

Co-Creating With, and In, a Southern Landscape

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Abstract

As an artist and musician, 'place' has always been entwined in my creative work and thinking. This arts-based autoethnography (Manovski, 2014), and music-based research (Leavy, 2015) draws deep connections between being an artist, researcher and educator in relation to the conceptual and physical local landscapes I move through. Situated in local places this research explores the dynamic overlaps (Yunkaporta, 2009) found across cultures, places, time and space. In response to this sense of place this thesis presents an intertextual artistic and scholarly celebration of this Wurundjeri landscape—this southern place—while critically gazing at myself in relation to land, people, climates, skies, waterways, and animals as I co-create with, and in 'the south' (Connell, 2007b). A complex polyphonic layering and re-presentation is thus expressed through the arts-based knowledge and narratives created as part of this artful inquiry. In this way a multimodal engagement with place, autoethnography and arts-based narratives is established.

This project seeks to find ethical and inclusive overlaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal knowledge and perspectives. In the relationships between artist, researcher and educator, dynamic overlaps (Yunkaporta, 2009) emerge from rhizomatic connections (Irwin et al., 2006), which I perceive as being vital for genuine engagement with Aboriginal knowledge and culture while staying grounded in one's own cultural identity. In so doing, a shared gaze is highlighted, exposing the relational and holistic roles and responsibilities that educators provide to both the wider community and to local places while rethinking how we engage with 'the Cultural Commons' (Bowers, 2010).

This arts-based research inquiry works with traditional ecological knowledge that challenges the neat arrangement of four seasons in our landscape and looks towards Indigenous seasonal knowledge. Seasonal knowledge and awareness deeply connected to the land is central to how places can be defined (Martin, 2008). In this creative scholarship I work with intercultural, intertextual knowledge following the seven Kulin seasons. I do this by naming each chapter in this thesis

as my interpretive response of experiences over one seasonal cycle. Furthermore each chapter has autoethnographic music that relates directly with each season and chapter; the chapter is named after the music which is a direct music-based response to that particular season and autoethnographic study. Enacting place-based arts learning in this way enables an enhanced relatedness with place, identity and community. The holistic nature of this work merges the artistic with the academic, the academic with the environment, the environment with education, and education to our communities, and communities to us. This research is self-reflexive and invites a different pace and perspective when engaging with contemporary qualitative research, while promoting music based research.

Articulating a relational public pedagogy that perceives education as existing across all facets of life, and relationally, this arts-based scholarship opens opportunities for arts educators—and educators beyond the arts—to deeply engage with their artistic and creative processes. Doing this is important when co-creating relational pedagogies that express our growing knowledge of place, and where it overlaps with Aboriginal knowledge and the places this knowledge is situated. The processes engaged within the making of this thesis offer new ways to see and act when conceptualising and engaging with professional knowledge as educators who are situated with, and in, a southern landscape.

Doctor of Philosophy Declaration

"I, Jayson Cooper, declare that the PhD exegesis entitled *Co-Creating With, and In, a Southern Landscape* is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This exegesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this exegesis is my own work".

Signature

Date

Dedication and Acknowledgements

In opening this research project I would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people as the caretakers and traditional owners of the place this research is grounded: western suburbs of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

I acknowledge the past and present Elders, families and descendants of the Wurundjeri people who are the custodians of this land. The landscape re-presented in this research is a place of age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal with local Aboriginal people continuing to have unique roles in the life of this land never ceding sovereignty.

As a guest on this land I respect and follow the laws of Bunjil to never harm the country of Bunjil, and to never harm the children of Bunjil. In following Bunjil's laws I also acknowledge the role Waa (the Crow) has in this landscape, as the protector, I pay my respects and acknowledgement to both Eagle and Crow in shaping this research project.

I would like to pay special acknowledgement to Moondani Balluk Academic Unit at Victoria University for providing stimulating and culturally aware conversations throughout my research project. These yarns guided my research where critical conversations around place, Aboriginality, Whiteness, history, art, and protocols rippled into the creation of this work.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Dr Tyson Kaawoppa Yunkaporta for his on-going support and advice prior, and throughout, this research project (thank you brother). Tyson and Kristi Chua have both seen me progress through this research project and have contributed in a multitude of ways to my thinking, awareness and sense of place. Without Tyson and Kristi this research project would not have begun; they both are inspirations, and this work is intended to celebrate the knowledge we have shared over the last decade. This work draws upon Tyson's scholarly work and on discussions with Kristi around the seasons of Western Australia.

As a result of critical yarns with Kristi and Tyson about the inclusiveness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and knowledges in Australian education, I enquired with Victoria University about undertaking doctoral studies. The person I spoke to on the phone was Dr Mary Weaven, who at the time encouraged and supported me to undertake a unit in research methods and design. The unit co-ordinator at the time Dr Eva Dakich encouraged me to pursue a PhD: I would like to thank Dr Eva Dakich for her support and guidance in this process. Doing so, Dr Eva Dakich introduced me to my principal supervisor: Professor Maureen Ryan who then introduced me to Dr Mary Weaven as my secondary supervisor for this research project.

I would like to step back from this research at this moment and acknowledge that although this is my work, behind this work are two amazing, supportive and brilliant supervisors: Professor Maureen Ryan and Dr Mary Weaven. Together we created a fantastic, stimulating and engaging team, where I felt supported, encouraged, and valued. Within my career as an educator I have not felt valued, beyond my skills as a musician (a frustration that also led to me doing this research project), working with both Maureen and Mary is one of the few times in my career as an educator, where I have felt my voice is valued, and given agency to express my concerns, ideas, and possibilities, as a professional educator, and artist. Maureen and Mary posed critical and creative questions and ideas that have guided me in re-presenting this arts-based autoethnography accompanied with musical narratives.

Maureen and Mary have both taught me many things within and beyond what I can write on these pages, they have validated me, my ideas, assisted me when needed, opened avenues for me as an emerging scholar and supported me through the highs and lows of doing a PhD, for this I am deeply thankful and feel extremely privileged. This research celebrates the knowledge we have shared, knowledge which I keep close to my heart as an artist, educator and researcher: thank you both for your on-going caring support.

One of the opportunities encouraged by my supervisors was to apply for a writing retreat scholarship with Professorial Research Fellow Ron Adams, in collaboration with Edith Cowan University (ECU) in Western Australia. I was one of five students selected to attend this writing retreat—towards the end of my first year into this research. From this one event, a weeklong retreat in the ranges that surround Perth Western Australia (WA)—we explored the transformation of the written word to embrace the performative. Staying in a remote location with limited access to the outside world, the five Victoria University (VU), and ten ECU students wrote and shared our work creating a collaborative writing community.

When I was sixteen, I was accepted into Edith Cowan University's Academy of Performing Arts to study classical piano. This writing retreat with Professor Ron Adams had a huge impact on this research, and on my identity as a scholar, and a non-Aboriginal Australian. This retreat was back where I had perceived home to be, connecting my past with the present: working with ECU in a new capacity, beyond, yet connected with me as a musician. While in Western Australia, I explored the hidden colonial chains of my ancestry and the idea of inter-generational racism, trauma, and exclusion; I asked questions of my family and remembered life growing up as a wadjella (white person) in rural Western Australia. I observed the inherited privileges and prejudices passed to my parents, grandparents and those who came before whose legacy continues to linger.

Back on the country where I was born, where my identity was shaped as a young person, I explored my whiteness, processes of decolonisation and my connections and relatedness with country (in Western Australia and Victoria), challenging my positions in relation to this knowledge from a post-colonial standpoint.

From this weeklong intensive retreat, I worked closely with Professor Ron Adams who continued to guide and support me beyond the five-day writing retreat. Ron is a highly innovative thinker and friend, who has been and continues to take an active interest in my knowledge and work. The work I did in WA at the writing retreat was extended into a performance for the Greg Denning Commemoration in 2013, promoted by Professor Ron Adams (a former student of Greg Denning and member of the commemoration committee). Some of the autoethnographic work

found in this project draws upon the writing and work done during this time with Ron Adams.

Victoria University has been a very supportive environment to undertake my doctoral studies. I would like to thank the VU staff for their support and guidance throughout my studies in particular: Grace Schirripa, Marg Malloch, Mary-Rose McLaren, Ligia Pelosi, Cindy Chung and the Dean, College of Education, Professor Pat Drake.

It can be at times lonely completing a PhD. VU provides a space for post-graduate students called 'the Den' I would like to thank the community of researchers in the Den, and thank you for your guidance and support throughout my studies at VU. Anthony Balla thank you for guidance and advice with photography and discussions on education, Debbie Qadri for artful experiences and facilitating my connections with Desmond Johnson. A huge thank you goes to Des for openly sharing his knowledge and experiences with me and I dedicate Chapter Seven to Des Johnson.

I would like to thank Lisa Cook for her support throughout this research project and I dedicate this work to our children Oliver and Xanthe: I love you bubbas thank you for your understanding, patience, and support during this time.

Early working versions (music and autoethnographic narratives) have been presented at the following conferences:

Performing the word: writing retreat, Perth, Western Australia.

Place and Displacement, November 2012, Melbourne, Victoria.

Annual Greg Dening Commemorative lecture, 2013, Melbourne, Victoria.

Victoria University Diamond series 2014, Melbourne, Victoria

International Society for Education through Art (INSEA), 2014, Melbourne, Victoria.

Victoria University Public Pedagogies Day, 2014, Melbourne, Victoria.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Doctor of Philosophy Declaration	iii
Dedication and Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	viii
Introduction	1
Living Research	4
Lessons from the Land	7
Engaging with this text	11
In our Eyes	13
Chapter One: Hidden within its Design	14
Artistic sensibilities, Identity and Autoethnography	14
The Piano Player	16
Autoethnography	17
Hidden within its design: listening to the seasons	19
Hidden within its Design	23
Photo Stories: communicating meaning through images	24
Research Area Photostory	26
Chapter Two: In our Eyes	33
Autoethnographic Rhizomes: more than a method	33
In our eyes	35
More than a method	37
Everything is connected	37
Multiplicity in action: Polyphony	38
Co-creating with Crow	39
In our Eyes	41
Chapter Three: Setting Sun	43
Performing the Liminal	44
Co-creating research with Country	48
Emerging from the Liminal Photostory	48
Setting Sun	57

Chapter Four: Joan	60
Country	60
Boodjar	61
Walking with plants	66
Jones Creek	68
Walking Jones Creek	72
Joan	76
Interpretive Music Autoethnography: Klangfarbenmelodie	77
Jones Creek as a musical writing process	82
Chapter Five: The Flowering	84
The warming ground	84
Holding the mirror	85
Place is a subjective concept	87
Place and art: sharing our visions	92
The Flowering	93
Chapter Six: Seeds	94
The Cultural Commons	95
Redefining the landscape	96
Entering the Dynamic Overlaps	102
Setting seed	108
Chapter Seven: A Relative Location	110
Place-based learning: The waterways	113
A Relative Location	119
A Relative Location Photostory	122
Conclusion: Closing the seasonal circle	132
References	137

List of Figures

Figure 1 Co-Creating with, and in, a Southern Landscape	5
Figure 2 Seasonal framework	6
Figure 3 Seven seasons, seven pieces of music	9
Figure 4 Creative process framework	10

Figure 5	Seasonal process and creative process combined (Co-creating with, and in, a Southern Landscape)	11
Figure 6	The Piano Player in Logic Pro	16
Figure 7	Dry Kangaroo grass	19
Figure 8	Row of Sugar Gums, located near a remnant colonial homestead.	20
Figure 9	Tasting grassland smoke in the air	21
Figure 10	Hidden with its design screenshot from Logic Pro	23
Figure 11	Crow watching	35
Figure 12	In Our Eyes in Logic Pro	42
Figure 13	Australian Raven: Crow	42
Figure 14	March data collection journal	44
Figure 15	Excerpt of raw musical ideas kept in journals	56
Figure 16	Documentation of an improvisations kept in journal (examples of raw data)	56
Figure 17	Ngaala kaaditj Noongar moort kayen kaadak nidja boodja	61
Figure 18	Gnowangerup mission, near present day Black Rd (drawing from a photo at the local library in Gnowangerup).	62
Figure 19	Black Road, Gnowangerup, near the Gnowangerup Mission and The Twisted Tree	62
Figure 20	'The Twisted Tree: 5km south of Gnowangerup, Western Australia, a recognised historical tree prior to European arrival. A tree known for its cultural and historical significance: a meeting place.	63
Figure 21	Family photo, taken just outside Gnowangerup circa 1960's (from personal collection), and a sign along the main street of Gnowangerup: promoting farming as the 'true' future of this landscape.	63
Figure 22	Chains: James Cook, Arthur Phillip and James Stirling.	64
Figure 23	Map of Australia highlighting places this research is connected to	65
Figure 24	Row of Sugar Gums near Jones Creek, St Albans	65
Figure 25	Jones Creek lagoons, looking towards remnant grasslands, behind the Sugar Gums	66
Figure 26	Sugar Gum walking path	67
Figure 27	Joan's Creek from Carstairs et al. (1988)	68
Figure 28	Hume and Hovell Memorial Cairn	69
Figure 29	Joan's Dam	69

