

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THEMES OF THE THESIS

The initial reflective hypothesis underlying the development of the thesis is:

- a) Chronic illness may be a catalyst for transformative learning.
- b) The Arts and creativity are valid tools for transformative learning.

From this, my aim was to explore how, as a person who had been dealing with a chronic illness, I had engaged in transformative learning through some of that experience, and how having a physical illness had influenced my learning and/or been a catalyst for learning in various ways.

A series of reflective research questions followed over time, and these concepts underpin the reflective journey of the dissertation:

How do I learn my way through the chronic illness experience?

How has transformative learning been a part of my learning through this time?

Is there a role for transformative learning in chronic illness experience?

How is creative expression connected with transformative learning and how does this relate to dealing with chronic illness?

Is there a role for sharing stories of personal experience through arts and learning?

Where does my own story sit in this?

How do we learn through the body?

Is there a connection between transformative learning, creativity/creative-expression and the body?

How do these aspects of learning link together in my experience?

How do I contextualise the illness/wellness experience creatively and experientially?

How do body, place, illness, creativity and wellbeing intersect in learning?

As a musician and creative artist, music and creative expression have played a major role in my life focus, intrinsic to my artistic wellbeing in the world in whatever context I live. Throughout the years of chronic illness experience, I continued to focus upon music for creative expression and also at times as a medium (directly and indirectly) for processing some of the experience.

As a (former) massage therapist, I have focused personally and professionally on methods of integrating body/mind techniques. I worked previously for some years with holistic bodywork and massage therapies. I had also practised yoga and various forms of meditation, to varying degrees, since my early twenties.

Through utilising various levels of these skills and techniques in a combination, or in various forms individually, I have explored some of the body's ways of knowing and integrated some creative approaches for learning through the body. This became a focus for my own learning also through chronic illness time. Health issues had also been a catalyst, in my early twenties, for initially exploring such avenues throughout my adult life. However, health work had not been my life plan. I studied drama and music at university and my career trajectory was strongly intended toward these areas in performing arts, not healthcare. Later, I began to intertwine them all. These aspects of learning and the body underpin some of this research project.

An aspect that also developed, through the process of research and writing, was the significance of place in my own learning journey. It was through the research process that this connection regarding place and learning developed into a major part of the thesis. This was in some ways connected to, and in other ways completely separate to, the chronic illness context, and had been a theme running through some aspects of life context. It was at times both co-inciding and influential on the experience of managing chronic illness, and it also existed prior to the illness experience as a dominant theme of learning in relationship to place. This theme of place and learning was intended as a minor theme within the thesis, but morphed into a strongly present theme, also merging in some ways with bodily and creative ways of learning.

Three main themes regarding learning emerged through the process of research then: That of creativity as a tool for transformative learning, that of the body as a focus for learning, and that of place having an influence upon, and relationship to, learning and experience. I have explored these three major themes throughout the thesis. Whilst each one has its own, more specific influence, the three also come together in some ways through various life experiences and the subjective focus of my process. They are each significant to my own experience of having dealt with chronic illness. Yet, they are also each significant in their own way as aspects of learning even apart from illness experience.

These three themes have influenced how I have learned through an extended time of several years of chronic illness. However, they each also formed a strong part of my life and experience prior to that chronic illness occurring. I have drawn on these areas for learning through the experience perhaps because they had already developed as ways of learning through/ for my own processes. However, I have developed these areas further as focuses for personal, transformative learning, *specifically* due to having also had the experience of chronic illness.

FOCUS OF THE THESIS

This dissertation revolves around creative-expressive aspects of learning. I have used this focus within a few different settings or contexts, such as:

chronic illness experience,
creativity/music work,
body learning/learning the body,
place and place pedagogy.

The thesis encompasses creative-expressive approaches to learning in a variety of contexts. The focus that I maintain throughout is learning through creative-expressive and bodily ways of engagement, whether that be within the surrounds of nature, a new environment, city environment, or whether it is through meditative relaxation visualising in a context of body learning.

Learning through chronic illness experience also underpins the whole of the thesis, even though it may appear at times to be an indirect, intersecting storyline. This theme of chronic illness and learning meanders its way throughout the thesis, sometimes as direct experience of the illness experience through descriptions of the bodily experience or medical/social experience, and sometimes as seemingly more indirect scenarios through which I have encountered and explored learning and meaning-making.

Each chapter is essentially its own topic, its own separate part of the experience, but the whole is a narrative of how I have come to learn and know through the extended time of illness. Essentially it is reflective of how I have come to learn and know through illness, creativity, the body and place, and is an intertwining of all of these aspects of, and within, the experiential

context. Although each chapter is a separate story, each also fits within the overall storyline of experience.

There are multi-layers to the thesis which revolve around different facets of learning, each addressing different angles of chronic illness as experienced within a life context. This incorporates creative-expressive approaches to learning in a variety of contexts. The whole of the story reflects on how I have learned my way through an extended time of illness with the influence of particular aspects of life during that time.

THE CHAPTERS

All the chapters hinge together in a loose framework even though there is not necessarily a strict, chronological order or flow from one to the next. In utilising such a framework, I have intentionally mixed the traditional with the non-conventional in thesis writing.

Three chapters, incorporating the Literature Review, Methodology and the Illness and Learning chapter, are foundational chapters, which necessitates that they are positioned as early chapters of the thesis. Although an arts based research and autoethnographic project, the areas of creative exploration and autobiographical aspects of the work do not really make a show until I begin to discuss some of my story and background in chapter five, on illness and learning. However, I have positioned the music CD in the front of the thesis, and the related CD music information chapter is situated as the first chapter in the thesis, after the Introduction chapter, in order to highlight the arts based elements as a major focus, intrinsic to the whole thesis. Discussion of further autobiographical elements, exploratory writing and poetic writing, all thread through the thesis in varying and layered ways.

Chapter 2: Music Notes and Recordings

This chapter is the recorded CD and music files, for listening, and provides a brief description of the music and its context. Discussion of these contexts for musical expression is developed more deeply in the thesis chapters.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

I chose to include a conventionally positioned literature review chapter within a generally non-conventional thesis format, as I reflected on the ways in which creative artists may often choose non-conventional and non-structured ways of working. I find that some basic structure enables my creative work to flow whilst working within some supportive guidelines. Having some element of structure allows some parameters within which to work, and I preferred to include a literature review to give myself some basis of academic tangibility with which to anchor the creative elements of the work. This was also an experiment in blending the traditional with the non-conventional, to bring an integrative focus into the research.

This is not to suggest that using an unstructured thesis is not valid, but that it is a personal and creative choice. It is simply to note my initial preference for some loose structure rather than none at all, within which I may then explore creative aspects of writing and reflection. However, the literature chapter is not a classic, critical review of the literature, but overviews the literature base from which I drew. I have also engaged with the literature throughout the individual chapters, providing deeper context for its use within those frameworks of exploration.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This chapter outlines the methods with which I explore my story of learning. These include arts-based research, writing as method, and an auto-ethnographic focus on the research.

Again, in presenting a more traditional thesis chapter on methodology, I have blended a traditional and non-conventional format. These two chapters on the literature and methodology provide some foundation for the research and for further exploration of ideas.

Chapter 5: Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS, CFS), Chronic Illness and Learning

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS, CFS) is a chronic, debilitating and multifactorial illness of unknown origin, and cohorts are considered to be heterogeneous.

The researcher has been in recovery phase from the illness over several years, to varying levels of capacity, and with concomitant illness that appears to be common in the setting of ME/CFS.

This chapter provides some background regarding ME/CFS from a health research perspective, as well as discussing the concept of transformative learning in relation to illness, and outlining

some of my own background. Although this thesis is not situated within healthcare, I considered it necessary to provide some general outline of *some* of the research, medical tests and natural healthcare related to ME/CFS. Delving into the various, in-depth areas of information regarding research, medical knowledge, natural healthcare and treatment of ME/CFS, can be highly relevant to the learning process involved for the patient and certainly has been so in my own learning experience. This may involve deeply complex, personal, social and medical layers of interaction, debate and understanding. However, the chapter is also limited in its space for discussing the full details of ME/CFS research, and is intended as an introduction to some of the areas involved rather than providing an in-depth analysis of the research.

Chapter 6: Reflections on Creativity, Music, Inspiration and Flow.

I wrote this creativity chapter largely from the perspective of the artist at work. It includes experiential writings from the site of the piano and observing what is occurring within me as a musician/singer/composer as I go about my day. I used this experimental way of observing the artist's day as a way of reflecting on my own processes of creativity and how I come to learn through those processes.

Nurturing a sense of creativity, tapping into a creative essence, and nurturing a sense of creative enlivenment are essential themes of this chapter. *Nurturing a sense of creative enlivenment* is a term that spontaneously arose through the writing of this creativity chapter, at a point where I was trying to grasp what it is about an experience of creativity that is nurturing, or provides nourishment that goes beyond a physical experience but is also related to a bodily experience of the creative engagement of the work.

Chapter 7: The Body and Learning

This chapter discusses some aspects of the relationship of the body to learning. The focus maintained within the chapter is that in order to learn through the body, we may need to consciously allow ourselves to step into the body's arena, rather than to only theorise the body with logic or objectivity to an extent of disengaging the body itself. This chapter draws out an argument that the body itself is sometimes neglected within the theorising of the body. The chapter includes a selection of anecdotal stories based around the personal, social, medical or meditatively focused body. However, the body chapter is not so distinctly defined. It also speaks

cryptically, symbolically, poetically and obliquely at times, regarding body/mind connections through experiential awareness.

Chapter 8: Notes on Sound

This chapter explores some of the experience of illness and the medical world through the perspective of the patient. Various medical and social issues are discussed through the context of being the patient. The exploration is carried out largely through research journal entries and reflection. The chapter reflects on bodily ways of knowing and learning, highlights some medical-social issues regarding illness/wellness experience, and explores the relationship of sound and hearing to the writer/musician subjectively.

Chapters 9 and 10: Movement, Place and Being Still; Transience and Belonging

These two combined chapters cover the areas of learning and place, exploring the subject of place pedagogy. Chapter 9 reflects on themes of place, moving and cities. Chapter 10 reflects on a subjective relationship to place and belonging. I explore some alternative and creative ways of knowing and learning, reflecting on how we can come to know place differently. In Chapter 10, I engage with transformative learning processes, largely through the context of being in a natural environment and experiencing a closer interaction with nature.

Issues of home, belonging and transience form major themes within these chapters, whilst creative aspects of writing form an integral part of the expression of place and learning. These two, linked chapters contrast each other but also join together as a connected storyline with themes of movement, transience and belonging.

Inhabiting transience is a term which developed through the writing of these chapters. I later decided to use that as the thesis title because of the multi-layers inherent in its application across various aspects of my learning and writing. These interlinked, transience chapters, reflecting about place and learning, tell a story of how I have learned through, and interacted with, place, transience and belonging.

FRAMEWORK AND PRESENTATION

I took a cue from writers such as Somerville (1995) and McConnell-Imbriotis (2004) in the presentation of the thesis. Reading their work inspired and encouraged me that it was worthwhile to venture beyond the stricter academic structure of a thesis project, to enter a more non-conventional exploration and to imbue it with my own creative emergence of ideas. Writing reflective experience and working with journal entries seemed prominent in Somerville's (1995) and McConnell-Imbriotis' (2004) work, whilst Reader (2007) and McNiff (1998) subsequently helped to shape some perspectives on arts-based research. Throughout the thesis I draw on reflections made through research journal entries, using them as data and as creative tools for engagement in the process of learning.

McConnell-Imbriotis (2004) and Somerville (1995) both note that their thesis work is not intended to be conventional, with McConnell-Imbriotis stating that she intentionally subverts, inverts and resists the conventional structure of a thesis (Fenwick 2004, cited in McConnell-Imbriotis 2004:1). Although I do present some conventionally structured chapters, these are located in combination with other chapters which encompass non-conventional parameters of writing and exploration to incorporate verse, reflection and music. Reflecting my intention to be involved holistically within the text, Somerville (1995:2) also writes that 'there is no such thing as objective research and... it is therefore critical to make visible the presence of the researcher and the way the research is negotiated' (Somerville 1995:2). I make this presence visible and audible within the text, music and the structure of the thesis, identifying that the writing and discovery within the research was a contextualised process.

The framework and presentation of the thesis has been influenced by some particular writers who have applied post-structuralist and feminist post-structuralist perspectives within their research. Somerville's (1995; 1996), McConnell-Imbriotis' (2004) and Richardson's (2005:961; 1992) work continued to be a strong, supporting element beneath my insistence to continue with a non-conventional presentation. Having been naturally influenced through my need for artistic expression, in pursuing an artistic presentation of work I have taken a loosely shaped, arts-based research (McNiff 1998) path. I present the research findings through a creative process of inquiry, discovery and experiential learning.

The use of verse throughout the writing reflects creative self-expression, learning and experience. At times it may represent a cathartic release of thought and emotion bound up within the illness

experience during the experience of darker times. At other times it may be a descriptive, free-flowing image of a particular scene, situation or event. Other verse writing may derive from the experience of centring in on musical expression, or may have been written whilst immersed within the musical experience, to speak of what that experience is like at the time.

Through the use of verse, whether rhyming or non-rhyming, the writing reflects a perspective of my experience that I could possibly not articulate as effectively or as concisely through a logical interpretation of events or senses. To articulate through verse in order to illustrate an image, such as 'soft, powder-fine, white sand...!', or to visualise the musical expression, with '... all those little sparkles of life, hiding in my sleepy cells...!', gives a fluidity to the phrasing which I would not depict in another written form. Additionally, verse draws on imagery, and in that, imaginal ways of knowing (Dirkx 2001) may surface through the writing.

Within my own experience, writing is often a way of connecting with such an implicit knowing. I may write 'to find something out' (Richardson 2000:924), or to explore a 'pathway to a strong and clear sense of self' (Cameron 1995:15). At times, writing verse may represent an expression of an intuitive (Lawrence 2009), embodied (Stuckey 2009; McConnell-Imbriotis 2004; Somerville 1995, 1996, 2004; Amann 2003) form of knowing, and facilitates a way of moving through, and expressing aspects of, the emotional experience. At other times verse is a mode of expression that enables me to capture a moment or a visual scene.

The fluidity of poetry/verse allows me a momentum that moves freely within a framework that is not always linear, a movement which can bounce back and forth between events, viewed through different and new perspectives, within a time continuum incorporating bodily, emotional, creative and spiritual experience. I have used these modes of expression, incorporating them into the thesis to both encapsulate some experiences of the ME/CFS years and times, and to also demonstrate how using the expressive mode of verse has been a personal coping device throughout some of that time. I 'learn my way through' (Boughton 2009) some experiences by writing them into verse, whether rhymed or unrhymed, as well as through song and music.

I felt some need to justify my use of non-rhyming verse, because I do not necessarily express in poetry to the extent or capability that I do through music and song. Nevertheless, it is an important expressive mode, a mode of inquiry (Richardson 2000; Richardson and St Pierre, 2005), and part of my learning framework. The use of poetry and verse as a tool for making

meaning of experience has been utilised here as an expressive mode of learning. I have also used the fluid expression of verse to articulate spontaneously some of the joyous experiences of music, to write of place and belonging, and to articulate freely other elements which seemed relevant in the process of reflection and researching.

I wanted the thesis to operate within a loosely creative framework, and to work partly within an arts-based-research perspective (McNiff 1998; Barone & Eisner 1997; 2006), whilst also factoring in some ideas on structure of themes. I needed to have some freedom of creativity and expression, which is an important *modus operandi* for me. I wanted, however, to also have an element of structure, even if somewhat mutable, so that there would be some delineation between the process of writing, creativity, music experience, my story and discussion. This delineation is not always clear, straightforward and fixed, as many borders blur within the writing and within the overlapping of life experience. Nevertheless, the interweaving of the themes of creativity, body, place, illness/wellness experience, and learning are there individually within the writing as well as being a collectively overarching, experience of learning. Although some chapters are separated as sections dealing with individually focused themes, so that there is some structural delineation between the topics, these themes tend also to overlap and interconnect within the different chapter perspectives.

I have intentionally combined a non-conventional thesis style with aspects that might be considered more traditional, merging the analytical, the poetic and the musical, as a storyline that interweaves academic discussion, journal entries and practical learning examples. It includes methodology and literature chapters as some foundation for further creative exploration. This integrative approach to thesis writing reflects my interest in integrative ways of exploring learning and health/wellbeing. It also asks indirectly whether there might be a conventionally-non-conventional approach to thesis writing that has become more accepted as being non-conventional, and whether researchers and artists might be able to further question assumptions of conventionality within research and methodologies. I suggest that this type of exploration can potentially generate discussion for new ways of approaching the arts and educational research.

The thesis sits at the junction of arts, health, and adult learning. Within the common ground found at the intersections of these areas, there are linking themes within my life-world of learning, creativity, health, illness/wellness experience, the body, place and belonging. Although

I endeavour to treat these themes separately, it is virtually impossible to completely disentangle their interconnectedness, as together they form some kind of integral basis within my history. Some of the links within this integral basis emerged through the writing of the thesis. Life experience is not a wholly linear process, and so drawing on this, the central ideas of the thesis act as a collection of interconnected and parallel themes. I will discuss these parallel themes in the thesis, and also allow overflow from one to the other.

Although I have given these parallel themes their own separate chapters, I could not help but be pulled by the comparisons and intertwining of their existence, how they move within the same frame, yet are also identifiable in their own role. I decided to allow for this crossing over and blurring of boundaries, because they are all interconnected within my experience and experiential learning. They cross over and intermingle within the separated spaces of their existence, illuminated through a process of exploration and discovery.

I welcomed the opportunity of a creative, expressive mode of research and presentation. This is not the solipsism as cautioned by Piantanida et al (2000:103). Rather it is an expressive representation of a lived experience, a presentation of material, experience, and exploration, of learning through a chronic illness time, and of honing creative skills through that time. In part, it is a 'narrative of my autobiographical approach to researching transformative learning' (Nelson 2000:261) and embodied learning.

Presenting some of my story, my perspective of the ME/CFS experience, the paramount importance of creativity throughout illness and recovery, and the ways in which I've worked with body learning as an integral coping and learning tool, is both enticing and challenging. It positions the self at the centre of the story, the subject of research (being the researched) through explorations in creativity, reflection, reflexive observation, journal writing and music, to discover and articulate what, and how, it is that I have learned through the experience.

As with Nelson (2000), it 'presented me with a way of being and seeking within ... my life that positioned me as the subject of it all and a learner' (2000:261). Significantly, in some way I also found that 'the story I was telling was forming my life, as well as describing it' (Nelson 2000). I became, in some subtle way, more confident of my story as I wrote it, and the writing of it not only reflected but informed my learning and life. The writing of the thesis itself appeared to be a transformative tool for learning.

I explore the subjects of creativity/arts and illness/wellness experience from a perspective combining artistic and creative expression, an alternative and natural health orientation, embodied learning and transformative learning.

Original music recordings are included, as arts based learning and research, demonstrating the musically evolving themes operating parallel to the thesis writing and within the same timeframe. These recordings are available to listen through a recorded CD, and through links to online recordings for streaming.

Title tracks are noted throughout the thesis in the context of when the music developed. Listening to the noted tracks in their context may facilitate a way of viewing and experiencing the thesis that is focused on listening, dreaming or imagining, potentially opening the possibility to other ways of knowing, learning and experience (Hoggan et al 2009; Dirkx 2001; 1997). This engages the musically expressive part of the thesis in its context, although it is not essential for the music to be listened to contextually. However, such engagement may potentially enhance intuitive, creative and bodily pathways for understanding, regarding the experiential learning inherent within the research. This context is the context within which the music developed and was written, and so provides a more accurate description of the research through arts, writing and experience of the researcher/musician.

The music is an essential part of the thesis. Listening to the music at least once is required, whether prior to reading, at the noted title track references, during reading, or at the allocated CD chapter, as it may influence how the overall themes of musical expression, in connection to the writing, are perceived by the reader. Listening more than once is also an option that the reader may take at any chosen time, and may be useful to consider also at the end of reading the full thesis. The music grounds the writing in a creative-expressive aspect of research and learning and is fundamental to the way in which the thesis is interpreted, even though this interpretation may be individual and subjective.

I have included the music CD and file links because this music developed parallel to the thesis. The thesis informed some of how I explored what I was doing with music at the time, and the music informed part of how I was working on the thesis. The two are connected. In listening to the music, the reader/listener may grasp a fundamentally more real-time experience of how the

music has influenced, and has been influenced by, the experience of illness, wellness, and the focus on renewal and transformative learning.

I acknowledge that there are variations in musical taste and that not everybody will have the same preferences in music. I can make no apologies for this, and present this research and learning with the music that developed through an intuitive, creative, learning process. In some way, the music represents a mini soundtrack to the thesis and is, importantly, the soundtrack to the illness/wellness experience and to the personal, transformative learning of a time period of about ten to twelve months during the research period.

In assessing whether to include recorded music or to speak only of the music in a theoretical context, I chose to include recordings of some of the music written during this time, as an authentic and valid expression of arts based research and learning. It is a presentation of experiential learning through creative expression. The recorded music represents a transformative experience within my own musical expression and through my development as a musician, drawing on personal experiences of illness/wellness and the body, as well as drawing on the inspiring, driving force of musical passion, and of life seen and heard in a musical context. It also substantiates a deeper, spiritual purpose of the self towards renewal and recovery, and illustrates the development of an authentic voice.

CHAPTER TWO : MUSIC NOTES AND RECORDINGS

CD music track titles

Momentum	7.36
Sparkling Water	4.38
Beginnings	5.07
A Soft Flight (in a soft light)	6.45
Nurture My Soul	7.35

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Internet Music File Links

To listen to each online music track via Internet music webpage, click on each file to go direct to the music web file (Storer 2011-2013; 2013). The song file should stream automatically if streaming is enabled. There is no Internet file link for Momentum.

<https://soundcloud.com/julie-storer/sparkling-water>

<http://www.reverbnation.com/juliestorer/song/9383151-nurture-my-soul-vocal>

<http://www.reverbnation.com/juliestorer/song/9434569-beginnings>

<http://www.reverbnation.com/juliestorer/song/9373055-soft-flight-in-light-full-version>

Lyrics to Nurture My Soul

Please don't tell me, that I've let myself go,
y'know I tried so hard, not to go there, at all.
And please don't tell me, that I let myself down,
coz I tried to lead
and I tried to follow
now.

Well I tried to breathe
and I tried to nurture my soul,
it takes time to heal
so I'm gone to nurture my soul.
yeah I'm gone to nurture my soul.

Please don't tell me that I'm doing it all wrong,
coz I've learned so much, and I've moved on.
And don't you tell me that I've wasted all my time
coz you know that isn't nice,
and I know that isn't right.
Well I've tried to breathe
and I've tried to nurture my soul
It takes time to heal
so I'm gone to nurture my soul.

It takes time to grieve
It takes time to let go,
It takes time to heal,
so I'm gone to nurture my soul.
yeah I'm gone to nurture my soul.

Notes

The music on this CD mostly reflects a period of personal transformative learning, experienced partly during a CFS/post viral relapse in 2009, and represents some of the experience also surrounding CFS prior to and after that period. It represents the creative process of moving through an experience and coming to new perspectives, musically, bodily and creatively. Of these pieces, 'Sparkling Water' and 'Nurture My Soul' were the most dramatically transformative experiences of learning for me.

The song, 'Nurture My Soul', is a reflection about the overall experience of having CFS, the issues sometimes encountered through others' perceptions and misperceptions of the condition, and their misperceptions of those who have it. Nurturing the soul is a notion with which I became vaguely familiar at some point. I can't pin point just when. Nurturing soul as a perspective in adult learning (Dirkx 1997) was, at the time of writing the song, a relatively new angle for me regarding this terminology. The song relates to the need to nurture soul – self and spirit, and what has true meaning for oneself – as a way of management and healing. That sense of nurturing soul has been a strong focus of necessity throughout the extended CFS experience.

Writing the song was triggered by a comment from a massage therapist that 'You've really let yourself go'. In fact, I had not let myself go, but had 'tried so hard not to go there', and had really worked at getting better from CFS. I was a regular at the gym where the therapist worked, and had been undertaking weights and fitness training there for some time. I was working on my personal health and fitness consistently at the time. The comment triggered other reflections on how easily it sometimes seems for some people to assume that one has not made any effort to be well. The comment was not necessarily a harsh judgement of great criticism, but rather, was perhaps spoken through lacking awareness as a therapist, and became a trigger for reflection. Nevertheless, therapists need to be considerate of their client's situation and realise that they are working within a sensitive environment. This song is not directly about that situation in particular, but rather is a lyrical reflection on how it seems to be sometimes assumed that those with chronic illness are not trying to make an effort to become well.

Writing 'Sparkling Water' was one of the most powerfully transformative processes at the time for me personally, with the creative process emerging out of a period of intense bodily and emotional concerns surrounding the ear and hearing. Ultimately, this piece of music represents

an uplifting, transformative process after a period of 'darkness', and still sits with me as a way of knowing from a bodily and creative perspective.

'A Soft Flight' was written at a later time, in May 2010. It conveys a feeling of space and place, dreaming, and perspectives of new possibilities. These ideas were not necessarily in my conscious thoughts whilst writing the music, but may have influenced how the music came to be expressed. At some point in a flight from Perth to Sydney around this time, soon after writing the piece, the music drifted into my consciousness, and the track became associated with this visual experience of the land and changes in the colour and light. Some reflection of that flight is depicted in the verse 'Somewhere over Broken Hill', which is included in chapter nine, on place learning.

On playing this piece to a friend, without mentioning any imagery of it, they had a completely different visual experience of it. They pictured a calm, Antarctic environment, with a ship slowly moving through icy waters and a lone albatross flying above. It is interesting to note that although the music may have become associated with a particular image to me, it may initiate varying visual perspectives for different individuals. I welcome this varying of the visual music perspective. It allows the music to speak for itself within an individual's experience. It may be worthwhile to let go suggestions of what the music might be, and simply allow oneself to dream into the creative space.

'Momentum' arose as a piano piece I was improvising one day, and became a symbolic 'moving on'. The name, Momentum, is reflective of the determination to move on gently and to gain momentum at my own pace. This may be a very different pace from the fast paced, predominant focus of a multi-tasking world, although I am not alone in the need for a gentler pace. At the time of writing, the music was also focused toward a friend who was recovering from breast cancer, and who happened to call me while I was at the piano. It was felt to be also a 'moment' for her, a bit of a memento, and is reflective of the need for people to heal gently.

'Beginnings' began as an experimental, harp sound piece (as described in the Creativity chapter), and developed into a more dramatic instrumental piece instead. It partners 'Sparkling Water' in its development, as it arose soon after, and seemed to emerge out of the 'Sparkling Water' experience. The title, 'Beginnings', represents moving on to new and better things, and the beginnings of music being created through a new perspective. This music title 'Beginnings' is also purposely mirrored as a chapter sub-heading in the 'Notes on Sound' chapter.

The music pieces were written as a parallel experience to the writing, reflections and reading for the thesis. They influenced the thesis work, and the thesis focus influenced how I reflected on the process of being immersed in music. The music existed side by side with the thesis, and the two informed each other in some ways. My reflecting on the transformative value of music, and of writing music, was a focus throughout writing these music pieces, and corresponds with my hypothesis that creative expression is a valid and valuable transformative learning tool.

The context for the composing of each of these pieces of music is presented within the writing of these following chapters. The particular music piece is shown as '(Music: Sparkling Water)', for example, to demonstrate the contextual timing of writing. At those points, the reader/listener may enlist the music as another contextual layer within the writing. It is not necessary to wait until those moments to listen to the music, although listening at those times may also add to the contextual experience of the music. The music may be listened to any time, as the listener chooses, and there is no specified number of times recommended.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as an anchor for the literature from which I have drawn in various dimensions and aspects of the research process over the time of writing the thesis. Much of the medical/health literature was also engaged with over several years prior to embarking upon a research thesis, in an ongoing learning process, and this also continued throughout the overall research timeframe.

I engage more deeply with specific areas of the literature throughout the thesis, providing a deeper context for its use. This chapter is not a conventionally defined, critical review. Rather, it provides some background and overview of literature significant to my framing and exploration in the research. It situates the research in the literature and creates a guideline of the areas that are explored more specifically within the thesis research. It also provides some background of literature that is foundational, regarding transformative learning theory, place based education and bodily perspectives.

I outline the beginnings of transformative learning theory, as researched and developed by Mezirow (1991) through a cognitive based focus on the critically reflective elements of transformative processes, in order to provide a background for the development of transformative learning theory, as this forms the beginning core of the theory. Such a cognitive approach is also highly relevant to the learning needed in understanding health and wellness research and literature.

I have undertaken much of this kind of learning which has resulted in transformative learning through better understanding of specific health conditions and wellness management. This cognitive focus relates to learning about health and wellbeing from a biological perspective as well as how to implement this learning for personal transformation. However, the thesis focuses more clearly on later developing aspects of the theory, which bring into play creative, affective, bodily and spiritual aspects of transformative learning, and it is from such literature base that I mainly draw. I discuss these perspectives of transformative learning within this review chapter. Throughout the thesis, I provide practical and theoretical examples that spring from such concepts.

Some of these areas of learning overlap within the thesis and some literature overlaps more than one area. For example, Stuckey (2009) works in aspects of both creative and embodied transformative learning, while Somerville (1999) intersects the areas of the body, space and place in learning. The creative, intuitive and embodied aspects of learning overlap within Lawrence's (2009; 2005; 2012a) work. These overlapping areas of creativity, the body, intuitive learning, and place, are strongly focussed within the thesis. The examination of these layers of learning can help to open up new, potential frameworks for exploring holistic ways of knowing and learning. It is from this literature base that I have explored ways of working which blur the boundaries of transformative learning, creativity and embodied ways of knowing.

