of fragmentation, she begins from an emergent differentiation within the somatic unity of mother and child. (In “Stabat Mater” she considers this emergence from the maternal point of view; Edelstein gives it substantial discussion. Other Kristeian texts center attention on the infant and the “zero degree of subjectivity,” as she calls it in Tales of Love, which Crownfield and Reineke examine in detail.) All subsequent experience is inscribed in this original pre-space, ur-container, chora, and constitutes a bodily semiotics that serves as the foundation for the possibility of the symbolic structures of language. Kristeva thus speaks of the semiotic order, in this sense of a somatic semiotics before the emergence of the Oedipal and symbolic.

Kristeva’s psychoanalysis and training extended approximately from 1976 to 1979, and she has since practiced psychoanalysis in Paris, as well as teaching in the Department of Texts and Documents of the University of Paris VII and periodically in comparative literature at Columbia University. Her major writings of this later period, Powers of Horror (1980), Tales of Love (1983), In the Beginning Was Love: Psychoanalysis and Faith (1985), Black Sun (1987), and Étrangers à nous-même (1989), are more relaxed, more readable, more concrete, more plural—some would say, more human—than the more theoretical works of the late 1960s and the 1970s, though the basic conceptual structure remains. In each case, she explores in the Western tradition religious and literary images of human being, with respect to issues successively of abjection, narcissism, and love, faith, depression, and estrangement (and foreignness—the French word étranger says both “stranger” and “foreigner” at once). Many of the themes of these works will be discussed in the essays that follow, though except for this introduction we have not commented on Étrangers, and only Jonte-Pace’s essay deals with Black Sun.

Throughout this history, Kristeva has been engaged with the questions of being a woman, of roles of women in the past, present, and future, of the status of gender in theory and practice. She writes consciously as a woman, but with reservations about the specific agendas of contemporary feminisms and of l’écriture féminine, the French “feminine writing” of her contemporaries such as Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous, with whom she is occasionally and inexacty classified. A number of the themes and issues she raises in regard to these matters are discussed in
the following essays. Edelstein takes up specifically some contemporary criticisms of Kristeva's relation to feminism; Jonte-Pace also gives substantive attention to her contributions to and criticisms of feminism, though not to her critics. Graybeal also discusses Kristeva's likening of certain feminisms to a religion, in "Women's Time" and "Woman Can Not Be Defined."

Kristeva engages directly with what may be the most radical predicament that confronts the very project of a feminist discourse. Lacan characterized the symbolic, the public realm of language and discourse in its logical, syntactical, semantic functions, as the Law of the Father, the substitutive trace and representative of the defeat of the child's Oedipal desire, the concealed and indirect persistence of the phallus, the marker of what mother wants (is imagined to want). If cognitive discourse is, then, paternal, male, phallic, how is feminine discourse to proceed? Is it necessary to submit to paternal and masculine authority in order to communicate? Or is it possible to devise a non-logical semiotics of the imaginary, of music and dance and play, sufficient to enable a full feminine being and expression and effective sociality without the negativity of the masculine language? (Graybeal's essay opens some of these latter possibilities.)

Kristeva sees exclusive reliance on either option as a mistake. She thus distances herself on the one hand from a sort of political feminism that wants to take over the linguistic means of production and achieve a feminine mastery, and on the other from a cultic and mythic feminism that abandons the rigor of cognitive discourse. She does not offer a totalist program to solve the problem but favors situational subversion, disruption, and displacement of cognitive discourse, while at the same time relying almost exclusively on that discourse in almost all her own work. (The extent to which "Stabat Mater," with its two-column text, is an exception is considered in Edelstein's essay; Jonte-Pace also touches on it.)

Kristeva prefers to engage the conflict of phallic language and feminine discourse at another level. Lacan recognized, more explicitly and consistently than Freud, that the primary parent for all children is the mother and that father is the third party who displaces the child from centrality. (In his view, it is the girl's—learned—strategy of managing this displacement through identification with mother and the boy's through substitution of an other for mother that is the basis of gender difference [Écrits: A Selection 146ff.].) Mother and father are thus not natural archetypes of female and male identity but parental roles that function initially in the same way for all of us. Language disposes of gender difference through correlation of gender names with the pres-
ence and absence of the penis. Kristeva makes a double move behind the Oedipal triangle on which Lacan, like Freud, is fixed. On the one hand, she develops the centrality of the archaic maternal function, the *chora*, the semiotics of the flesh. With respect to the paternal character of language, this plays out as the recognition of the constant codetermination of discourse by the archaic semiotics as well as the formal symbolics—a codetermination operative for all of us, only (false) suppressed in patriarchal domination.

At the same time, Kristeva brings the father back into this prehistory. Not a gendered, genitally specific male figure, but the third party, Mother's Other, for whom the child is object of discourse and of regard, and in mimicry of whom the child begins to be a subject. In some sense, then, having moved back into what had been regarded as exclusively maternal territory, she betrays it to the enemy by bringing the third party into the primordial situation. But it is crucial to see here that it is not the function of the *masculine* but the function of the *other*, the third, that is decisive. This argument is, indeed, central to her late work because it is in the triadic foundation of subjectivity that there lies the possibility of effective sociality, of the effective sublimation of narcissism. (Crownfield and Reineke have organized their essays around this structure, which also functions for Kearns.)