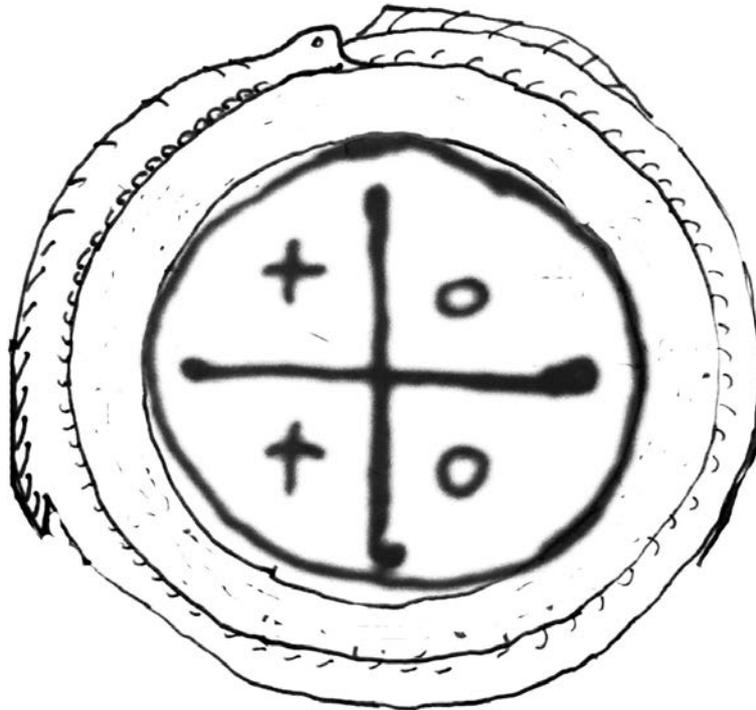
Figure 30 Forgotten waterway, concrete drain	71
Figure 31 Jones (Joan's) Creek prior to its redevelopment, from Carstairs et al. (1988), titled Original land owners.	71
Figure 32 Joan in Logic Pro	77
Figure 33 The Flowering in Logic Pro	93
Figure 34 Meeting at the Junction	106
Figure 35 Seeds in Logic Pro	108
Figure 36 Dynamically overlapping	111
Figure 37 A Sine Wave	111
Figure 38 Vibrations of Sound	112
Figure 39 The meeting of two waterways	113
Figure 40 Des Johnson, photo taken by local artist Debbie Qadri, used with permission.	114
Figure 41 Des' annotated topographic map	115
Figure 42 Topographical features of this research area (Jones and Cray Creeks can be seen in the bottom right corner): Aerial Survey map, with permission Des Johnson Collection.	116
Figure 43 The vibrating landscape	117
Figure 44 Hume and Hovell Memorial	117
Figure 45 Kangaroo Grass	119
Figure 46 Thesis expressed as symbols	120
Figure 47 A Relative Location in Logic Pro	120
Figure 48 A relative location music score	121

List of Photostories

Photostory 1: St Albans	32
Photostory 2: Emerging from the liminal photostory	55
Photostory 3: Joan's Creek	75
Photostory 4: Redefining the landscape	100
Photostory 5: A relative location	131

Music

1. The Piano Player	16
2. Hidden within its Design	23
3. In our Eyes	41
4. Setting Sun	57
5. Joan	76
6. The Flowering	93
7. Seeds	108
8. A relative Location	119



Introduction

This research examines how educators can engage authentically with cultures and place to develop and enhance pedagogy and approaches to learning. Drawing on the idea of a Pedagogy of Place (Lewicki, 1998) and expressed through autoethnography and arts-based research, this work offers insights into ways of observing, looking forward and co-creating transformative learning experiences for educators and students from a place-based perspective (Zimmerman, 2011).

Lewicki (1998) notes the etymology of the word pedagogy when discussing a 'pedagogy of place', noting its ancient Greek roots to mean leading someone in and through learning processes. He continues by stating that pedagogy is more than theoretical discourse it requires movement and action, "*it is the action of teaching and learning combined*" (p. 5), situated within local places and environments, this work embraces the action of teaching and learning from a southern stance (Connell, 2012).

Connell (2007b) explores the division between knowledge grounded in the Northern Hemisphere and that found in the Southern Hemisphere. Places like Argentina, Africa, New Zealand and Australia have unique knowledge systems that can stand beyond the colonial veil of the Northern metropole: a form of global knowledge in itself (Connell, 2012). Importing theories, methods, terminology, curriculum and approaches to education make "*us retailers of ideas, rather than manufacturers*" (p.208). It is from this idea this work embraces a southern stance (Garbutt, 2011) aligned to post-colonial thinking (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1995; Connell, 2007; Diversi & Moreira, 2009) emerging from the social sciences and beyond. As with the work by Kip Jones (2012) this research unites artful processes with the social sciences by engaging with issues that are interdisciplinary.

Connell (2007b) extensively highlights how scholars who are located in these southern places are embracing the knowledge systems of their local places rejecting imported knowledge systems from colonial empires. She argues that social scientists need to be learning authentically from Aboriginal systems of

knowledge so they may become to know “*the importance of thinking from, and with, the land*” (p. 212). It is from these ideas this research expresses a shift in approach to be in alignment with Australian social sciences as we locate “*ourselves collectively where we are, on this land*” (p. 212).

How I present this research inquiry draws on this notion that within the place I conduct research there is a wealth of knowledge already existing beyond the northern metropole’s shadow, connecting with Aboriginal knowledge systems in a culturally safe way (Bin-Sallik, 2003) is not only vital to this research but crucial for navigating towards some idea of a post-colonial Australia. Diversi and Moreira (2009) also writing from a southern landscape argue that such postcolonial views invite “*both Indigenous, and non-Indigenous scholars*” to carefully think about how, why and where, we connect with Indigenous methodologies and epistemologies. Stating authors who are situated between the north and south “*are uniquely placed to address*” such issues (pp. 7 – 8). Carefully situated to allow processes of decolonisation to emerge and knowing where we are, who we are, and how this knowledge can benefit learning within southern places, within local places of learning. This idea blends well with place-based education and discourses as it works besides Aboriginal methodologies within and beyond educational research (Moreton-Robinson, 2004; Moreton-Robinson & Walter, 2009; Semken & Brandt, 2010). The pedagogy of place that this research enacts opens discussion on topics like a southern voice and landscape, discussed throughout this text with special emphasis in chapter three.

Lewicki (1998) was one of the first place-based writers I had encountered and continues to have a lasting impact upon this research. His overview of a pedagogy of place opens pathways for me to enact an innovative southern approach to teaching and learning. Lewicki outlines innovation to mean renewal by exercising new methods simultaneously scaffolding prior knowledge and generating new structures and ideas. New approaches that promote thinking with, from, and in southern spaces as “*a way to look innovatively at new kinds of pedagogical activity and curriculum structure*” (p. 5).

It is with this idea of trying new methods that this research opens possibilities when engaging with Indigenous bio-cultural knowledge. In this study all creative works are grounded in western music traditions. It would be unethical, exclusionary and inappropriate if my cultural artistic expressions mimicked and appropriated Indigenous cultural and artistic practices. Following the Koori Heritage Trust's (2010) publication '*No Dots down here*' that highlights unique south-eastern Aboriginal artists' voice and concerns, clearly articulating Aboriginal Australia has unique creative practices that shift across the continent (Keeler & Couzens, 2010).

Aboriginal Australia is not a homogenous whole and as a result mimicking and appropriating traditional Indigenous music is not culturally safe, and will only damage relatedness (Bin-Sallik, 2003; Foley, 1999; Scott & Robinson, 2011). The focus of this research is to communicate my own artistic knowing—grounded in western classical and popular music—in response to Indigenous and non-Indigenous land-based knowledge where they dynamically meet. In doing so, I aim to avoid objectification of another's cultural practices, thus avoiding objectifying and marginalising from a white, male perspective.

Deeply conscious of national Australian curriculum policy requirements and drawing on both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal perspectives, this work addresses the Australian cross curriculum priority: inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives, histories and cultures (ACARA, 2012) and the professional standards for teachers to "[u]nderstand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people [promoting] *reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians*" (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2013).

Conducting this research the dynamic overlaps; metaphors, bio-cultural knowledge, artistic and environmental knowledge meet across cultures to address these policies by engaging with the findings of Yunkaporta (2009), where deep engagement with Aboriginal knowledge was not found in the content, but rather in Aboriginal processes, metaphors and pedagogies (p. xv). Throughout this work, reference is made to Yunkaporta: through his work I was able to frame

and position my own research project, in sections this work is a response to ideas put forth by Yunkaporta, at other times, his work serves as a guide.

This Interpretive Autoethnography re-presentation (Denzin, 2013) addresses this curriculum priority by bridging knowledge, metaphors, analogies and concepts while I “*stay grounded in my own cultural identity, with integrity*”, willing to grow beyond (Yunkaporta, 2009). Being willing to grow beyond my cultural identity provokes my interpretive skills to be the cultural drivers of this work. Thorne (2014) highlights interpretive approaches to qualitative research are shaped by “*historical and cultural positionings*” (p. 103) approaching research in this way I am able to evoke phenomena across multiple realms of understanding.

Interpretive autoethnography and arts-based inquiry promote a self-reflexive, interpretive turn that is achieved by engaging in an “*ongoing interpretive process*” (Leavy, 2014, p. 32). Following McNiff (2008) by staying with the creative process both critically and interpretively unexpected results can emerge, and it is from this kind of interpretation and re-presentation that this interpretive autoethnography promotes.

Articulating my growth as artist, researcher and educator, autoethnography provides an ideal method to express this learning process and product. An expression of place-based arts learning, this work brings together knowledge and ideas from land, cultures and artistic practices in order to create new knowledge. Sharing this knowledge will enable other educators, artists, and researchers to re-think professional development within education; and how place, identity and community contribute towards Australian students’ and educator’s lives.

Living Research

This thesis is seen as a living document, it is written from my lived experience and is multimodal (Knowles & Cole, 2008) capturing the intertextual nature of my artistic knowing. Thinking in this way is similar to Deleuze, Guattari and Massumi’s (2008) idea of rhizomatic pathways of knowledge production and cognition: being expressed in a variety of ways: aurally, visually and linguistically (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Irwin et al., 2006).

The arts offer a range of re-presentations that appear as visual, spatial, aural, and physical products. According to Wright (2011), these re-presentations interact and meet, promoting multimodal thinking. In this way, this work embraces the visual, spatial, aural and physical qualities of making art with place. Communicating the re-presentations of place through analogies and metaphors bridging the non-linguistic, to the linguistic, to the sensory.

This research acts as an invitation for other educators to engage with their knowledge, culture and places relevant to their lives: deepening their educational practice and sites where learning occurs following rhizomatic pathways (Irwin, 2013) and embracing multimodal storytelling, expressing how we know and see the world.

As an aural thinker I hear the world around me; as a visual thinker I picture the world around me. Within my learning processes I need to hear or see ideas in order to understand them. Picturing my pathways of learning, through conceptual and patterned languages, I keep and share this knowledge through art and objects (Yunkaporta, 2009). The following compilation of symbols best communicates this research project.

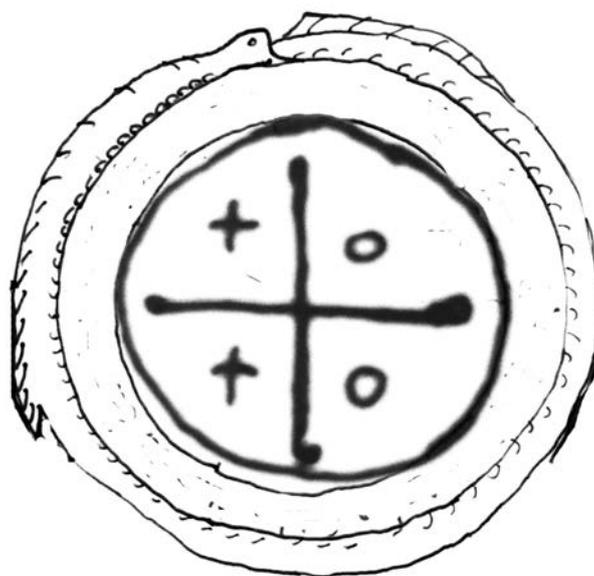


Figure 1: Co-Creating with, and in, a Southern Landscape

Co-Creating with, and in, a Southern Landscape (the symbol) is a compilation of universal symbols, found across cultures, for this research the most significant is the Ouroboros. The Ouroboros is typically depicted as an encircled dragon or snake, manifesting duality, balance, renewal and protection (Kuehn, 2015).

In this landscape small waterways define bioregions¹: Eels take cyclic journeys from fresh waterways to salt to procreate; using the eel as opposed to a dragon or snake, represents the cyclic nature of this place, and the accompanying renewal of seasonal movements.