Socio-cultural aspects of transformative learning theory are also relevant to my own learning, through health, the body, place and arts, and are discussed in varying elements, most especially within the healthcare sector. I discuss health social movements as drivers for socio-medical transformative learning, and some of the learning associated with overcoming socio-cultural oppression that is sometimes evident within illness/wellness experience. I address some issues within medical environments through a lens of social and patient empowerment, as well as through the creative-expressive writing of medically situated stories. I also address the creative aspects of transformation within those elements of social change, largely through writing stories of the body, as a creative expressive aspect of transformative learning in health contexts. Creative expression through music and creative verse are inherent to the thesis and are discussed as being anchored in transformative learning concepts and theory.

This thesis rests in transformative ways of learning in a variety of situations and experience directly related to the researcher's life. It draws from literature in transformative learning, embodied and somatic learning, place pedagogy, and creative ways of learning. It draws also on medical and health literature, including literature based in patients' perspectives, and addresses some aspects of learning in relation to health social movements.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

The foundations of Transformative Learning theory begin with the premise by Mezirow (1991:168) that a disorienting dilemma is experienced by an individual and, following this event, a cascade of eventuating and/or reflective experience triggers learning through reflexive and critical engagement with the cognitive aspects of those experiences. Mezirow's initial study (1975 cited in Mezirow 1991:169) focused on the perspective change experienced by women returning to college after a long interval away from studies. Based on this study, ten phases of transformative learning are outlined:

- Experiencing a disorienting dilemma (or experience).
- Undergoing self examination.
- Conducting a critical assessment of internalised assumptions and feeling a sense of alienation from traditional social expectation.
- Relating discontent to the similar experiences of others – recognising that the problem is shared.
- Exploring options for new ways of acting.
- Building competence and self-confidence in new roles.
- Planning a course of action.
- Acquiring the knowledge and skills for implementing a new course of action.
- Trying out new roles and assessing them.
- Reintegrating into society with the new perspective.

from Cranton 2006:20

Cranton (2006:20) notes that, significantly, six out of these ten phases are focused on preparing for and implementing new perspectives. This puts an emphasis on the initiation of new possibilities for learning and transformation. She describes Mezirow's (2000; 2003a cited in Cranton 2006:2) concept of transformative learning as 'a process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more permeable, and better validated' (2006:2).

Critical reflection and critical self-reflection are central to Mezirow's view of transformative learning (Cranton 2006:38). He states that 'Our meaning structures are transformed through reflection' (Mezirow 1994:223). We reflect on unexamined assumptions of beliefs when those

beliefs are no longer working for us or where old ways of thinking are no longer useful (Mezirow 1994:223). We may face a disorienting experience that triggers reflection (1994:223). Reflection then involves us critically assessing our assumptions to establish whether the belief remains functional (1994:223). We do this by 'examining its origins, nature and consequences' (Mezirow 1994:223).

The need to make meaning from our experiences is an underlying facet of transformative learning.

We resist learning anything that does not comfortably fit our meaning structures, but we have a strong urgent need to understand the meaning of our experience so that, given the limitations of our meaning structures, we strive towards viewpoints which are more functional; more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative of our experience.

Mezirow 1994: 223.

Mezirow (1994:224) distinguishes three kinds of reflection – content, process and premise – used in the transformative learning process. Cranton (2006:34) evaluates this distinction as a useful guide for critical reflection and for understanding transformative learning, although she acknowledges that Mezirow no longer emphasises it (Cranton 2006:33).

Content reflection examines the description of the question or content of a problem, and asks 'what is happening here? What is the problem?' (Cranton 2006:34). Process reflection asks 'How did this come to be?' (Cranton 2006:34), and is focused on engaging problem-solving strategies in order to help understand the problem. Premise reflection is centred on the questioning and examination of the basis of the problem, where questions such as 'Why is this important to me?', or 'What difference does this make?' (Cranton 2006:34), are the focus of reflection. Cranton suggests that premise reflection has the potential to lead to transformative learning (2006:35).

Mezirow (2000:18-19) uses the terms 'frames of reference', 'habits of mind', and 'points of view', (2000:18-19) to illustrate some aspects of transformative learning. Frames of reference are a meaning perspective, 'the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions' (Mezirow 2000:16), and result through the interpretation of experience.

They may often represent cultural paradigms, learning assimilated from the culture, or personal perspectives derived from primary caregivers (2000:16-17).

Mezirow (2000:17) discerns two dimensions within frames of reference – 'habits of mind' and 'points of view' (Mezirow 2000:17). A habit of mind is a set of assumptions which is 'expressed as a point of view' (2000:17-18) and 'our values and sense of self are anchored in our frames of reference' Mezirow (2000:18). Mezirow (2000:21; 1994: 229-230) outlines two kinds of transformation of habits of mind: Epochal and incremental. Epochal transformation refers to a sudden and dramatic, 'reorienting insight' (2000:21), while incremental transformation refers to a progressive development through a series of transformations within related points of view that 'culminate in a transformation of a habit of mind' (2000:21).

Cranton (2006:71) suggests that transformative learning may be more often incremental than epochal, through having observed transformative stories heard in her practice and based on her own experience. However, she also suggests that epochal transformative learning may not necessarily be abrupt, and 'not one of sudden illumination' (Cranton 2006:71). Although the precipitating event may be abrupt, the process of learning which follows may be 'a process of unfolding, including critical reflection, discourse, and a conscious revision of assumptions' (Cranton 2006:71-72).

Mezirow (1994:225) includes discourse as an essential aspect of the transformative learning process. Cranton (2006:7-8) emphasises that although 'discourse with others may play a vital role' (2006:7), transformation can emerge without collaboration, so that collaboration is not a clearly defining feature of transformative learning (2006:8). Further, although transformative learning may be initiated by an experience, 'the process itself may be driven by critical *self*-reflection, exploration and intuition, with no further reference to the world outside of the self' (Cranton 2006:7).

Mezirow's concept of transformative learning is focused predominantly on the cognitive qualities of learning and interpretation. However, he does also make reference to other ways of interpreting experience, such as through the body and through intuitive aspects of experience (1994:223). Although these aspects are not given precedence in Mezirow's work he does appear

to identify the possibility of transformative learning occurring through a wider range of contexts than initially included in the theory.

Construal may also occur without the use of words ("presentational") involving recognition, directionality, intuition, empathy, feeling, physiological awareness and other functions. We remember by re-construing a new experience, drawing upon cues identified in prior learning and reinforced by use and/or their affective valence.

Mezirow 1994: 223.

He notes the imagination as part of the way we learn through examining alternative interpretations of experience.

Imagination is central to understanding the unknown; it is the way we examine alternative interpretations of our experience by "trying on" another's point of view. The more reflective and open we are to the perspectives of others, the richer our imagination of alternative contexts for understanding will be.

Mezirow 2000:20.

Mezirow (2000:6) suggests that alternative ways of knowing and making meaning are available to us other than using the purely cognitive approach. 'Art, music and dance are alternative languages. Intuition, imagination and dreams, are other ways of making meaning. Inspiration, empathy and transcendence are central to self-knowledge and to drawing attention to the affective quality and poetry of human experience' (2000:6). In bringing these aspects into his concept of transformative learning, Mezirow gives some light also to the necessity of reframing our perspectives of learning and keeping an open mind on how knowledge and learning are experienced.

Since Mezirow first developed a theory of transformative learning, there have been numerous branches developing from its base of transformative change. These branches may differ in some respects to Mezirow's cognitively based, original theory, though there are some commonalities as well. Freire's (1972) philosophy of education has at its core a focus on transformation and

empowerment, with its basis in social change rather than the perspective focus of Mezirow's work. Although Mezirow drew from Freire's work (Cranton 2006:43), Cranton (2006:44) specifies that Mezirow 'clearly believes that individual transformation precedes social transformation' (2006:44). This does not necessarily indicate that the two works are entirely discordant, but suggests that they are different perspectives of a similar aim; that of transformative learning. Merriam and Caffarella (1999:319) draw to light that Mezirow and Freire's work have parallels and that Mezirow acknowledges Freire's influence on his ideas.

The social-emancipatory view of transformative learning has developed largely through Freire's (1984, cited in Taylor 2008:8; 1972) work. This philosophy of learning emphasises social transformation through 'conscientization' (Freire 1972:81), whereby those who are oppressed learn to develop a critical consciousness to overcome oppression and to become empowered. 'Conscientization is the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence' (Freire 1972:81). For transformation to occur, new meanings, perspectives and consciousness must be acted upon through praxis (Freire 1970 cited in Merriam & Caffarella 1999:326), which involves reflection, acting on one's new understanding in the world, and critically reflecting on those actions (Merriam & Caffarella 1999:326). Praxis is transformational action, and Freire (1972:40) suggests that true reflection must lead to action. However, 'action will constitute an authentic praxis only if its consequences become the object of critical reflection' (Freire 1972:41).

Freire (1972:81) opposes what he refers to as a banking method of education, in which students are taught to learn by accumulating deposits of knowledge, and the objective is to fill students with 'contents that are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them, and could give them significance' (Freire 1972:45). Opposing this style of education, he expounds a dialogue which stimulates critical reflection. He criticises 'the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge' (1972:46) of the banking model, which he describes as 'an at best misguided system' (1972:46).

His philosophy of learning embraces teacher and student as each having elements of both teacher and learner, rather than the teacher teaching and the student being taught, and rather than the teacher knowing everything and the student knowing nothing (Freire 1972:46). Freire suggests (1972:49) that the teacher must, rather, become a partner with their students, in their 'quest for mutual humanization' (1972:49). Students must become 'critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher' (1972:54). Freire suggests that in a problem posing form of education people

'develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation' (Freire 1972:56).

Moving from the cognitive into the more affective domains of learning, emerging transformative learning perspectives have taken on a wider focus than the initial theory included, aimed at expanding the boundaries of transformative learning theory and practice. Taylor (2008) outlines some of these developments and Cranton (2006) provides further insight into the development of alternative ways of learning through a focus on transformation. Such diversity in theoretical perspectives (Taylor 2008:7) may potentially provide 'more diverse interpretation of transformative learning and have significant implications for practice' (Taylor 2008:7).

Cranton (2006:40) suggests that the extrarational approach (Dirkx 2001:64) to transformative learning 'represents a fundamental challenge to critical reflection as a way of knowing by suggesting that transformative learning is mediated by unconscious processes beyond the level of rational and conscious awareness' (2006:40). Extrarational approaches to transformative learning draw on alternative ways of knowing and learning (Dirkx 1997:80; Hoggan et al 2009) such as creative expression, intuition, dream states and imaginative experience (Dirkx 2001:68; Hoggan et al 2009).

Cranton (2006:49) reflects that perhaps integrating 'this way of understanding transformation with Mezirow's work rather than treating it as an opposing position' could assist in the developing of a 'unifying, holistic theory' (Cranton & Roy 2003 cited in Cranton 2006:48).

I suggest that these varying approaches are branches that stem from the same core, regarding transformative learning, and may facilitate their own kinds of learning processes that differ from one another. However, they are not necessarily in opposition to one another, but rather may enhance the possibilities for further experience of transformation and learning within a broad range of contexts. Cranton (2006:49) acknowledges the strong difference between the cognitive approach and the extrarational approach, and suggests that harnessing some aspects of this difference may hold some promise for expanding the theory.

Dirkx's (1997; 2001; 2008) extrarational approach to transformative learning is initiated through the concept of nurturing soul (Dirkx 1997). This notion of soul in transformative learning is represented as a deepened sense of self and meaning, and is not based in a religious ideology.

Dirkx (1997:81) gives examples of common experiences to describe what is meant by the terminology of soul, reflecting that it is easier to identify it in this way rather than through a specific definition. Experiences such as 'being awestruck by a brilliant sunset', or 'captured by the majestic beauty of a rising full moon' (Dirkx 1997:81), are two of the examples he provides. He reflects that 'soul is more than a psychological attribute' (Dirkx 1997:81), and that it 'beckons to a relationship between the individual and his or her broader world' (Dirkx 1997:81). Soul is therefore not necessarily a solely individual or self-focused experience, although this may be central to some experience, but rather one that connects to our central core and helps make meaning of our experience in a shared world.

'Soul has to do with authenticity, connection between heart and mind, mind and emotion, the dark as well as the light. When we are attending to matters of soul, we are seeking to live deeply, to focus on the concreteness of the here and now' (Dirkx 1997:81). This notion of seeking to live deeply perhaps sums up many aspects of nurturing soul. In relation to learning, soul is 'coming to know ourselves in the world and how we make sense of the other within this world' (Dirkx 1997:82-83), which 'are critical aspects of learning' (Dirkx 1997:82-83).

Referring to Mezirow's (1991 cited in Dirkx 1997:83) perspective as 'analytic, reflective and rational' (1997:83), Dirkx (1997:83) then contrasts the perspective of learning through soul as fostering self-knowledge through symbolic and imaginative means, and elaborates that 'soul is nourished within our lives through story, song, myth, poetry, and the concreteness of our everyday experience' (Dirkx 1997:83). These symbolic and imaginative means do not rely on the rational, cognitive experience of interaction or critical reflection, but rather allow for the bypassing of the conscious, rational mind, toward a fundamentally intuitive process of learning and transformation.

Dirkx (2000:1) describes a mytho-poetic perspective of transformative learning, which draws on poetic imagery and symbolic forms of knowing, and which may manifest through dreams, myth, legends, poetry, stories, ritual, and creative arts. This perspective makes rich use of metaphor and image as ways of connecting with knowing. Through an imaginative engagement with the unconscious (Dirkx 2000:1), such approaches foster transformative learning through drawing on alternative ways of knowing. He suggests that 'through emotionally charged images' (Dirkx 2001:65) it is possible to 'express and connect with' a 'deeper reality' (Dirkx 2001: 65). We may

use 'these charged images to perceive and understand ourselves and the world' (Dirkx 2001:65), and thereby potentially facilitate learning.

The imaginal perspectives (Dirkx 2001:63) proposed by Dirkx as alternative ways of knowing and learning, highlight the emotions and imagination as integral aspects of transformative learning. Imaginal processes draw on the intuitive, creative, imaginative aspects of learning and knowing, and may include 'dreamwork, free association, fantasy, active imagination, and other forms of creative activity' (Dirkx 2001:68). Rather than using critical reflection, the imaginal perspective more clearly relies on experiencing feelings and emotions and allowing the images reflected in them to surface into consciousness. The purpose of imaginal work is 'not to analyze and dissect these emotions and feelings, but to imaginatively elaborate their meaning in our lives' (Dirkx 2001:69).

Addressing the importance of the emotions and embodied knowledge in learning, Dirkx (2008:15) also refers to the body as a source of knowing, noting that the emotions 'convey a deep and intimate connection with our world', and that 'this connection is often manifest neurophysiologically through the body' (Dirkx 2008:15). Rather than presenting a separation of emotions from both bodily and cognitive processes, a holistic concept of the emotional self 'implicates our emotions in an active process of knowing, suggesting a positive and "intelligent" role for them in our lives and, in particular, adult learning (Dirkx 2008:14). Goleman (cited in Dirkx 2008:14) suggests that both rational and emotional ways of knowing contribute to human learning. Emotional intelligence reflects an awareness of one's own feelings and emotions as well as those of others (Dirkx 2008:14). Dirkx (2001:64) argues that 'personally significant and meaningful learning is fundamentally grounded in and is derived from the adult's emotional, imaginative connection with the self and with the broader social world'.

Drawing on alternative and multiple ways of knowing, through creative expression, the body, intuition, and artistically focused ways of knowing and learning, Hoggan, Simpson and Stuckey (2009) expand on the notion of an alternative, creative and imaginal perspective of transformative learning. They suggest that such 'alternative and creative ways of knowing allow space for transformation to occur in ways that supplement cognitive, rational thought, to include the affective, spiritual, imaginal, somatic and artistic' (Hoggan et al 2009:17).

To understand adult learning in a context of creative expression, it is the process that is

emphasised rather than the end product (Lawrence 2005:9). Hoggan et al (2009:26) suggest that we become active in our own learning process when we 'allow creativity to flow through us' (2009:26). The experience of creative expression is 'not simply about the creation of "art" ' (Hoggan et al 2009:26), but is innately concerned with the process of creativity (Hoggan et al 2009:26), while 'the role of imagination is not to resolve but to awaken' (Hoggan et al 2009:22).

Accentuating the use of intuition as a way of knowing, Lawrence (2009:129) conveys the relationship of symbol and imagery in intuition (2009:130), dreams as a source of intuitive knowledge (2009:131), and the relationship of creativity and intuition (2009:133). Noting dreams as a potential, intuitive link to hidden knowledge from the unconscious, Lawrence (2009:131) adds that this knowledge is 'always expressed through symbol and metaphor' (2009:131). She describes the language of imagery as non-precise, remaining 'open to multiple interpretations, truths and realities mediated by the context and experience of the knower' (2009:130). Lawrence (2009:133) notes that intuition is a creative process, and likens creative and intuitive processes as similar pathways of learning.

Lawrence (2008; 2005) also addresses the aspect of learning through artistic expression, within the perspective of there being artistic ways of knowing (Lawrence 2005a). She suggests that dominant Western culture places more value on rational and cognitive ways of knowing, whilst emotional, artistic and embodied ways are often ignored (Lawrence 2008:65). Art is also an emotional experience, and there is a pressure to produce great art, leaving many people who do not consider themselves to be artists reluctant to try expressive approaches (Lawrence 2008:66). Embracing creative projects for their learning potential and letting go of 'technical rationality' (2008:66), creates 'space for sensory imagery in a world dominated by cognitive processes' (2008:66). In such a space we may sometimes experience an altered state, or flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1996 cited in Lawrence 2008:66). 'A person in this flow state is working intuitively, and it often seems as if the poem writes itself or the painting just appears' (Lawrence 2008:66).

Using creative process to engage with body knowledge, Stuckey (2009) draws attention to making meaning of chronic illness through creativity, utilising the resources of visual imagery and art. She reflects on the body as 'its own river of knowledge, ever-changing and organically flowing' (2009: 29). Creative expression is one way to connect with meaning 'that is held within the body, to access the knowledge that lies beneath conscious, rational thought' (2009:38). Stuckey explores

the notion of using somatic knowing and creative expression as linked tools for transformative learning.

The value of creative expression as a tool for transformative learning is supported through Hoggan et al's (2009) inquiry, which furthers the ideas presented by Dirkx (1997; 2001; 2008) regarding imaginal processes of inquiry and learning, through a creative-expressive approach to transformative learning. Hoggan et al (2009) suggest that through utilising creativity and art 'to tap into the spiritual, the imagination, and the somatic, people can reconstruct their belief structures and begin to make new meaning through transformation of perspective' (2009:19).

Transformative learning taking place through these forms of engagement may link with Mezirow's (2000:21; 1994:229-230) concept of epochal or incremental transformative learning, as both incremental learning and epochal learning may be a part of the imaginal process. Although critical reflection is not a direct focus of the imaginal, intuitive process, cognitive engagement through critical reflection of the learning experienced through these intuitive and imaginal perspectives may take place after the process-oriented learning has occurred. This is implementing aspects of the cognitive approach of transformative learning alongside the extrarational approach and may be a link to consider in integrating elements of the two in learning theory.

The concept of conscientization (Freire 1972:81) may also be contextually relevant to the process of learning through some imaginal and intuitive perspectives. Creative, imaginal and intuitive modes of learning have the potential to link to critical perspectives of social change.

The arts may take on many dynamics for learning and engagement in social and cultural transformation. In socially oppressive contexts, the fostering of creative-expressive approaches for learning toward transformative change may take on community as well as individual contexts of transformative learning. The concept of conscientization (Freire 1972:81), therefore, is relevant to some transformative learning contexts in which creative-expressive, imaginal and intuitive ways of learning are engaged.

Although the arts in adult education are not new they appear to be growing and diversifying (Clover & Stalker 2007:3) through a 'contemporary groundswell of creative and aesthetic practices' (2007:3). To 'honour the aesthetic dimension of the human being' (2007:3), using the arts and 'culture as a tool and a site of critical, social learning' (2007:3), and moving toward an

empowering experience of learning, creative-expressive, imaginal, and intuitive aspects of learning may have a potent role within a critical perspective of transformative learning.

Clover and Stalker (2007) discuss the arts as tools for social transformation and learning. They suggest that there has long been tension between the role of individual and collective learning within adult education, and that 'there is a strong tendency towards individual creativity and expression over collective, social efforts to use the arts as a tool for social change (Clover & Stalker 2007:10). However, importantly, they also note that it is 'possible to operate from both perspectives in both the arts and adult education' (2007:11). They suggest that arts based adult education can be 'an imaginative, participatory and critical approach to personal, political, economic, social and cultural transformation' (2007:2).

Collectively working and learning through creative and artistic processes can help to develop 'new paradigms for comprehending and valuing culture and people's aesthetic selves' (Clover & Stalker 2007:2). This has the potential to support consciousness, social awareness and knowledge, to stimulate imaginative and critical reflection, reposition and reconstruct social/cultural identity, strengthen community, and to enhance people's ability to challenge those practises which marginalise or disempower (2007:2).

At the interface of physiology, the body, brain and transformative learning, is a perspective encompassing neurophysiology in transformative learning (Taylor 2008:8; Cozolino & Sprokay 2006; Sheckley & Bell 2006; Swartz 2011; Taylor 2006; Wolfe 2006; Zull 2006). This includes the physiological processes involved in the brain during learning as well as the changes that learning appears to exert on the brain. Newer understanding about the role of neuroplasticity (Cosolino & Sprokay 2011:12; Doidge 2010; Swartz 2011:23) has the potential to influence some aspects of transformative learning, through the ability of the brain to change itself (Doidge 2010) when stimulated to promote new neural pathways (Cosolino & Sprokay 2011:12; Swartz 2011:23). Some studies suggest that changes in the structure of the brain occur during learning and provide a physiologically based pathway to learning (Taylor 2008:8; Zull 2006:4). This area is just briefly dealt with in the section on learning and the body.

Transformative learning theory continues to be a theory in progress (Mezirow 1996:162), 'an evolving theory of adult learning' (1996:162). As such, it is open to development through further exploration of varying perspectives. Since Mezirow first developed his initial theory of

transformative learning, developments have moved in a number of directions, expanding the boundaries of transformative learning, and potentially linking to new possibilities for further exploration within new areas.

HEALTH LITERATURE AND MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS/ CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME (CFS, ME/CFS)

Literature on Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (abbreviated as both CFS and ME/CFS) is extensive and includes a Western Orthodox Medicine (WOM) perspective and research, as well as a Natural Healthcare (NHC) orientation. Much of the literature from these varying perspectives is contradictory, and there is a strong element present of the WOM versus NHC divide. This is a socially constructed division between orthodox medicine, with its stronghold on the medicalisation of wellness, and natural healthcare, with its emphasis on person-centred, natural healthcare. Each perspective is based on a different philosophy of healthcare (Coulter & Willis 2004:587; Ellis 2003:14), and each has a useful place in an integrative healthcare system.

Integrative medicine is a burgeoning healthcare approach that draws on useful elements of both WOM and NHC (Coulter & Willis 2004:588-589; Ellis 2003:14; Cohen 2004) and may provide a useful framework for management and treatment of CFS. Much literature on CFS also takes an integrative approach.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to review the extensive array of literature regarding CFS. This review therefore focuses on some of the influences regarding my own journey of learning toward management and recovery. That journey focuses on an integrative approach to healthcare and draws from both orthodox medical research and natural healthcare choices. It also draws attention to some of the dissonance between the natural healthcare (NHC) and Western orthodox medicine (WOM) perspectives, highlighting the practical value of an integrative healthcare approach.

CFS literature also comes from those who have experienced the illness themselves: the patients. In the form of personal stories as well as practical information for guidance, through anecdotal reports and through providing pointers toward useful research, people with CFS have developed a global community through writing books, providing web-based information and building support groups. Some sources of CFS information are more useful and reliable than others, and discernment is necessary when reading much of the web-based information. Nevertheless,

anecdotal information provided by those who have firsthand experience of the illness may provide a much needed support base for many who are looking for information whilst navigating the terrain of a much misunderstood condition.

Importantly, social issues surrounding CFS have also been studied. Swoboda (2006) explores the social construction of the legitimacy of contested illness and 'sheds light on the social influences shaping the diagnosis and treatment of three controversial illnesses'(2006:248), including CFS. The struggle experienced in living with a chronic illness 'has direction, meaning and is valued' (Brody 2003; Frank 1995; Kleinman 1998; cited in Swoboda 2006:235), whilst those with a contested illness have an added significant struggle; that of legitimisation through 'the struggle to explain the medical authenticity of their illness' (Swoboda 2006:235).

Travers (2004) conducted a phenomenological inquiry into the process of 'self-renewal associated with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome' (2004). In her study, 'From Violation to Reconstruction' (2004), Travers utilises descriptive analysis of the findings of the study group through two parallel narratives- The 'Narrative of Self' and the 'Narrative of the Illness Biographies' (2004). The impact of CFS on participants' personal experience of self is explored in the narratives, with common themes emerging. Themes uncovered include the social invalidation of participants' experience of the illness, of being silenced, and of the consequent reduction in self-esteem (2004). For many, this violation of the self is also in some way a catalyst for change and eventual renewal of self, as participants struggle to find identity and vocality for, of, and within their experience (2004).

Thomas and Bosch (2005) uncover themes of self and identity as paramount for those with CFS. In their exploration of the impact of CFS, identity emerged as a significant theme, incorporating sub-themes such as 'lost identity, new identity, and dislike/like of new identity' (2005:31). Grief was evident in the process of change in identity and life experience of CFS, while themes of invalidation, scepticism and hostility also emerged (2005).

For some, the 'restructuring of self-identity' (Thomas & Bosch 2005:30), although fraught with difficulty in the illness itself, was ultimately perceived as a positive change, as they had time 'to reflect and to come to a better understanding of who they were and what they wanted out of life' (2005:30). Although devastating, the experience was also life affirming in some sense. The study summarises that the devastating and isolating experience of CFS has a 'profound impact on all

aspects of a sufferer's life, particularly on their identity', and that 'there is a critical need for supportive psychological services as part of a holistic treatment plan for CFS (2005:30).

Chamaz (2002) draws attention to the silences within the stories of the chronically ill, stating that not only are the personal stories of those with chronic illness significant, so also are the silences. Personal disclosure is not always clear, and those with chronic illness may experience being or feeling silenced (Chamaz 2002:305). Importantly, Chamaz (2002:303) brings attention to the issue that silences are not just an absence of words, feelings or emotions, but 'may at times reflect active signals – of meanings, boundaries and rules' (2002:303). She suggests that we may need to ask what the sources of those silences are, as some silences may be intended and others may be imposed (2002:303). The study does not suggest that sharing stories is not important, but rather that there are silences within those stories that also need to be addressed. She suggests that what is not said may be as telling as what is said (2002:304).

Bulow (2004) emphasises the importance of sharing stories. Her study, conducted in a patient school for adults with CFS, focuses on the narrative of personal and shared stories. She notes two particular kinds of parallel transition and transformative experience occurring through sharing stories in this study context. These involve the transformation of individual experience into 'shared, collectivised experience' (2004:8), and the transition that occurs when the individual perceives his or her private suffering through sharing experiences with 'co-sufferers' (Bulow 2004:8).

Berne (2002) also addresses some of the social issues of invalidation, scepticism and the need for support, from the viewpoint of having lived with CFS herself. She provides some practical information for management and treatment, and presents a case for better understanding the illness from a physiological and personal perspective, also addressing the need for emotional and psychological support.

Berne (2002) relays in part her own story and others' stories, as well as giving a clear explanation of what CFS is, and its symptoms, from the patient's point of view. She emphasises the importance of self-validation, acceptance, and taking an active approach to wellbeing. She notes that self care is an active process, not passive, and it requires that we focus on the areas where we have choices rather than trying to control what we cannot (Berne 2002:273). She suggests the importance of being realistic about our expectations and abilities. 'Coping means giving up the

fairytale notion that life is fair or simple, as we reluctantly accept its difficulties and complexities. We develop realistic strategies for dealing with rotten circumstances' (2002: 273).

Regarding taking an active approach to wellbeing, Berne (2002) notes '... we cannot afford to wait passively to be rescued. Despite feelings of helplessness and defeat at times, we remain our own best sources of effective coping strategies' (2002: 273). She makes reference to the transformative aspect of learning and growth that may occur through the experience of chronic illness, and focuses on the positive possibilities of learning whilst also acknowledging the realities and difficulties of chronic illness. She notes that learning through illness does not mean passively resigning to it, and that skilled coping is important in maintaining a sense of self esteem (2002:273). Berne relates some of her story of the need for coping and management through modification of lifestyle balance. This gives the reader a sense of identifying with another's story of managing and coping and the difficulties involved in reaching a compromise.

Shomon (2004:8-13; Shomon & Yeaw 2003) has a history of CFS, as well as thyroid disease. An outspoken advocate for thyroid disease awareness (Shomon 1997-2012) and related health issues, Shomon addresses some of the social and medical issues of chronic illness, maintaining that 'we are patients not lab values' (Shomon 1997-2012). Shomon (2004;1997-2012) also demonstrates some of the transformative learning potential of chronic illness experience, having used her diagnosis of thyroid disease as a springboard to help educate and empower others who are struggling with thyroid disease and other related conditions.

Facilitating a critical engagement in the process of learning through chronic illness is instrumental as a source for empowerment and transformation. Shomon (1997-2012) highlights the capacity of chronic illness to be a catalyst for new meaning and perspective through critical reflection and engagement. Intent on the focus of empowerment and empowering patients, she openly contests the socio-political agendas of the medical status quo (Shomon 2010a; 2010b). Conscientisation and praxis (Freire 1972:81,96-97,128) are a part of this process of empowerment and transformation, both on a social scale and on a personal level.

The Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome society of Western Australia (ME/CFS WA 2010) continues the theme of empowering patients through encouraging a proactive capacity toward health management and wellbeing (ME/CFS WA 2010:online). With

a holistic and integrative health orientation, some socio-political agendas regarding CFS, health, treatment and diagnosis are addressed. At the same time, ME/CFS WA provides links to useful and relevant research regarding CFS, from a wide variety of resources, including WOM, NHC and Integrative Medicine.