One key aspect of Kristeva’s resistance to programmatic feminism may be indicated by a brief reference to *Strangers to Ourselves*. The book deals with the problem of the stranger, the outsider, the foreigner—with explicit recognition of the contemporary French political conflict about the status of foreign workers. She is interested in the origins, the dynamics, the provenance of the idea of the stranger, including its function in constituting the political community. And she finds, as the title indicates, that the problem of the stranger is internal to each of us. This theme relates to those found in her analysis of abjection in *Powers of Horror*, where the abhorrent, the intolerable and absolutely-to-be-excluded, is a representative of a problematic separation of self from mother, and thus of the terrifying threat of otherness to one who is uncertain of one’s own boundary. (The maternal matrix of this structure is responsible for the general tendency to target women for abjection and scapegoating, as Reineke argues; Jonte-Pace and Graybeal also comment on this problematic).

Only less controversial than Kristeva’s relation to feminism is her increasingly appreciative consideration of religion. While she shares the
contemporary intellectual consensus that the era of religion is past, she recognizes in its semiotic/symbolic structures images of the split self, of desire, of narcissism and its sublimation, of abjection, of paternal and maternal functions, that have been of great force in the Western textual tradition and that resonate strongly with the imagery through which her psychoanalytic subjects articulate their pain and their desire for love. These issues arise throughout her work, and the role of religious discourse in articulating them has been of central importance in her writings of the 1980s. It is these questions that have gathered this collection of essays.

We begin with an essay by Diane Jonte-Pace, who notes that psychoanalysis from Freud to Winnicott to Lacan has associated religion with femininity and illusion, though on different grounds and with different valuations. Kristeva continues this connection, in several texts the analysis of which enables Jonte-Pace to uncover a deeper association between the feminine and otherness and ultimately death. Marilyn Edelstein moves the focus from the question of woman to the figure of mother, in an analysis of the essay, "Stabat Mater," which focuses a discussion of various of Kristeva’s critics as well as leading into questions of the status of the author and the practice of reading.

David Crownfield summarizes Kristeva’s account of narcissism and the triadic foundation of subjectivity and her use of this structure to explicate the force and limits of Christianity. The essay closes with the question whether psychoanalytic thought participates in the same illusory and fictive character as Christianity, and it leaves open a space for their continued conversation. Martha Reineke begins with the same triadic structure, in the somewhat different form in which it is presented in Rene Girard’s analyses of violence and the sacred. Reineke goes on to argue that Kristeva’s gendered account of the originary (infantile) triad provides a sounder foundation than Girard’s and makes evident the grounds for the characteristic choice of women as sacrificial victims and scapegoats. David Fisher takes the same foundation in another direction, into the divided nature of the ethical subject and the extent to which an internal heteronomy of the archaic maternal body-space is at the center of that division.

Crownfield’s, Reineke’s, and Fisher’s essays all combine theoretical analysis with aspects of the application of Kristeva’s work to specific topics: the semiotic efficacy of Christian theology, the sacrificial foundation of social existence, and the internal heteronomy in the ethical subject, respectively. While not without theoretical interest, the last two essays focus more definitely on the side of applications. Cleo Kearns considers the role of imagination in Kristeva and Thomas Aquinas from the point of view of the function of religious discourse in practice, and
specifically in prayer. Jean Graybeal concludes the collection with reflections on jouissance as the play of the split subject, and on religious phenomena (especially Vodou) in which this play is enacted.

If the reader of this volume would like to structure the reading of the essays around the chronological development of Kristeva’s work, the best place to begin would be with Fisher’s discussion of the chora, our most intensive examination of Revolution in Poetic Language (1974). Graybeal works primarily with essays from the period 1974–80, including those in Desire in Language (1980) and “Women’s Time” (1979). Edelstein focuses on “Stabat Mater” (1976), with a wide range of references to work before and after. Kearns uses some of these same materials, plus Tales of Love (1983). The most focused examination of Powers of Horror is in Reineke’s essay, which also develops the theory of narcissism in Tales of Love. Crownfield centers on Tales of Love and In the Beginning Was Love (1985). Jonte-Pace also deals with “Stabat Mater,” “Women’s Time,” Powers of Horror, and In the Beginning; I list her last only because she is the only one who discusses Black Sun (1987). Except for the paragraph in this introduction, none of us has engaged with Étrangers à nous-mêmes (1989).