Kuehn (2015), discussing the Ouroboros states:

The ... encircling Ouroboros marks the boundary between the ordered world and the chaos around it and thereby appears as an exponent of liminality situated upon the ambiguous dividing line between the divine and the demonic ... intrinsically linked with the idea of the threshold.

Liminality is a major concept within this research project, and is discussed in detail in Chapter Three. To be liminal, is to be in-between; the Eel Ouroboros is a symbol of the liminal moments in time and season this research re-presents.

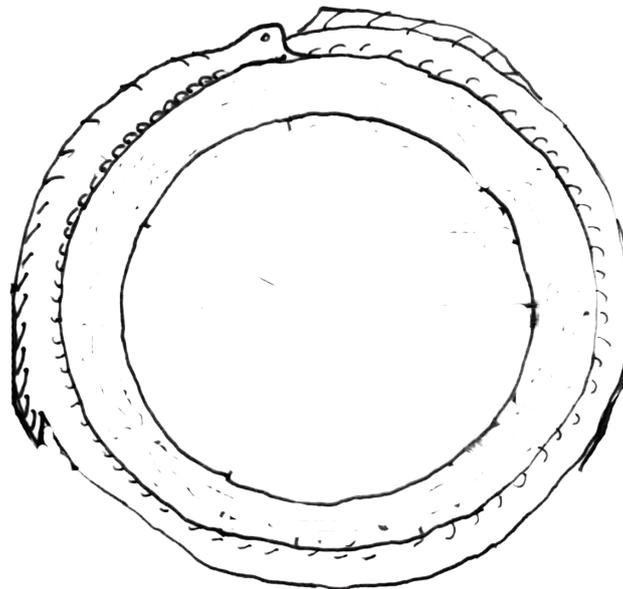


Figure 2: Seasonal framework

¹ Bioregion refers to a naturally demarked region of land, sharing climate, ecological and physical characteristics

Lessons from the Land

Across Australia Traditional Ecological Knowledge (Bequette, 2007) informs us that Australia has a range of climates and seasons and the ecological knowledge is relational to whose Country² you are on (Curtain & Barker, 2013). Because this thesis acknowledges the importance of place, so too must it recognise the significance of climate to place, as climates are part of how places are defined (Martin, 2008). Being on Wurundjeri country I observed, researched, and exposed myself to the seven seasonal cycles of Melbourne.

In coming to this knowledge I also came to know the six seasons of where I was born. My work in this research follows and maps seasonal movement for one year, drawing on cultural knowledge compiled by Victorian institutions and academics in the ecological and environmental sciences: (Bureau of Meteorology, 2014; Curtain & Barker, 2013; Gott, 2013; Museum Victoria, 2013; School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, 2008).

The main source of information was derived from the information compiled and exhibited at the Forest Gallery, Melbourne Museum. This exhibit outlines Melbourne and the surrounding area as having seven seasons, based upon Victorian Aboriginal cultural bio-cultural knowledge. The Forest Gallery is closely related with *“a calendar for the upper Yarra region around Healesville ... led by Dr David S. Jones in consultation with elders of the Wurundjeri [people]”* (School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, University of Melbourne, 2008).

Wurundjeri country is quite large, covering the majority of Melbourne, except for the southern coastal strip, which is Boonwurrung country. Both Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri people belong to a larger nation of peoples (linguistically and culturally), called Kulin. There are five language groups that compose the Kulin Nation: Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung, Taungurung and Dja Dja Wurrung (Presland, 1994; Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Language, 2011).

² Country is used in this thesis referring to a particular language group's traditional land, or country. The country featured in this work is Wurundjeri country. The country where I was born is Noongar boodjar (country).

This research is enacted on western Wurundjeri land: one of the thirty-eight language groups of Victoria (Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Language, 2011).

The School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, University of Melbourne document (2008) note there is a climatic difference between the eastern and western suburbs of Melbourne. The Calendar for the upper Yarra region around Healesville is situated in the eastern area of Wurundjeri country, whereas my seasonal observations took place on the western side of Melbourne. In addition to seven yearly seasons, there are two larger, irregular and overlapping seasons: of fire—approximately every seven years—and flood—approximately every twenty-eight years (School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, University of Melbourne, 2008). A Museum Victoria document (2013) outlines the seven Kulin seasons of Victoria as:

1. *Kangaroo-apple Season, in December, when the kangaroo apple ripens, the Christmas bush and black wattle flower and Peron's tree frogs lay eggs.*
2. *Biderap Dry Season, from early January to late February, when kangaroos start breeding, wombats are seen at night and native cherries ripen*
3. *Iuk Eel Season, in March, when eels migrate downstream, Swamp Gums flower, tiger snakes lay eggs and brushtail possums breed.*
4. *Waring Wombat Season, from early April to late August, when wombats are most active, lyrebirds display, silver banksias flower and rainfall increases.*
5. *Guling Orchid Season, in September, when orchids and flax-lily flowers are numerous, pied currawongs arrive and goannas excavate nesting hollows.*
6. *Poorneet Tadpole Season, in October, when tadpoles abound and antechinus (marsupial mice) give birth.*
7. *Buath Gurru Grass Flowering Season, in November, when kangaroo grass flowers, Orion can be seen and lilies flower.*

Each season is marked in this thesis as a chapter; each chapter contains a piece of music that is co-created with, and in, place, relating to each season; each chapter is named after the music.

The seven seasons and the accompanying music are outlined below, and at the

beginning of each chapter.

This short overview relates to the season and the musical re-presentation the merges my own observations with those published by the Museum of Victoria (2013).

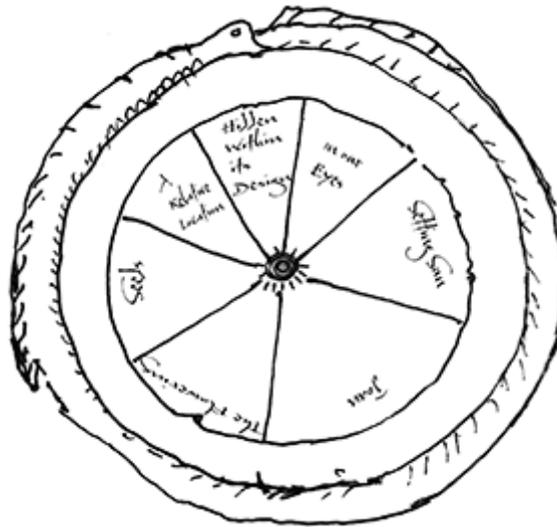


Figure 3: Seven seasons, seven pieces of music

1. Hidden within its Design (December): Kangaroo apple ripens, the black wattle flowers and the grasslands are dry, and flammable. Hot dry days; enforce a slower pace, allowing the subtle nuances of place to emerge in the shade of Sugar Gum trees.
2. In our eyes (January to late February), dry days are broken by regular humid thunderstorms; dazzling showers of lightning following pathways across the sky, bringing connections between the sky and ground.
3. Setting Sun (March): eels migrate downstream, swamp gums flower, tiger snakes lay eggs and brushtail possums breed. A liminal time of the year: in between warm and cold.
4. Joan (April to late August): silver banksias flower, rainfall increases and the hidden narratives of the landscape emerge.
5. The Flowering (September): orchids, flax-lily flowers and numerous wildflowers; lizards emerge from their holes. Conceptual ideas and artistic practices begin to unfold and emerge.
6. Seeds (October): wildflowers set seed along with the bringing together of

conceptual ideas found in the sentient landscape.

7. A Relative Location (November): kangaroo grass flowers, Orion can be seen and Flax lily begins to fruit, adding purple colour to the landscape. Place-based response to place-based learning³

Seeing place from the local standpoint opens diverse pathways of connecting education, artistic practices, and the musical with the process of conducting research. There can be many meanings and associations ascribed to a time in a year, in this research I articulate my relationality with the seven Kulin seasons, from my location, cultural standpoint, and artistic knowledge

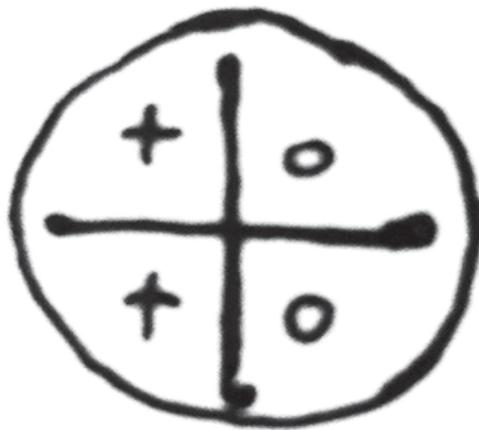


Figure 4: Creative process framework

My artistic knowledge is composed of my values, beliefs, knowledge and how I put these into practice, in life and within the creative process. As a symbol for my creative process figure four illustrates where I am situated, at the centre of the large cross (any religious iconography associated with crosses is not implied in this re-presentation). The four extending arms each symbolise, my values, beliefs, knowledge and actions, surrounded by smaller crosses and circles. Representing different ideas, concepts and imagination, found in the temporal creative process. With this idea, the creative process framework is placed throughout this text as a marker between autoethnographic writing styles.

Combined (figure two and figure four), these images represent this work as symbols (also seen in figure one).

³ In addition to the music outlined here, there is one extra musical work, presented as an opening into this autoethnography, and it is titled The Piano Player.

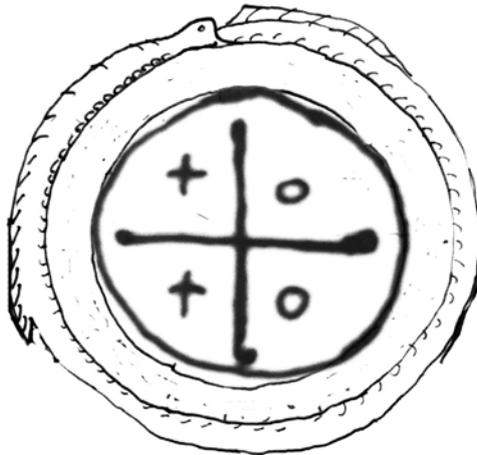


Figure 5: Seasonal process and creative process combined (Co-creating with, and in, a Southern Landscape

Engaging with this text

This thesis engages with multimodal re-presentations: music in recorded and written form, photography, cartography and fluctuating writing styles that interrupt, and disrupt one another seeking a resolution in the final chapter. These texts each provide their own lenses for understanding the theories and standpoints articulated in this work.

In combination with music and the written elements of this work, the accompanying photographs with the written word and music invite readers to enter into my critical engagement with place. They enable the reader to gain an insight into my sense of the place, where I am working from; representing the non-linear approach this work takes. Working with multiple artistic vehicles aligns with Barone and Eisner's (2012) first paragraph in their book *Arts-Based Research*:

All forms of representation, the means through which the contents of our mind are shared with others, are both constrained and made possible by the form one chooses to use. Sound, which reaches its apotheosis in music, makes possible meanings and other forms of experience that cannot be secured in nonmusical forms. The narrative, as rendered through words, makes possible stories and other forms of prose that are not renderable in music. Arts based research is an effort to extend beyond the limiting constraints of discursive communication in order to express meanings that

otherwise would be ineffable ... forms of communication employed in the culture at large reveals a level of diversity of forms that is enough to dazzle the eye, delight the ear, and tempt the tongue. Humans have invented forms within a spectrum of sensory modalities in order to "say" in that form what cannot be said in others. Arts based research represents an effort to explore the potentialities of an approach to representation that is rooted in aesthetic considerations and that, when it is at its best, culminates in the creation of something close to a work of art (p. 1).

The dynamic place-based nature of this research captures moments in time, visually, graphically and musically, perceiving these modes as integral forms of expression and re-presentation in this study. These three forms provide vehicles for the expression of the stories shared in this research. Interpreting the process of research through these artistic vehicles enables the dynamic nuances of place, cultures, arts-based research and education to emerge through re-presentations, interpretations and articulations. This thesis is written from my lived experience and it is from this lived experience I invite you into this research project.