Berne, Shomon, and ME/CFS WA each emphasise the necessity for empowerment, renewal, and learning through the experience of chronic illness. These themes are also reflected in Swoboda's (2006), Traver's (2004) and Thomas and Bosch's (2005) studies of people with CFS, and inform part of the focus of this thesis, through the perspective of transformative learning. Sharing of stories (Chamaz 2002; Pulow 2004) also informs the thesis. This is partly focused on proactive participation, becoming empowered, and being heard, but also reflects my subjective experience of being and feeling silenced.

The Australian guidelines for diagnosis and treatment of CFS are presented by Loblay and Stewart (2002), and present a WOM dominated focus. These guidelines have been adopted in Australia since 2002 and have been used generally in mainstream medical practice. The Canadian Guidelines (Carruthers et al 2003) provide a more comprehensive approach to CFS, including the use of some nutritional and natural modalities as viable, complementary treatment to WOM management (2003:64, 65-66, 67).

I address only these two sets of guidelines, as a way of comparison, rather than attempting to address all guidelines for CFS, such as those of the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC). The CDC definition was created in order to standardise research and it has been suggested that it is not necessarily appropriate for diagnosis (Carruthers et al 2003:9). Although noted briefly in the chapter on ME/CFS, in relation to naming the illness, I have not provided the CDC guidelines definition, as this takes the analysis of such literature into more in-depth areas. I have attempted to reduce the amount of literature within the chapter, in order to bring the discussion into a framing for my own experience.

As literature on CFS is extensive and also contradictory, I have attempted to address some of this contradiction and some of the wide array of literature within a limited space for discussion. Likewise, I have not provided other specific definitions for ME/CFS or other illnesses. The ME/CFS chapter is intended to discuss some of the various aspects of learning linked with illness, to overview some of the possible causes of ME/CFS, some potential treatments, and to

present some of my own background story of it. I have not given detailed explanations of diagnostic requirements or discussed all research covering ME/CFS. Orthodox medical guidelines can also portray a medico-political stance in terms of which guidelines are considered correct in different health quarters, and for this reason I also have not provided specific definitions. However, I do discuss aspects of the divide regarding ME/CFS research, including WOM and NHC in the literature and I discuss my own stance regarding this area.

Loblay and Stewart's (2002) Australian medical guidelines for diagnosis and treatment of CFS do not delve into the possibility of using natural healthcare as part of an overall regime of management and care (ME/CFSWA), and appear to reinforce a misconception that natural healthcare is of no use in regard to the complexities of the illness. 'Unproven Therapies in CFS' (Loblay & Stewart 2002:s41) are briefly mentioned, and some are listed (2002:s41), but not recommended. 'Alternative health practitioners' (2002:s26) are listed under support available to patients within collaborative therapies (2002:s26), but this is not elaborated. Nor is there a recommendation that general practitioners could co-consult with these practitioners. They do not acknowledge anecdotal evidence or nutritional support research as being worthwhile, and give a biased guide for practitioners of general medicine, rather than providing more understanding of the use of natural healthcare as a complementary protocol of management in CFS.

Importantly, they do discuss the complex nature of symptoms and diagnosis (2002:s30-32, s23-24, s27, s29), and maintain that the illness is considered multifactorial (2002:s24). However, equally important, the omission of alternative therapy possibilities in management and treatment protocols suggests that there is no possibility of useful non-conventional support. This reinforces the orthodox/ natural healthcare divide, rather than providing another level of information that could benefit both practitioners and patients. Because Loblay and Stewart (2002) emphasise proven, orthodox, evidence based medicine (EBM), they neglect an entire area of CFS support and treatment that may help progress in both research and patient treatment as well as social understanding of the illness (2002:s42).

The Canadian Guidelines (Carruthers et al 2003) offer a more comprehensive assessment and inclusion of complementary treatment as viable support (2003:64, 65-66, 67). They include 'lifestyle practices and self-help therapies' (2003:39-40) as important aspects of management and include meditative and relaxation techniques (2003:40) as useful tools for self-awareness within a protocol of illness management. Self-development (2003:41) is also noted within the context of a

constructive management protocol. Nutritional support is recommended through individual treatment plans (2003:42), and some research on the use of natural support recommendations is cited (2003:64-67) and elaborated (p64-67).

Myhill's case (Myhill 2010a; Shomon 2010a; 2010b; BBC News 2010:Online; One Click Group 2010:Online) provides an example of the oppressive forces of political control exerted by some WOM proponents (Shomon 2010a; 2010b). As an integrative healthcare practitioner, Myhill has specialised in treating patients in the UK who have CFS and environmental illness (Myhill 2010b). Her practices, however, were pursued by some fundamentalist proponents of WOM as being inappropriate medical treatment (Shomon 2010a; 2010b; Myhill 2010a). A UK hearing by the British General Medical Council (GMC) in April 2010, led to her being forbidden to prescribe medication for at least eighteen months (BBC News 2010:Online; Myhill 2010a; Shomon 2010b).

This case highlights the need for WOM, NHC and integrative medicine to find complementary ways of working together in healthcare that focus on the wellbeing of patients, rather than dismissing valuable contributors to health practice and research. Myhill (2010b; Myhill et al 2009) outlines natural and nutritional treatments which are potentially useful for the management of CFS, and verifies the possibility of underlying causes and symptoms related to numerous nutritional and endocrinal imbalances, whilst also acknowledging the potential for environmental, viral and bacterial factors to play a part in CFS.

Many other researchers and practitioners do also advocate the use of natural and nutritional support in CFS management, and suggest that endocrinology and nutritional imbalances may underlie at least some of the symptomatic experience (Poesnecker 1999-2003; Puri 2004; 2007; Konynenburg 2007; Wilson 2002; Maes et al 2009; Collins 2009; Sullivan et al 2009; Isolauri et al 2001), whilst others have focused on viral and bacterial elements regarding the onset and chronic nature of the illness (Jardin 1999; Nicolson et al 2002; Nicolson et al 2008; McGregor et al 1999).

THE BODY AND LEARNING

Embodied learning encompasses a wide range of perspectives on how the body is related to, and is relevant to, learning. Within this review and dissertation, the focus is largely upon those perspectives which relate to somatic learning and learning the body through physical, affective and creative perspectives, including some methods for exploring learning of the body. I also

address some of the aspects of the body in relation to space and place, and some socio-cultural contexts of the body.

I have referred largely to authors whose work relates quite specifically to somatic or experiential knowing and an exploration of learning the body, rather than encompassing the full scope of the many and varied perspectives of embodied learning and body theorising. I also refer briefly to some authors/practitioners who write through a context of physical therapy and body psychology. These associations and perspectives regarding bodily learning have been relevant to my subjective, life experience of learning the body and of learning through illness and health.

Due to the vast literature base regarding so many, varying perspectives on body theorising, there will be many authors who are not included within this review and thesis, even though their work may be significant and contribute to the wider literature base for theorising the body. I have attempted to draw from literature perspectives that pertain to the most relevant aspects of my journey, and focus of this thesis, regarding learning of the body.

The body is referred to as having a way of knowing (Amann 2003; Freiler 2008; Stuckey 2009), and accessing knowledge through the body is considered as a way of learning. Several authors clearly identify the body as a conduit for learning and understanding, and as a way of making meaning of experience (Amann 2003; Cohen 2003; Davies, 2000; Freiler 2008; Gustafson 1999; Lawrence 2012; Somerville 1999; Stuckey 2009).

The body's way of knowing is explored by several authors through the specific context of adult learning (Amann 2003; Butterwick & Selman 2012; Cohen 2003, Freiler 2008; Lawrence 2012; 2012a; 2012b; McConnell-Imbriotis 2004; Meyer 2012; Somerville 1999; 2004; Stuckey 2009; Swartz 2011; 2012). Reference to the body in relationship to place is distinct within some of these writers' work (Somerville 1995; 1999; 2004; Somerville & Perkins 2010), whilst some focus on accessing the body's ways of knowing as a way to learn through illness (McConnell-Imbriotis 2004; Stuckey 2009) and to access greater creativity (Stuckey 2009).

Those who explore neuro-biological connections to learning and the body, bring to light an area of adult learning that has previously been the domain of quantitative and medical evaluation, but which now appears to be receiving more attention through mixed methodologies of research regarding learning and the body/brain connection. Perspectives concerning the neuro-physical

changes of the brain in learning (Cozolino & Sprokay 2006; Perry 2006; Taylor 2006; Swartz 2011; 2012; Sheckley & Bell 2006; Wolfe 2006; Zull 2006) and neuroplasticity (Doidge 2010) are of significance in this regard. Areas of somatic learning that incorporate health and wellbeing modalities such as yoga and relaxation techniques are also explored by some authors (Cohen 2003; Freiler 2008; Stuckey 2009).

Some authors who theorise the body (Grosz 1994; 1995; Davies 2000), but whose focus is not specifically adult learning, contribute to a base of knowledge and research about the body from which we may draw regarding learning. However, within the focus of this dissertation, I have not entered all the many and varying angles of body theorising that are encompassed in such literature. This is due in part to the wide complexity of the area sociologically, and an overarching need to simplify the connections of learning to those that have been most relevant within subjective, autobiographical experience of learning the body.

Amann (2003) proposes a model of embodied/somatic learning which includes four overlapping aspects of learning: Kinesthetic, sensory, affective and spiritual. She suggests that these four aspects are fundamental to embodied/somatic knowledge and learning. Rather than focusing on one illustration of embodied learning, she encompasses these four aspects in a model of learning, to present a holistically oriented, balanced perspective of embodied learning.

Amann (2003:1) links embodied learning to transformative learning, highlighting the need to create a space for embodied/somatic ways of knowing within transformative learning theories. She examines how the body contributes to the process of meaning-making and utilises a framework which is aimed toward understanding bodily learning.

It is noted that as 'somatic learning is *felt* by the body' (Amann 2003:2), defining this kind of knowledge rationally has hindered the understanding of somatic education and its development (2003:4). Although there may be a broad range of learning that occurs within somatic learning, and it invokes varying interpretations, Amann (2003:4) also suggests that the body 'continuously emerges as a multi-faceted force for making meaning of our experience' (Amann 2003:4).

The element of *Kinesthetic learning* is concerned with movement, from the smallest of fine motor skills to gross movements and physical action (Amann 2003:5). The body creates movement and action through which we may learn about 'discipline, diligence, dealing with stress or solving

problems' (2003:5). *Sensory learning* is that learning we experience and interpret through our five senses of sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell. *Affective learning* is learning that is associated with feeling and emotion. Amann (2003:7) links *Spiritual learning* into somatic learning, stating that spirituality is to do with making meaning of our life or experience. It can also relate to understandings that are made through symbolic and unconscious ways, such as through music, art imagery, symbols and ritual (2003:7).

Grosz (1994) writes about the body from a feminist post-structuralist perspective. She challenges the notion of mind-body dualism (1994: vii), noting that many philosophers, including feminists, have ignored the body or placed it somehow in a subordinate position (1994: vii) to the mind. She asserts her attempt 'to displace the centrality of mind' (1994: vii) and to give the body a place at the centre of subjectivity and experience (1994: ix), noting that 'bodies have all the explanatory power of minds' (Grosz 1994: vii). She describes this intention as 'a reconfiguring of the body' (1994: ix), moving the body 'from the periphery to the centre of analysis' (1994: ix) so that the body can be seen as central to subjectivity (1994: ix). Grosz (1995:83) depicts the need for 'non-dualistic accounts of subjectivity' (1995:83), suggesting that there has been a developing interest in the corporeal within contemporary philosophy which has been driven by this need.

Grosz (1995) and Davies (2000) both refer to the notion of inscription regarding the body, although from somewhat different angles. Grosz (1995) suggests that there are 'two broad kinds of approach to theorizing the body' (1995:33) which are discernible in radical twentieth century thought; that of the inscriptive and that of the lived body (1995:33). She notes the first, inscriptive, as conceiving 'the body as a surface on which social law, morality, and values are inscribed' (Grosz 1995:33), and the second, the lived body, as referring essentially to the 'lived experience of the body, the body's internal or psychic inscription'. She contemplates that these two separate approaches may not be compatible or 'capable of synthesis' (Grosz 1995:33). I suggest that it is, however, perhaps possible for some aspects of them to be integrated, to an extent, through exploring somatic learning in connection with the lived experience and reflecting on experiential perspectives of inscription.

Grosz's theorising of the body spreads across a much broader scope than is the focus of this thesis. Her perspectives of the body are anchored in contemporary sociological and philosophical discussions of the body and include a theorising based strongly in gender and socio-cultural perspectives. I have not drawn from this whole base of Grosz's literature but have referred to

some specific areas of her work, in order to focus more fully on the somatic and experiential elements of the body in learning, whilst also including some relevant references regarding social inscription. Grosz also combines the theorising of the body within the concept of place and space (1995:103-110), as do Davies (2000) and Somerville (1999; 2010), each within their individual interpretations of the subject and subjectivity.

Davies (2000:19) suggests that it is 'our minds that we are practiced at knowing, rather than our bodies' (Davies 2000:19), as most familiar discourse orientates the mind as separate from the body, and the mind is given the precedence of position of control over the body (2000:19). She notes that the body is generally regarded as natural and is taken for granted (2000:13-14).

Reflecting that body theorising is as disembodied as ever and that theorising the body has been too cerebral and esoteric (Davies cited in Davies 2000:13), Davies (2000:13) suggests that some even 'go so far as to say that writing about the body ignores the body' (2000:13). It is on bringing the theorising of the body back to a sense of bodily knowledge that Davies focuses, reiterating that the body needs to be placed at the centre, rather than the mind and body being perceived as dualistic and competing factors in the lived experience.

Although both Davies (2000) and Grosz (1995) refer to the inscription of bodies, Davies defines where her work separates from Grosz, regarding the ideas of inscription. However, she acknowledges Grosz's clarity on how the overt practices of 'controlling and shaping bodies are only one aspect of how bodies are inscribed' (Davies 2000:15). She continues on to explain that the covert shaping done through established norms and value patterns are equally relevant (Davies 2000:145). Davies (2000:15) notes that the separation of her work from Grosz's work especially occurs regarding Grosz's claim (Davies 2000:15) that 'bodily inscription is as permanent as scarification of the body surface' (Davies 2000:15) and the construction of natural as being unmarked and unscarred (Davies 2000:15).

Davies (2000) explores body/landscape relations and the practices of reading and writing bodies and landscapes (2000:13). She states that bodies and landscapes are not static but are 'shaped through our acts of reading and writing them' (2000:16). She notes that texts are also volatile, and are influenced by change and movement, and explores various ways of exploring bodily experience and memory through texts and writing, such as in group biography workshops.

Davies (2000:50) tells us that the original event of a memory is lived within the body 'in ways that practised forms of telling often make inaccessible' (2000:50). She explains collective biography as a way of making meaning of bodily experience. She describes, in the reading of rewritten stories to others, and in the listening by others, a memory coming 'to life in the detail caught in the written/spoken words, bringing the story to life in their bodies – in the speaking of it, in the hearing of it' (2000:50).

Somerville (1995; 1999; 2004) explores aspects of learning in relation to the body, most notably regarding the body being connected to, and central to, learning in place and space. Like Grosz (1994; 1995) and Davies (2000), Somerville (1995; 1999; 2004) takes the focus of the body from that of a peripheral subject to that of being central to learning and knowing. She discusses the body in relation to place and space, and through reflection on the landscapes of the body and the body in the landscape (1999), she discusses her own experiential and bodily learning.

In her explorations of the body and place within the landscapes of learning and being (1995; 1999), she draws on journals written during time spent in the desert, at a women's protest gathering, and in Indigenous Australian communities. She draws from her research conversations with Aboriginal women regarding place and she draws from her immediate, subjective experience, within various places, through her own history and in aspects of health (Somerville 1999).

Focusing on the body in place, Somerville (1995;1999) also explores the notion of liminality of space and being, including liminality regarding the body. Discussing an experience of illness, she explores the liminality of illness, 'to redefine [her] state of dis-ease as a movement from one state to another' (Somerville 1999:80). She explores writing the body within an experimental learning frame initiated through a series of massage sessions (Somerville 2004:52; 1999:13). Through this, Somerville (2004) reflects on her experience of learning to write the body. She reflects that in these massage sessions 'expressing images that occurred in the in-between space made by the movement of body surfaces – Cathy's hands over [her] skin – allowed a play of different ways of writing embodied experience' (2004:53).

Somerville (1999) suggests that we need to position the body at the centre of our spaces and places, and to work with the body from a perspective of learning that does not displace it from the site of learning and as a site of learning. Through journal reflections, Somerville (1999;

2004:54) explores 'ordinary embodied experiences of inhabitation, or being at home in place' (Somerville 2004:54). She contrasts these reflections with transcripts from previous research conversations about place (2004:54). 'The experience of inhabiting place becomes collective through shared (gendered and race) stories of embodied experience' (2004:54). Somerville (2004) also writes of 'bodylines'(2004:47), and reflects in a journal entry on some of the ways that this notion might be embodied.

Walking, thinking about body, (my) body. Its outline, feel the shape with my hand over shoulder and breast, hip and thigh, tracing a bodyline. Running, thud of feet on rubber, wetness of sweat on forehead and neck, breath panting in and out, heart beating pleasure of movement. My body at the scene of thinking, writing; your body reading, body connection, bodylines.

Somerville 2004:47.

McConnell-Imbriotis (2004) focuses on the body in her autoethnographic research work dealing with diabetes and learning. She addresses some of the difficulties experienced by those with chronic illness in regard to the orthodox medical system, and draws on creative expression as learning, relayed through a subjective, experiential learning journey into chronic illness management. As Stuckey (2009), she works with learning the body in diabetes education and management.

McConnell-Imbriotis relays some medical stories through her perspective of being the patient (2004:154, 177) and identifies the oppression within some of those experiences. The power relations apparent within some medical landscapes are discussed through such stories, and McConnell-Imbriotis (2004:134) notes that respect is not enacted through the medical system.

McConnell-Imbriotis (2004) shares stories of her medical experiences, including within hospital, health appointments, and being ill at home, whilst trying to balance caring for children, academic work and her creative work. She notes that constructive, medical knowledge, or expert knowledge, may sometimes delegitimise the body and invalidate learned body knowledge (McConnell-Imbriotis 2004:45). I also share some stories of the delegitimising of my subjective body and explore alternative ways of bodily knowing.

Stuckey (2009) combines the creative, the body and learning, and draws on transformative learning theory and techniques of learning, often referring to multiple ways of knowing. As do Grosz (1994; 1995), Davies (2000), Somerville (1999), and Aposhyan (2004), Stuckey (2009) emphasises that the body has not been given a central place in how humans are viewed. She refers to Descartes (cited in Stuckey 2009:32), saying that he 'would have dismissed a non-rational explanation for the body, as sensual experiences, intuition, emotions, and anything other than rational judgement are not "real" ' (Stuckey 2009:32). She points out that Western culture 'has been dominated by the separation of cognitive knowledge from body knowledge' (2009: 32) and that there has been a distrusting of bodily knowing (2009:32).

Stuckey (2009) uses the body and creative expression as a means for learning through illness, specifically that of diabetes. This connects with McConnell-Imbriotis' (2004) work, who also focuses on diabetes and learning the body. However, perhaps the strongest departure between the two is that Stuckey focuses more strongly on somatic, meditative and creative-expressive aspects within a therapeutic facilitation of group participation work.

She hones in on the creative-expressive aspects of metaphor, accessed partly through participants' meditation and visualisation exercises, and uses art as a way of expression and reflection. Underpinning Stuckey's (2009) work is the premise that 'The experience of the body is not only an intellectual and philosophical one, but a deeply personal and organic one' (Stuckey 2009:50).

Stuckey also provides scope for using meditations which focus on the body in ways that bring us closer to the bodily experience, expressed or visualised symbolically (Stuckey 2009:36; 2009:42-43). Such body awareness exercises, visualisations and meditations 'connect us to the inner parts of our bodies, the inner world of reflection, bringing potential for relaxation and calm' (Stuckey 2009:36).

Cohen (2003:86) describes how she noticed that her students, after an intensive week of learning, were exhausted and looking as though their bodies needed movement. It brought to her awareness how she had generally, in her teaching, ignored the needs of their 'corporeal selves' (Cohen 2003:86). It led her to reflect on the need to incorporate some element of body involvement even though it was not on the syllabus (2003:86).

She considers some of the parallels between Mezirow's (1991; 2000, cited in Cohen 2003:86) theory of transformative learning and of Hatha yoga, reflecting that each offers a path 'toward human liberation; one largely dependent on reason and one largely dependent on the body' (Cohen 2003:86). She explores how the practice of yoga may enhance education practice through using the body as a 'laboratory for cultivating personal transformation' (2003:86).

Cohen (2003) notes the concept of *mindfulness* as being useful to help bring our focus into the here and now (Tremmel 1993:442, cited in Cohen 2003:89), and notes the value of using non-rational and affective ways of learning. She considers the breath as being a possible connecting force for us to connect with body learning, stating that the notion of the 'breath infusing our beings, connecting body and mind, might help bridge the dualistic divide' (Cohen 2003:89).

Freiler (2008:39-40) delineates varying, general definitions of embodiment, embodied learning and somatic learning, stating that '*embodiment, embodied learning and somatic learning* are all closely aligned and used interchangeably within the discourses'. However, Freiler (2008) aims specifically to differentiate the area of somatic learning, emphasising its basis in a deliberate focusing of attention upon bodily awareness.

She notes in comparison, that embodied learning and embodiment are usually referred to in 'a broader, more holistic view of constructing knowledge that engages the body as a site of learning' (Freiler 2008:39), and within other areas of knowing, such as affective, spiritual, cultural or rational (2008:39). She highlights the distinction that 'somatic learning generally refers to learning directly experienced through bodily awareness and sensation during purposive body-centered movements (Alexander Technique, tai chi, yoga)' (2008:39).

In her action research project for a higher education nursing class, Freiler (2008:41-42) implemented activities which are oriented within the perspective of body learning. She provides examples of activities that she explored with the group to 'facilitate experiences of embodiment' (Freiler 2008:41-42) and 'attention to body awareness' (2008:41-42). These included practising tai chi, diaphragmatic breathing, guided imagery, 'attention to body inscriptions' (2008:41-42), and exploring 'an awareness of how bodies are inscribed, marked and scarred' (2008:41-42). She also focused on the connection of creative expression and used tools such as artistic expression, music and dance as ways to access and express embodied reflections and learning. This overlaps to an extent with Stuckey's (2009) work in creative expression regarding methods of accessing the

body's ways of knowing and learning. Although the study sits within a specific, somatic learning context, there is also some reflection of Grosz (1995) and Davies (2000) regarding the inscription of bodies.

Lawrence, Meyers, Swartz, Butterwick and Selman (Lawrence 2012) write of embodied learning in a variety of contexts of learning for adult education. Exploring embodied learning in both formal and informal settings (Lawrence 2012b:71), they incorporate the participation and notion of bodily knowledge through utilising intuitive ways of knowing, and through theatre, dance and outdoor education activities. Lawrence, Meyers, Swartz, Butterwick and Selman (Lawrence 2012) explore embodied learning through holistic frameworks of engaging the body in learning.

Six themes are outlined as having emerged within their explorations of embodied learning. These include the body's role within holistic learning, body wisdom, the body's role in fostering increased awareness of self and other, the body's role regarding experiential and transformative learning, body pedagogy, and the challenging of dominant ideology through a decolonisation of the body (Lawrence 2012b:71).

Such a holistic based perspective of embodied learning sits within a frame of experiential and experimental learning regarding the body, and overlaps many of the areas I have also been exploring through my approach to learning the body. Although I am not working in the exact, same contexts regarding the body and bodily learning, there are significant understandings that appear confluent within this literature of the body and my own experiential learning of the body. I came to this literature some time after I had written of my perspectives in body theorising. This newer literature strongly supports intuitive and holistic ways of knowing and learning the body, including through creative contexts, situated specifically within adult learning perspectives. This is highly relevant to my subjective reflections and body theorising perspectives.

Lawrence (2012b:74) notes that listening to one's body is a discipline, a deeply engaging experience of body, mind and spirit. She suggests that embodied learning is experiential by nature (2012b:75). It can be a profound physical, mental, emotional and spiritual experience and it holds the potential for transformative learning. It is noted that participants/learners experienced a change in their world view through engaging in various embodied learning practises (2012:75). Meaning can be made through not just the act of doing, but through the reflection on the

experience (2012:75). 'As embodied experiences are often deep and meaningful for the learner, they are ripe for transformative learning to occur' (Lawrence 2012b:75).

Lawrence (2012b:77) also points out that the body is potentially a site for decolonisation in the questioning of assumed knowledge that is privileged over others. It is suggested that the dominance of rational ways of knowing within the education system can be 'a colonising process, particularly for oppressed groups and cultures where other ways of knowing are regularly practiced' (2012b:77). Such colonisation separates the mind from the body and in so doing can leave people open to manipulation and control (2012b:77).

Lawrence (2012a) discusses integrative ways of knowing which incorporate body, heart, mind, spirit and intuition. She suggests that these ways of knowing are not generally taken seriously in Western culture, which tends to focus on the cognitive value of learning and knowledge (2012a:9). Working with the body through creative expression is one way to connect to a deeper sense of these ways of knowing. She suggests that much feminist discourse has focused on reclaiming the body as a source of knowledge, challenging dominant, objective rationality that has been associated with male domination.

She discusses 'embodied pedagogy'(2012a:10), and asks what a pedagogy might look like if it were to hold embodied knowledge and cognitive knowledge with equal value. She discusses four elements that might be included in such a pedagogy: Paying attention to body language; facilitating embodied activities; bringing the body and embodied learning into the perspective of social activism; and acknowledging learner resistance.

Swartz (2012:16) writes of her own experiences following a head injury which left her with chronic health issues. She explains that the core issue was not immediately diagnosed through orthodox medical intervention or examination, but rather, through her own, subjective, body learning exploration, engaging alternative ways of learning and reading her body in subjective bodily experience. Swartz also mentions her experiential, self-diagnosis of a later breast cancer.

In her work, Swartz (2012) questions the status quo of the established, orthodox medical model, and the system within which diagnoses are made or missed. She suggests that such a model does not hold all the answers and that engaging in embodied learning through exploring aspects of our

own, subjective, bodily sensing may also hold some empowering potential for integrative medicine for the patient and learner.

In her methods for learning the body she adopts an approach based in neuroscience, embodied cognition and embodied cognitive science (Swartz 2012:17). Attempting to integrate both the body and mind without Eastern or Western dichotomies (2012:17), Swartz states that embodied learning is a highly 'brain influenced process of emerging'(2012:17). She writes of 'embodied mind' (2012:17) as being an interconnection of systems in the body, especially nervous and endocrine systems. Swartz (2012:19-22) explores learning the body through clinical action pedagogy.

Consistent with critical, feminist, and transformative adult education pedagogies, this clinical action methodology purposely strives to engage metaphors of the body that challenge the limited biomedical view, and it values the slow knowledge focus on nurturing life over outcomes and instrumental rationality.

Swartz 2012:20.

Swartz notes that she and her patients/participants experiment with new ways of engaging learning the body, such as through music and poetry, community walks engaging in photography, walking and conscious breathing, and reflections on changes of body state through these processes.

Butterwick and Selman (2012) focus on embodied learning through the context of theatre. They suggest that participatory theatre processes can be powerful methods for connecting the body, mind and emotions, and may facilitate transformative learning processes (2012:61). Some of their reflections are informed through feminist discussions regarding the need to reclaim 'the individual and communal body, memory and story, and critical pedagogy, including decolonizing and transformative pedagogies' (2012:61-62). They discuss how theatre practices and embodied activities can be facilitated in a way to 'generate new knowledge that leads to enfranchisement and action' (2012:62).

They suggest that 'unremembered memories are held in the body'(2012:64), and that facilitators need to be sensitive regarding this fact. They note that sharing stories is a core element of

popular theatre, and that such remembered events layer self knowledge and the knowledge of others (2012:66). These stories are not just about telling stories, but about telling, listening and engaging in order to create action.

The need for creating a sensitive and caring space for such stories in using embodied theatre processes is imperative. Butterwick and Selman (2012:68) emphasise that disclosures should not be encouraged unless they can be fully heard, listened to, honoured and explored for the knowledge within the experience. The facilitators of such processes must take into account the responsibility and sensitivity required in such group work in embodied learning practice.

Meyer (2012) refers to 'embodied transformative learning' (2012:29), having herself witnessed and documented examples of transformative learning that had come through the embodied experience, within a safe, co-created space in which adults are safe to participate wholly, to become aware of their whole bodies and to engage them, as well as to engage their emotions, intuition, environment and humour (2012:29). She notes that this is not the same form of perspective transformative learning as proposed by Mezirow (1990 cited in Meyer 2012:29), but is related to learning specifically through engaging the body.

Meyer (2012:26) writes of whole person engagement as a method of learning through the body and specifically explores embodied learning through theatre exercises and practice. She uses the terms 'whole body strategies' and 'whole person engagement' (2012:26), and describes her methods as taking a 'whole person approach' (2012:30). In engaging embodied theatre processes within the context of the work place, Meyers recreates the notion of the workspace as a playspace, exploring embodied learning through such a space and facilitating whole person engagement.

I have used the term 'whole person methodologies of the body' to describe a perspective of integrative methods for learning, reading and writing the body, as suggested and explored through my research thesis. Although perhaps there are some similarities and differences to Meyer's use of the terms 'whole person approach' and 'whole person engagement' (2012:26), I have used this term largely in reference to the integration of various ways of working with the body, incorporating embodied learning, bodily knowledge, physical therapy, body/mind awareness techniques, bodymind explorations, creative expression, addressing inscriptions, and decolonisation of the body as a site of learning and meaning-making.