In situating Kristeva in relation to other figures, one might begin, as we do, with Jonte-Pace’s discussion of Freud, Winnicott and Lacan on the relation of “woman” and “religion.” Reineke gives systematic attention to the relation between the work of Kristeva and that of Rene Girard with respect to violence, sacrifice, identity, and the foundations of social existence. The feminist criticisms (especially with regard to the category of motherhood) are considered most directly in Edelstein’s essay. Edelstein and Kearns consider aspects of Kristeva’s relation to contemporary literary theory. In Kearns, Thomas Aquinas’s theory of imagination comes into play; in Fisher, questions of Aristotle and Hegel as well as contemporary philosophical and Christian ethicists; in Graybeal, reflections on Vodou as it might illuminate some of the Kristevan issues.

Conceptually, the chora and the notion of the semiotic are given most attention by Fisher. The question of woman is an organizing theme for Jonte-Pace, Reineke, and Edelstein and plays a decisive role for Kearns as well. (It is necessarily part of the discussion for all of us and throughout.) Edelstein’s discussion of “Stabat Mater” and Fisher’s consideration of Kristeva’s relevance for postmodern ethics are the only essays in which her understanding of religion is not an organizing theme. (In Reineke, to be more precise, it is Kristeva’s analyses of abjection and narcissism, as a corrective to Girard’s understanding of religion, that is thematized.) Abjection gets substantive attention in Jonte-
Pace as well as Reineke. The question of ethics comes into play in Edelstein as well as in Fisher; in so far as Reineke’s analysis centers on the constitutive role of abjection in establishing community, her work also bears on the matter of ethics. Narcissism is decisive for Reineke and Crownfield. Illusion is important for Jonte-Pace, Graybeal, and Crownfield. Crownfield gives central attention to her analyses of Christianity.

The problem of language is inseparable from discussions of Kristeva. The maternal matrix of the semiotic is in Fisher’s eye, and the notion of a signifying practice is the link to ethics in his reading. Text and reading are pivotal for Edelstein; absence and difference for Jonte-Pace. The decisive role(s) of art for Kristeva, especially as alternative to religion, is in play especially in Kearns, but also in Edelstein.

None of these authors is a psychoanalyst, and the essays are not oriented to technical psychoanalytic issues. But it would be impossible to discuss Kristeva without extensive engagement with psychoanalytic themes. The general questions of psychoanalytic interpretations of “woman,” and of religion (including illusion and wish fulfilment), are engaged throughout; Jonte-Pace gives them most attention, with consideration of parallels between Freud, Winnicott, Lacan, and Kristeva in their treatment of these two issues. (Judith Van Herik’s discussion of Freud is much in play in all this). Crownfield and Reineke give some detailed examination to the etiology and structure of narcissism, including the Kristevan focus on a pre-Oedipal family triangle. Narcissism and other pre-Oedipal issues are also engaged in Fisher, who especially attends to the maternal chora. Questions of the phallus, castration, penis envy, are discussed in Jonte-Pace, Edelstein, and Crownfield. Reineke gives major play to topics from Totem and Taboo, especially as treated by Rene Girard: violence, incest, incorporation, dismemberment. Jonte-Pace discusses the death drive and the fort-da game; Crownfield, transference, sublimation, and analytic treatment; Reineke, identification. The Lacanian distinction of imaginary, symbolic, and real (and Kristeva’s semiotic/symbolic pair), and the correlation of the symbolic with castration, are important for Edelstein, Crownfield, Fisher, and Graybeal. Jouissance is central for Graybeal and important in Jonte-Pace. Abjection functions significantly in Jonte-Pace, Reineke, and Fisher, and the true-real in Kearns.

Four of these essays, in earlier form, were presented together in a session of the American Academy of Religion in Anaheim in 1989; Fisher’s
and Kearns’s essays were originally presented at other sessions of that same annual meeting of the academy. Correspondence and conversations, and reading of one another’s work, have made more of a cooperative effort of it than is the case in most such collections. While time limitations have precluded making the commentaries on the essays formally collective, I have benefited by the collective spirit of the work throughout and have tried to make it as much as possible a conversation among the essayists, rather than just with me.

To reflect this conversational dimension and to underscore the polyfocal, open-textured, synergetic character of the work, brief commentaries are inserted between the essays. These inter-texts are directed primarily to highlighting the questions the essays raise for one another, with occasional recognition of an interplay with other authors whose work questions and is questioned by our essays. In lieu of a “conclusion” — a closure — we exit with an Extra-text, a focusing of questions still open, directions in which the conversation must continue beyond the covers of the book. This strategy has posed some problems for my role as both editor and one of seven authors. I have tried to maintain a consistent separation of voice, referring to the Crownfield essay in the third person except in direct response to it, and restraining the assertion of author-ity as editor. If this produces the effect of a split subject, that is in keeping with our subject matter.

One of my co-workers merits individual comment. Martha Reineke appears in this volume formally only as one of seven authors. But she has been an invaluable consultant and conversation partner throughout, in the development of the project, in the selection and interpretation of the essays, in the development of my own contribution. She has drawn my attention to essays I would have missed, she has asked questions and made observations that have opened many doors for me. Above all, she has spent hours helping me struggle with the texts on Kristeva’s theory of narcissism, without which my own essay could not have been written. It is merely because she needed to protect her time for her own work that she is not a full co-editor.