All music contained in this thesis I have written, performed and recorded and can be found on the accompanying CD or as downloaded with this text. The supporting document contains mp3 versions of all music contained in a .zip file titled: *Co-Creating With, and In, a Southern Landscape.JaysonCooper(PhD)*

Track list:

- 1.ThePianoPlayer.mp3
- 2.HiddeninitsDesign.mp3
- 3.InOurEyes.mp3
- 4.SettingSun.mp3
5. Joan.mp3
6. TheFlowering.mp3
7. Seeds.mp3
8. ARelativeLocation.mp3

All music mentioned throughout this work will refer directly to the track number and name, an example is:

In our Eyes

(3.InOurEyes.mp3)

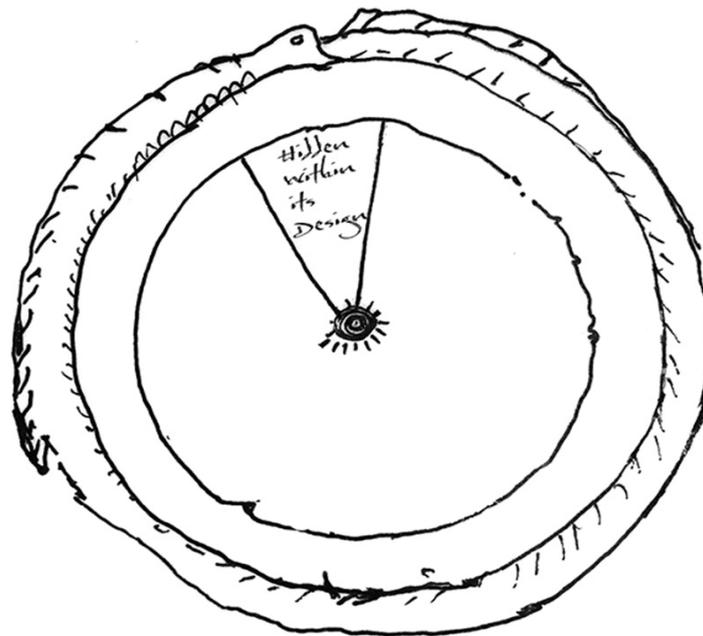
The music in this scholarship was recorded in similar ways where one instrument is overlaid or multitracked using Logic Pro, a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW), further tracks were improvised, discovered and recorded over the top. After tracks were recorded they were mixed and edited using Logic Pro. This process was elongated and interspersed between autoethnographic writing and other higher education requirements.

Webber (2009) articulates the difficulty in rendering the process of composing music saying it can be “*the hardest to write about, and the hardest to observe*” (p. 262), continuing to highlight the discoveries of constructing music over a period of time. Feeling the sound grow and shape itself is part of this creative process, some musicians refer to this moment as requiring non-linear thinking processes (Carless & Douglas, 2009). Feeling the sound, hearing its “*sonic moment*” (p.263) taking shape as the gently transforming musical thoughts and sensations naturally take form. Or feeling the sound and wrestling with the imagined and created aural realisations seeking aesthetic balance between what is made and what is imagined. Webber (2009) beautifully articulates his musical observations writing “*I like it to grow in some organic way and put roots into the rock*” (p.263), a resonating metaphor that aligns with the place-based nature of this research, as well as this work’s music-based autoethnographic elements.

This place-based musical inquiry establishes its roots into the ground it represents through musical narratives, or as noted by Carless and Douglas (2009) as “*unfolding dramas*”. It is with this idea; the music contained in this research enhances, and contributes towards the unfolding musical narratives aligned to my local environment. Each track captures a moment in time, much like the photographs used in this work, imperfections and all.

Chapter One: Hidden within its Design

Hidden within its Design (December): Kangaroo apple ripens, the black wattle flowers and the grasslands are dry, and flammable. Hot dry days; enforce a slower pace, allowing the subtle nuances of place to emerge in the shade of Sugar Gum trees.



Artistic sensibilities, Identity and Autoethnography

Identity and art are entwined, each influencing and shaping one another. I cannot separate my art from my approach to education; from my approach to thinking about the world; from my approach to conducting research. As an artist, arts educator and researcher, autoethnography as a methodology connects my sense of self (artist, researcher and educator), with culture.

Artistic ways of being are part of my identity and cannot be divorced from my role as researcher. Being an artist brings a range of perceptions and skills to a research project. My aesthetics and artistic knowledge offer pathways into how I am able to conduct research and as a result I draw on graphic, visual and musical forms in my exploration and re-presentation of place.

This autoethnography informs, interacts, and co-creates through my artistic sensibilities, identity, and significant interrelations. Arts-based autoethnographies evolve from these significant interactions with the world around us (Ellis, 2007). In this way, autoethnography, a deeply personal and revealing methodology, examines my relational stance in the world observing my position within and around art and culture by placing myself as the one who is studied (Denzin, 2013).

As the one who is studied, this autoethnography automatically becomes arts-based writing life through artistic expressions and thinking. Manovski (2014) fluently communicates a shared ethic where he is an artist who aims to create “*artful narratives*” (p. xvi) that are not restricted to any one repertoire of art making. Stating, “[*m*]y life is art. Art is my life. I am an artist writing about becoming an artist, sharing my journey on this quest through my art. It is my way of being” (p. xvii).

Like Manovski (2014) I am an artist and it is also my way of being, this arts-based autoethnography is infused with my artistic ways of thinking, knowing, and doing as expressed through my artistic processes. Creating an intertextual work that is re-presented through changing yet interconnected narratives: musically, visually and through various expression of writing. Arts-based autoethnographies showcase who we are, and who we are becoming, they evoke provoke and engage the audience, across their aesthetic reasoning grounded in historical, cultural, biographical, environmental and social situations. Showcasing artful encounters with possibilities that enrich, sustain and develop expressive ways of valuing, being within, knowing and creating the worlds around us (Manovski 2014).



The Piano Player: track one

(1.ThePianoPlayer.mp3)

The Piano Player

I began to learn classical piano at the age of six.

In the small rural town in Western Australia where I was born, I was known as the boy who played piano. I was told I had talent; that I was gifted; yet failed at almost every other subject at school. I was awarded a scholarship at the age of sixteen to leave school and pursue classical piano at the conservatorium, which I did for a while. Remembering my childhood life I often performed piano for the community I was raised in, playing accessible music for all ears, resulting in music that would be classified as easy listening piano music. This autoethnographic musical reflection draws on those memories of being ‘the piano player’.



Figure 6: The Piano Player in Logic Pro



Autoethnography

Autoethnography is broadly defined as both the “*process and the product*” (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2010, p. 1): sharing life stories. The process informs the product and the product informs the process—writing the self, relationships and contexts, in and across time, cultures and places.

Autoethnography becomes a holistic practice, concerned and connected with relationships found in the everyday: inciting significant narratives through a range of approaches and processes, expressing life stories, offering a glimpse into lived realities. To the wider audience autoethnography offers a view into the researcher’s mind and heart, it is a heartfelt methodology (Scott-Hoy & Ellis, 2008) that reflects the tensions, resolutions and emotions of life. Life stories communicate the polyphony of the lived experience and take us on journeys together, moving from the storyteller to the wider audience.

Autoethnography is recognised as being a vulnerable research methodology, exposing the researcher as the main participant, exposing their story to the world and exposing the vulnerable self (Anderson & Glass-Coffin, 2013). Bochner (2001), a supporter of life writing, encourages stories to draw attention to “*the cross-currents of life’s contingencies*”, stating “[w]hen we stay with a story, refusing the impulse to abstract ... we respect the story and the human life it represents” (Bochner, 2001, p. 132).

Autoethnography, like creativity, requires an understanding of “*the various [stimuli] that contribute to its development and manifestation; from the biological to the cultural, from individual expression to social dynamics*” (Glăveanu, 2011, p. 48). How we interpret or understand the autoethnographic product/process depends also on the biological, cultural and social dynamics of the reader, or audience.

Pelias (2011) highlights the idea of being pulled into or away from things in life, relating to how we connect with the world around us. Pelias refers to this aesthetic attraction as a form of leaning, permitting an intimate connection between writer

and reader: leaning in and out, from the life story being presented, and how it is communicated.

Leaning in, calls for a negotiation of bodies. I find myself always asking how my body stands in relationship to another's. Simultaneously aware of my body and the other's, I watch the positioning, the resistance, the acceptance. I seek a comfortable fit, although I recognize that is not always possible or desired. When bodies tilt toward each other, they may begin to move in the same rhythm, with the same pulse. They may sense themselves in an empathic encounter, each understanding and feeling with the other (Pelias, 2011, p. 9).

Each process and product contained within this work offers a number of gateways into understanding the autoethnographic re-presentations of arts-based research. The processes and products live beyond the scope of a research timeline. They begin to take on their own identity, becoming their own object, open to interpretation.

Through interpretative re-presentations I perceive life stories shifting from being about a person, to being connected with many people. In this way, relationality is ignited and through autoethnographic storytelling we are all connected through the power of sharing stories.

The relational quality of autoethnography allows insights into the writer's interior, which according to Ellis come from a "*deep reflection about ourselves, our relationships with others, and how we want to live ... the reciprocal relationships between knowing and feeling, self and other*" (Ellis, 2013, p. 10).

Ellis (2013) eloquently endorses autoethnography as a way to live "*consciously, emotionally, and reflexively*": reflexively thinking how actions and feelings emerge, in unique personal ways, within larger communal identities, sharing the process of observing ones-self while simultaneously interrogating and challenging any complacent and inherited belief systems or assumptions that may hinder relationality. In this way, autoethnography is a process of viewing and challenging

ideas about how we are in this world and how we relate to the often dynamic, many sided, realities we construct. Through autoethnography we story our lives as they travel outwardly, seeking contact with another's storied life, seeking the dynamic interactions between people, places and spirit.

Hidden within its design: listening to the seasons



Figure 7: Dry Kangaroo grass



Standing on the edge of remnant grassland plains, the hot dry sun bakes the dry dusty ground and protruding basalt stones, once neatly stacked as a fence. Long dry stalks of grass could almost self-combust if it were not for the shade cast by the row of Sugar Gum trees.



Figure 8: Row of Sugar Gums, located near a remnant colonial homestead.

Walking through the Grasslands of the outer volcanic plains of Melbourne's west, dry tussock, kangaroo grass, and thistles crinkle, and crack under my feet.

Gentle, warm winds; caress the yellow-brown stalks, releasing any remnant seed, on the dry, dusty dirt. Never far is a row of Sugar Gums, a physical landmark imported from South Australia: windbreaks, fences, toxic leaves, boundaries and borders.

Silences from a time almost forgotten yet screaming: I was arranged here!

Dry tinder and grass bring thoughts of fire.

Firestick farming.

Mosaic burning.

Caring for country with fire.

Would fire clear the thistles and boxthorn bushes obstructing paths, with their prickles?

Across the distance Crow calls out.

*Willywag-tail, New Holland Wrens, Blue Wren, they make the
boxthorn bushes a safe home.*

*Telling us stories about the recent history of this Country: telling
stories of adaption.*

*Within this country's seasons, fire is expected—a rejuvenating cycle
and crow is watching*

*Smoke, regularly tasted in the air as I think about the renewing
qualities of fire, as a source of returning what has come from the
ground, back to the ground: how certain seeds require fire to sprout,
and how the ash feeds the soil, promoting new growth.*

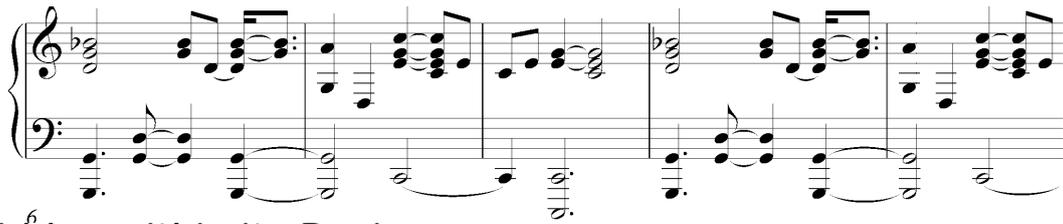
*The hidden design of fire has shaped and forged this landscape and
this idea has inspired me.*



Figure 9: Tasting grassland smoke in the air

Hidden within its Design is about the multiple layers of conducting a music-based research project, but is also about the nature of all things, how they have meta-narratives, how those narratives weave into a range of meanings, existing relationally, within a much greater design, from the stars to the ground.

Our stories of relationality keep our hearts warm and through this arts-based autoethnography I share my stories of relatedness.



Hidden within its Design

(2.Hidden.in.its.design.mp3)

Lyrics

Verse

Fires burn all around, they keep the heart warm (Repeat)

Chorus

hidden within its design (Repeat)

for its alive. (sung in counterpoint to first line and repeated)

This is a cyclic peice of music, where the two parts rotate around each other, inside each section smaller rotations (ostinatos) cycle through each other.

The notation of my music was not the main focus of this research project and as a result the notation presented here was to preserve the harmonic progression for any future performances, and not focus on the art of writing music..