Dychtwald (1977) outlines the concept of bodymind (1977) through the context of physical therapy and the connection of emotions/life experience to the body. I draw from this terminology of bodymind to reflect upon and extend the connection of body and mind to learning. I was initially introduced to this term through its basis in structural bodywork, during training in some techniques within that field, although it is not specific to this context alone. Bodymind (1977) draws from the relationship of the emotions and experience theorised to be held within the body in various and subjective ways. Dychtwald's (1977) methods and theories incorporate, and were developed through, the use of deep bodywork (Dychtwald 1977:12; European Rolfing Association 2013) and techniques such as Bioenergetics (Dychtwald 1977:9-10; Lowen 1976) for the learning and resolution of those body/mind tensions.

Aposhyan (2004) positions the body in a psychotherapeutic focus. Although there is not a direct association to adult learning within Aposhyan's work, she does speak of transformative experience, as does Dychtwald (1997), and the association of body-mind focusing as a tool for transformative experience.

Aposhyan (2004:12) notes that a fundamental premise underpinning somatic psychology is that 'the body reflects the mind and the mind reflects the body' (2004:12). She makes note of the multi-layered complexity involved in seeking to understand the body-mind relationship (2004:12). This emphasises that somatic psychology is not a simplistic notion or formula for diagnostic analysis, but is complex and multilayered. She places an importance on respect for the body's intelligence, with an 'appreciation for the intelligence of the bodymind, its motivations, emotional tone and responses' (2004:16).

Neuroscience also contributes some perspectives to learning regarding the body, through both cognitive and biological understandings. Several authors (Cozolino & Sprokay 2006; Perry 2006; Taylor 2006; Swartz 2011; 2012; Sheckley & Bell 2006; Wolfe 2006; Zull 2006) outline and explain various neurological processes of the brain, its impact regarding learning, and the role of learning in reshaping and rewiring the brain. Neuroplasticity (Doidge 2010; Cosolino & Sprokay 2011:12; Swartz 2011:23) is explored in its relevance to learning, ageing and the changing shape of how the brain is viewed (Cozolino & Sprokay 2006). Some authors (Stewart 2008; Levitan 2013) explore a specific focus of music and the brain.

PLACE AND LEARNING

Exploring the question of how we may learn to know and inhabit our places differently, as posed by Somerville et al (2009), exploring a relationship to place (Somerville et al 2009) through several different contexts, and considering different aspects of belonging (hooks 2009; Davies 2000) and some contexts of inscription (Davies 2000; Grosz 1995), I have reflected on some of the ways through which I have learned place and through which place has influenced my learning, both through illness and wellness. I draw from literature that explores these topics in creative, bodily, and some critical perspectives, holding alternative and creative ways of knowing as valuable. I have explored some of my own stories and learning of place through a perspective of creative artist, traveller, immigrant, learner, tenant and patient. Interlinking different ways of learning place, I draw from a literature base that may be seen as interrelated and interdisciplinary.

Some of the authors here are also reviewed in other parts of the literature review, as their work crosses over into multi-topic territory, such as Somerville (1999; 2004), Grosz (1995) and Davies (2000). These authors each write of the body, and of place and landscapes, and have interlinked these areas in varying ways. I draw also from that interlinking within my own work, through linking the body, place and learning, and linking creative aspects of knowing and learning within place learning and aspects of belonging.

Gruenewald (later known as Greenwood) (2008) discusses how place based education and critical education might come together in a way that collaborates and engages a learning of place, both urban and natural, in critical and ecological contexts. He specifically notes that while critical pedagogy may support 'cultural decolonisation' (Gruenewald 2008:310), place based education may underpin progress toward 'ecological reinhabitation' (2008:310). He asserts that critical pedagogies of places are needed in order to 'challenge the assumptions, practices, and outcomes taken for granted in dominant culture and in conventional education' (2008:308).

Two interlinked objectives in a pedagogy of place are those of decolonisation and reinhabitation (Gruenewald 2008:318). Decolonisation necessitates 'learning to recognise disruption and injury and to address their causes' (2008:319). It requires the ability of recognising injurious ways of thinking such as those that exploit or oppress people and place. Reinhabitation 'involves learning to live well socially and ecologically in places that have been disrupted and injured' (2008:319).

Some critical pedagogies of place focus significance on the telling of people's stories of place (Gruenewald 2008:312), exploring how 'individual stories are connected in communities to larger patterns of domination and resistance in a multicultural, global society' (Gruenewald 2008:312). Some critical theorists focus on recreating urban landscapes, but may neglect the 'connection between cities and ecological contexts' (2008:312). Gruenewald suggests that a challenge for critical pedagogy 'is to expand its socio-cultural analyses and agendas for transformation to include an examination of the interactions between cultures and ecosystems' (2008:312). The acknowledgement of experience having geographical context 'opens the way to admitting critical, social and ecological concerns into one's understanding of place, and the roles of places in education' (2008:317). Gruenewald (2008:314) notes that place pedagogy is inherently multidisciplinary, inherently experiential, connecting place with self and community.

Somerville, Power and de Carteret (2009:8) articulate three key elements as part of a new pedagogy of place and space.

- Our relationship to place is constituted in stories and other representations.
- Place learning is necessarily embodied and local.
- Place is a contact zone of cultural contestation.

Somerville et al 2009:8.

The first element interprets story as being fundamental to how we make meaning in the world, as the 'primary unit of meaning' (Somerville 2009:8). The concept of story is expanded to include other representations such as the arts, as well as those of scientists and policy makers (Somerville et al 2009:8). The second element 'emphasises the mutual constitution of places and bodies' (Somerville et al 2009:9). This puts the body at the centre of experience of place (2009:9). The body is therefore taken from a place of objectivity and separation and linked with place and space as we connect. The third element describes place as offering a 'material and metaphysical in-between space for the intersection of multiple and contested stories' (2009:9). A multiplicity of stories contained in one place gives rise to variable and contested stories, and it is this aspect of place which is characterised as a 'contact zone' (Pratt 1992, quoted in Somerville et al 2009:9).

It is noted that a new pedagogy of place must engage with new ways of perceiving learning and new methodologies for research and learning (Somerville et al 2009:10). This includes those

methodologies based within artistic and creative representation of place and includes developing a creative/artistic engagement with our places. Through creative processes we can also 'begin to know the world anew, and each expression is part of a larger ongoing process' (Somerville et al 2009:10). In Australia, a new pedagogy of place involves learning to see our places with a growing awareness of Aboriginal ways of knowing in this country, and coming to understand that reinhabitation necessarily involves the telling of those stories and the making of new collaborative stories of place. A new pedagogy of place also involves understanding that place learning is local and embodied (Somerville et al 2009:8).

Somerville et al (2009:7) suggest that Australian place studies research must be 'characterised by a necessary engagement with the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and knowledges' (Somerville et al 2009:7). Noting that Aboriginal Australians have regarded the land in totality, with the connection to country sitting at the very heart and essence of their culture and social structure, Somerville et al (2009:7) suggest this relationship to country has 'profound implications for an Australian understanding of place and space' (2009:7). They also note that place studies may present alternative storylines about who we are in the places where we live and work in an increasingly globalised world (2009:4).

Somerville and Perkins (2010) extend the notion of telling stories of place through translating into written stories some of the oral, Indigenous stories of the Gumbaynggirr culture of the mid north coast of NSW, Australia. The stories within *Singing the Coast* (Somerville & Perkins 2010) are 'constructed from the space between oral stories and written text. The writing itself follows the process of creating knowledge from oral stories'(Somerville & Perkins 2012:ix). It is derived from research undertaken over a ten year timeframe, involving many Gumbaynggirr people's stories being recorded by Somerville and Perkins (2010).

Noting that the stories within the research are written from the in-between place of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal storytellers and identities, Somerville and Perkins (2010:ix) acknowledge an acute awareness of the politics and sensitivity of this. The translation and writing of the stories, such as at Yarrowarra (Somerville & Perkins 2010:19), is working in 'the contact zone' (Somerville & Perkins 2010:19), where multiple and contested stories intersect. Somerville and Perkins (2010:19) suggest that 'specific local places, such as at Yarrowarra, offer us an in-between space' (Somerville & Perkins 2010:19) for the intersection of these stories.

Somerville (Somerville & Perkins 2010:xiv) also discusses ways of learning in our places through describing examples of engaging with the surroundings of her walking. She sometimes uses poetic description of a place, and nurturing a sense of what that place says to her in a visual and sensory awareness, through what she notices in the everyday and in the patterns of the beach. Throughout the chapters on place learning, I have used poetic and reflective description as an interactive, creative method for reading and learning of place.

Somerville (in Somerville & Perkins 2010:19) tells us that as she walks the beaches, she learns those places differently. She acknowledges that the writing of these stories, and her experience of being in those places and of learning those places, is 'about a process of coming to know. It is about how white people can learn to live in this country differently' (Somerville & Perkins 2010:19).

The notion of learning to write differently is also inherent within Somerville's (in Somerville & Perkins 2010:10) work. She explains that in her previous experience of academic work there had been an emphasis on logical ways of writing that did not encompass the body or place as relevant to the work or writing. In exploring landscapes and the body in regards to ways of knowing and learning, she discovered that she had to learn a new way of writing and a new way of seeing (Somerville & Perkins 2010:20). She describes this writing and seeing as a way of learning that 'demands an attentiveness to place from the whole body' (Somerville & Perkins 2010:20), and she discovered that this way of learning required her to place herself 'bodily in the places of these stories' (Somerville & Perkins 2010: 20). This aspect of writing and learning place can support a deeper connection of the body and place, and I have drawn from that concept extensively in the dissertation chapters on place learning.

Somerville (1999), Somerville and Perkins (2010), Davies (2000) and Grosz (1995), each discuss the body in relation to place and the connection points of the two. Although each approaches the subject in a somewhat different manner, there are intersections of learning that are addressed through each author that connect bodily to place, landscapes and learning.

Rose (1996) discusses the Australian Aboriginal concept of 'country'(Rose 1996:8) and relationship to country. Aboriginal relationship to country is based in a system of kinship and nurturance and there are obligations of nurturing country (1996:49). The relationship between people and country is 'intense, intimate, full of responsibilities, and, when all is well, friendly'

(1996:49). Rose (1996) depicts the sense of country and the nurturing of country as being an essential obligation to those who live there. 'Country is a nourishing terrain' (Rose 1996:7). Nurturing country and caring for country are essential acts of responsibility in living with country and being on country. 'People and country take care of each other' (1996:49).

Rose (1996) discusses the established practices of Aboriginal fire management, which has been noted as shaping and managing the ecosystems of Australia over centuries. Aboriginal strategies of management 'sustained a mosaic of ecosystems across the Australian continent within which the diversity of living things could flourish' (Rose 1996:68). She also discusses other systems of land management that Aboriginal Australians had implemented long before white colonisation. She contrasts the way most white settlers used the land, and how Aboriginal ways of knowing can inform a deeper learning of country and place. Although I do not write of land management practices, I draw from Rose in relation to Indigenous ways of knowing country, and in ways that reflect the need for contemporary Australia to understand and adopt systems of care and nurturance that are based in Aboriginal ways of knowing country and caring for country, both personally and holistically, and even perhaps artistically.

Rose (1996:8) notes that country has multidimensionality. It consists of sky country, sea country and land country. It consists of people, plants and animals. It includes Dreamings and it includes both the underground and air. Country is multidimensional. The word country is a proper noun as well as a common noun in Aboriginal English (Rose 1996:7). I have drawn from a multidimensionality of aspects for learning and knowing, for exploring a deeper perspective of country, by engaging the mythic and poetic aspects of country through my own reflections on place, belonging and coming to know nature places differently.

People talk about country in the same way that they would talk about a person: they speak to country, sing to country, visit country, worry about country, feel sorry for country, and long for country. People say that country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, is sorry or happy. Country is not a generalised or undifferentiated type of place, such as one might indicate with terms like 'spending a day in the country' or 'going up the country'. Rather, country is a living entity with a yesterday, today and tomorrow, with a consciousness, and a will toward life. Because of this richness, country

is home, and peace; nourishment for body, mind, and spirit; heart's ease.

Rose 1996:7

Such reflection on nurturing different ways of knowing country and understanding different knowledge systems, such as those which traditional, original Australians had developed long before white settlement, may help us understand a different relationship to our places in a variety of ways. I have referred to some of these elements of place learning within a few different contexts of my own subjective learning in nature places.

Paton and Brearley (2009:37) speak of 'deep listening between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous knowledge systems' (Paton & Brearley 2009:37). Deep listening has various manifestations of use. In the Ngungikurungkurr language this concept is called Dadirri (Ungunmerr 1999, cited in Paton & Brearley 2009: 38; Ungunmerr-Baumann 2002) and in Yorta Yorta it is called Ngawal (Hamm 2008, cited in Paton & Brearley 2009:38). I explore this concept in subjective and holistic ways, through walking and being in nature and reflecting on engaging with other ways of knowing.

Deep listening, when used as a research methodology, 'provides an approach which facilitates a recognition of shared interests and concerns, as well as differences' (Paton & Brearley 2009:39). In a deep listening experience and methodology 'we learn from and with each other through the stories and experiences we share' (2009:39). This opens the way for new meanings, learning and kinds of inquiry (2009:39). Qualitative research informed by deep listening has also been described as 'an approach to research involving respect and checking your heart' (Atkinson, cited in Paton & Brearley 2009:39). I have drawn from elements of this concept of deep listening, and have reflected upon the significance of its use poetically, creatively and bodily, as well as considering the aspect of sharing stories. I have extended this symbolic and physical connection to listening, both within the place chapters and within other aspects of the thesis.

Davies (2000) develops the concept of inscription of bodies and landscapes, the positioning of bodies in landscapes, and the elements of longing in belonging. She refers to the notion of '(be)longing' (Davies 2000:37) as a relevant aspect of place, bracketing the word in two parts in order to emphasise the sense of longing that is associated with having a place to belong. She describes further the relationship of belonging and longing in regard to landscapes and our places. 'In the process of constructing ourselves *appropriately* in landscape, we long for a *secure*

relationship, for an *affinity*, for a sense of our being in our *proper* or *usual* place. This longing is intricately tied up with becoming the appropriate(d) body, which is *of* that landscape, which *belongs* to that landscape' (Davies 2000:37). The theme of belonging is intricately connected within my writing and research about learning place, including the impact of aspects of real estate, immigration, enforced moving and stories of rapid, inner city gentrification. It also connects within themes of transience and a sense of freedom experienced as belonging in the open space.

Davies (2000:11) explains the notion of inscription regarding the body and of inscribing the landscape on the body. 'The concept of (in)scription is developed as texts written on the depths/surfaces of the body/landscape, not in the sense of scarifying but in the sense of bringing the subject into being. That being is understood in terms of process rather than in terms of essence, and as such is motile, fluid, open to change'. (2000:11). I have discussed Davies further in the literature section relating to the body.

hooks (2009) suggests that this world has become a world of 'too much' (hooks 2009:1), and specifies that 'this too muchness creates a wilderness of spirit, the everyday anguish that shapes the habits of being for those who are lost, wandering, searching' (hooks 2009:1). She notes that many people feel no sense of place but rather 'what they have is a sense of crisis' (hooks 2009:1).

I have drawn from hooks' (2009) ideas of walking and belonging, and the sense of geographical location having a part in my sense of knowing, forming these notions into poetic and reflective explorations of walking and learning place. I draw from her sense of identifying the 'too muchness' and 'sense of crisis' (2009:1) in place and belonging. Establishing presence through walking and knowing a place is explored through my writing of place, learning and belonging.

hooks (2009:2) reflects that like many of her contemporaries, she has yearned to find a place in the world, 'to have a sense of homecoming, a sense of being wedded to a place' (hooks 2009:2). She discusses the notion of belonging, nurturing 'a sense of belonging, a culture of place' (hooks 2009:2-3) and finding identity in one's geographical places. hooks (2009:2) identifies walking as a way through which she comes to learn a place (hooks 2009:2-3), where she can develop her sense of the place and establish her presence in it, 'to create firm ground' (hooks 2009:2).

hooks (2009) reflects on the nature of finding place and her own sense of belonging and coming home to where she had begun. I also reflect on the places of my belonging and the roots of my learning in geographical location.

Kentucky was the only place I had lived where there were living elders teaching values, accepting eccentricity, letting me know by their example that to be fully self-actualized was the only true way to truly heal. They revealed to me that the treasures I was seeking were already mine. All my longing to belong, to find a culture of place, all the searching I did from city to city, looking for that community of like minded souls, was waiting for me in Kentucky, waiting for me to remember and reclaim.

hooks 2009:21

Grosz (1995) draws attention to cities in relation to bodies and the notion of inscription (Grosz 1995:33), discussing 'the body as a surface of inscription' (Grosz 1995:33) and the change and transformation of bodies resulting through cities and places. She suggests that the city 'always leaves its traces on the subject's corporeality' (Grosz 1995:110). She explains that although the city, through its 'particular geographical, architectural, and municipal arrangements is one particular ingredient in the social constitution of the body' (Grosz 1995:108), it is not the most significant. Nevertheless, the norms, culture, form and structure of a city 'seep into and affect' (Grosz 1995: 108) every other element that constitutes corporeality (Grosz 1995:108).

The city is also a site for cultural saturation of the body, (Grosz 1995:109), a place where the body is taken over and transformed by images, systems, media, the arts and culture. It is a place 'where the body is representationally reexplored, transformed, contested, reinscribed' (Grosz 1995:109). The body, in turn, also 'reinscribes the urban landscape' (Grosz 1995:109), depending on demographic changing needs, and this also may lead to 'extending the limits of the city ever towards the countryside that borders it' (Grosz 1995:109).

I have drawn from some of Grosz's (1995) writing on the body and on cities, most especially regarding inscription of bodies and places, and the reinscribing of place and the body. This also draws parallel with Davies (2000) on inscription of places and bodies. I extend these reflections

of inscription to the places of my walking in nature and to the experience of living with rapid, inner city gentrification, both bodily and in relation to place.

CONCLUSION

This chapter outlines some of the themes and contexts of my research as anchored in the literature. I have overviewed some areas of literature as they specifically pertain to my research and learning, whilst also providing a background of some foundational perspectives for place pedagogy, transformative learning and body theorising.

This thesis has drawn from a seemingly wide range of literature areas. I have focussed on pulling these areas together, into a context of learning involving the creative, artistic, the body, place, illness/wellness, and transformative learning. I have drawn from some literature in ways that support bodily and creative ways of learning and knowing, through themes of illness/wellness, creativity, embodied learning and place. I have drawn from much health literature from a perspective of cognitive learning as well as learning in relation to health social movements and socially transformative learning. Much of the adult learning literature ties together through its focus on alternative, creative and intuitive ways of knowing and learning.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

Based in a qualitative research paradigm, the thesis uses a mixed genre methodology, incorporating autoethnography (Ellis & Flaherty 1992; Ellis & Bochner 2000; Bochner 2002), writing as a method of inquiry (Richardson 2000; 2005; St Pierre 2002; 2005), and arts-based research (McNiff 1998; Barone & Eisner 1997; 2006). Arts-based methodologies are also alternatively referred to here as creative-expressive approaches to research. I chose to use these genres of methodology as a foundation for inquiry because they complemented each other in a way that would enable the story to be told in a creative way.

The research project was initially intended to be primarily focused on group work, through creative drama and voice workshops for people with CFS or recovering through CFS. Ethics approval was granted for participant workshops and interviews, and recruitment was undertaken. However, first round recruitment failed to enlist enough participants within the given timeframe. Due to time and energy/health constraints, after some consideration, I decided to cancel the workshops, and instead focus on the autobiographical component of the research.

I had initially planned that the autobiographical component would form a *part* of the thesis, intentionally mirroring the participants' exploratory experiences of creative expression and CFS, and providing an anchor for participant and researcher collaboration within the workshops environment. However, as limitations of personal health and energy became apparent, I began to reconsider this plan, choosing to simplify the process and to work for the time being on my own story, hoping to later integrate the ideas of the workshops into a professional working strategy.

I certainly did not perceive autobiographical ways of research as an easy option or as an easy way out. On the contrary, autobiographical, subjective research proved itself to be highly challenging. In simplifying the process I am referring to simplifying plans which may impact on health management, and creating realistic strategies for working within my means. Unfortunately, this is one of the realities of dealing with CFS. One may often need to reassess and learn to deal with disappointment at failed plans.

Application for ethics clearance was sought and granted for the original project involving the intended workshops and interviews with participants. Although I later moved into an autobiographical inquiry which did not require ethics clearance, applying for ethics clearance gave

me the opportunity to learn, to refine my initial research aims, and to review my plan of action for how to formulate research projects. As I embarked on the seemingly detailed process of the ethics application, I decided to approach the process as though I was doing a coursework assignment, and to learn from it. As the process was completely new to me, I viewed this as a process for learning in an area in which I had no experience. Although the thesis eventuated in having no requirement for ethics clearance, going through that process of defining and refining the research area allowed me to understand the process of ethics approval and provided further understanding of the research process. Had I undertaken the autobiographical work without initially having submitted an ethics application, I may not have gained this understanding. Significantly, the ethics application process became a substantial area of learning for me, and one which I do not feel was wasted.

I had devised a plan of the workshops and secured a community workshop space in an inner city, Sydney location. Unforeseen, additional necessities came to light through my inquiries about such workshop spaces, such as the lack of affordable artistic, community space available for hire in inner city Sydney, and the requirement of public indemnity insurance cover when accessing a community space. I discovered some element of an underground movement within the arts and learning of the city, where people were seeking spaces to use as community and arts workshop venues that did not cost the earth. It appeared that even the more affordable, alternative types of workshop venues were highly sought after, and needed to be booked well in advance. Meanwhile, I also discovered that more alternative, 'underground' spaces were popping up in unexpected places, as artists in the community sought spaces to make their creative work found and known in the city, without the price tag. This lack of affordable space available to rent for artistic purposes in inner Sydney, reflects issues of real estate that have been predominant in that city for some time. These issues of real estate affordability form a major theme in the chapters on place learning, belonging and transience.

Interestingly, I reflected that some of these arising issues, which I had stumbled across through my seeking a workshop space, were catalysts for creative ideas emerging, regarding potential, future work in the area of creative-expressive learning groups and workshops.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

I chose to explore autoethnography (Ellis & Flaherty 1992; Ellis & Bochner 2000; Bochner 2002) as a way of understanding the topic of learning through chronic illness. Autoethnographic research positions the researcher at the centre of the research, as subject, providing an autobiographical focus to inquiry.

This genre of research and writing 'displays multiple levels of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural' (Ellis & Bochner 2000:739). Ellis and Bochner (2000:739) describe the autoethnographer as using 'an ethnographic wide-angle lens' (2000:739) to focus on the social and cultural elements of their experience, and then, with an inwardly focused gaze they expose the more vulnerable self, through the depiction of personal experience. The autoethnographer moves back and forth between an outwardly focused, wide-angle lens and the inwardly focused lens, such that 'distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond recognition' (Ellis & Bochner 2000:739). Autoethnographic research methods are reflective of life (Ellis & Flaherty 1992:6), as the writer moves 'between fluctuating levels of absorption and detachment, managing multiple selves and roles, even when their own experience is the subject of investigation' (Ellis & Flaherty 1992:6).

Autoethnographic texts may be presented through a variety of mediums, such as poetry, drama, fiction, and other creatively focused or expressive forms of presentation. They are usually written in first person and may feature varying facets of vulnerability, including self-consciousness, embodiment, spirituality, dialogue, emotion and concrete action (Ellis & Bochner 2000:739).

I incorporate personal stories, poetry and music to 'express the complexities, contradictions, and revelations of lived experience' (Ellis & Flaherty 1992:8). The nuances of artistic and creative expression identified and experienced through my own, subjective, lived experience and artistic, creative expression mix with my subjective (life) experience as novice researcher and as a person recovering from a long term illness.

'A subjective sense of ourselves is one of the principle elements in lived experience' (Ellis & Flaherty 1992:9) and the 'sense of self depends on place as well as time' (Ellis & Flaherty 1992:10). I explore the concept of place through a framework of poetry and writing related to a subjective experience of place, art and being. I also explore the sense of self through artistic work in music, using this medium of expression as a means for learning and exploration.

Ellis and Flaherty (1992:11) suggest some questions for consideration, regarding the value of subjective research. I suggest that these questions may be worthwhile to ask through the reading. They ask :

Have we made subjectivity more intelligible?

Do readers experience something akin to the emotions, thoughts and bodily sensations we attempt to convey?

Does the prose evoke cognitive, emotional, or physical response or identification?

Were readers reminded of similar situations or different situations but with similar conditions?

Have readers redefined a personal problem as a public issue as a result of reading our texts?

Do readers have some increased understanding of the connection between subjectivity and sociocultural dynamics?

Do readers recognise themselves – their feelings, thoughts and everyday experiences – in the texts?

Ellis and Flaherty 1992:11.

My interest in subjective research came through the experience of reading others' stories, both those stories of CFS experience, especially during the earliest time of my CFS experience, and in some researchers' stories relayed in an academic context (Somerville 1999; McConnell-Imbriotis 2004; Richardson 1992; 2000; Nelson 2000). One of the most important things that I found in the reading of those stories was a sense of common ground, shared emotion, even if the situation may be different in some circumstances. The CFS stories were significant to me essentially and directly, physically as well as emotionally. As a person with a CFS diagnosis and with disabling incapacity from the illness, I related strongly to the stories I read. I felt that I had an instant rapport with those writers telling the stories, even though our circumstances may have been widely different.

I learned something through reading others' writing of their experience. I found support and I found some kind of human connection, even though we were separated physically by the pages,

miles, countries or continents apart. There was shared experience, and that mattered to my sense of wellbeing. It helped make meaning of the experience. Others who had 'gone before me', helped me to navigate the path to greater acceptance and personal discovery throughout the process of illness and recovery.

As a researcher, I discovered that sharing of stories within a research context gave a level of personality to the research that humanised the experience of research. As a beginner researcher, I found that the depth the writers' personal stories brought to their research pulled me into a world of their experience and resonated with my body and self. Some of these stories held powerful experiences in the reading, and I was moved by the ability of story to tell an emotional experience, and yet for it to still be related within an academic context of research. I felt intrigued by the ability of subjectivity in research to convey meaning, and to connect with human qualities, feelings and senses within myself and my body in regard to the subject and the writer. Through reading stories and accounts of subjectivity from researchers, I began to discover subjectivity as a valid tool in research methodology.

I have also used music as an autoethnography experience or experiment, through the use of song and through descriptions/ stories of the musical experience. As with written stories, wherein sometimes the meaning is made through the process of reading, so too with song this may occur. In listening to the music of the thesis, the reader may read or experience the meaning inherent in the music and/or lyrics, or they may relate through their own personal experience, not necessarily an experience regarding illness or music, but perhaps through emotions or body feelings related to their own individual life.

Bochner (2002:262) states that a 'purpose of self-narrative is to extract meaning from experience rather than to depict experience exactly as it was lived' (2002:262), and that these narratives reflect 'a desire to grasp or seize the possibilities of meaning, which is what gives life its imaginative and poetic qualities' (Bochner 2002:262). He explains that 'we narrate to make sense of experience' (Bochner 2002:262). I suggest that within this seeking to make sense of experience, autoethnographers are learning through that subjective experience and through the representations of that experience. Narrative reflects experience, as 'experience presents itself in a poetic dimensionality saturated with the possibilities of meaning, however perishable, momentary and contingent' (Bochner 2002:262).

Bochner (2002:263) outlines some suggestions for his approach to autoethnographic narrative, regarding some of the elements that he looks for in the reading. Importantly, he stresses that in reading subjective autoethnography, he wants a story that moves the reader, in heart and belly as well as the head (Bochner 2002:263). He expects the author to delve beneath and into their own actions and emotions, 'displaying the self on the page' (2002:263), in all its contradictions, ambivalence and 'layers of subjectivity' (2002:263). He expects a vulnerability from the author, and an emotional honesty. He states a preference for stories that tell a 'tale of two selves; a believable journey from who I was to who I am, a life course re-imagined and transformed by crisis'.

Bochner (2003:264) responds against the idea of narratives being perceived 'as some sort of victim art or confessional' (2002:264), and maintains instead that narrative can be a 'source of empowerment and a form of resistance to counter the domination of canonical discourses' (2002:264). He elaborates that narrative often has the expressed purpose of devictimising the stigmatised identity, and of humanising experiences by giving voice to what it means to live with those experiences (Bochner 2002:264).

Richardson (1992:125) specifies that although her chapter on subjectivity, was 'consciously self-revelatory', it was not 'confessional' (Richardson 1992:125). I make a similar distinction regarding the processes of my writing and learning in this thesis being focused toward transformative learning rather than it being confessional. This thesis is not confessional, although it may have had some therapeutic effect at times through the personally transformative focus I gave it. It is an exploration of creativity, illness management, recovery and hope.

Combining the methodologies of autoethnography, writing as a method of inquiry and arts-based research, I attempt to blend these methods into a coherent piece of work geared toward telling a story in a non-linear way, a story which interweaves throughout the various chapters, whether I am speaking about the body, CFS, music, creativity or place. Each of these interweaving methods tells an aspect of the story in a different way, from a different perspective, and combine together to give a personal account – or narrative – of my lived experience presented through exploratory research. This is not confessional, although it may perhaps make the writer somewhat vulnerable in the telling. It is also, nevertheless, an empowering tool for transformative learning.

WRITING AS A METHOD

I have made extensive use of writing as a method of inquiry (Richardson 1992; 2000; Richardson & St. Pierre 2005) and Nomadic writing (St Pierre 2002; Richardson & St. Pierre 2005) practices throughout the research. This was most notable during a long episode of relapse and illness that occurred over six months during the research period, where I wrote my way through the experience as a way of learning and inquiry, using the time to explore the experience as research, through autoethnography, writing, body learning and music.

Poetry, song and reflections in the research journals became part of the thesis as they emerged in a parallel sequence connected to the autoethnographic inquiry. As the researcher and the subject, these methods of inquiry were part of my focus as I went about working on my music, doing various daily activities and trying to get well from an extended post-viral, relapse experience. Writing formed a strong part of how I learned through the process of the illness experience. In the writings and reflections in my research journal, I found that I was writing in a cyclical method, exploring through the act of writing, and then reflecting on what I had written. At times this had a profound effect on my perspective of experience and at other times it led to further writing or to the musically expressive aspects of the thesis.