Instrumentation

Piano

Bass Clarinet (Virtual Instrument)

Percussion

14 voices



Figure 10: Hidden with its design screenshot from Logic Pro

Photo Stories: communicating meaning through images

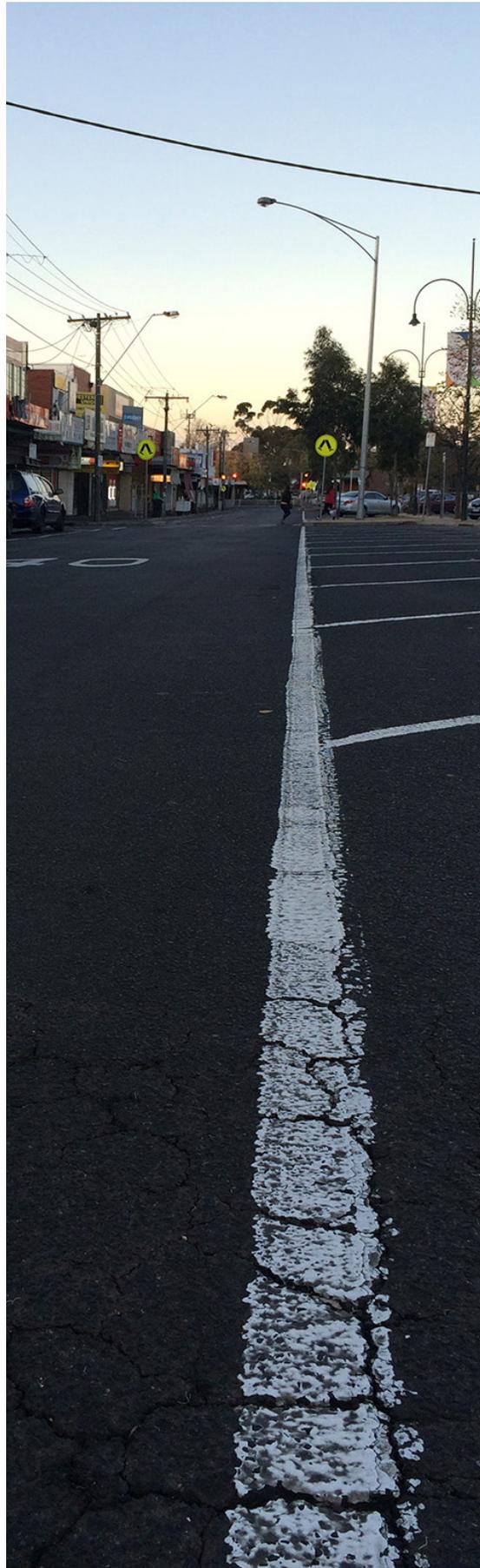
Photo story, or photo voice, is a qualitative research methodology, a process, to gather data, and “*identify, represent, and enhance ... community [and place] through photographic technique[s]*” (Wang, Cash, & Powers, 2000, p. 81). This approach has been demonstrated to be an effective way in connecting researchers with their participants, or in the case of this research, connecting the researcher and audience to place (Skrzypiec, Harvey-Murray, & Krieg, 2013). Photo stories are a tool to express the visual nuances, memories or thoughts, to communicate perspectives (Wang et al., 2000; Wright, 2011). Photo stories capture the eye/I of the photographer, offering insights into how they see and know the world, from this insight the audience is invited into moments of time and place, adding and providing new layers to the text.

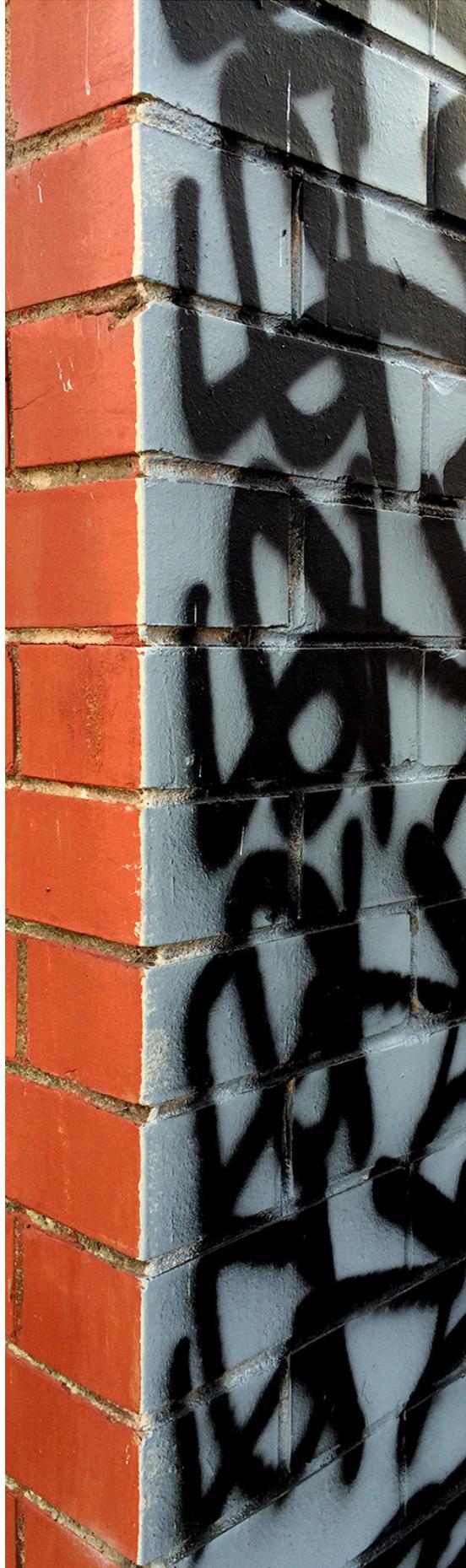
Photography is one of many arts-based research methods of inquiry (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2013; Leavy, 2014, 2015) and has been employed through a range of research projects within and beyond the arts (Engstrom, 2009; Popovich, 2008; Suominen, 2004; Wright, 2011). Irwin (2013) employs arts-based research through *a/r/tography* which is, the “*creative invention*” of research, of performative pedagogy, of the relational and the temporal, mapping processes that emerge from the liminal encounters in life (pp. 198 - 199). Photography as an arts-based medium, and research methodology, allows the capturing of these moments, mapping and analysing the creative process. Photography allows the unification of creative liminal processes, where the “*blurred middle space between memory and experience, between knowing and unknowing, between reality and imagination*” (Irwin, 2006, p. 77) are transformed into narratives that are intertextual and evocative, sharing the in-between processes of arts-based inquiry.

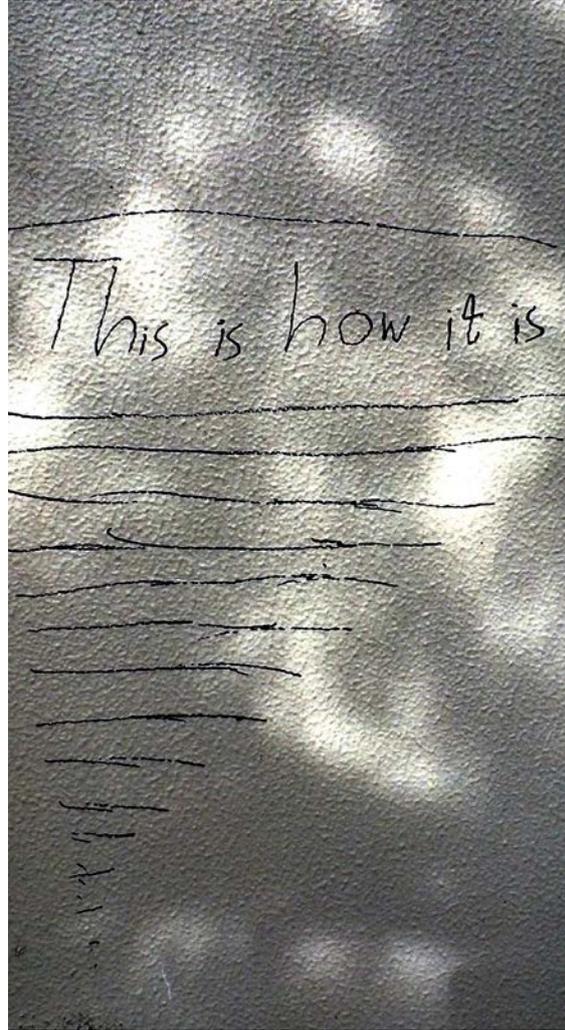
Drawing on ideas from *a/r/tography* this research project embraces the in-between creative processes of photography, drawing, music, poetry, and writing, re-presenting the insights gained by being immersed within the inquiry: through methodological decisions and the resulting products. In the creative invention of

this research project this living inquiry utilises photography to capture moments in place and time, generating and re-presenting data: offering the reader an insight into the landscape of this research and how I perceive this landscape. The following photostory is an insight into the place that has shaped this research: St Albans, Melbourne Australia, a landscape that is rich with metaphors, analogies and cultures.

Research Area Photostory











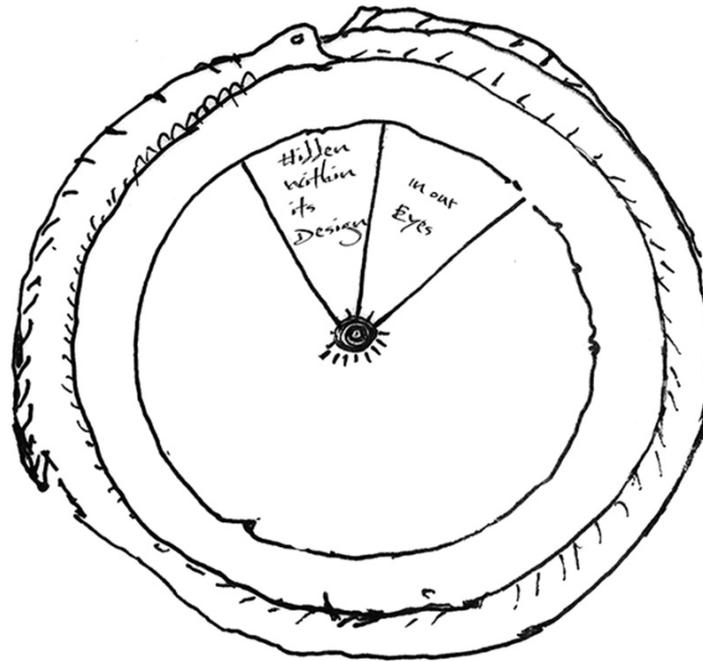




Photostory 1: St Albans

Chapter Two: In our Eyes

In our eyes (January to late February), dry days are broken by regular humid thunderstorms; dazzling showers of lightning following pathways across the sky, bringing connections between the sky and ground.



Autoethnographic Rhizomes: more than a method

Nestled within the realm of qualitative research (Denzin & Giardina, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Wall, 2008; Leavy, 2014) autoethnography is intimate as it shares individual stories. Autoethnography stories lives, shares lives, and is a way of life (Ellis, 2013), re-presenting lived realities.

In this way, autoethnography is more than a method (Holman Jones, Adams, & Ellis, 2013) it is a way of being; a research methodology that is inextricably mixed with the personal, social and cultural as it shifts across boundaries as it acknowledges the interconnectedness found when revealing life stories.

Autoethnography addresses ideas, illnesses, power struggles, topics and issues other research methods cannot reach in the same manner (Spry, 2011). Tami Spry's extensive work in performative autoethnography urges the audience to

connect with individual and collective memories.

More than a method, autoethnography is an approach to research that allows the researcher to be embedded within layers of culture. Transformative and challenging, autoethnography examines how knowledge is produced and distributed, bringing to the surface any inherited positions of power and privilege and struggling against any one true way to live.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) fought for researchers to witness how culture is represented; in particular how Indigenous cultures have been portrayed within traditional ethnography, and anthropology, making research a “dirty word” (p. 22) Smith (1999) reminds us:

Academic knowledges are organized around the idea of disciplines and fields of knowledge. These are deeply implicated in each other and share genealogical foundations in various classical and Enlightenment philosophies. Most of the “traditional” disciplines are grounded in cultural worldviews which are either antagonistic to other belief systems or have no methodology for dealing with other knowledge systems. Underpinning all of what is taught in universities is the belief in the concept of science as the all-embracing method for gaining an understanding of the world (p. 65).

‘Inferior’, and ‘superior’, re-presentations of culture can only continue colonial paradigms and binaries. Bowers (2005) refers to these superior representations as ‘enclosure’, a process where language re-colonises and reinstates colonial power struggles, maintaining monocultural re-presentations of cultures.

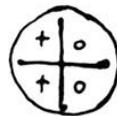
Jennifer Houston (2007) notes that autoethnography was born from the “*crisis of representation*” (p. 45), a crisis that challenges how we interpret, understand and express experiences, and culture in qualitative research. From this crisis of representation autoethnography sheds light into scholarly writing through acts of performance and interpretation (Denzin & Giardina, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Holman Jones et al., 2013). More than a method, autoethnography is an alternative in defining and re-shaping academic knowledge (Houston, 2007)

confronting hidden monocultural narratives.

In our eyes



Figure 11: Crow watching



Crow and I are interlinked, through an elaborate series of events, and connections.

I see Crow, as an intelligent, mysterious, and numinous being.

My learning is experiential and guided by watching, listening and 'being', besides and in place.

Some moments in life are more profound than others. In those moments that stand out, Crow is involved.

Marked out in the skies and enacted on the ground plant cycles are entwined within the cyclic journeys of the seasons. Certain Acacias flower throughout the year, marking changes in seasons and observing plants guides my awareness of the seasons, country includes all things.

Country is not to be tampered with lightly.

Culture is not to be tampered with lightly.

Power and privilege are not to be tampered with lightly.

'Finishing up' late summer female eels prepare to move out to sea: the beginning of their seasonal cycle, and my attention moves from fire, to water.

Crow is there with me.

Crow, stops and tilts its head, our eyes connect. We stare into each other for an immeasurable amount of time. As I gaze into Crow's blue and white, concentric circle eyes, I sense the importance of this experience.

Non-verbal stories criss-cross through other events within and around me, within and around places.

Our shared gazing, reminds me of Greg Dening's words: "a bound-together present", "passing over the silence" and, "in the mirror of otherness, we see ourselves" (Dening, 2006).

Through axiological connections that inform the heart, mind and body.

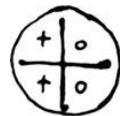
I know: keep this story, sit with it, work with it and share it: co-created with Crow.



More than a method

Autoethnography moves away from traditional approaches to research by embracing multiple belief systems. Writing from this autoethnographic position, there are prospects for diverse knowledge systems to speak, opening possibilities for the unhinging of the colonial foundations lingering in our personal and professional lives, viewing autoethnography as more than a method, or more than a research methodology. Autoethnography is scholarship shared with purpose (Ellis, 1999; Holman Jones et al., 2013) and contains the ability to disrupt, recognise, listen, see, feel, and smell.

Cunliffe (2010) sees autoethnography as representing the connections between personal and communal stories that live between cultures. Further, these representations reveal and avoid the polarisation of another person, and the multiple cultural traditions found in the everyday (Cunliffe, 2010).



Everything is connected

In my early teens I remember looking up to the stars, and having a thought.

A thought that would change the way I understood the world around me.

A thought that generated more questions, and less answers: only possibilities.

'Hangin' down at the 'pipeline', a fixture that travelled north—if I followed it I would get to Perth, it was like the yellow brick road, only circular and far less visually appealing.

Laying there looking up, I thought what if we—humans—were just little mites or fleas on some larger creature?

Which in turn, was something microscopic on some other larger being, never ending; infinite.

What if?

Can microscopic beings know the dimensions of our lived realities, and can we know theirs?

Is it all an illusion?

An illusion, we rely upon for our own survival.

An illusion but at the same time a reality. A reality, connected to something much larger than what we could ever understand. Larger than what we could ever know?

In this adolescent daydream, I had lifted a veil of seeing the world in a fractal, interconnected way.

The concepts hidden within this fantasy, blew my mind, everything is connected.

Like fungi mycelium, an intricate living, breathing web of life.



Multiplicity in action: Polyphony

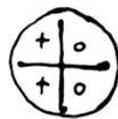
As autoethnography gains popularity across disciplines, there are alternatives and possibilities being generated and discussed (Denzin & Giardina, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Scott-Hoy & Ellis, 2008). Far from being formulaic, autoethnography is adaptable in writing styles, refusing to be centred on any one set of repertoires (Hogan, 2013). Repertoires that are found in analysis (Denzin, 2006); thick descriptions (Colyar, 2013; Ellis et al., 2010); personal recounts; and reports (Ellis, 2007). Autoethnography allows researchers to engage with the cultural, social or political phenomena, across a multitude of research projects

(Hogan, 2013).

Engaging with autoethnography allows another's life account to be experienced (Ellis et al., 2010) evoking rich stories in a multitude of renderings (Bochner, 2001). Polyphony in music is the interplay between musical voices, or many sounds (Kennedy & Bourne, 2004), and in this way, this text transfers this concept into this written document. Writing polyphonically aligns with my understanding of the orchestration technique *Klangfarbenmelodie* (Schönberg, 1966)—translated from German to roughly mean Tone-color-melody—and is discussed further in Chapter Four. Polyphony and *Klangfarbenmelodie*, both musical techniques are found within the musical works and as a metaphor when approaching writing.

In this way, the repertoires available to arts-based researchers embracing arts-based autoethnography are full of possibilities, aiming for transformations (Dyson, 2010) working from “*I-witness*” events (Denzin, 2013) embracing learning in many places and contexts. Generating a rich tapestry of events, epiphanies, interactions, landscapes and perceptions born from the liminal moments found in the everyday (Beech, 2011; Conroy, 2004; Denzin, 2013).

This arts-based autoethnography encounters the I-witnessed events, from a southern landscape and the liminal places of making art and music, as representations of the creative process and resulting products



Co-creating with Crow

I know: keep this story, sit with it, work with it: co-created with Crow.

Our shared gazing ends in synchronisation, simultaneously we both break our stare. Crow calls and we both take leave, with a warm glow inside from this experience.

This is no coincidence, Crow is guiding me here, it was only a few weeks earlier that while walking at sunset one hundred or more Crows gathered in a row of Sugar Gum trees: a gathering with plenty of conversation between the whole flock.

Never before had I seen so many Crows in one place at the same time.



In our Eyes

(3.InOurEyes.mp3)

Verse one

(G - D - Am - C)

*From the waters you're watching overhead,
From blue to black, hypnotising, eel gather under your stare,
Circle in circles; move around, high above and on the ground,*

Mesmerising

Chorus

(Em - G - Am - C)

Its in our eyes, its in our mind, it is

Its in our eyes, its in our mind, it is

Verse two

*Geometric patterns they unfold
Is this how your story's told?
Vibrations, kaleidoscopic forms,
We see it all unfold and*

There's more rising

Chorus

(as above)

Middle eight

(Harmonic progression: G - D - Am - C)

*Your songs in the sky,
Your songs are in the ground,
Your songs they fix my hold
Your magic is untold
Your soul is in the sky
And your soul is in the ground
Your soul it fixes my hold*

Your magic is untold

Chorus

(as above)

Instrumentation

Acoustic Guitar

Melodica

Vocal one

Backing Vocal



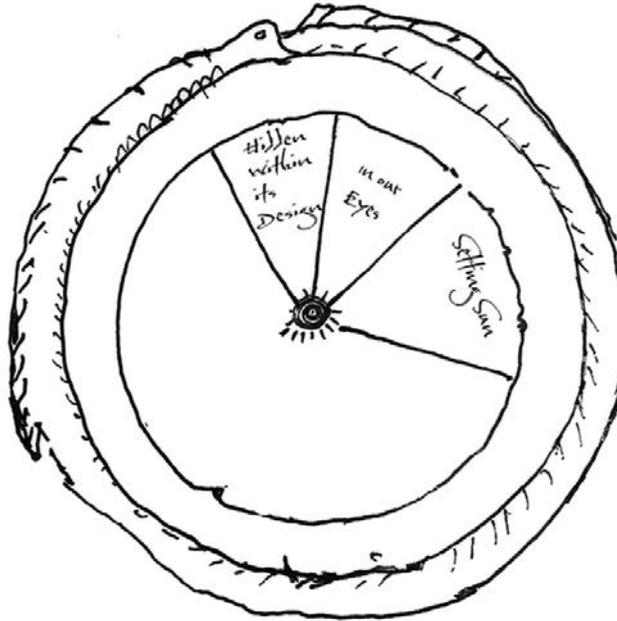
Figure 12: In Our Eyes in Logic Pro



Figure 13: Australian Raven: Crow

Chapter Three: Setting Sun

Setting Sun (March): eels migrate downstream, swamp gums flower, tiger snakes lay eggs and brushtail possums breed. A liminal time of the year: in between warm and cold.



The setting sun is vibrant and brilliant, slowly shape-shifting rich warm projections of colour over the sky and clouds. The late afternoon moving into the evening is a liminal time of day, between day and night: moments where I improvise music with guitar. Co-creating music in these moments enacts the I-witness events found in the liminal moments of time and place, evoking a performance-based interaction with place. This process of improvising and writing music is liminal: moving through the temporal qualities of improvisation and composition.



Liminality can also be thought about in an educational context, where learning moves in stages, where the learner is in a liminal process: in between prior

knowledge and new knowledge. Building knowledge from this liminal place aligns with Manovski's (2014) approach to understanding creative experiences by engaging with them through artistic thinking and action, he writes "*I am inspired to fashion such profound experiences ... from facts and emotions ... I also work to authentically share [and] organise them in the way I came to understand them—usually in a non-linear process*" (pp. 111-112). In a similar fashion this work shares the profound experiences that emerged with the sentient landscape in non-linear ways. Re-presenting the performative acts found in my creative processes, takes the turn towards interpretive renditions of conducting research (Denzin, 1989, 1997, 2000, 2008, 2013), seeking the powerful junctures found within the liminal process of creativity.



Figure 14: March data collection journal

Performing the Liminal

Personified by Turner (1987), the liminal, is a rite of passage, a passage that is composed of epiphanies: betwixt and between (being within the limen).

Being at the limen is to be at the threshold of something, neither here, nor there, like standing in a doorway or on a verandah—in-between a house and the wider world (Garbutt, 2011). A limen is neither inside, nor outside, it is in-between, linking one space to another, a passageway between places: usually not seen as a place in itself. The liminal place of writing autoethnography allows epiphanies to arise, shaping how I move through the autoethnographic 'write' of passage.

Co-constructing autoethnography (Cann & DeMeulenaere, 2012) with, and from, a southern place (Connell, 2012), interprets the landscapes of research, art and life: co-constructing aural, written and visual stories to enhance and provide added depth to these autoethnographic accounts (Zimmerman, 2011).

The southern view embraces the unique voices, standpoints, and worldviews that are found in a southern hemisphere landscape (Connell, 2007b): landscapes that are found in the “*periphery of the northern metropole*” and continue to cast the colonial shadows onto the southern landscape.

Looking from a southern stance it is possible to see where the northern epicenters have re-written and re-defined the south through the palimpsest nature of colonisation, founded on erasure and displacement (Laenui, 2000).

Writing from a southern stance reacts against a unified globalization theory (Connell, 2007a): a theory that has the potential to bring with it abandonment of what is local, to bring erasure and displacement.

Co-creating in a southern landscape is an interpretive, performative process generating knowledge within the liminal place of creation. This brings ideas, scenes, and epiphanies together to create something new. Performative methodologies give value and power to local knowledge, cultures and traditions, and are articulated through our personal ways of knowing and doing.

“A ‘southern’ view reconsiders and counters the standardising gaze of the western academy for a narrative rendering, of a ‘returned gaze’” (Garbutt, 2011, p. 77).

It is through this returned and mutual gaze (Maoz, 2006) that performative acts articulate and challenge monolithic spaces. These monolithic spaces can be re-framed through performance, where the limen—the in-between—becomes the lintel—the frame—and is re-cast back into colonial spaces, re-defining and reclaiming places. Through these performative acts we can re-connect with what is local and remove imported disjointed veils. Doing so reveals the southern voice

and re-defines how we speak from our relative locations, redistributing expertise and how knowledge is gained. A southern voice has the ability to reconfigure our practices as educators within southern landscapes across the layers of learning.



Country

We breath its air, we smell its smells, we live its seasons. We may even touch the bluestone of our buildings, ripped from country, yet, allowing a concrete connection with country.

With meaning.

Place.

Home.

Identity and belonging.

Touching the bluestone of country is to confront responsibility. We may not recognize it. We may not see that every stone, every tree and blade of grass, every sentient creature together create this place. Together, making country. To see this requires a another view of creation. Another understanding of time. Another stance to the world. Another conception and experience of self—one not grounded on the belief that creation rests with man alone; or with god made in the image of man.

Only then can we acknowledge, and know stones, trees and creatures as being connected, like strands of fibre woven deeply, within the fabric of place.

Multi-dimensional, polyphonic, co-created and co-creating: a fabric.

Constantly being woven—never static—including the gaping, frayed

rip, down the centre.

A rip so wide and thick, not even the blanket stitch can pretend to mend anymore. So wide, no longer will it suffice to prevent it from bursting open. Bursting, like thick, grey, cumulous clouds. Bursting, like the sudden rain. Four seasons in one day, I hear people opine.

But no! Four seasons are not a reality here.

Superimposing distant places, and time, over this landscape does not render such notions true. Not in this place, this country, with its ways, its cycles, its peoples.

Despite the gaping, wounded gash, country continues to sing.

Wounded, re-arranged, and forced to assimilate.

Despite this, fibres continue to weave.

And we are all threads: aware or not.

Threads rip away.

Taken as artefacts of study.

Locked in rooms under microscopes, behind display cases, oddly shaped, whitewashed walls, displace.

The weight of such actions maintains a history with present-day implications, to which we are bound. A history with its own sustaining myths, like progress and development.

Country is not to be tampered with lightly this is serious business, casting a returned gaze.



Co-creating research with Country

Writing from an ethical southern stance inherently privileges local place-based knowledge traditions, ways of being, knowing, doing and valuing (Martin, 2008; Rose, 1999). Working from a southern view embraces a relational pedagogy shared between people, cultures and places. Leaning in and out (Pelias, 2011) of our lived experiences, relational and public pedagogies weave into interpretive autoethnographies, becoming valid ways of sharing place-based learning and narratives.