Sometimes writing for the thesis happened in an indirect way, as I wrote 'the morning pages' (Cameron 1995:9) almost daily as a routine I had established during the earlier years of CFS, and as a link to creative action whilst physically inactive. Using writing as a creative process of thought clearing and centering, the technique of the morning pages (Cameron 1995:9) uses three, long-hand written pages of flow-of-consciousness writing, in order to free the conscious mind from the (often mundane and trivial) thoughts that may be restricting creative action.

Cameron (1995:9) suggests that 'in order to retrieve your creativity, you need to find it' (Cameron 1995:9). An 'apparently pointless process' (1995:9), the morning pages may be 'occasionally colourful' (1995:9) but are 'often negative, frequently fragmented, often self-pitying, repetitive, stilted or babyish, angry or bland' (1995:10). Cameron (1995:10) explains that there is no wrong way to write the pages, and that they are meanderings, not art. They use writing as a tool, in the simple action of 'moving the hand across the page and writing *whatever* comes to mind' (Cameron 1995:10).

The morning pages became a tool for creativity during the CFS years, something which helped to nurture creativity and to establish a trust in the *process* of writing. This notion was reinforced to me in Richardson's (1992; 2000; 2005) work academically, for using the process of writing as a viable method of inquiry. The discovery is within the writing, and the writing is the method in itself.

Cameron (1995:12) makes a note regarding the 'logic brain and artist brain' (1995:12). The morning pages exercise assists in moving the logical brain to the side so that the more creative, non-linear dimensions of thought can be accessed, and creativity encouraged. There are ways of connecting with the creative side of the self, the creative brain, and often that is through using techniques that do not rely on rational or logical thought processes. Writing the morning pages is one such technique.

Cameron (1995:15) illustrates, 'And then, one wet morning, a character named Johnny came strolling into my pages. Without planning to, I was writing a novel. The morning pages had shown me the way' (1995:15). On occasions, I found myself writing parts of the thesis within the morning pages. Although I later edited and refined those ideas, associations linking ideas and realisations sometimes came into the writing through the very process of the writing itself.

I include the morning pages in a methodological perspective of writing as inquiry as they have been a regular part of my process of creative action (and also supporting illness management) through the years of CFS. I also include them because they are a technique for enhancing creativity, by overcoming the logical-mind-focused inhibitions to creativity, which is a part of the focus of this thesis.

Richardson's (2000; 2005) use of writing as a method of inquiry also connects in with this aspect of harnessing the non-logical and the creative. Using writing as a process inherent in the research, writing as a method does not focus only on the product of the work but on the process as well. 'Nurturing our own voices releases the censorious hold of "science writing" on our consciousness as well as the arrogance it fosters in our psyche; writing is validated as a method of knowing' (Richardson 2005:962).

Some of her ideas for writing as a methodology were discovered by Richardson (1992:126) through experimentation in her sociological research study of single mothers. She shaped her

transcribed interview with Louisa May (Richardson 1992:126) into a three page poem, using only Louisa May's words, tone and diction but with the use of poetic devices (Richardson 1992:126). Through this, she began to reflect further on new ways of using writing in research.

Richardson (2000:924; 2005:959) admits that she had 'yawned [her] way through numerous supposedly exemplary qualitative studies' (2000:924; 2005:959), and abandoned texts part way through. She elaborates that qualitative work needs to hold more of its power in the writing than she had been finding at the time (2000:924; 2005:959-960). She notes that unlike quantitative writing, which can convey its meaning through tables and summaries (Richardson 2005:960), 'qualitative work carries its meaning in its whole text' (Richardson 2000:924; 2005:960) and it needs 'to be read, not scanned; it's meaning is in the reading' (2000:924; 2005:960).

Creative analytic processes (CAP) to enhance writing and qualitative research practice are discussed by Richardson (2005:962). These processes invite the author to use creative elements within writing and to go beyond the 'conventional social scientific writing' (Richardson 2005:962). CAP ethnographies 'invite people in and open spaces for thinking about the social that elude us now' (2005:962). They 'display the writing process and the writing product as deeply intertwined; both are privileged. The product cannot be separated from the producer, the mode of production, or the method of knowing' (2005:962).

'I write because I want to find something out. I write in order to learn something that I did not know before I wrote it' (Richardson 2000: 924). This is partly how I worked with writing through a post-viral fatigue phase of six months during part of the research process, a method I also used for reflecting on music and creativity, and for writing on place as I moved through the process of learning my way in the space of it. I also learned to write the body in a similar way, based in my reflections on the body within a meditative/relaxation space. Richardson (2000:924; 2005:960) suggests that we have perhaps been taught not to write until we know what we want to say, with our points organised and clearly outlined. The notion of writing being valid only once the ideas and points are organised and outlined, encourages a 'static writing model' (Richardson 2000:924). It 'ignores the role of writing as a dynamic, creative process... and requires writers to silence their own voices...' (2000:924-5).

She further elaborates that those constraints of writing 'cohered with mechanistic scientism and quantitative research', and 'were themselves a socio-historic invention of our 19th century

foreparents' (2005:960). Importantly, Richardson brings attention to the fact that 'Learning to write in new ways does not take away one's traditional writing skills anymore than learning a second language reduces one's fluidity in one's first language' (2005:960). In using some of these techniques of writing as a dynamic method, qualitative writers can move beyond 'the questionable metanarrative of scientific objectivity and still have plenty to say as situated speakers, subjectivities engaged in knowing/telling about the world as they perceive it' (2005:961; 2000: 928).

St Pierre (2002; 2005:967) brings the terms Nomadic inquiry and Nomadic writing into use in relation to writing as a method of inquiry. Through her focus on the process of writing as discovery she began to 'deterritorialize spaces in which to travel in the thinking that writing produces' (St.Pierre 2002:57). The idea of writing being like a Nomadic wandering of discovery, in which 'the author and the text write each other' (St. Pierre 2002:65), brings a focus to the inquiry that is not bound in the logical application of thought, but allows a thinking process to occur that is creative and fluid, and draws on unseen, creative ways of knowing.

She notes that, for her, 'writing *is* thinking, writing *is* analysis, writing *is* indeed a seductive and tangled *method* of discovery' (St Pierre 2005:967). This notion of writing as discovery, as thinking and as a method, resonated with me. It seemed to form some kind of natural bond with the creative process. Nomadic inquiry and writing as a method of inquiry open up the 'possibility for producing different knowledge and producing knowledge differently (St Pierre 1997:175, quoted in St Pierre 2005:969).

St Pierre (2005:970) suggests the use of writing as data collection and as a method of analysis. She describes some of her methods of data collection within the writing as 'dream data, sensual data, emotional data, response data and memory data' (St Pierre 1997; 1995, quoted in St Pierre 2005: 970). I have utilised similar sorts of data collection throughout the thesis, explored in the writing, and discovered through the imagining, through body memory and sensations, through musical expression, and through dreams. St Pierre points out that these data may have escaped her entirely had she not written throughout the process of the research, as she notes that they were 'collected only *in the writing*' (St Pierre 2005:970).

Data is collected in the writing as the researcher also thinks and writes about things that are seemingly unrelated to the research but are 'unleashed within it' (St Pierre 2005:970), producing

'strange and wonderful transitions from word to word, sentence to sentence, thought to unthought' (St Pierre 2005:970-971). It is suggested (St Pierre 2005:971) that data collection and analysis are not separate when writing is used as a method of inquiry. I found that data collection and writing worked cyclically, sometimes the data coming through the writing process itself, and sometimes the reflections on those processes leading to more writing.

As St Pierre (2005:970), I 'wrote my way into particular spaces I could not have occupied by sorting data with a computer program... and made fortuitous connections I could not foresee or control' (St Pierre 2005:970). The thinking is in the writing (2005:970). This notion is illustrated further by St Pierre (2005:970) with her statement that 'Sometimes I wrote something so marvellous it startled me. I doubt I could have thought such a thought by thinking alone' (2005:970). At times the writing process did indeed surprise me, as the fluidity of the writing took on a direction entirely of its own making. Through the writing, unseen thoughts merge with the page and lead to a new way of seeing, being and knowing through a perspective of creative thought. This method seems to also draw on creative-expressive aspects of inquiry and research.

Addressing the concept of triangulation, with its concerns of reliability, validity and generalisability, Richardson (2005:963) suggests the potential of crystallisation rather than triangulation. She argues that in using CAP in ethnography, 'researchers draw from literary, artistic and scientific genres, often breaking the boundaries of those genres as well' (Richardson 2005:963), and so demonstrating that there are more than three sides by which we approach the world. She suggests that 'we do not triangulate; we crystallize' (2005:963). She presents the imagery of the crystal as an object which 'combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach' (2005:963). She describes the idea of crystallisation with such imagery that suggests it as a process of organic change and including a variety of perspectives and subjectivity.

Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, and arrays casting off in different directions. What we see depends on our angle of repose – not triangulation but rather crystallization. In CAP texts we have moved from plane geometry to light theory, where light can be both waves and particles.

Richardson 2005:963.

This notion of crystallisation creates a wider, and deeper, perspective for considering the validity of texts. Richardson brings to our attention that there is 'no single truth' (Richardson 2005:963), and that we can see 'how texts validate themselves' (2005:963).

In relation to this concept of crystallisation, Richardson (2005:964) suggests some criteria that may be useful in evaluating CAP ethnographies. Her criteria mostly focus on a sociology perspective of research but may be relevant to arts-based research and autoethnography in their varying forms. Briefly summarised, these criteria include:

- 1) *Substantive contribution*. Does the piece contribute to our understanding of social life? ...
Does this piece seem 'true' – a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of 'real'?
- 2) *Aesthetic Merit*. ... Does this piece succeed aesthetically... Does the use of creative analytic practices open up the text and invite interpretive responses? Is the text artistically shaped, satisfying, complex, and not boring?
- 3) *Reflexivity*. Has the author's subjectivity been both a producer and a product of this text?
- 4) *Impact*. Does this piece affect me emotionally or intellectually? Does it generate new questions or move me to action?

adapted from Richardson 2005:964.

As with Ellis and Flaherty's (1992:1) suggestions for evaluating autoethnographic texts, Richardson's (2005:964) criteria make use of a multi-layered approach to reading and evaluating blurred research genres which bring a creative and subjective focus to the work.

Bochner (2002:259) also highlights that there is no single paradigm for evaluating what comprises 'valid, useful and significant knowledge' (Bochner 2002:259). He states that 'the phenomena we study are messy, complicated, uncertain, and soft. Somewhere along the way we became convinced that these qualities were signs of inferiority, which we should not expose' (2002:259). He suggests that perhaps in becoming 'preoccupied with rigor' (2002:259), we have become 'neglectful of imagination' (2002:259). To evaluate the validity of an imaginative, subjective or creative piece of work perhaps requires a different evaluative approach, one which uses a broader lens to focus on the creative, imaginative and subjective methods through which the research has been conducted. I suggest that such unfolding approaches for assessing creative and autoethnographic research texts address an important consideration, and may help to bring the creative element within some blurred genres into some perspective.

Bochner (2002:259) relates that he sometimes feels that 'criteria are the very means we ourselves created to contain our desire for freedom and experience, a way of limiting our own possibilities and stifling our creative energy' (Bochner 2002:259). I argue that established criteria may still be valid tools in regard to evaluating some aspects of research, especially such as quantitative methods, whilst progressive methods for evaluating qualitative research may need to include a multidimensionality of perspective, especially when those kinds of research are based in creative and non-linear ways of knowing and thinking.

ARTS-BASED RESEARCH METHODS

Arts Based Research methods (McNiff 1998; Barone & Eisner 1997; 2006) are utilised through music, writing and poetry throughout the thesis. Music, being my strongest artistic tool, forms the core of my subjective, creative exploration. However, poetry and writing are also components through which I have worked to explore various themes surrounding chronic illness experience, the body, place and creativity. Poetry especially is present within the body and place chapters, whereas within the creativity chapter, music is portrayed as the dominant tool of expression.

It is interesting to note that within different themes of the thesis, different creative modalities appear to form their own, unique pathways of subjective expression and learning. For example, within the exploratory writing on 'Movement, place and being still', poetry naturally forms into lines of creative expression, whereas music does not appear to become a focus clearly within this chapter theme. Although I have included a music piece ('A Soft Flight') that is connected to

place, it was the poem ('Somewhere Over Broken Hill') that was the original connection to the theme, and the music piece became retrospectively connected. Perhaps this was a connection that was simply not consciously made until after the physical, visual connection was made in flight over the land (see chapter on 'Movement, Place and Being Still').

Arts-based educational research (ABER) recognises a genre that comprises various approaches (Barone & Eisner 2006:98). Narrative and storytelling are included within these approaches and may utilise poetry, the novel, short stories, autobiography, ethnodrama and readers theatre (Barone & Eisner 2006:99), among others. Non-linguistic forms of arts-based educational research include music, painting, photography, film, sculpture, dance and collage, among others (Barone & Eisner 2006:101). This thesis makes use of the narrative, poetic and non-linguistic approaches. The non-linguistic approach of music is also reflected within some of the narrative approach, through reflections on musical processes.

Barone and Eisner (2006:97) suggest that arts-based texts tend toward designs that are literary or semi-literary, often linking with poetry, plays, biographies, autobiographies, critical essays or novels (Barone & Eisner 2006:97). Often, stories about the research process, or descriptions of that process, accompany the literary text (Barone & Eisner 2006:97). This is similar to Richardson's 'writing stories' (2005: 965). The use of expressive language and metaphor are mirrored in Richardson (2000; 2005), St Pierre (2002; 2005), Barone and Eisner (1997; 2006:97), and McNiff's (1998; 2006) approaches to methodology and writing within research.

Barone and Eisner suggest seven features of arts-based educational research. The first is the creation of a virtual reality within the arts piece. This is illustrated through an example of the medium of dance (Langer 1957, quoted in Barone & Eisner 1997:73), where the dancer creates dynamic images and the viewer is drawn into the changing movement of the image. Texts of ABER present an 'ambiguous quality' (Barone & Eisner 1997:74). The gaps in the text that must be filled in by the reader constitute some of this ambiguity, according to Barone and Eisner (1997:74). The gaps in the text, the unwritten spaces in between, need to be filled in by the reader with 'personal meaning from their own experiences outside the text' (Barone & Eisner 1997:75). Arts-based texts include the use of expressive language that is metaphorical and evocative (Barone & Eisner 1997:75). Again, this invites the reader to fill in the gaps with personal meaning as well as calling on imaginative qualities (Barone & Eisner 1997:75) of the work, and inviting the reader to interact imaginatively. Use of vernacular language and contextualised language are

apparent in ABER, where readers are able to 'participate in making meaning from the text' (Barone & Eisner 1997:77). Barone and Eisner also suggest that the use of contextualised, expressive or vernacular language encourages empathy. 'The inquirer's use of contextualised, expressive and vernacular language motivates the reader to reconstruct the subject's perspective within themselves' (Barone and Eisner 1997:77). Each piece of ABER expresses the author's personal style (Barone & Eisner 1997:77), and lastly, the piece of ABER must have aesthetic form (Barone & Eisner 1997:78).

Barone and Eisner (1997:85-86; 2006:101-102) also address issues of validity, reliability and generalisability regarding ABER. As Ellis and Flaherty (1992), Bochner (2002), and Richardson (2000; 2005), Barone and Eisner also recognise non-conventional aspects of research as needing non-conventional methods for evaluation (1997:85- 86; 2006:101-102). The concepts of validity, reliability and generalisability are addressed through notions that are more related to artistic and aesthetic value and the meaning-making inherent and available to the reader within the work (Barone & Eisner 1997:85-86; 2006:101-102). The ability of the work to generate new meaning to promote empathy, and to raise new questions (Barone & Eisner 1997:77, 85; 2006:102), may contribute to the evaluative reflection. It is noted that educative research 'serves its most important function when it enhances people's lives' (Barone & Eisner 1997: 85) and that arts-based educational research has a role for helping us to 'notice, understand and appraise' (Barone & Eisner 1997:85).

Artistically grounded research that furthers understanding and that enables a reader to notice what had not been seen before, to understand what had not been understood, to secure a firmer grasp and appreciation of complex situations contributes to the end to which educational research is committed. Our conception of validity is rooted in the ways arts-based research helps us notice, understand and appraise.

Barone and Eisner 1997:85.

McNiff (1998) provides a perspective of arts-based research in a different light to Barone and Eisner, in that he focuses on the therapeutic aspects of art and arts research. Although not an educational researcher, his perspective of arts-based research highlights issues of the blurred genre (1998) specifically relevant to this thesis. The focus on arts research within a therapeutic

context is valuable in relation to the work I pursued musically, especially in regard to transformative learning. Although Barone and Eisner work within an educational perspective of arts-based research, it appears that McNiff's (1998) ideas may also hold strong relevance to the study of the arts as transformative learning tools.

McNiff (1998:151) suggests that creative expression is an effective tool for discovery to utilise during the phase of research when a method is being chosen. He encourages students to 'paint spontaneously, write randomly, move freely, improvise, and perform', and suggests that 'ideas and methods emerge through the process of artistic expression' (McNiff 1998:151). I agree with this notion of creative expression as a tool for discovery, through a variety of contexts, whether during the initial stages of formulating a research idea, or during the deeper exploration and research phases.

He also notes that the introspective nature of arts based research 'increases the problem of self-absorption' (McNiff 1998:151). This was an area I specifically wanted to avoid. The desire to share the story and to present it within an artistic, expressive context was the mainstay of the work. I tried to be mindful to keep returning to the point of inquiry and not to get carried away with the story, which could, at times, potentially become convoluted and scattered.

Unlike deductive methods of research, creative inquiry discourages the researcher from 'being at the end when they are at the beginning' (McNiff 1998:145), dissuading us from being too bound up in a research plan, so that ideas may emerge through some freedom of exploration. McNiff (1998:145) explains that a difficulty with using deductive methods within creative research is that creative process 'emerges in unexpected ways from the attention we give to the objects of inquiry' (1998:145). ABR is experimental and experiential in nature. Rather than each smallest detail being planned, ABR is a 'process oriented mode of discovery' (1998:145). My experience through my subjective research in an arts-based area is that ideas emerged from immersion within the creative experience, and from reflection on the processes involved within that experience.

McNiff's advice to 'discover the thesis you are living and cannot see' (1998:146) is a process that was seemingly spontaneously and gradually uncovered throughout my inquiry. Although I began with one option of research, my area of work changed from that option and developed along the way. As new creative ideas developed, I was able to integrate them into the thesis, working in ways which I had not anticipated in the beginning phase of the research outline. This process-

oriented inquiry forms a part of my personal process of inquiry as well as my academic process of inquiry. Much like a creative piece of work, such as a music piece, the thesis unfolded when I allowed it to be a creative process. Parallel themes and creative exploration emerged through this action of allowing it to unfold, in a patchwork of overlapping patterns in a visual context, or as a harmonising of sequences in an auditory musical sense.

However, sometimes, especially after times of heightened creative work, I found it was also necessary to give more specific structure to the thoughts, ideas and reflections. This appears to be an important element in my subjective, creative process for shaping and grounding the creative and the methodology into a whole piece. Integrating two realms – the creative, fluid, and dynamic changes of creative expression and some solid, structural foundations in a methodology – appears to be an important element in the way I work creatively.

For example, rather than a musical piece remaining fluid and changing all the time, there is a time when I record and edit the piece for a final time. I may play that same piece in live improvisation many times. Yet for a recording, it needs to be given a final interpretation, with structure, and some methodology of composition applied. I suggest that there is room for both the free flowing, creative-expressive element of research writing in ABR and a methodological practice which can give it foundation, even if that methodological structure sits within a blurred genre.

As a creative artist, it serves my subjective creativity well to have some structure and form, at times, with which to put that creativity into shape and action, and to provide it with structural stability. Supporting this, McNiff (1998:147) states that within arts-based research, 'ideas emerge from the method which is the experimental bedrock of inquiry' (1998:147). A clear, simple method may 'give the creative process the opportunity to move freely and imaginatively' (1998:147) and a structure 'gives the artist-researcher a sense of security and constancy which tempers the inevitable precariousness of the creative process' (1998:147).

McNiff (1998:153) encourages the use of spontaneous writing for exploration, suggests writing in vernacular language, to refrain from using jargon, and to find the 'authentic voice' (McNiff 1998: 153). The suggestion of writing in the vernacular within arts-based research (McNiff 1998:153) links with Barone and Eisner's (1997:76-77; 2006:97) suggestions of using the vernacular language when working within the arts based research context. This helps to potentially reach a wider

readership, rather than limiting the work to a traditionally academic audience (Eisner & Barone 1997:76; 2006:97; McNiff 1998).

Richardson (2000; 2005), Cameron(1992) St Pierre (2002; 2005) and McNiff (1998) each utilise spontaneous and free-flowing writing as a tool to access creativity and expression. McNiff (1998) and Richardson (2000; 2005) specifically note the value of writing with an expressive quality in a thesis, leaning away from more traditional, standard, and perhaps dry styles of stricter, academic writing. They reflect and emphasise the creative component of thesis work in the writing of it, as an expression of the writer/researcher.

In using the terminology arts-based research (ABR) or arts-based educational research (ABER), I continued to feel that this did not always exactly portray the kind of research I am exploring, although I do have artistic training in music and drama. At times I preferred to use the term *creative-expressive* regarding some aspects of the research. I employ the use of this terminology myself, even though it may essentially have the same meaning as *arts-based research*. I suggest that sometimes the use of the word *art* may promote an alienation of the expressive quality of our ordinariness, and may give the impression that expression has to be extraordinary, or that creative expression cannot be art. This might have an effect sometimes of generating the expectation of great art, rather than creative expression. Using the term *creative-expressive* suggests, to me, a wider availability of creativity and expression, not one restricted to those with arts training and experience but one available for everybody to explore.

In some ways, the term *creative-expressive* seems to be, perhaps, more representative of a general, expressive experience, whereas the term *arts-based* may at times sound a little more exclusive, perhaps requiring an arts training background. I make use of the terms *arts-based research* as well as *creative-expressive approaches*, in a blurred definition, in order to make it apparent that creativity is potentially available for everyone, not just a few. Importantly, it is also to state that creative expression is not always about producing a brilliant masterpiece of work in art or music, for example, but is more clearly concerned with the process and the journey of discovery within that expression which may lead, or has led, to a transformative experience of learning.

Regarding the possibility that some people may consider themselves as not being creative at all, use of the term *creative-expressive* may appear just as daunting as *arts-based*. However, the perspective of creative-expressive work lies in the consideration of creativity being something to

be nurtured, to be explored, and to be nourished through techniques that might lead to interesting personal discoveries, and which may uncover unknown aspects of our nature, or the intuitive aspects of creativity, making connections that may not have been otherwise formed. I address some techniques within the different chapter focuses for utilising in these ways.

CONCLUSION

I have incorporated three main methodologies within my research thesis. Creative-expressive/ arts based research, autoethnography, and writing as a method, have directly informed the research and writing. In this chapter, I have written of authors/researchers who have pioneered these methodologies as viable research genres, and from whom I have drawn extensively in my own research.

Such creative and subjective methods require a different lens for reading, viewing and evaluation than those genres based in quantitative research methods. They encourage a multilayered approach to research, writing, reading and evaluation. I have noted criteria and questions that may be valuable when reading and evaluating such texts, as suggested in the literature.

Combining these methods into a mixed genre methodology forms the foundation for this inquiry. I have attempted to bring to light some of the reasons for my choosing these particular methods, and why and how they have informed my research. Those reasons are essentially to do with the experiential, spontaneous and creative elements which these methods make available for exploration, and the support they provide to the telling of a subjective, lived experience in a creative way.

CHAPTER FIVE:

MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS/CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME (ME/CFS), ILLNESS AND LEARNING

'A starting point for empowerment is to validate the patients' self experience and knowledge, as that is an integral part of their healing process.'

Carruthers et al 2003: 37

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines some of the complexities surrounding Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS, CFS), in order to demonstrate that it is complex physiologically, medically and socially. I provide a brief outline of some of the focus of my own exploratory, technical learning about CFS (but by no means all), and present some basic history and background of my experience. Reference is given both to published medical resources and to anecdotal health resources, including some web based information sites, as these are important sources for disseminating information. My own reading of research and information, through varying sources, both popular and medical, was an integral part of learning towards recovery and management.

Throughout this chapter, and at various parts of the thesis, I interchangeably use the acronyms CFS, ME/CFS, CFS/ME and ME regarding the illness. These acronyms are each used in the literature and by various support groups in referring to the illness currently medically termed Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), largely because of ongoing contention regarding the name.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis or chapter to provide an in-depth analysis of CFS causes and research. As a multi-factorial and multi-causal condition (Carruthers et al 2003:8), it remains complex, not easily defined nor completely understood. There are, nevertheless, areas of research regarding some physiological factors behind CFS that have been relevant to my own case and I outline some of these very briefly.

This chapter also makes note of the relationship of chronic illness as a catalyst for transformative learning, and expands on some of the ways through which chronic illness is associated with learning and transformative experience.

BACKGROUND

I was diagnosed in 1999 with both Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) and Hashimoto's Autoimmune Thyroiditis (HAIT/HT/Hashimoto's). After some orthodox medical treatment of the thyroid was initiated, CFS was considered the primary diagnosis at the time, in regard to the debilitating, extreme fatigue and many other symptoms. Hashimoto's was considered to be managed medically with treatment. However, Hashimoto's may impact quality of life (Ott et al 2011; Shomon & Yeaw 2003). If undertreated it may cause significant impact on some patients' ability to function (Shomon & Yeaw 2003; Ott et al 2011:166) and there are some holistic approaches that consider many different facets of treatment and management rather than relying on one medication only (Ott et al 2011:166). I initially consulted a naturopath and an acupuncturist for the CFS symptoms prior to orthodox medical treatment and then pursued integrative care.

After much reading and learning about the two illnesses (knowing little about the thyroid beforehand), I found that there are overlaps between the symptoms of each (including fatigue) and it was therefore very difficult to delineate which illness was at the root of the overall condition. I accepted that I had two concurrent illnesses, but it appeared that this also complicated the situation of having CFS. At times I did not accept this, and sought more definitive answers to specifically pinpoint one, underlying condition. However, this only served to complicate things even more and I had to learn to address both as individual and coinciding conditions. Much later clinical evaluation has led to the suggestion of other autoimmune illness also being a factor, in later years. At the time of writing, evaluation has not been completed thoroughly, but alludes to the possibility of underlying autoimmunity.

In the first two to three years I made marginal progress, and was disabled to an extent through the illness for some time (although not obvious visibly apart from weight loss). During this time I read and searched for much information about both conditions, about how to manage and treat them with natural treatments and about research of them from an orthodox medical perspective as well.

I began to focus on the illness experience as a learning experience, and over the time became committed to this perspective of using illness as a way of learning. This was not only in so far as learning about treatment and possible causes, but also as a way of learning through my lived experience. I also, necessarily, reflected upon how I may need to adjust my expectations of my life goals in order to manage health and to still achieve life satisfaction, and I attempted to put plans into action based on my health capacity and my hoped-for-improvement over time.

I learned about how many other people are affected by CFS and by thyroid disease, and that there is a level of social disbelief about certain illnesses (often environmental or autoimmune illnesses) that are very real for those who experience them. I read others' stories and later, in this thesis, began to write about my own. It seemed to me that there was something in this sharing of experience through our stories that could help others, as it had helped me. There are many accounts of stories of survival, recovery and hope.

I used creativity as an anchor through the time of illness. As a musician and creative artist, I used the time to foster creativity and tried to nurture my musical expression. I later worked this into my thesis work, with creativity and learning becoming a strong element of my academic focus. I used the time of illness as a transformational journey, a process of transformational learning. This was very important to me. However, even though I tried to maintain an optimistic attitude, this was not without difficulty and challenge.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING AND CHRONIC ILLNESS

Throughout this dissertation, I have explored the impact of chronic illness on meaning-making through various, subjective ways of living and learning. Exploration of the challenges and experience of CFS, through engaging in creative expression, writing, learning the body and exploring a relationship to place, has been pivotal to the ways I have learned through chronic illness over a period of several years. From the time of onset of CFS, I gravitated toward reflection on transformative processes of learning. This became a way of coping and working my way through the disorienting experience of illness, utilising various ways of engaging with learning and discovery as a result of illness.

A transformative learning experience begins with the experience of a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow 1991:168; 2000:22) or disorienting experience. Perspective transformation (Mezirow 1991: 145-195) has also been 'explained as being triggered by a significant personal event' (Taylor 2000:298). The impact of an illness such as CFS, which may be disabling to a level not recognised through a wider socio-cultural understanding, may bring a person with CFS to a sudden and prolonged disorientation on several levels.

Over months of time, a person with CFS may have visited several doctors, sought second opinions, been referred to specialists in varying medical fields, and begin to feel a sense of despair at the lack of answers about the apparently un-diagnosable condition which is presenting. Many are met with disbelief by their general practitioners, as the knowledge of some GPs falls short of a serious, in-depth assessment of the condition. Other GPs may have more understanding, yet may consider it a precaution to wait to see if symptoms resolve, as conditions such as post viral syndrome may resolve over several months. Some practitioners who are more aware and understanding of the condition may begin work immediately to examine the possible cause and to recommend nutritional support and/or natural therapies.

It may be a year or more before some with CFS are given a diagnosis. During this long process, however, many may be left with little support or serious understanding of their illness. Some will embark on a search to find answers, to fit the missing pieces of the puzzle together. As the time progresses, some will learn to adapt to a timeframe perspective of taking a 'one day at a time' approach.

Through these situations, a person with CFS may undergo critical reflection of their position. Undergoing self-examination and critical assessment (Mezirow 1991:168; 2000:22) may come to be essential components in the recovery phases. Transformative learning is perhaps a vital part of recovery through CFS, although the meaning attributed to such transformative learning will vary subjectively.