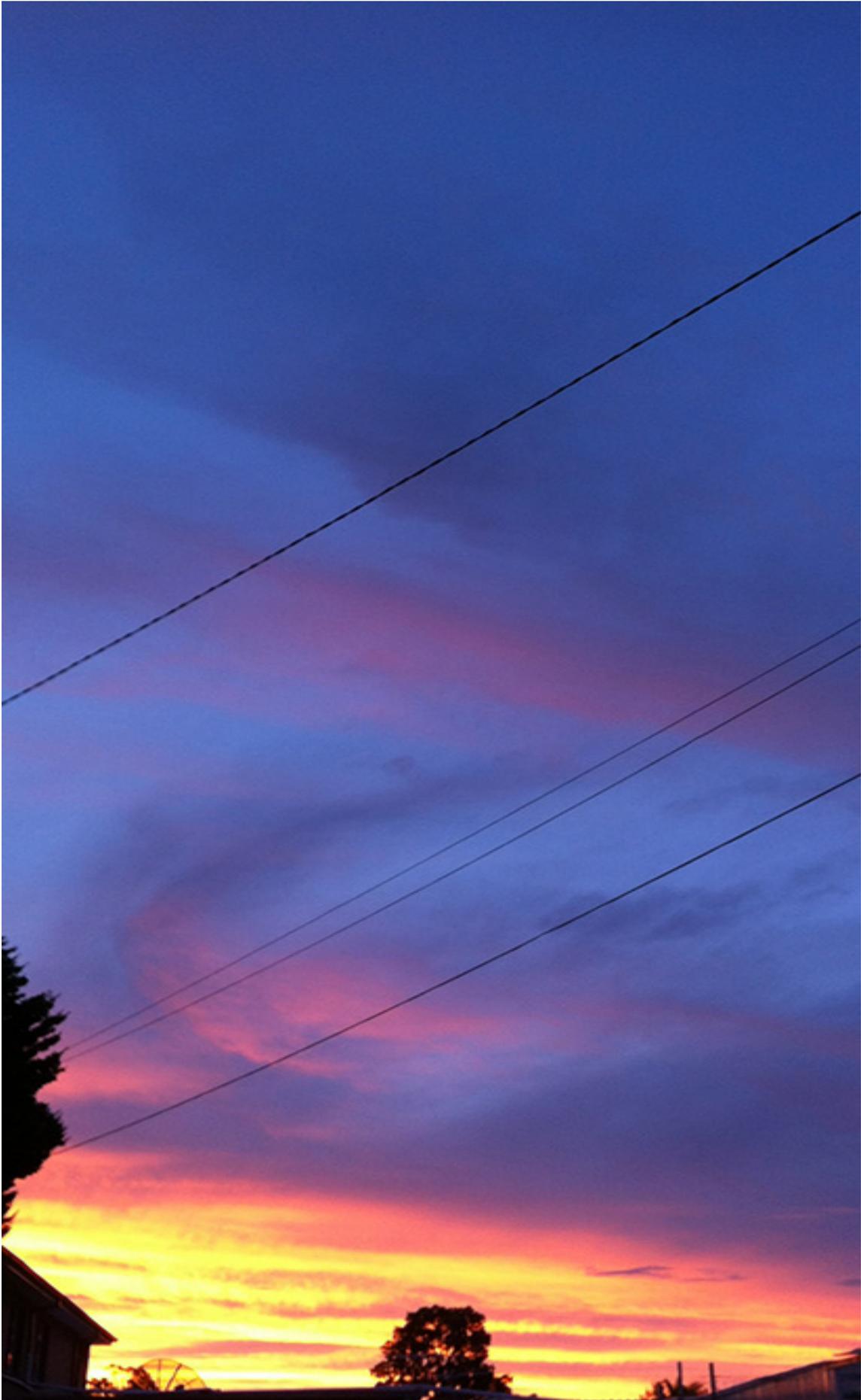
This research is a reciprocal conversation, residing in relative locations as I embrace the multiple layers of havin' a yarn (Fletcher et al., 2011): disclosed in the intertextual narratives of this research project. Narratives that communicate the rhizomatic connections found in the everyday, the landscape, education, history, art and the landscape (Deleuze et al., 2008; Honan, 2007; Irwin et al., 2006). This notion of yarnin' draws upon Aboriginal English in meaning. A discussion that is inclusive and contextual consisting of verbal, non-verbal gestures, silences and interactions with the environment (Dean, 2010).

In this way, I embrace the concept of having a yarn, with myself, with people in my community, with academic literature, the landscape, its history, and my history. This approach to discourse is a holistic approach that takes "*into account the past, present and future implications for all involved*" (Dean, 2010, p. 7). This thesis embraces the interpretive turn by yarnin' up the liminal process of creativity.

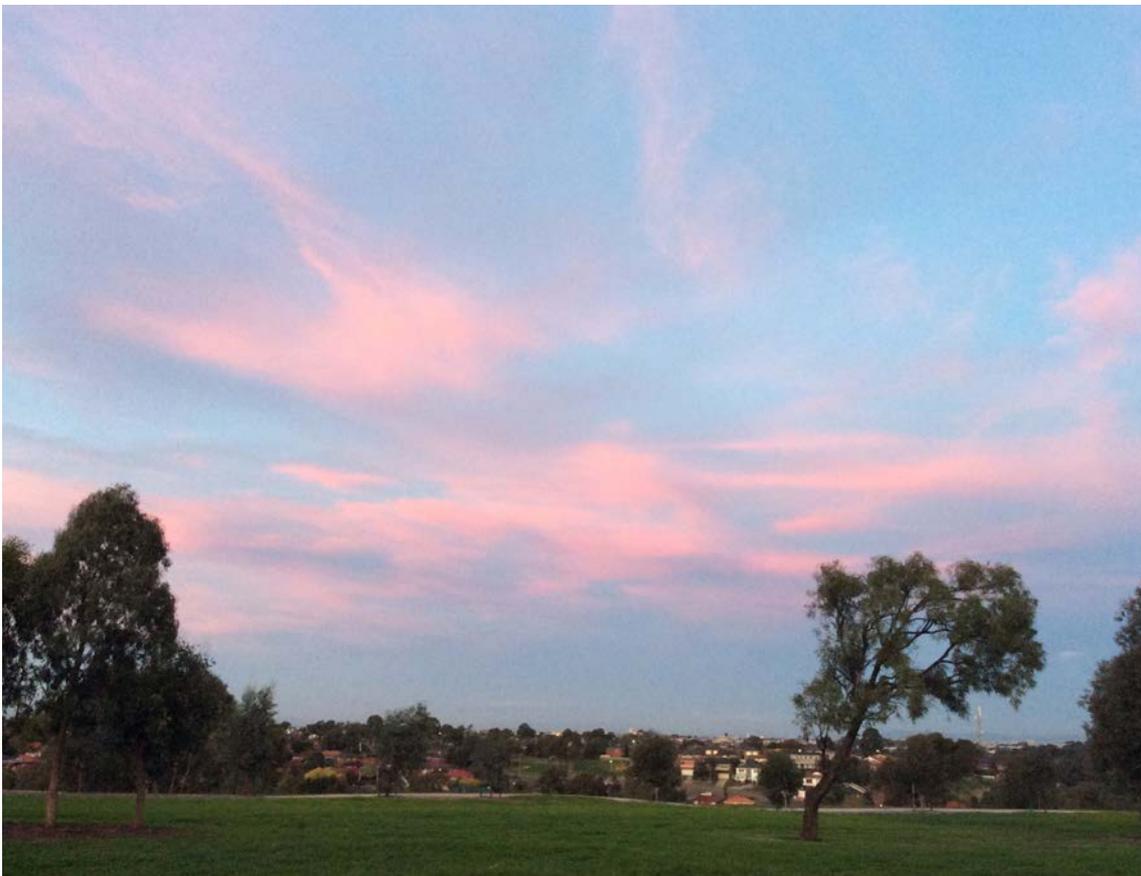
Emerging from the Liminal Photostory

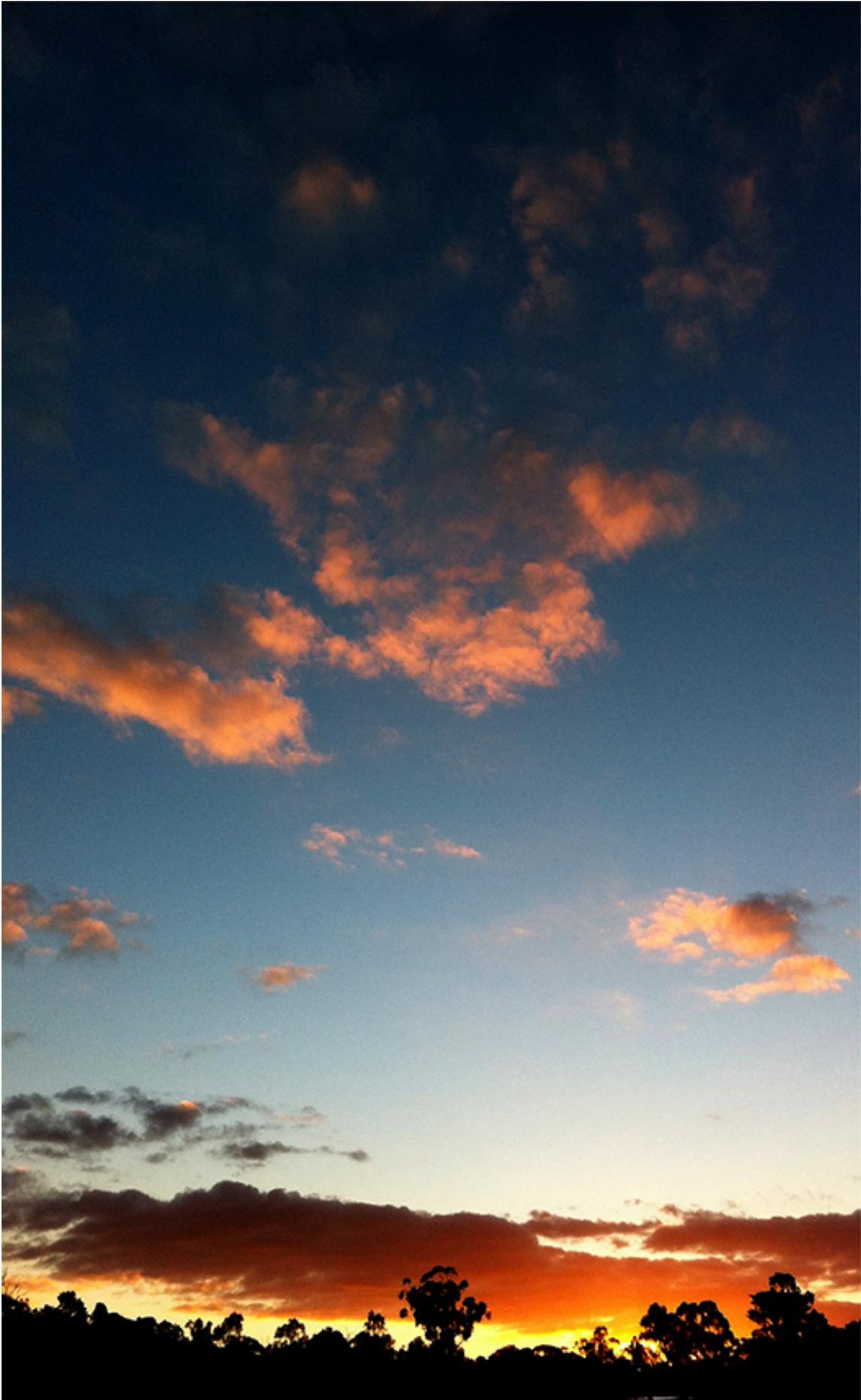


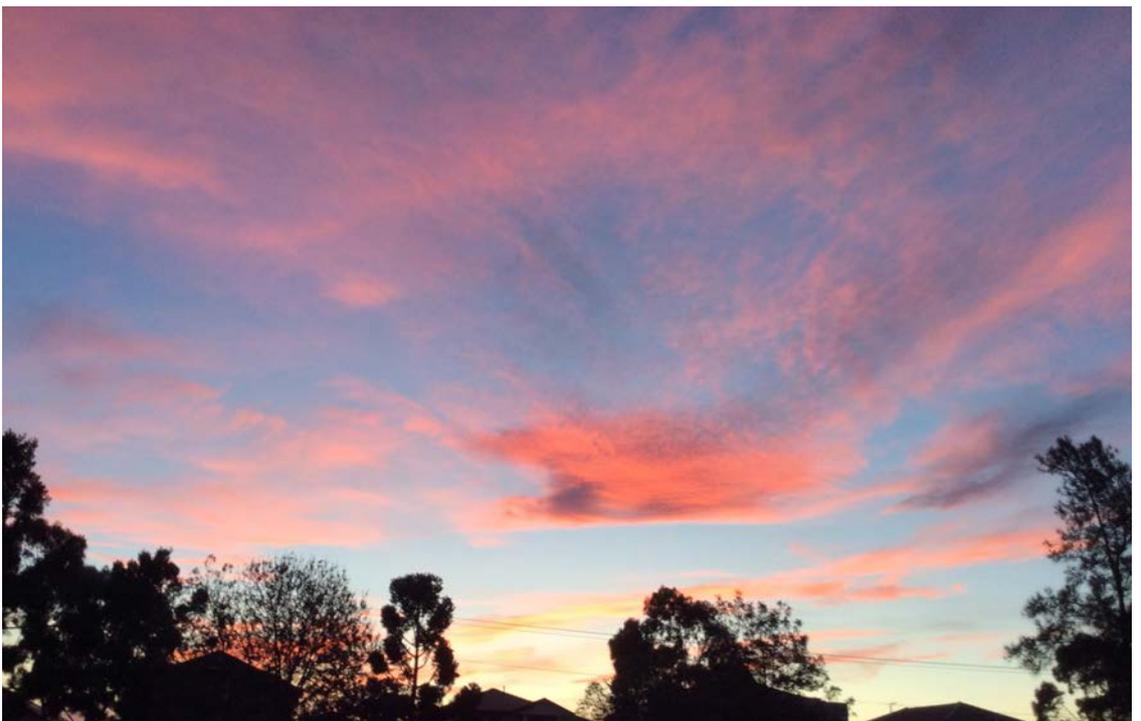












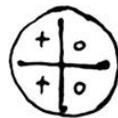


Photostory 2: Emerging from the liminal photostory

During March to early April, the sunsets are vivid and brilliant.