I suggest that the experience of a chronic illness such as CFS may be a catalyst for transformative learning. As such, chronic illness is a potentially transformative learning experience, and we learn to negotiate the new terrain as we pass through it. This suggestion does not undermine the impact of chronic illness or CFS. Rather, it takes account of the processes of critical reflection, change and integration that may accompany it.

'Self-Directed learning is central to coping with a chronic illness' (Baumgartner 2011:8) and it is suggested that 'self-directed learning can lead to transformative learning or a change in world view (Cranton 2006, cited in Baumgartner 2011: 8). Learning about how to deal with an illness, how it may be treated, learning about new and alternative treatment and management systems and finding practitioners who may be knowledgeable in the field, are all areas that the self-directed learner with a chronic illness may begin to learn through the catalyst of illness. This learning is a process of discovery and requires self-direction. It may also lead to a process of transformative learning.

Some studies have explored the relationship of self-directed learning and chronic illness coping skills, linking the processes to transformative learning (Baumgartner 2011:8). Rager (2004, cited in Baumgartner 2011: 8) demonstrated that some patients who undertook self-directed learning experienced feeling more empowered, 'more connected to others' (Baumgartner 2011:8), and 'experienced a change in their world view' (Baumgartner 2011:8) as a result of their self-directed learning.

'Learning is integral to coping with chronic illness' (Baumgartner 2011:7). There are several ways of learning that have been discussed through studies in relation to chronic illness, such as informal, incidental and problem based learning (Baumgartner 2011:11). These ways of learning may present in individual ways, depending on the context, and also can overlap with, or include, self-directed and transformative learning. Many of the methods and perspectives of learning I discuss within the various chapters, hone in on self-directed skills, and include incidental learning, informal learning and bodily and creative ways of learning within an overall approach that centres within a transformative focus.

Some transformative learning processes related to chronic illness may not be as rationally reflective as those suggested by Mezirow (1991) in his original, transformative learning theory model. This model of transformative learning is based in a cognitive perspective, and relies on rational processes of critical reflection to understand the transformative phases (Mezirow 1991:168; 2000:22) as a somewhat linear or interrelated progression. Other perspectives of transformative learning, such as creative and spiritual perspectives, may also come to be a centrepiece for some patients, and some reflective processes may take a more cyclical or spiralling course, focusing on a complex process rather than manifesting as linear, critical reflection and

outcomes. These transformative learning processes are based in an extra-rational (Dirkx 2001:64; Cranton 2006:49-52) perspective. At times, there may be some interrelationship between the rational and extra-rational perspectives (Taylor 2000:303) as they each may be pertinent to the subjective illness experience in varying ways.

Transformative learning involves an enhanced level of awareness of the context of one's beliefs and feelings, a critique of their assumptions and particularly premises, an assessment of alternative perspectives, a decision to negate an old perspective in favor of a new one or to make a synthesis of old and new, an ability to take action based upon the new perspective, and a desire to fit the new perspective into the broader context of one's life. Perspective transformation involves a) an empowered sense of self, b) more critical understanding of how one's social relationships and culture have shaped one's beliefs and feelings, and c) more functional strategies and resources for taking action. Taking action is an integral dimension of transformative learning.

Mezirow, 1991:161.

Although it may not appear always as a clearly linear, stage by stage process, but more perhaps as a cyclical and spiralling experience of change, with constant review and reflection, all these actions stated by Mezirow (1991:161), above, may appear within the illness experience as one learns to navigate the experience as learning. Applying a rational-cognitive view of transformative learning, making the choice to seek further knowledge of the condition, of possible treatments, and of new research, educating oneself perhaps in some alternative health methods of support through reading, all contribute to a reflection on the learning process.

Although learning new information about health and wellbeing may initially consist of reading practical information about medical/scientific/therapeutic perspectives, reviewing the understanding that is gleaned from such information and applying it to one's own health scenario, to one's life perspective and to one's own, subjective meaning-making, contributes to a potential process of transformative learning. The patient, being formerly positioned in one perspective of knowledge and understanding may find that they are moving into different realms of understanding for new meaning-making and wellbeing.

Transformative learning experiences within the illness/wellness experience also appear to be shaped in ways that are not always 'epochal' (Mezirow 2000:21; Cranton 2006:71), but may be 'incremental' (Mezirow 2000: 21; Cranton 2006:71), and with a mix of both incremental and epochal transformative learning experiences (Cranton 2006:71-72). This may be similar to Dirkx's (2000) notion that transformative learning is not always an experience of 'the burning bush' (Dirkx 2000), but can appear in ways that are incremental and subtle, and through engaging with everyday experience.

Some have suggested that Mezirow's (1991) rational approach to transformative learning has neglected other dimensions of knowing (Cranton & Tisdell 2008: 40; Taylor 2000:303) such as those stemming from affective, emotional, creative, intuitive, spiritual, and somatic ways of knowing (Cranton & Tisdell 2008:40). Critical reflection may have been given too much weight (Taylor 2000:303). As transformative learning 'is more than rationally based; it relies on the affective dimension of knowing, such as developing an empathic viewing of other perspectives and trusting intuition' (Taylor 2000: 303). These other ways of knowing can connect to transformative learning. Drawing from transformative based approaches which connect to these ways of knowing may also influence how one may learn through illness/wellness experience.

Various methods for drawing upon these kinds of knowledge in relation to learning are discussed throughout this dissertation, and include the use of creative expression, learning the body and emotional/affective learning. The role of the emotions in learning through chronic illness provides a rich tapestry of experience from which the patient may draw in order to learn, and can be shared through autoethnography, artistic expression, storytelling and other subjectively meaningful modes of expression.

There is meaning in the challenges associated with the experience of having chronic illness (Swoboda 2006:235), and those with a contested illness, such as CFS, have an additional challenge imposed upon the illness experience; that of legitimising and explaining the authenticity of the illness (Swoboda 2006:235). Many are faced with invalidation, intolerance, scepticism, disbelief, and hostility (Swoboda 2006; Travers 2004; Thomas & Bosch 2005; Berne 2002; Chamaz 2002), as well as experiencing isolation (Berne 2002; Thomas & Bosch 2005:30).

Journal notes, Dec 2010.

One of the most difficult issues to grapple with for many with ME/CFS is that of not being believed. The experience of dealing with a disabling, debilitating, long term, chronic illness when one experiences others' attitudes of disbelief, is a disempowering experience. Having the stamina and endurance to come to grips with such attitudes is possibly dependent on the individual. My personal, subjective experience is that I have not had the confidence to speak about it to those who will not listen, to those who reject it, or to those who appear to act as though my situation is not very difficult and seem to believe that I am over-dramatising a bit of tiredness, flu, generally getting older, or that I am simply depressed.

Several studies support the notion of CFS being a catalyst for transformative learning experience (Swoboda 2006; Travers 2004; Thomas & Bosch 2005; Bulow 2004). Themes of identity, changed identity and renewed identity have been noted regarding CFS patients (Thomas & Bosch 2005:31; Travers 2004). These themes have related to transformative changes within the patient's experience of self, and 'restructuring of self identity' (Thomas & Bosch 2005:30), although challenging, has been perceived by some patients as ultimately positive. However, patients also may experience grief for lost identity and sense of self, as well as experiencing a negative view from others, experienced as invalidation and violation (Thomas & Bosch 2005; Travers 2004; Swoboda 2006:235). For some, such invalidation and violation, although highly challenging, has also been a catalyst for transformative change and renewal (Travers 2004; Thomas & Bosch 2005).

Many people with a contested chronic illness feel silenced (Chamaz 2002:305; Travers 2004). Some of those silences are imposed, while some of them may be chosen (Chamaz 2002:305). Sharing of stories is an important part of collaboratively learning through contested illness experience (Bulow 2004), for making meaning of experience, and for facilitating greater understanding socially regarding the illness. However, the silences within those stories may be equally important (Chamaz 2002:304).

Sharing stories (Bulow 2005) and acknowledging the silences (Chamaz 2002), whether imposed or chosen, may be important aspects of understanding how we learn through illness, and for legitimising the illness socially. In the sharing of stories there may also be silences that need to be addressed and better understood (Chamaz 2002:305). Better understanding the root causes of

those silences may help to learn about some of the social issues surrounding chronic illness. Importantly, sharing stories provides a potential catalyst and support for transformative learning through chronic illness. Transforming individual experience into collectivised, shared experience supports reflection on the experience not only individually, but also socially, through sharing experiences with others of similar experience (Bulow 2004:8), and may facilitate transformative learning and change at both a personal and social level.

Transformative learning for social change is also a part of learning associated with chronic illness and CFS. Political-medical issues, including the need for a more holistic based, integrative, medical model and the limitations of the current Western Orthodox Medicine (WOM) model, as well as social and cultural awareness of CFS issues and its lack of recognition socially as a legitimate illness, all contribute to a movement within the CFS community that drives an agenda for social change, and greater awareness of the disabling impact of the illness. The social and medical limitations with which CFS patients have to deal are, largely, not acknowledged as being significant issues within the wider social arena.

This aspect of striving for social transformation within learning, regarding illness/wellness issues, incorporates aspects of an emancipatory perspective of transformative learning (Cranton & Tisdell 2008:38). It fosters empowerment through transformative learning in the context of social awareness and change. Emancipatory transformative learning theories developed through Freire's (1972) philosophies of education, with the notions of conscientization and praxis (Freire 1972:81,40) being central to learning and transformative social change.

This takes into account social systems and power relations. Many CFS patients are oppressed within a medical system which sometimes shunts them around without a diagnosis and sometimes treats them with disbelief. Some experience financial hardship as a direct result of chronic illness and may experience a lack of social support and resulting social isolation. I have relayed some stories through parts of the dissertation which reflect such power relations, some social issues, and aspects of the medical/health system as experienced subjectively. These stories, told from the perspective of the patient, draw from experiential awareness of the body, the patient and the illness as being one intertwined story, but the representations of those stories of the body and patient also lie at the heart of a need for medical/social/cultural transformative change. These stories combine aspects of a socio-cultural, transformative learning focus and

perspective transformative learning (Mezirow 1991:145-195), alongside affective, somatic and creative aspects of transformative learning.

'Health Social Movements (HSMs) are an important political force concerning health access and quality of care, as well as for broader social change' (Brown & Zavestoski 2004: 679). HSMs may challenge medical policy, health politics, practice, research, and belief systems (Brown & Zavestoski 2004: 679). They include a variety of organisations, supporters, networks and media of both a formal and informal nature (Brown & Zavestoski 2004:679). HSMs 'address a) access to, or provision of, health-care services; b) disease, illness experience, disability and contested illness; and c) health inequity based on race, ethnicity, gender, class and/or sexuality' (Brown & Zavestoski 2004: 679).

Within a global and national community of CFS patients, thyroid patients, and advocates for patients, there is a health social movement which addresses aspects of social change through challenging assumptions of healthcare, research and belief systems, and which draws together people from the contested illness arena of CFS into a community, providing support for mobilisation and empowerment. Societies such as ME/CFS WA (2010) provide valuable support bases, both online and otherwise, for people with CFS and their loved ones, carers and healthcare practitioners to better educate themselves.

These organisations help to better promulgate information about the illness, new research, alternative treatments, and to create better media attention. They also help to create a wider understanding regarding the (widely held) misconceptions about the illness. These kinds of organisations are important channels for political and social change regarding healthcare and for personal empowerment. Some promote health activism, advocating for and supporting those with the illness, whilst some also challenge the very nature of Western Orthodox Medicine's political hold on the medical/healthcare model (ME/CFSWA 2010; Shomon 1997-2012; Shomon 2010a; 2010b; Shomon 2012a; Myhill 2010a; 2010b; One Click Group 2010).

... in our modern scientized world, science and medicine have become increasingly powerful sources of authority that play a central role in supporting dominant political and socioeconomic systems. Concepts such as 'medical social control' (Zola 1972) and the 'medicalization of society' (Conrad 1992) have demonstrated how health belief systems and

the practices of the health care system support and maintain existing class, race and gender inequalities.

Brown & Zavestoski 2004:682.

Some patient advocates and organisations (Shomon 1997-2012; 2010a; 2010b; 2012; 2012a; ME/CFSWA 2010; Myhill 2010a; 2010b; One Click Group 2010) have demonstrated a determined effort to facilitate patient empowerment, regarding both ME/CFS and thyroid disease education, management, treatment, diagnosis and understanding. Some organisations and patient advocates (Shomon 1997-2012; 2010a; 2010b; 2012; 2012a; ME/CFSWA 2010; Myhill 2010a; 2010b; One Click Group 2010) are very vocal and visible regarding changes that need to occur in healthcare, and publicly dispute some orthodox methods. These individuals and organisations represent both perspective transformative learning (Mezirow 1991:145-195; Cranton 2006:20) and social transformation at the core of their activity.

I discovered very quickly, that the politics of thyroid treatment, management and even diagnosis is a minefield of contention. I was lucky, in one sense, to have had a clear, medical diagnosis of Hashimoto's. Nevertheless, I struggled with aspects of thyroid treatment and management. Some patients are not so clearly diagnosed, even though they may struggle with thyroid related symptoms. I found one particular thyroid patient advocate to be extremely helpful (Shomon 1997-2012) and used her website and books as particularly useful guides for management. Shomon (1997-2012; 2004), an outspoken patient advocate, has long been up against the conservative, orthodox medical brigade (Shomon 2012a; 2013), some of whom have publicly discounted her as 'crazy' (Shomon 2013).

It was through such patient advocate resources that I eventually found a particular thyroid doctor in Sydney, who did not believe that orthodox medicine had all the answers. She had Hashimoto's herself, and did not take lightly the orthodox medical assumptions that it is easily fixed by just one little pill (Shomon 2012; 2012a; 2013). She told me that she had such difficulty in getting a specialist to treat her illness well, and to take her continued symptoms seriously, that she began to make it her own specialty (as a practising GP).

Sarah Myhill (2010a; 2010b; One Click Group 2010), a GP in the UK, has also been a vocal advocate and healthcare practitioner, specifically for ME/CFS patients, using integrative and

natural medicine, but is considered a maverick by some in the orthodox medical profession. She has been the victim of a well publicised 'witch hunt' (Shomon 2010a; 2010b) having undergone mistreatment by the orthodox British General Medical Council (GMC) (Shomon 2010a; 2010b; One Click Group 2010; Myhill 2010a; 2010b; BBC News 2010). This well publicised trial has several YouTube (One Click Group 2010) accounts of the proceedings and developments. Her treatment of ME/CFS patients worked through an integrative medicine approach, but it was pinpointed by some in the orthodox profession, who had an axe to grind, as being unorthodox (Shomon 2010a; 2010b).

During the years of having ME/CFS, I focused consciously and purposely on the transformative process of the illness experience; physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Aspects of learning through the years of ME/CFS, including the earliest times, tended to focus on three main areas:

- That of the transformative quality of the process.
- The focus on the body (through body awareness techniques/meditative inquiry, utilising natural health consultation and treatments, participating in health oriented reading and informal research, and consulting both orthodox and integrative medical practitioners) and
- The focus on creative expression (largely through music and writing).

I have also delved into the impact of social transformative learning within the ME/CFS and thyroid global and national communities, and found that there is a community driven, health social movement aligned to these chronic illnesses.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is not something one has whilst getting on and living a normal, active, busy or hectic life. It is not something that one puts to the side when one has too much to do. It is not something one can postpone to the weekend, or push through regardless. CFS, in its unpredictability, in its inconvenience, in its need for management and in its changes over time, is there through day, night, week, year, and on. Social inferences that those with CFS are just lazy or depressed are incorrect assumptions, yet are unfortunately, misleadingly common.

ME/CFS is *not* synonymous with depression or other psychiatric

illnesses. The belief by some that they are the same has caused much confusion in the past, and inappropriate treatment.

Curruthers et al 2003:27.

The currently accepted name of the syndrome possibly has had some influence on the proliferation of such misunderstandings, allowing room for preconceived ideas that its symptoms merely involve a general tiredness. On the contrary, CFS is a debilitating and disabling illness that can last for many years. In some cases it may last for a shorter duration of six to twelve months, and some people spontaneously recover after a couple of years. Others may have lingering symptoms for years, with some level of recovery maintained over time, and with intermittent relapses and plateaus, while still others may have an ongoing, severely disabling presentation and range of symptoms, with little respite. Thus, there are varying degrees of the illness and there are varying rates of recovery, remission and relapse (Berne 2002: 8-9, 16; ME/CFS Australia 2010; ME/CFS WA 2010a; Environmental Illness Resource 2010a).

A distinction must also be made between chronic fatigue, which is a symptom experienced through various illnesses, but is not an illness itself, and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, which is an illness that has a cluster of many symptoms, with intense, debilitating, chronic fatigue being one of those symptoms. There is also a difference in the kind of fatigue experienced in CFS, as reported by people with the condition. The fatigue of CFS involves a whole body fatigue and weakness.

The name Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is relatively new, and came into use during the late twentieth century. The illness, however, is not new. It has been known medically for decades. In the nineteenth century, a CFS-like illness was referred to as Neurasthenia by Dr. George Beard (Shomon 2004:18). There are also references to outbreaks of CFS-like illnesses dating back to the eighteenth century, and some descriptions may date as far back as the fifteenth century (Berne 2002: 9). In the mid twentieth century a series of outbreaks in various locations throughout the world drew attention to the illness later to become known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFSWA 2010a).

One such cluster outbreak occurred at the Royal Free Hospital in London during the 1950s. Early descriptions of the illness, firstly by Wallis and then by Acheson (cited in ME/CFS WA

2010a), focused on 'hallmark muscular and neurological symptoms, including ease of fatigability and potentially relapsing and remitting course' (ME/CFSWA 2010a). Acheson began use of the term Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) in 1956, reflecting the neurological, muscular and brain symptoms apparently involved in the condition and in 1986 Ramsay added to the descriptions based on his first-hand experience of the Royal Free outbreak (ME/CFS WA 2010a).

Social issues associated with CFS may have become more pronounced during the 1980s, when the notoriously offensive name Yuppie Flu hit the circuits, as affluent professionals acquired the syndrome thought to be a condition associated with burnout (Shomon 2004:18). Unfortunately the nickname stuck, and even in more recent years I have heard it referred to through derogatory and misleading interpretations. A nickname such as this can do a lot of damage. It takes time and education for the surrounding social assumptions to be unlearned and a different context of association learned.

The name Chronic Fatigue Syndrome was adopted by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the U.S., as a working title for research, and subsequently became the most used universal title. In Australia and the U.K. the name Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) was used more commonly until the mid to late 1990s. However, in keeping with the CDC's criteria for diagnosis, Australian medical professionals began to use the name Chronic Fatigue Syndrome as the standard name of reference for the illness (Loblay & Stewart 2002:s27). In 2002, a working group for the Royal College of Physicians developed guidelines for clinical practice, suggesting that ME was no longer a relevant name to use.

In the United Kingdom the earlier term “myalgic encephalomyelitis” (“ME”) is still in use, and in the United States the term “chronic fatigue and immune dysfunction syndrome” (CFIDS) is in widespread popular use. Both names inappropriately suggest that the cause or mechanism of illness is understood (inflammation of the brain, spinal cord and muscles; or immune deficiency). Most research groups prefer the term “CFS”, as it leaves open the question of aetiology and pathogenesis.

Loblay and Stewart 2002:s27.

The ME/CFS society of W.A. lists this report in its 'Unhelpful guidelines' (ME/CFSWA 2010c) selection, stating that it, and the other reports listed, received 'widespread criticism upon publication by those affected by the illness as well as a significant number of health professionals' (ME/CFSWA 2010c), and outlining that the most significant weaknesses of these reports are:

- Use of vague and inaccurate descriptions of the disease (case definitions).
- Use of inappropriate and potentially harmful treatment recommendations.
- A failure to clearly differentiate the difference between ME/CFS and the ubiquitous symptom of 'chronic fatigue.'
- Poor understanding of the crucial issue of 'severity' and the potential for ME/CFS to devastate the lives of those it affects.

ME/CFS WA 2010c.

Berne (2002:12) also criticises another report as 'a giant step backwards' (Berne 2002:12). The 1996 position statement issued by the Joint Working Group of the Royal College of Physicians, Psychiatrists and General Practitioners in the UK recommended replacing the name ME with the name Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, even though issues surrounding the latter had been present for several years.

Included in ME/CFS WA's list of 'unhelpful reports' (ME/CFSWA 2010a) is also the UK's National Institute for Clinical Excellence clinical guidelines of 2007. ME/CFS WA describes this report as another 'backwards step', which has 'reverted to the trend of using vague, fatigue-centric descriptions of CFS' (ME/CFS WA 2010a). They specify that this 'trend persists within medical circles in the US and Australia today and is a major hindrance to better understanding of the disease and the introduction of improved treatments and care for those affected' (ME/CFS WA 2010a).

I do not view the guidelines of Loblay and Stewart (2002) as entirely unhelpful, as they do outline some general information on CFS for general practitioners of Western Orthodox Medicine. Importantly, they acknowledge the physiological reality of the illness and mention that psychological assumptions of its basis are unfounded. However, I argue that a weakness of the

guidelines is in not acknowledging natural and complementary healthcare as being able to provide viable treatment and support. The value of general practitioners and specialists working alongside a team of complementary healthcare practitioners is completely omitted and many of the in-depth tests available for potential underlying causes are not even mentioned. The naming of the illness, in these guidelines, as CFS rather than ME/CFS, is part of ME/CFS WA's criticism, as it reinforces vague, fatigue associations and so may proliferate misunderstanding in the wider community. Nevertheless, there are some important issues that are overviewed, and I have referred to the guidelines in some areas of this chapter because of this.

Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction Syndrome (CFIDS) is a term also used (Shomon 2004:18) to refer to the illness. Although less commonly known than the name CFS, CFIDS does address that there are more than general tiredness issues associated with the syndrome, one of which is an immune dysfunction component. This is an important acknowledgement, and it could potentially help the general public to understand, through the naming of it, that there is more to CFS/CFIDS than a simple tiredness. Although this name receives some criticism from Loblay and Stewart (2002:s27), at least it does not infer such vague and unreliable positioning of the condition as does the name Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. The intensity of fatigue experienced in CFS is a debilitating symptom. However, this word is often misunderstood as representing just general tiredness, which it is not.

CFS appears to be a neurological, endocrine, and immune dysfunction syndrome (Carruthers et al 2003:8). It involves multiple body systems and has a range of presenting symptoms (Berne 2002: 16-17, and 64-80; ME/CFS Australia 2010:online; Environmental Illness Resource 2010:online; ME/CFS WA 2010:online). It is considered to be multi-factorial and multi-causal (Carruthers 2003:8).

Advocates for a name change of the syndrome (Shomon 2004:20) argue that the current name, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, does not present an accurate depiction of the illness, is misleading and is potentially socially damaging to those who have the illness. I also argue that the current name is inappropriate and misrepresents the illness as a trivial condition rather than the disability it can be.

Berne (2002:12) writes on the unsuitability of the name Chronic Fatigue Syndrome:

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) is a silly name for a serious illness, clearly inappropriate since fatigue is associated with many chronic disorders and is common in the healthy population. The name, insulting to patients and to physicians and researchers involved in the study and treatment of CFS, does not reflect the severity or associated abnormalities of the syndrome, making patients easy candidates for dismissal by the medical profession, media and the uninformed. Resulting misconceptions leave family members baffled and make sufferers the brunt of jokes or snide remarks.

Berne 2002:12.

On many occasions I have chosen not to disclose that I have, or have been recovering from, the condition. This is because there has been a strong element of social misrepresentation about it, and it has a name that seems to reinforce misunderstandings of its origin and presentation.

I have long considered that the name NEIDS, an acronym of Neuro-Endo-Immune-Dysfunction Syndrome, is a far better term for the condition. A name change that includes some reference to the spectrum of body systems that are involved, or affected, may be helpful to the social understanding of NEIDS/ CFS as a real illness, rather than it being perceived as just tiredness and not as a real illness or disability. Alternatively, a name based on some of the pioneering work by early, significant researchers or doctors, such as Ramsay or Acheson, may also be suitable. Neuroendocrineimmune Dysfunction Syndrome, or NDS, is a name change that has been lobbied by the Name Change Work Group (NCW) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services CFS Coordinating Committee (Shomon 2004:20). Similarly, Neuroendocrine Immune Disorder (NEID) has also been suggested as an alternative name (Berne 2002:13).

Changing the name of the illness may have a far reaching effect socially, helping to improve the way in which the illness is perceived by people who have little knowledge of its impact. Although Loblay and Stewart (2002:s27) may criticise a new name change based on the reason that an exact cause is not yet known, continued use of a name which trivialises an illness can do more harm than good and does not contribute positively to deepening a social awareness and understanding of a truly disabling condition.

SOME OF MY STORY

I was a generally healthy, active and athletic child. Our mother usually treated my three siblings' and my colds etc with simple, practical and traditional remedies, including sunshine and rest. Sprained ankles and the like rarely required a doctor, as my mother (a senior nurse and midwife) worked on these things with her practical skills of first aid, applying ice, liniment, massaging the site gently, and bandaging with added layers of cotton wool padding for support. I remember watching as she did this, and learning, through her example, how it was done. I had managed to sprain ankles or wrists on several occasions during a period from around 9-12 years old, so I got to view the procedure a number of times. As a child, I had aspirations of becoming a nurse, inspired by my mother. We rarely needed to see doctors and I realised, in later years, that she had employed many traditional and natural remedies that had been passed down through the decades, and that through her experience of professional and practical knowledge, I had also learned.

Contracting Glandular Fever at age eighteen was a probable factor, in my case, in the development of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome in later years (Loblay & Stewart 2002:s30). The initial Glandular Fever was not diagnosed until after several visits to the university doctor at the time, who had suggested that I was simply partying too hard and should get some sleep. I was not partying at all. I was sleeping for longer than an eighteen year old should need, struggling through the day, and studying through my first year of undergraduate drama and music. I felt somewhat insulted by his presumption that an eighteen year old must be simply partying too hard in their first year away from home. It seemed insensitive and as though he did not take me seriously. Glandular Fever is one illness that should have been immediately suspected in a young adult/teenager presenting with the symptoms I had.

In retrospect, it appears that a chronic, post viral condition, or chronic Epstein Barr Virus (EBV, which causes Glandular Fever) may have followed the acute episode of Glandular Fever. This condition continued (to a lesser degree and with intermittent exacerbations) for approximately eighteen months and then appeared to resolve. Two years later, after a bout of flu, I again experienced what may have been a post viral condition with debilitating fatigue, improving over several months, and completely recovering over a few years. Glandular Fever is notorious for debilitating the system in some people, and can have an impact on some long after the acute illness has passed. A possible disruptive impact on the endocrine system is something which has been noted through some natural healthcare areas.

During the post-viral like illness recurrence, at age twenty-one, I consulted various Western Orthodox Medical doctors. None suggested the possibility, nor acknowledged the existence, of such an illness as ME or post-viral syndrome, and at the time I did not know to ask. It was only after I began, through my own self-directed learning, to read about such complications of Glandular Fever, its viral cause Epstein Barr Virus (EBV), and information on ME, post-viral syndrome and natural therapies, that I realised the extent of the lack of care I had received at the young age of eighteen. By this time, I felt that I had been dismissed and silenced by too many Western Orthodox Medical practitioners. This created a strong impression for me, at the age of twenty-one, about the lack of support that the orthodox medical model was able, or at times willing, to give to patients. There seemed to have been the presumption that because I was young, there was nothing wrong with me or that I would just get better. Had that first university doctor taken my initial symptoms more seriously, perhaps I may have averted some of the health issues which instead became chronic.

At age twenty-one, the various doctors I consulted looked at some symptoms more seriously but frowned upon the relevance of others of more vague presentation. My concern about my need for much sleep (although I was young) was met with various responses. One of these responses came when I said to the doctor, 'I am in bed at 8.30 pm.' Her dry response was simply, 'Half your luck'.

Silenced.

I had consulted this doctor a few times, looking for answers to my health concerns, and there were, at times, intimations by her of hypochondriac tendencies. Eventually I decided to look elsewhere and I had already, by then, begun to look more deeply into natural therapies. These and other negative experiences turned me away from orthodox medicine and I began to pursue an alternative philosophical and practical foundation for health instead.

Doctors who display the essential therapeutic characteristics of empathy, acceptance of their patient's suffering, nonjudgemental style and a commitment to continued care are more likely to make an appropriate diagnosis and to minimise the adverse effects of the illness experience. Conversely, those who reject the patient's illness experience are likely

to promote feelings of alienation and perpetuate ill health. A qualitative study of people with CFS found that lack of perceived medical support and understanding was associated with increased seeking of alternative medicine. Rejection by family, friends, peers and doctors leads many to experience CFS as a “delegitimising” illness. Dismissing a patient’s suffering as non-existent or imaginary is antitherapeutic.

Loblay & Stewart 2002:s45

After I graduated from university I began to explore further areas of natural health and healing. This led me into massage and postural bodywork training. My own health had improved by then and I had learned that natural healthcare had the potential to help where orthodox medicine had failed. I certainly felt that the modern, Western Orthodox Medical model had failed me. I learned that there are some grey areas of health and treatment, and that orthodox medicine does not have all the answers. I discovered that natural healthcare tends to treat the patient through a more personal way of working, and allows for nuances of symptoms and patient experience. This was exactly what had been missing for me in the orthodox system.

I acknowledge that some of the doctors had seemed like nice people, and seemed to have my best interests at heart, even if they didn't have the answers. Unfortunately, some also had a tendency to dismiss the patient experience as imagined or as an over inflated description of symptoms. Others simply may have not had knowledge of post-viral syndrome issues, as at that time it was not known about widely. Natural health circles, however, did acknowledge ME and post-viral issues. It was within this arena of natural healthcare that I learned of various healing modalities, and subsequently embarked upon a journey of discovery which was to strongly influence my adult life, learning and work.