Facing west, I sit with my guitar and improvise while watching the sky, being in the moment with the setting sun. I regularly engaged with improvisation during these moments of the day and season.

Improvisation is a liminal act and the recordings of these moments act as sources of data—collection, analysis and re-presentation. Co-created with the environment these recordings express the musical narratives, layered with symbolism.

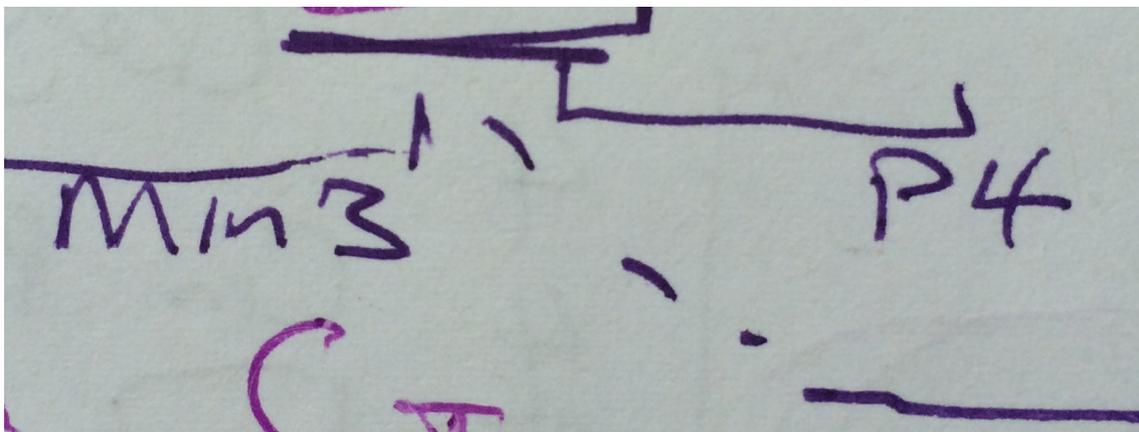
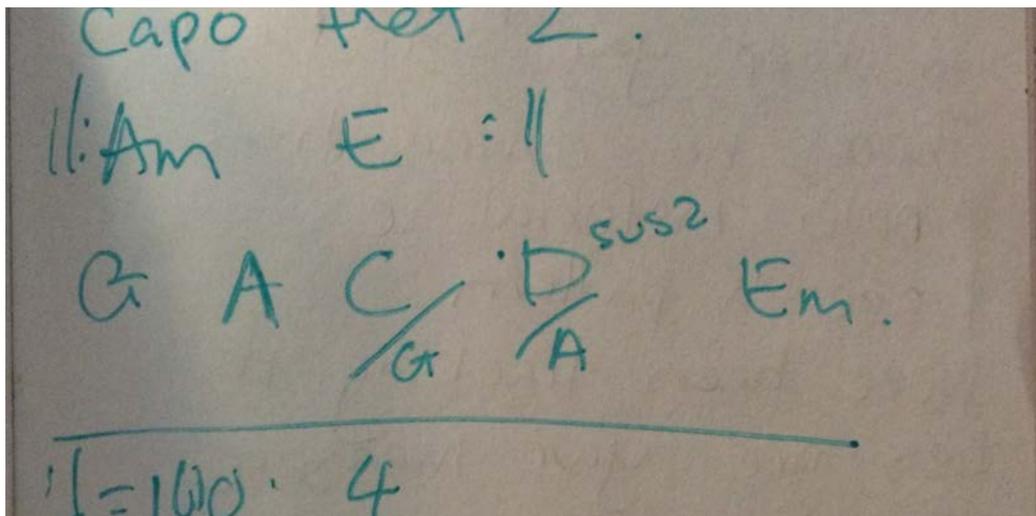


All musical works in this project began with improvisation responding to particular ideas, events, or experiences, later refined and re-worked in a second liminal process of creation. The musical ideas captured from improvisations were recorded in my monthly journals, the music chosen for each season was re-presented through the in-between process of recording music, being the only musician, this process took many hours of being in another consciousness, completely immersed in the process of layering audio tracks, sculpting musical and conceptual ideas. The liminal process of composing music in this way “*may not have been [articulated] through ... living words, though [it can be communicated] in a way most meaningful to me—in a way I [know] how*” (Manovski, 2014, p. 65).

The creative work contained in this thesis communicates the liminal lessons learned from the landscape in the way I know best: yarnin' my aural and visual thinking.



Figure 15: Excerpt of raw musical ideas kept in journals



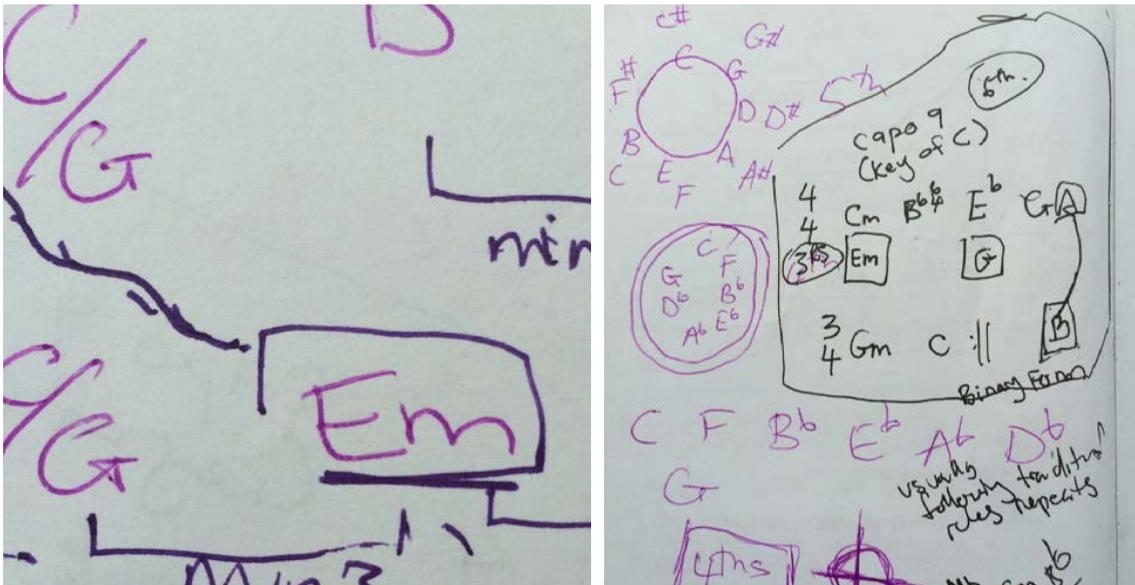


Figure 16: Documentation of an improvisations kept in journal (examples of raw data) Liminality is able to unify the in-between by working with and embracing ideas, experiences and epiphanies found in liminal states of being. The creative works in this inquiry all have emerged from liminal processes, moving through rites of passages that are similar to Molino's communication stream (Mazzola & Müller, 2002, p. 12), where the creative work is firmly in the hands of the creator. At some stage in the creative process the creator has to let go of the work, where it sits in a neutral liminal state. In this state the artwork and artist await the aesthetic perceptions of an audience. Each phase of this communication stream I perceive as consisting of liminal processes constantly shifting through and within the "betwixt and between" (Turner, 1987), and it is through these processes that liminality can unify itself.

The final products are seen as re-presentations and interpretations of being in-between as the creator, the analyst, and the reporter. They also await being interpreted and re-presented by those who engage with this work, reaching out to the aesthetic moods of my audience. Meeting halfway, meeting in between to interact with visual, aural and written re-presentational expressions. The music *Setting Sun* is imbued with references and musical decisions that express liminality: from the creation of the music, to the lyrics and how they are expressed, this song articulates liminality: literally and conceptually.



Setting Sun

(SettingSun.mp3)

Verse One

(Capo third fret) Amin - C - G (repeat)

*Setting sun, gaze in the mirrors,
and windowpane,
Stepping out, on solid dirt in bare
feet again,*

Chorus One

F - G - Amin - F - G - Amin

*'Cause it's coming, from the liminal
state of mind, cause it's coming
from the liminal,
'Cause it's comes from the liminal
state of mind, yeah it's coming from
the liminal*

Verse Two

Amin - C - G (repeat)

*You said you were neither here,
nor neither there,
I said, it feels just like, loosing your
hair*

Chorus Two

F - G - Amin
F - G - C/G - E
F - G - Amin

*'Cause it's coming from the liminal
state of mind,
Sprinkle drifting clouds with fairy
floss disguise,*

*'Cause it's coming from the
liminal*

Verse Three

*In the cracks of
conversation you, remember
a time
On a tune of your creation,
drifting through your mind*

Chorus Three

F - G - Amin
F - G - C/G - E
F - G - Amin

*'Cause its coming from the
liminal state of mind
And it's goin' upstream
dreams so nice
'Cause it coming from the
liminal state of mind
And its flowing, flowin'
flowin' flowin'*

Hold Aminor at the end

Chords provided are for Guitar with
Capo on third fret.

Instrumentation:

Two Guitars
Bass
Synth Pad
Drums
Vocals

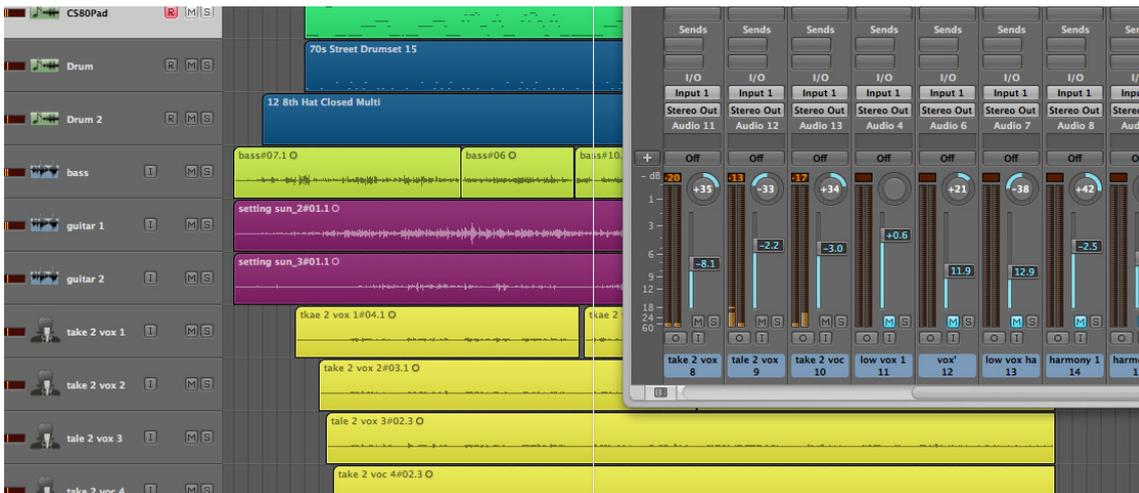


Figure 17: Setting Sun in Logic Pro

In the silence⁴, thoughts, sounds, and imagination drift with the descending sun. In these moments, silence speaks in multiple ways, as I sing up the cracks of silence: the “betwixt and between” (Turner, 1987).



4 I perceive silence as being inclusive of the sounds found in the environment, following ideas put forth by composer John Cage, silence is the quiet quality of music: there is never true silence. As John Cage noted when in an environment that removed all audible sound, he could still hear sounds: the sounds of his physical body.