No medical or health practitioner can be expected to know everything or be versed in every kind of illness and treatment available. Nevertheless, insinuations of symptoms being overplayed and presumed to be easily dealt with, or that I was a bit of a hypochondriac, were difficult to deal with and certainly are not welcoming for a patient trying to get to the bottom of what is going on. I was looking for answers, not sympathy. I expected the health profession to help me. That was supposedly their area of expertise. I had known good health and I presumed I would get well, but I needed some help with that.

Although I became generally well in my mid-twenties and through to my mid to late thirties, and had embarked upon a personal and professional interest in natural health therapies, I still had to take care of my health more than most people I knew. I was able to participate in lively, sociable and physical activity, and I had plenty of fun. I was a naturally sociable kind of person. I was able to live a reasonably energetic life and I was able to travel. However, I always had to make up for lost sleep, was best to live a reasonably healthy lifestyle, and seemed better to live in places that supported a non-hectic way of life, making sure I had a reasonable life balance. I continued activities such as yoga and meditation (to varying degrees) as ongoing management for health and wellbeing, and I worked in the relaxation/wellbeing/natural healthcare industry for many years.

Returning to Australia after living overseas for several years, a succession of stressful, personal experiences, within an undercurrent of constantly adjusting, seemed to take its toll on the resilience of my body. I had grown used to being able to bounce back when unwell or after stressful incidences. I was strong, I thought, both physically and mentally. I had been through some challenges and one more was not going to defeat me, I thought. I had been pushing myself for some time, and was trying to get established in the arts/film world of Sydney, as well as working part-time with therapeutic massage.

Acting jobs involved a lot of auditioning, casting calls and travelling to various places across several areas of the city by public transport and by foot (as I had no car at that time). Securing acting work is like always looking for a job and going to interviews. It is never having a secure income or weekly routine. The flexibility is good, in terms of freedom, and film sets are interesting places to be, but it is also fraught with insecurity. It takes work and energy to keep the work coming in, and the rent still has to get paid.

Suddenly, it appeared that my body just did not bounce back, even though I took a two week rest holiday, in my old home of Byron Bay, to try to help it do so. After the holiday, it seemed my body gave in. I experienced severe, debilitating fatigue and a cluster of other disturbing symptoms that were diagnosed some months later as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, along with Hashimoto's Autoimmune Thyroiditis.

SOME POSSIBLE CAUSES OF ME/CFS

During the eighteen months preceding onset of CFS, I had had a simple nasal surgery intended to correct breathing issues. Post operative infections during the two months after that surgery were followed by chronic ear inflammation, which medical investigation and treatment was unable to fully resolve. Significantly, some research supports the possibility of chronic staphylococcus infection of the nose and sinuses as a factor in some cases of CFS (Newcastle University 2001-2002: Pers. Comm; Gottfries 1999; Gottfries et al 2006; Gottfries Clinic 2012; McGregor et al 1999; Whiting 1998, cited in Environmental Illness Resource 2010c).

It has been suggested that this may have been a possible link in my case of CFS (Newcastle University 2001-2002:Pers.Comm), although it was not tested at that early time, due to unavailability of the research testing lab, which had had its funding cut, and the cost of the test through a private testing laboratory. Less specific, non-specialised testing in later years was inconclusive. Interestingly, recent research into emerging infectious diseases has also pointed to the presence of strains of mycobacteria from household tap water as a factor in some cases of chronic rhinosinusitis (Tichenor et al 2012).

Other ongoing infection and underlying chronic, low grade infections have also been targeted as potential causes of CFS. Rickettsia (Jardin 1999), Mycoplasma (Nicholson et al 2002; 2008), Epstein Barr Virus (EBV) and others (Carruthers et al 2003:8; Shomon 2004:22; Environmental Illness Resource 2010: online; Loblay & Stewart 2002:s30) have been the subjects of CFS research over time. For some time it was thought that EBV was the major cause of CFS, and some studies support findings linking EBV to a subset of patients (Environmental Illness Resource 2010a; Loblay & Stewart 2002:s30). However, it has since been discovered that there are many possibilities of viruses that may cause or trigger CFS in some people, including Cytomegalovirus (CMV), Q Fever, Ross River Fever and others (Carruthers et al 2003:8; Shomon 2004:22; 104-112; Loblay & Stewart 2002:s30; ME/CFS WA 2010d).

Carruthers et al (2003:8) add that although several viruses and infectious agents have been investigated, findings have been mixed and there is not one, particular pathogen which is concluded to be a direct cause. 'While the pathogenesis is suggested to be multi-factorial, the hypothesis of initiation by a viral infection has been prominent' (Carruthers et al 2003:8). The involvement of viral infection as a trigger initiating ME/CFS is supported 'in at least half of the patients' (Carruthers et al 2003:8).

It is unclear whether the pathogens play a direct causal role, accompany an underlying infection, trigger reactivation/replication of latent pathogens, represent reactivated pathogens, activate a neural response or modulate the immune system to induce ME/CFS(20). Possibly a new microbe will be identified.

Carruthers et al 2003:8.

That one person may contract a virus but not develop CFS, while another does, is interesting for CFS research, considering such viral load causes complications in some individuals but not others. This may indicate that there are other factors individually that complicate the scenario of health.

Through my early reading on CFS, in 1999 and the early 2000s, it became clear to me that the adrenal glands appeared to play a major role in the symptoms and experience of the condition (Poesnecker 1999-2003a; 1999-2003b; Shomon 2004:144-145). Some research supports that the endocrine system, and especially Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis dysfunction plays a key role in CFS (Shomon 2004:140; Environmental Illness Resource 2010a; Loblay & Stewart 2002:s30; Carruthers et al 2003:20; Torpy 2010).

It rang true for me personally that the adrenals would have taken a major hit during a long, two years of stress of varying nature and intensity. Although I was managing that stress, to an extent, prolonged stress nevertheless may have a physiological impact (Poesnecker 1999-2003b), potentially making the body vulnerable to viral and bacterial infection. Other complicating factors such as post operative infection and possibly underlying viral infection added to this load. EBV, a stealth virus, may have been a component, as well as taking into consideration that it may have already potentially caused some underlying damage to the endocrine system and immunity. Stealth viruses also may damage the mitochondria of cells, creating defects in the metabolic pathways (Shomon 2004:107).

Orthodox medicine does not acknowledge sub-clinical adrenal insufficiency as being a relevant medical issue (Shomon 2004:146; Poesnecker 1999-2003b; Wilson 2002:6-7). Addison's Disease and Cushing's Disease are the extreme forms of adrenal disease (Shomon 2003:146; Torpy 2010) and are acknowledged in orthodox medicine, whereas it is considered that a sub-clinical hypo-

adrenalism may be at the base of, or be a part of, some CFS cases (Poesnecker 1999-2003a; 1999-2003b; Shomon 2004:144-45; Environmental Illness Resource 2010b; Torpy 2010). From the outset, this possibility fit my case. However, it was not medically confirmed until later, when eventual endocrinology tests showed a correlation to some hypo-adrenalism.

In more recent years the terms adrenal fatigue and adrenal exhaustion have become somewhat more widely circulated (Environmental Illness Resource 2010b; Wilson 2002:1-8; Shomon 2004:145) through Natural Healthcare and Integrative Medicine. However, in those early days of my condition, they were not. Natural Healthcare and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) covered some of this aspect of CFS long before, and my early reading supported this as a strong contender in the basis of my symptoms. It is suggested that adrenal insufficiency and CFS have a lot in common (Baschetti, cited in Shomon 2004:145)

The connection of CFS to gastro-intestinal health is also pertinent. Some research has shown that probiotics have a place in the treatment of CFS (Newcastle University 2001-2002: Pers comm). I initially learned this from the CFS research department of Newcastle University (2001-2002: Pers comm). My doctor reiterated it to me, and subsequent reading supported it. Sullivan et al (2009) have demonstrated further possibilities for use of probiotics in CFS. This supports the possibility that there may be some element of digestive dysfunction in some CFS patients. Naturopathically, the gastrointestinal tract (GIT) has long been considered a portal to immunity. This is supported by Sullivan et al (2009) and earlier studies (Isolauri et al 2001). Naturopathy links intestinal permeability (Burgoyne 1998) to various health and immunity issues, including some autoimmune illnesses (such as Hashimoto's).

Another major player involving the endocrine system in some cases of CFS is the thyroid. Autoimmune thyroid disease may sometimes also be linked, *non-conventionally*, indirectly to the GIT (Burgoyne 1998:3, 6). However, hypothyroidism occurring as a result of the autoimmunity is treated, conventionally, only with thyroid hormone replacement, in order to replace the life-essential thyroid hormones not produced by the damaged thyroid. Naturopathic oriented treatment may include treating underlying issues as well, seeking to isolate the cause of the immune dysfunction, and subsequently treating with supportive herbs and nutrients for regulating immunity, as well as supplementing with thyroid supportive nutrients (Burgoyne 1998).

It is noted that thyroid disease and CFS may occur concurrently (Konynenberg 2007; Carruthers et al 2003:13), although this is potentially a contentious area of medical opinion. This may sometimes be an area of grey in determining whether a patient has CFS or whether symptoms are caused entirely by an untreated, or undertreated, thyroid condition. Carruthers et al (2003:13) list Hashimoto's Thyroiditis as a co-morbid condition which 'may occur in the setting of ME/CFS' (Carruthers et al 2003:13). 'Hypothyroidism is considered fairly common in CFS' (Shomon 2004:146) and it is suggested by some practitioners that CFS may be a manifestation 'of undiagnosed hypothyroidism, or a cellular resistance to thyroid hormone' (Shomon 2004:146).

Newer circulating information on natural ways of working with autoimmunity supports the inclusion of supplemented digestive enzymes. Proteolytic enzymes have been used experimentally in reducing autoimmunity (Collins 2009). 'Autoimmune thyroid disease treated with systemic enzyme support resulted in a significant decrease of TSH, anti-TG and anti-TPO and allowed the lowering of L-thyroxine dosages' (Kvantchakhadse 2002 cited in Collins 2009). Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs) are also suggested as being of use for those with CFS (Puri 2004; 2007). These natural substances have a number of anti-inflammatory actions and may work on different aspects of autoimmunity. As CFS has components of immune dysfunction and inflammation, they may be useful in the natural treatment and management of CFS as well as other autoimmune disorders (Puri 2004; 2007).

Some literature points to another physiological process regarding the symptoms of ME/CFS; that of the body's methylation process (Konynenberg 2007; 2006; Yasko & Gordon 2006). Methylation pathways, among various other things, impact metabolism and energy. Enhancing the activity of these pathways is intended to increase energy levels and support physical wellbeing. One nutrient that may be significant to this process is Co-enzyme Q10(CoQ10) (Maes et al 2009). CoQ10 aids the production of Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP), and thereby helps energy to be produced and utilised more effectively by the mitochondria, the energy storehouses of the cells. Myhill et al (2009) discuss mitochondrial fatigue and dysfunction as a significant issue underlying CFS, and Maes et al (2009) discuss a far reaching role for CoQ10 in CFS specifically.

Our observations strongly implicate mitochondrial dysfunction as the immediate cause of CFS symptoms. However, we cannot tell whether the damage to mitochondrial function is a primary effect, or a secondary

effect to one or more of a number of primary conditions, for example cellular hypoxia, or oxidative stress including excessive peroxynitrite. Mitochondrial dysfunction is also associated with several other diseases and this is not surprising in view of the important role of mitochondria in almost every cell of the body, but this fact appears to have been recognised only in recent years.

Myhill et al 2009:12.

Some other factors that may contribute to CFS are various nutritional imbalances (Shomon 2004:186-193), including deficiencies and toxicities. The area of nutritional support is a detailed topic and to give an in-depth account of all the various herbal and nutritional treatments and support available is far beyond the focus of this chapter. I have touched upon just some of the potential underlying issues associated with CFS, brought to light through various angles of research in the literature. This is by no means a detailed account of the various nutritional, herbal and integrative medical regimens I have incorporated in the treatment of CFS, and is only a brief introduction to some potential underlying causes and management regarding CFS.

AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

During the course of ME/CFS, I have explored various alternative, orthodox, and integrative treatments, options and research. Financial constraints greatly restricted treatment options at times. Nevertheless, I have tried and evaluated mixed and varying plans for treatment, and have worked within a limited budget, also implementing self-care. My treatment regime has been based in a holistic approach to medicine and healthcare, an integrative approach, which incorporates both Western Orthodox Medicine (WOM) and Natural Healthcare (NHC).

Self care, although important to recovery and management, is not enough alone. Likewise, in order to recover through ME/CFS it is not simply enough to reside in a gentle paced, healthy environment, at least not in my own case. Prolonged rest is considered inadequate as a sole treatment (Loblay & Stewart 2002:s40). I have incorporated much self-care, but have also consulted various practitioners of natural and orthodox healthcare and undertaken graded and paced exercise routines.

There are many specialist medical tests to draw upon in order to exclude other illnesses and to isolate underlying issues of ME/CFS. Nevertheless, some of these remain untested in many ME/CFS patients, including myself. This is partly because the research into these many, various issues, such as mycoplasma (Nicolson et al 2002; 2008), Rickettsia (Jardin 1999), underlying gastro-intestinal infections, Staphylococcus (Gottfries et al 1999; 2006; McGregor et al 1999) and others, tend to remain under the domain of specialist testing facilities which are not subsidised by Medicare in Australia and are reasonably expensive for the patient. Additionally, most GPs do not know to test for such things regarding ME/CFS.

As yet, there is no true, quality standard of practice for isolating underlying possible causes for patients with ME/CFS, although the Canadian Guidelines (Carruthers et al 2003) make some headway with this. It is, perhaps, also a matter of some specific guidelines being put in place which present, systematically and comprehensively, all pathology and scans to be conducted for those presenting with ME/CFS.

Providing GPs and healthcare practitioners with a specific, comprehensive list of *all* tests, treatments and procedures would possibly be a valuable contribution to healthcare for those with the illness. Georgiou et al's (2006) model for implementing computerised physician order entry systems, is one such method that may assist in gaining higher levels of accuracy and thoroughness in diagnostic testing. This kind of system 'may include decision support mechanisms such as defined order sets for particular conditions in order to support the selection and appropriate use of tests and treatment' (Georgiou et al 2006:1). Implementing such a model might help to improve quality of care for people with illnesses such as ME/CFS which can be difficult to diagnose, and to improve, overall, 'the quality of care, reducing errors and increasing efficiency in health care delivery' (Georgiou et al 2006:1).

Orthodox medicine does highlight the need for testing of several underlying issues and alternative causes of chronic fatigue (Loblay & Stewart 2002:s36). It also addresses the need for rehabilitation, psychological support therapy as appropriate (2002:s40-41), paced and graded physical exercise (2002:s40), and the usefulness of having a patient care team of (orthodox) practitioners (2002:s37). These are all important elements of care. However, orthodox medicine also emphasises random controlled trials (RCT) and evidence based medicine (EBM), accentuating that CFS cohorts are heterogeneous (2002:42) and that unproven therapies may not be successful and are not recommended. Although they may not be proven to cure CFS

(2002:41-42), I argue that alternative therapies may nevertheless support healthcare of patients who have CFS and some may lead to improvement.

Natural healthcare emphasises that there are many natural avenues available for treatment and management, and makes use of anecdotal evidence as well as acknowledging the value of RCTs and medical research. Integrative Medicine may take account of each of these aspects and adds another layer to management through combining orthodox and natural treatment. Both integrative healthcare and orthodox medicine should also make use of comprehensive testing for underlying issues, supported by up to date research.

Natural healthcare and integrative medicine appear to offer a more well-rounded approach to treating CFS than Western Orthodox Medicine alone, acknowledging nuances of symptoms and patient experience rather than strictly being guided by orthodox protocols. NHC and integrative medicine may have much to offer those with CFS, as alternative healthcare and Western Orthodox Medicine can blend their areas of expertise. This potentially gives patients and practitioners greater scope for identifying various possible causes of CFS in individual cases, and room for treatment alternatives.

WOM excels technologically and has solid foundations in research, whilst NHC has its excellence based in person centred, natural care. A cooperative effort between the two areas may provide a potentially effective model for managing health and wellbeing, whereas maintaining the divisions between the two, based on differing or opposing philosophies of health, may simply serve to maintain the status quo. A team of natural healthcare practitioners working alongside orthodox and integrative practitioners is a valuable approach to quality healthcare for patients.

Although varying perspectives on healthcare may differ in their approach to managing and treating CFS, it appears that an integrative approach to care and treatment, one that takes advantage of natural therapies as viable and useful complementary treatments, as well as utilising the technology and research of WOM, may be of benefit. Managing CFS also requires a social perspective of care, with patient empowerment being a part of the process of learning and management.

CONCLUSION

ME/CFS is a complex condition, and no single, specific cause or treatment has been discovered to date. Nevertheless, it does appear that there may be many potential contributing factors, and research is ongoing. This chapter has provided a very brief overview of just some of the research, testing, and other factors that may be associated with ME/CFS, whilst also addressing the added social issues associated with contested, chronic illness. I have outlined some of the complexities associated with the investigations, experience and treatment of ME/CFS, in order to highlight that the illness is not a simple, easily resolved condition.

It must be noted, that the outline of causes provided in this chapter was edited and re-edited again and again, in order to narrow the information from a much wider base, and is not a full account of the many possibilities of causes. This outline does not reflect the amount of reading required for gaining an in-depth understanding of ME/CFS regarding its causes, the medical research and treatments, as undertaken by this patient/researcher. I have attempted to reduce the amount of information presented here due to its broad nature, and the possibility of writing a whole thesis solely on this area. I have attempted to provide some context overall for the illness and some account of the additional learning involved in being a pro-active patient.

I have included part of my own story to give a small glimpse into the nature of the personal inquiry I have initiated through the history and progress of recovery. This also briefly outlines some of the history of how I became interested in alternative healthcare and describes some of that learning journey. Subjectively, I have focused on the illness experience as a catalyst for learning and have explored various avenues for learning through the experience.

This chapter has also addressed the area of transformative learning regarding chronic illness. Perspective transformative learning and socially transformative learning are both aspects of learning apparent through chronic illness experience. Health social movements, patient advocates and patient societies provide support, promulgate information and create social movements which may address inequities and emphasise greater patient empowerment, on both social and personal levels.

CHAPTER SIX:

REFLECTIONS ON CREATIVITY, MUSIC,

INSPIRATION AND FLOW

Creativity – Better than fame and fortune.

... Living creatively means tuning in to all your senses and really knowing what's going on. It means making quirky connections, and seeking out inspiration, beauty, humour, tenderness and absurdity.

... Creativity may be expressed through great works of art. But it can also be a way of living that is open, spirited, engaged, eager, curious and uplifting.

from Dowrick, 2007:48.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores musicality, expression, the process of writing music, being immersed in the creative process, and the learning inherent in such active focusing on creative expression. It looks at the experience of creative resistance and acknowledges that creative practice is not always a steady stream of inspiration, but consists of times of ebb and flow, inspiration and frustration. I suggest that allowing this natural ebb and flow to occur, in its own fundamental space, and moving through resistance to creativity, is a learning experience and helps us move toward creative praxis. I consider how I approach writing music, and how it infiltrates my day when the creative process is at its most active. A key theme is the notion of nurturing a sense of creativity, creative essence and expression.

I draw from research journal notes and reflections on the processes of creative expression, conveyed through real-time observation in the moments of the experience as it was occurring, in context, and through a focused, reflective stance within the overall timeframe of this creative action in the artist/researcher's life.

During this research period of several months, I reflected on creative experiences I may not otherwise have stepped back from as participant to observe, taking the position of observer/participant as a part of the research and exploration. The process of writing music was integral to the process of writing this chapter and the reflections therein, with the researcher's musical processes occurring parallel to the thesis work. Some of these reflections are included in their entirety, rather than as brief excerpts of writing, as it was a combined process of writing and process/participant observation that brought some of the reflective ideas into greater clarity.

FINDING AN AUTHENTIC VOICE

It is difficult to delineate which aspects of my musical development throughout the extended period of CFS have been directly related to, or occur as a direct response to CFS experience, and those which may have developed similarly in a situation of greater health and wellness. During my musical development of this period, overall life experience was significantly influenced by having a chronic illness which had resulted in physical and social restrictions. My music may have developed inherently similarly in some way without the experience of CFS, or it may not have. I have no tangible way of identifying or testing this possibility. I speculate, however, that it is reasonably possible that some of the restriction and isolation was a catalyst for musical learning and development, facilitating the accessing of aspects of my musical creativity, and overall creativity regarding writing, which I may not have explored in other, freer circumstances.

Having been piano-less for too long, during the early time of CFS I rented a piano and began again to practise classical music. I practised every day, and at times it was the only active activity for the day. I practised the technical and the musical. I learned Beethoven's passionate 'Sonata Pathetique', though slowly, something I had envisioned as a goal for learning and focusing through this time. I learned the music. I practised scales and technical work. I learned my fingers across the keyboard. I listened to the music of eras passed, played through my fingertips, even if imperfect. I imagined Beethoven, Bach and others silently holding the candle for musical healing on some level of my existence. I improvised solo piano music, and played my way through depression and the anxiety of hopelessness.

Throughout my history of musical expression, improvisation of solo piano music was a key, expressive element of the music, both as a child and as an adult. It was not a new development. It was a natural part of my creative expression. However, this constant theme in my musical expression also underwent development as I played and practised more of the technical skills of playing, through the years of CFS.

The development of writing vocal songs with piano, often mixed with long instrumental interludes, and layering of instrumental harmonies, was a natural evolution of hours and years of technical, classical and improvisatory piano work which lay some ground work. Without chronic illness experience, I may have arrived at a variation of this, or some similarity of the theme within this way of working with music, as I perceive it was a natural evolution. Music may have developed and matured in some similar vein, although with variants, under different life circumstances. How I perceive, write and play music, however, has also in some way been vitally linked, during this time, to the restrictions of illness through the lived experience of it, and the, at times, hermit-like qualities of practice within the artist's life.

Perhaps it is a natural evolution of a musical style and the maturity of that style within a personal expression. By nature, my personal expression has been deeply informed by life experiences. CFS experience reinforced the solo capacity of my artistic work and expression, an element which seems to have strengthened through the last few years, and through which I have gained greater musical confidence and a stronger sense of musical self.

Cranton (2006:54) notes that 'the development of an authentic identity as a teacher can be a transformative experience'. I suggest that my subjective, personal process regarding the development of an authentic identity, finding the authentic voice as musician/artist, is a transformative learning experience. This is not to be confused with artistic fame and fortune (Dowrick 2007:48), which, I argue, are not necessarily indicators of authentic identity. Many famous and successful artists are, nevertheless, also highly talented and authentic, with fame and talent not being necessarily mutually exclusive. This development of the authentic voice, in my own experience, has been taking place over many years, transforming somewhat through varying life periods and situations, and notably changing throughout the CFS experience, as perhaps I have been forced to be more still and to listen more deeply, or to engage in artistic expression in different ways.

I suggest that finding one's authentic voice can be a process of transformative learning, especially if pursued with awareness and reflection. It comes through a process rather than necessarily as an end goal product. It appears to be a process of cyclically learning new perspectives of oneself and one's expressive genre. Through the experience of illness, recovery and management, this personal creative process was perhaps quietly driving toward a validation of an authentic identity.

Illness experience itself did not lead me to creative-expressive ways of working, but rather, as a creative artist, I naturally moved into creative ways of exploration whilst managing a physically restrictive illness such as CFS. I am not someone trying to learn their way through an illness by using art as a medium for learning, newly discovered and explored throughout that time. I have drawn upon my already developed, artistic expression and put some of that illness experience in focus through my art.

However, perhaps being in a position of less mobility and having to be at home a lot, I began to also develop that vision of the creative life being, in some new way, a stronger focus in my day to day existence and to perceive myself as a valid artist whether I was out in the world making money or not. Notably, I have strengthened my authentic, creative self working at music as a solo artist, whilst sustaining a clear focus on musical work most dramatically in the past few years of CFS recovery and management. This has also been enhanced and supported through working at recording with a home recording set-up, which was something I had long wanted and had long felt was essential to my musical wellbeing.

I began also to work more on writing, in various ways, throughout the earlier CFS years, as a specific creative-expressive tool for focusing and exploration, and I continued this to the current time. I had always written poetry and songs as an adult, beginning as a child from the ages of ten and twelve respectively. However, I now found myself leaning more towards writing in other ways as well, for no particular reason other than that I felt the urge to do so. Throughout CFS years my way of writing as creative expression appeared to be developing through a process of allowing it to be, as well as through implementing a simple method of practising by doing. The urge to express creatively appears to manifest in various ways, yet each aspect of expression appears to provide a different perspective regarding a personal, creative authenticity.

An area of artistic expression and creativity where I became less active, by necessity, has been that of drama/acting/film and performance. These were aspects of artistic work where I had

been much more creatively focused, determined and involved when I had the state of health and wellbeing that could support such energy demanding pursuits. These are still on my artistic itinerary and I have not given up on them. However, being restricted through CFS years, meant that it was within the more solo artistic work that I became more focused.

My areas of expressive creativity are most oriented toward word and sound. Notably, I have strengthened my authentic, creative self working at music as a solo artist, whilst sustaining a clear focus on musical work most dramatically in the past few years of CFS recovery and management.

LEARNING CREATIVELY THROUGH MULTIPLE WAYS OF KNOWING

The importance of creativity in adult learning 'emerges from the assumption that there are multiple ways we can come to know and learn other than cognitive rationality' (Hoggan et al 2009:7). The creative process draws on a knowledge base that is not logical or projected through reason. It draws on an intuitive way of knowing, integrative of the body, mind and spirit that for me, expresses itself (mostly) in a musical medium. Artistic and creative ways of knowing (Hoggan et al 2009:19; Lawrence 2005:3-4) draw on intuitive knowledge, emotions, experience and the body. 'By being flexible and open to alternative and creative ways of knowing, there is an opportunity for new understanding and transformation of perspectives. We can then begin to engage the body, the arts, and the imagination as transformational experiences' (Hoggan et al 2009:19-20).

The expression of my subjective, personal knowing and learning through music draws also on learned skills of piano playing, musical study and technical practice. However the pursuing of learning these skills was firstly sought out through the innate, intuitive desire to express musically, which I first expressed through singing. Subsequently, the accessing of intuitive ways of knowing through creativity was also further enhanced through the application of practical and technical skills.

12/7/09:

The head swims with ideas.

I have a piece of music going in the background simultaneously (in my head), a piece I had recently improvised, recorded some, and worked on a little. It was there as I was going to sleep last night, and I realise this morning that it is still there. It's as though I am

working on it quietly as it plays in my auditory senses, the almost sub-sensory memory, the creative memory.

At the same time, I have thoughts, ideas, and realisations about the research and writing active in the foreground. I touch on a theme... I must write that down to note it in case I forget... the music still fading in and out of more conscious awareness.

When I find myself with a piece of music playing in my head, and just suddenly realising I have been working on it, playing it over without the conscious attempt to arrange it or rearrange it, I feel a certain revelation in the recognition. I will go and play that piece of music today at my piano. There must be something happening.

Meanwhile, prior to my more conscious awareness of the music in my head, I was rolling around thoughts and ideas related directly and indirectly to the thesis work.

I reflect through this that somewhere in the consciousness, a learning process is occurring.

Just what sort of learning process is occurring? Is it an imaginal process (Dirkx 2001:68), whereby transformative learning occurs through the symbolic and imaginative experience of the psyche? I suggest that this learning process is drawing on the imaginal process and non-logical ways of knowing. 'Intuition as a way of knowing' (Lawrence 2009:129) draws on creative elements and 'symbolic or imaginal knowing comes to us through intuition' (Lawrence 2009:129). I suggest that the learning process of creativity takes place in symbolic and multidimensional ways.

Somehow, accessing a part of my semi-conscious awareness within music, whilst going about other activities, I am learning through creative pathways that are not logically connected but which, nevertheless, do somehow connect. Stewart (2008) suggests that the practised musician's brain is able to cross different neural/learning pathways connecting within the two hemispheres of the brain, and suggests that the creative processes involved in music making may be a good model for learning about neuroplasticity.

4/11/09:

I am living inside this new piece of music (Music: Sparkling Water, 2009). It is playing in my head almost constantly these few days since I began to write it. I wake up with it. I drift off to sleep with it.

The ear has improved and I have been immersed in the exploration of sound and harmonies once again, now free to explore the depths and heights. I am relieved – unspeakably relieved – to have my ear become enabled again, and to be released from the stress of that endurance.

It was the herbal remedy that finally conquered the virus and infection, and reduced the inflammation, not the antibiotics, although they helped to lessen its impact for a while. It was not the visits to a doctor – although that was useful and helped assess the condition to an extent. Chiropractic sessions twice per week also helped. They released pressure from the neck, and worked on C1 and C2 (the Cervical vertebrae 1 and 2, the Atlas and the Axis).

The herbal remedy: The day after I started taking it I began to feel improvement, some clarity returning, infection dissipating, resolving. Although residual inflammation continues to some degree, I am able to play and to hear the music more clearly now, and find that I am more grateful than I can articulate for the joy of it. Perhaps this is articulated musically, in the music itself, in the new piece, which has evolved, developed, out of the experience of the past month, and keenly focuses my artistic desire for self-healing and renewal.

The expression through this sound creates with it an uplifting piece that somehow takes my music to a different level. It's a transformative learning experience, flowing (and floating) within this creative process.

I will make use of this creative time.

5/11/09:

Even though the music piece is playing over in my head, it is not just there as music. I am working on it, just by listening to it. I am inside it and feeling into it. It's not a logical, conscious, always actively analytical state. It's a state of allowing it to be, to play, to come into being.

From this, development suddenly arises as a new part emerges out of the flow of it. It's an unconscious, yet distantly conscious, working. It's a way of learning, through allowing the music to develop.

I suggest this is a form of learning because I am learning my way through this piece of music and the music has been, and is, a part of my learning my way through a quite intensely difficult experience of healing and hearing.

If art is a way of knowing (Allen 1995, cited in McNiff 1998:28), so too, creative exploration of music through playing, writing and being, is a way of knowing. It involves a tacit knowledge, intuitive, creative and embodied. Tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1966, cited in McNiff 1998:132) is that knowing we may instinctively feel, and of which we may not be consciously aware. It may emerge through non-logical inclinations and an intuitive sense. Such 'subjective inklings' (McNiff 1998:133) can be highly significant within the process of discovery. 'Within the arts, tacit or unspoken knowledge permeates virtually everything we do' (McNiff 1998:132).

McNiff (1998: 27) notes that 'the images and processes of the artistic creation are always at least one step ahead of the reflecting mind'. I sense that as there is some form of tacit knowledge and intuitive flow occurring here, that the creative mind is steps ahead of the reflective mind. To allow this to come into clarity of being I need to listen to that creative, instinctive urge, and go with the music as it plays to me to come into form.

My learning through living in this piece of music, exploring it and allowing it to evolve and develop is intrinsically linked to body, mind, and spirit, although there is not necessarily a clear delineation between the three.

As the music plays in my head, my mind may still be actively involved in other focal points, to some extent. Sometimes the music is soft and in the background as I go about some other mind engaging or physical activity. Sometimes it comes to the foreground and I am consciously following the notes. Although it is in my mind, it is not always my active, conscious task. The music is there, and the active mind co-exists, operating within a different mode.

There is a dual experience occurring – that focused on the conscious task at hand, and that of the music underpinning a conscious and semi-conscious awareness. The learning pathways navigated through this activated creative expression seem to intersect, meld, follow through, and physiologically, may potentially open up new neurological pathways.

As the music plays itself in my head, I may go about other mind engaging activities, and I may go about other physical activities. The degree to which I am alert and consciously engaging in the music varies. Nevertheless, it is there, as a soundtrack to my day.

I generally don't turn the radio on in my car whilst driving during this time, as that would take away the focus, conscious or subconscious. Sometimes I don't actually realise how much the music is with me until I do turn on the radio. "Hmmm ... no... that's not what I'm listening to", I suddenly realise. For some time, I anticipate, I will live in this piece of music, and then I will complete it. It may be days, a week, most likely not longer. It is half way there.

This type of creative work is a creative engagement in learning. I suggest that nurturing such creative engagement potentially nurtures and enlivens the pathways of creativity. I suggest that nurturing creative engagement is connected with learning. Fundamentally, it enhances a connection with 'alternative and creative ways of knowing' (Hoggan et al 2009:17), allowing greater access to creative, intuitive, and bodily ways of knowing and learning. 'These alternative and creative ways of knowing allow space for transformation to occur in ways that supplement cognitive, rational thought, to include the affective, spiritual, imaginal, somatic and artistic' (Hoggan et al 2009:17). If nurturing creative engagement also stimulates neuroplasticity, or neural plasticity, the capacities of the brain in forming new neural pathways (Doidge 2010; Stewart 2005:207; Cosolino & Sprokay 2011:12; Levitan 2012; Swartz 2011:23), then perhaps this creative engagement in learning also opens up new dimensions of learning through a neurophysiological perspective of transformative learning.

Undoubtedly, this piece has evolved for me out of a testing time of these few weeks. Because I am creative musically, this is where my learning and transformative experience and expression perhaps reside best.

There is a strong centring experience in living in this piece of music. It is at a core somewhere in the depths of Self. I am connected to this deepest sense of Self when I am deeply engaged in the process of creativity.

I have written of this whilst in the experience of this music as the soundtrack of my day, so that I can see it, and present it, from the perspective of the moment, rather than as an observed or somewhat more objective reflection later of how I work in music. This is because I can see better through the current, immersed experience than to observe it later after it has ebbed. Observing it later may yield other observations and insights, yet will not allow me the articulation of being in the moment of creativity.

Coming subsequent to a disorienting experience, in this case the impact of a viral infection affecting the sensory perception of hearing, and bringing to the fore strong, emotive issues surrounding that embodied experience, the transformative quality of the creative and musical process, and the deeply centring sense of self which it brings, is a transformative, embodied learning experience.

The music is embodied in me. It is part of me. Yet it is also not yet formed, and so is somehow waiting to be a part of me, and in some way to also transform some part of me. It's waiting in the wings, perhaps, but the design and form it eventually takes depends on my movement with it, how I perceive it, and so also how I learn with it.

This playing of the music in my head, as I go about my day otherwise, is part of a creative process of unfolding and developing. Although transformation and perfection may never really be fully complete, there is a time when I know the music is ready as a whole and complete piece of its own. It is then that I can let it go, complete the process, and let the wave of creativity ebb, or flow again in a new way, to begin a new cycle. I will also proceed to edit and refine the piece, but this works in a different way to having it play as a soundtrack through my day. Then, I will sit with it, play it, listen to it in the recording, make changes I think it may need or could be better with having, listen for imperfections, try to be at a distance from it to hear it how somebody else might hear it. Afterwards, I also may not listen to it for days, after such an immersed and almost obsessive repetition of hearing and playing, and then come to it with a fresh perspective. The process of creatively refining and editing the music piece after its initial completion is a longer task,

and may occur over several weeks, or longer, depending on time allocated and life interruptions.

The learning through this experience is embodied, innate, creative and intuitive. It occurs through allowing, flowing and following a freedom of creative, expressive experience. It draws on creative and alternative ways of knowing (Hoggan et al 2009:19), intuitive (Lawrence 2009:129) and imaginative (Dirkx 1997; 1998; 2001; Hoggan et al 2009), and urges the process of creativity to be listened to throughout the context of my day. It is up to me to do the listening, to respond to the creative process, to move with it and to take it where it moves.

Experientially, writing a piece of music moves with alternative and creative ways of knowing (Hoggan et al 2009:19) that emerge and integrate through the body, spirit and mind. The body knows how, through years of practice and work. It knows the rhythms of my musical practice. It comes through the self, and through a transformative experience of learning, as new discoveries are made and new perspectives found, artistically, and incorporated, integrated, into the music and into the experiential self. Nurturing a sense of creativity, creative essence and expression is fundamental to the learning involved in following a creative process such as this embodied, innate, transformative experience.

CT Scan and the Music Soundtrack

Even as I lay on the bench with the CT scanner beginning to whirr softly above and around me, head taped in place, I try to remember to focus on the music. It was there right with me in the waiting room. Now, however, there is a strange, subtle, body-brain sensation. I almost feel as though I detect a subtle interference in the music from the machine taking images, visually cutting through my internal head space. 'Strange', I ponder, and lay there without making too much analysis of the thought, but consider it a strange phenomenon nevertheless.

RESISTANCE, EBB AND FLOW

My music sessions aren't always filled and uplifted by an enthusiasm of inspirational flow. At times, strong frustration enters the picture. Trying to push the creative flow of inspiration doesn't seem to work. It only serves to produce more frustration at the *lack* of creative flow. It seems

useful at those times to focus on technical practice, to play other completed pieces or songs, and to work on the practical skills. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) uses the term *flow* to connote the optimal experience of being immersed in an activity. I have made extensive use of this term, which now appears to be part of the vernacular of my cultural milieu. I also suggest that 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) does not always involve being immersed masterfully in active creativity, but also allows, as part of an *overall* flow, for the ebb to naturally occur.

Even in the midst of a seemingly endless flow of creativity, the wave can change. I need to ride with it when it's there, and allow that force of creative energy, creative inspiration, to unfold. I also need to allow the times of frustrated creative work to settle and then move eventually into another focus of creativity. There are times, however that the ebb may be caused by an emotional resistance to creativity, and exploration of this may lead to transformative experience.

14/7/09: *After playing and writing a new song.* (Music: Nurture My Soul 2009).

I resisted music, I resisted my piano, in this time, these few weeks. Some of it was being too unwell to sit for long. The virus was bad. I lost my voice, and singing wasn't possible.

Today, I dusted and polished my piano, in a ritualistic gesture, and then went about with other general tasks at home.

Later, I felt tired and depleted again.

I had resolved that I would play piano today, no matter what, even if just for a few minutes, to get through that resistance, and not be restricted by it.

...

I went to the piano. Played a little. Then a song. Sang... softly, gently.

Something started to lift.

I began to improvise around some notes, some meanderings, some gentle improvising, a bit of recording, and back to another new improvisation.

After a time... not long... I start to feel something in my body that acknowledges a sense of change.

Quite suddenly, music is flowing.

Soon I notice that I am not depleted anymore. I am not even tired.

I am invigorated. Filled and flowing. Excited even, through the inspiration taking me beyond.

Words come. Though my voice is still needing gentle care, I can sing softly.

The words come out from the recent time of health frustration, and the almost desperate need I experienced to not be unwell any longer, after years of CFS. A song begins its words. A couple of verses. More music. Layering of melodies and bass line follow. Flow.

And in the process, music.

I have attempted to write of this whilst in the process of the music. Enthusiasm is high.

Music is flowing again. Melodious, soft, uplifting in the end.

My dark blood flows, and music flows.

And two and a half hours pass.

Later:

And then I can't keep away. I go back to the piano again. I have to.

The piece evolves. I have to be there with it, for it. The movement includes both of us.

I don't want to stop this cascading

rivulet

of sound now...

I want to hear it,

feel it,

be in it.

Whether it is or is not a brilliant masterpiece of work, it is healing for me, now, as I am.

To write it and to play it,
to feel it come out from the
cells of my body.
Hands, fingers and soul, heart, legs, feet, belly
Depths,
Surging, and flowing,
Sounding.
Out they come,
all those little sparkles
of life,
hiding in my sleepy cells
within.
Out they come,
to hear the sound
spurring into life.
And as the sound
swirls around
and in me,
I'm cut free.
And I remember
who I am
again.

Joy, harmony, life, it's all in it.
Uplifting, healing, freeing.

Shaw (2003) relates the ability of song to express our experience through emotion. Songs can heal and give meaning to our experiences. 'Songs move people. They make us sad and happy, hopeful and angry. They can also make us think. Most of all, songs communicate feelings... and

when we are moved, we are more likely to act' (Shaw 2003). Using song as an intuitive, reflective tool for my experience of chronic, physical illness and the emotional sense surrounding some of the social misperceptions of that, I wrote my sense of loss and grief, openness, solitude, and hope in a musical context. From this I became uplifted, inspired and reawakened to a sense of hope and a heightened sense of a new perspective of my experience. Musically, this was a dynamic experience of learning, utilising creative expression and openly naming my need to nurture soul (Dirkx 1997) for learning and wellbeing.

Utilising an intuitive flow in accessing pathways of creativity for improvising music, and writing the music of individual parts to be played as one, whole, integrated piece, firstly by improvising, I am using intuition as a way of knowing (Lawrence 2009:129). Entering the creative flow is fundamental to my method of working with music and improvisation. It takes me to a deepened space of conscious awareness. Ultimately, some form of personal transformation comes through the occupying of that space within the embodied experience and the expression of free flowing music.

It incorporates the body, as instrument and channel for an organic, practical application of learned skills, through resonance of the vocal chamber in singing, the engaging of the ears for hearing and listening, and the body seated at the piano. Yet it also incorporates the body on a deeper level, that of a body-mind interaction (Aposhyan 2004), where a knowledge of intuitive accessing of the musical pathways of learning lies beneath the surface of the physicality of flesh. Additionally, neuroplasticity (Cosolino & Sprokay 2011:12; Doidge 2010; Levitan 2012; 2013; 2013a; SBS TV Australia 2010; Stewart 2005; Swartz 2011:23) of the brain supports the embodied aspect of learning in the creative process, as the brain changes through the development of these intuitive, improvisatory, creative processes, and creates new neural pathways of learning in the brain.

At a point in the above descriptive process, there is a body feeling that acknowledges something has changed. In the body, there is a change from depletion to energised, though that sense of energy is not an entirely physical sensation. It is more a sense of creative enlivenment, being energised by the music, and enlivening the pathways of creativity. This does not infer that CFS is psychosomatic, but rather that such creative action helps initiate movement of creative energy toward creative expression and transformative experience. This creative engagement with learning through creative expression connects personally to transformative learning through

nurturing soul (Dirkx 1997) and through embodied (Amann 2003; Lawrence 2012; Somerville 1999; 2004; Stuckey 2009), creative and alternative ways of knowing (Hoggan et al 2009:19; Lawrence 2005; 2005a) and being.

10/7/09:

I've hardly played music in weeks. This is most unusual. Even when I was at my worst with fatigue, I played piano, usually daily. But now, long in 'recovery phase' from CFS, I have had an acute but prolonged viral infection. Couldn't talk for a time, and certainly couldn't sing. I was too tired to sit for long without back support so I didn't play piano.

When I went to my piano again, it was like I touched hands with a long lost lover.

Liberated and free.

I felt recharged and revitalised.

I sit at the piano.

I put my hands to the keys.

In flowing equilibrium

music comes,

and I remember

myself again.

I remember,

this is me.

'We are all intuitive beings, yet the privileging of rational empiricism in our culture has taught us to mistrust and often dismiss our intuitive knowledge' (Lawrence 2009:129). Extrarational (Dirkx 2001:64; Lawrence 2009:129) ways of knowing and learning are active in the creative process of music making. 'Intuition is an extrarational way of knowing' (Lawrence 2009:129). Moving through, or learning our way through creative resistance with tools such as intuitive, spontaneous and exploratory playing and writing, or focusing on the sense within the body, potentially encourages the ability to navigate the creative-expressive space with these intuitive and extrarational ways of being, knowing and learning.

16/7/09: *More on the process of song-writing after restriction and resistance.*

Following a restriction of creativity, the creative flow enters.

When I begin to play again, there is a creativity that comes out of that restrictive time that is liberating. It's a clear flow of creativity, alive and well inside my body and being.

I reflect that it seems as though there is an ebb and flow to creativity.

I can't always be flowing, spontaneous and free,

but I can be available.

I can sink into the feeling and let myself be ready when inspiration comes.

If I go naturally with the ebb, and try not to be worried or frustrated, the flow can perhaps naturally come in time – if I am available.

In the ebb, I can use the time to practise technical work, scales and the like. If well enough, I can go for walks and engage the body in some physical activity, always good for moving the energy.

21/8/09:

In the last two weeks or so I have been fully in the creative. My music has been flowing, and I am empowered by the creative expression I have been immersed in lately.

Coming out of a period of illness, and feeling resistant to playing, I began to play more. It was like a sudden but gentle unfolding, and a delicate renewal of trust.

What is that resistance, that urge to never play anymore? It's a deep sense of something I can't quite connect with verbally to articulate. Yet, when I feel it, I know now that it is a resistance, somewhere inside myself, to vulnerability. Music is expression, yet it also opens one potentially to vulnerability in an artistic sensitivity.

I was conscious of the presence of this resistance, and I knew I needed to move with it, and through it.

'Just play', I coaxed myself, 'Just do a little... It doesn't have to be grand... Just do some technical work... no pressure'.

And in time, I did.

In working *with* the resistance, instead of trying to ignore it, deny it or being anxious about it, I was able then to begin to access the creative connections – just by touching the piano keys for a while. Touching, playing. Playing 'nothing', playing something. Anything. Just to begin to move the stuckness I was feeling.
Move the fingers. Touch the keys. Let the channels open.

Within days, I was writing, singing, playing, and loving it. The flood gates were opened, and I experienced an intently satisfying period of musical creativity. Enthusiastic, and even excited, I couldn't *wait* to get home when out, to get back to the piano and play music, explore the possibilities, to get back to the work. The music is flowing, and I am there with it.

Through this, I discovered experientially, that a useful method for moving through resistance is to acknowledge it, and let it be there, as it is. Then act on it gently. Rather than feel bound and gagged creatively by it, actively voicing its presence seemed to release the hold and move me forward to a creative praxis. This is not the same as attempting to remove it forcibly, however, and is a gentle process of examination, reflection and action.

I encouraged myself that I *would* play again when I felt like it. I tried not to worry about the strange, yet subtly disturbing, feeling that this might be the end of my creative expression. Nevertheless, I also felt great discomfort with the presence of the resistance. It was strongly palpable even when I so much as looked at my piano. It was strong. I feared it would be stronger than I. I feared it could override my creativity forever, and release my musical expression into a sea of dust.

After some time of not playing, and of not wanting at all to play, I decide that I will at least touch the keys, to just do something. That breaks the cycle of resistance, and opens the channels for me to find my creativity and flow in music. There is embodied learning in the touching of fingers to keys to break the cycle of resistance. The change of focus from stronghold of emotional resistance, to free flowing expression, is initiated through that simple action, connecting body to musical instrument.

Music carries such a strong emotive force, an emotional component, for me, that the urge to resist it is equally strong and emotional at times. Music potentially opens up vulnerability, though it also expresses a clear, strong, creative freedom. There is an element of both the darkness and the light in creative expression.

21/8/09:

The notion of ebb and flow, cycles of creativity, is something I have to respond to, allow, and be at ease with. I am not always a fountain of flowing, creative expression. And so, I have to learn to work with the ebb as well as celebrating in the inspirational flow when it is there.

Working at this time with acknowledging the ebb, allowed me to move through a resistance that was generating stagnant creative feelings. It turns out that this was emotionally based. However, I suggest that there is also an ebb and flow cycle that naturally occurs as part of the cycle of creativity.

At the time of the musical resistance, I felt as though I may never write another note, that my music was dead, gone, finished with. Yet, through my submergence in that feeling, with an intentional focus, within the sense of that very resistance itself, and my subsequent liberation from it and emergence from it, I undertook an intensely creative period of musical activity over a few weeks. I reflect that if I acknowledge this resistance, and immerse myself in the sense of it, and within the senses of the body, with an objective, reflective focus, I can aim to move through to the other side of it through a transformative learning experience.

I enlisted an intuitive knowing (Lawrence 2009:129), utilised writing as a method of inquiry (Richardson & St Pierre 2005), and focused my awareness on the body feeling of the experience (Aposhyan 2004), to move toward an engaged, creative praxis. I maintain that this process of moving bodily and creatively through a resistance experience, is not irrelevant to the work of transformative learning in a creative context, but is a core aspect of it.

GOING WITH THE FLOW

(Music: Beginnings 2010)

4/10/09:

I began a music piece with repetitive harp sequence (Music: Beginnings 2010). My proposed intention was to work with the sense of a simple, purity of the sound. I had wanted to explore a healing resonance, after the de-stabilising, disorienting noise of an MRI head scan had penetrated my senses to a disturbing level of disequilibrium.

Soon, however, the musicality of the piece lends itself to some harmonising with other instrument voice parts. I find myself adding bass strings. I leave the piece for the day soon after this, but it plays on my mind, and I return to it the next day.

Wherever I had *intended* this piece to develop, to travel, to go, it is not where it ended up going. The beauty in this journey is in the discovery of unexplored places surprisingly coming into sound-sight. The music goes where it will. If I try hard to control it intellectually, it seems to frustrate the process. Eventually it either takes the path it wants to go regardless of my intellectual instructions, or I cannot continue the piece at all and decide to abandon the exercise. If I let myself follow the natural flow of the movement in the music, then the creativity is more likely to flow freely, and it is more likely to develop into a piece that is natural, and fundamentally an artistic expression.

This piece of music took several surprising turns. At each of these musical turns there was a definitive moment within the developing new part which I knew was the right turn. Others were then discarded or transformed into a newer perspective. This instinctive kind of knowing of it being the right turn is a subjective experience. My music writing is a subjective, artistic experience. Moving away from my conceptual vision of pure harp sounds, I added a saxophone part and the piece moved into an entirely different direction. Delighted, I followed.

Over the next few days, an interesting learning experience developed. I was trying to fit the music into a shape I considered appropriate for the presumed destination. I became increasingly frustrated. I tried several different parts and styles, but none seemed right. They did not feel, or sound, right. They didn't fit. There was something missing. The piece was not coming together. It felt stagnant.

I decided that I must leave the piece. It was too frustrating, not flowing, not working. However, it would not leave *me*. The repetitive harp sounds with strings and sax played through my head with clarity, awaiting investigation. I realised only later, that I was partly conscious of another melody on top of the rest, which I found myself singing and humming throughout the day. However, I did not explore it. I didn't want, or plan, to use that particular melody.

Days later, after resisting using that simple melody, I gave in to it. In that moment, the piece took a dramatic turn, and became almost complete. The melody of new top strings was there all along, but I had, for some reason, ignored it, or at least tried to ignore it, unwilling to explore its relationship to this piece. This reason, I later reflected, seemed to be bound up in my logical thoughts on what I should do or should not do with the development of the piece. Rather than *allowing* it to *unfold*, I had been *trying* to write it. In fact, in so doing, I had been blocking it. The high strings part immediately pulled the piece together. It was the missing part I had been trying to find whilst, ironically, it had been playing softly in my ear all along.

Allowing a piece to unfold is part of the subjective, creative process and creative, experiential learning. If I try intellectually to write a piece it is an intellectual, rather than artistic, exercise. One composer may work subjectively very differently to another composer, and there are individual nuances to accessing creativity. However, my natural way of working within music is to find the flow of the piece by allowing it to unfold through a process of exploration.

McNiff suggests that creative process 'emerges in unexpected ways from the attention we give to objects of inquiry' (1998:145). As a learning process, the creative process is potentially transformative and intuitive, drawing on tacit forms of knowledge and fluid, imaginal perspectives (Dirkx 2001:64) of discovery and understanding. This example of writing a piece of music, which took several unexpected turns, and with which I engaged intuitively (though for a time unaware of the melody playing softly in my ear, urging to be written) is an example of the uncertain paths the creative process may take, and of the intuitive movement needed within that process. McNiff (1998) acknowledges the uncertainty of the creative process of transformation. 'Uncertainty and mystery rather than reliability and predictability are the driving forces of artistic transformation' (McNiff 1998:43). Further, we must allow ourselves to 'trust the process and

allow it to do its work of transformation' (McNiff 1998:37). To do this we also need to make ourselves available for the process and for our own creative action.

THE REVERBNATION TRANSFORMATION

In mid 2011, I began to upload some of my music through mp3 files to the Internet with ReverbNation (2011-2014). Having resisted the online music game, and being resistant to convert my music into mp3 format (partly because of integrity of sound), I eventually decided I may have to go in that direction in order to keep up with working with music in the current world space.

I felt that I had come to an impasse musically, in the business world of it though certainly not in the writing and playing of it, and had been feeling as though this was insurmountable. I felt defeated. In that lowest ebb of creative engagement, I took the bull by the horns and entered the world of Internet music. I discovered a transformative experience in the following of that direction. Not only did the musicians' website ReverbNation (2011-2014) offer me support as a musician to publish, sell and express my music online (depending on how much time and effort I was willing and able to invest), I also connected with other musicians from all over the globe. Even though we did not have deeply involved conversations or stay in communication for lengthy discussions, there was a strong sense of solidarity from some quarters.

There, I discovered a global community of artists supporting artists. Some wrote proudly in their bios, and some expressed also in lyrics, of troubled pasts and of overcoming adversity through the expression of music. Some asserted, supported, encouraged or promoted the vision of 'artists supporting artists', and there was a strong movement against the machine of the music industry having had a hold on what musicians do and how they express their music and lyrics. Over a short period of time, I became one of them. I felt connected to, and within, a global village community of musicians, however diverse our backgrounds, style, music and language.

People listened; I listened. Some of us shared each other's music online. I felt that my music was worthwhile again. Whatever the shortcomings of ReverbNation, there appeared to be many positive and transformative levels of its support for musicians globally. ReverbNation (2011-2014) is not anti-music-industry. However, the level of support provided to musicians as a platform for music of many genres has got to cast a small but significant dint in the establishment-music-industry's hard line tactics to control musicians, art and expression.

Of course, ReverbNation is not the only Internet music site that supports musicians and enables online publishing, connecting and management for musicians to have their work heard. Nevertheless, at this point in time, it is the main website that I utilise as a musician. Moving from a position of apparent stagnation and defeat, I progressed to a position of feeling a part of a global music community, through the support of this online community, and my music has been heard by many who it would not otherwise have reached previously. In this, I find some sense of artistic and personal satisfaction, although it is not the end aim for my musical expression or artistic endeavours.

This experiential process of moving from the feeling of having been defeated to one of empowerment, has a transformative learning experience at the base of it. The link with transformative learning here reflects a perspective transformative learning and transformative learning based in creative expression and artistic knowing (Hoggan et al 2009; Lawrence 2005a). Yet it also reflects transformative learning through the arts as social change (Clover & Stalker 2007) and social movements, reflecting perhaps some elements of emancipatory transformative learning (Freire 1972; Clover & Stalker 2007) through music and the arts. The sense of transformation to which some musicians refer in their biographies (on ReverbNation), and the sense of some solidarity regarding musicians having a say over their art, becoming empowered artists, standing up together against the music industry's hold on art and money making, reflects a social aspect of creative expression and transformative change, through using the arts as transformative learning tools.

CONCLUSION

I have described some aspects of a musical and creative learning from the perspective of personal, subjective experience. Stepping inside this learner/researcher experience through exploratory and expressive writing is intended to bring into focus some of the learning dimensions of creativity, as a creative exploration of learning. I have included excerpts from research journals, collected as data, in order to illustrate some of the perspectives of learning inherent in creative expression.

Through subjective accounts, I have demonstrated that there are multi-dimensional qualities to learning associated with creative action and participation/practice. Exploring these qualities may facilitate learning, both enhancing the learning pathways of creativity, and enhancing the learning of these pathways of creativity.

Creative and intuitive ways of knowing infiltrate the creative, transformative learning experience. The body's experience and embodied ways of knowing also form an anchor for learning through creativity. Finding an authentic voice and navigating our way through resistance to creativity may help move us, bodily and creatively, toward a personal, creative praxis. The notion of nurturing a sense of creativity, creative essence and creative expression as valuable tools for transformative learning is a key theme throughout these exploratory observations.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE BODY AND LEARNING

A Verse of the Body

The lived body,
The inscribed body,
Inscribed by the landscape,
Inscribing the landscape.
The life of the body,
The knowing body.
Body knowledge,
Body wisdom,
Bodymind.

The learning body,
and learning the body.

The body at the site of learning.
... The body at the site of Dreaming.

The opening 'Verse of the Body', above, draws on themes and phrases from several writers (Amann 2003; Davies 2000; Dychtwald 1977; Grosz 1994; 1995; McConnell-Imbriotis 2004; Somerville 1999), as well as from my own writing regarding the body. This chapter draws on literature from varying fields, including postural bodywork, massage, yoga, body psychology, post-structural feminism, neurophysiology (regarding learning) and adult learning.

This chapter addresses a developing perspective of bodily aspects of learning, acknowledging the body as a site of learning and exploring ways of learning through the body. Throughout the thesis, I have utilised aspects of learning through the body as theorised and presented through this chapter. This chapter is a grounding for some of the exploration and examples in the thesis regarding body learning and discussing some socio-medical contexts of the body. I also approach

some aspects of the body and learning through the frame of social transformative learning, largely through health and wellbeing contexts.

Literature on body theorising is quite extensive and crosses several disciplines. Theories of embodied learning also have many branches and can take several complex paths. Nevertheless, as research within the areas of subjectivity, the body and embodied learning is growing, so too is it perhaps becoming more refined into several, distinct perspectives of the body and its relationship to adult learning. Rather than attempting to bring together the many, varying perspectives apparent within the broader literature of body theorising and embodied learning, I have focused on areas of bodily learning that have most strongly influenced my own learning and experience. I address the notion of learning through creative and somatic ways of knowing, drawing from the areas of arts and health, and integrate these aspects into an overall, loose framework or context for learning the body.

Three main questions arose in the formulating of this chapter.

- 1) How do I learn the body during chronic illness experience/ throughout this time?
- 2) How do I write of the body in relation to learning and creative expression?
- 3) How do I learn of place through the body, and of the body through place?

Addressing these questions, I have illustrated some of the ways through which I have learned the body and how I have learned through the body's knowing. This has been a focused aspect of learning with which I have engaged throughout my adult learning life. I have drawn from an experiential, personal history of learning through utilising body awareness techniques, massage and yoga, as well as through creative expression and the arts.

The third question is dealt with in greater depth in chapters nine and ten, on place learning, whilst only touched upon briefly within this chapter. Through the experiential processes involved in writing of place, being and belonging, which navigated partly around the body and creativity as aspects of my learning in urban and natural environments, I was able to connect a bodily and creative approach to my learning of place.

Some of this chapter is presented in verse form, continuing the creative-expressive aspects of research and learning. Additionally, extracts from the research journal are utilised, and writings specific to the body are presented in the context through which they were written.

INITIATING THE INQUIRY

From the moment I read of the term *embodied learning* (Amann 2003; Cohen 2003; Freiler 2008; Merriam & Caffarella 2006: 190-198; McConnell-Imbriotis 2004; Somerville 1995; 1999; 2004; Stuckey 2009) it held meaning for me. At the time, I did not know its academic definitions, but felt that it must mean something that relates to, or reflects upon, some of the ways of learning I have experienced. I sought clarification on its meaning, yet came across seemingly conflicting information, and so put it on the shelf, perhaps not realising I was already setting things in motion in the back of my mind. Still, it urged me to look into its essence. I wanted to, but felt that the academic avenue of embodied learning must surely be far beyond my conceptual understanding of the body and of learning. Somewhere in my own body, the term *embodied learning* rang with meaning.

Later in my reading, I began to find some gentle confirmation and validation of my own experiential learning of the body (Amann 2003; Cohen 2003; Merriam & Caffarella 2006:190-198; McConnell-Imbriotis 2004; Somerville 1995; 1999; 2004) and so felt compelled to venture further. Some writers (McConnell-Imbriotis 2004; Somerville 1995;1999) were inspirational to my initial, exploratory ideas on embodied learning, and several had an influence on my choice to include aspects of bodily learning in the thesis (Amann 2003; McConnell-Imbriotis 2004; Somerville 1999; 2004; Stuckey 2009). Some, however, also initiated in me a query as to whether it may not be the right road for me to pursue (Grosz 1994; 1995; Merleau-Ponty 1962), that I was mixing up the facts, and that I was not understanding or getting to grips with the basis of embodied learning.

It was through this experience that I began to realise that theorising of the body is complex and multilayered. However, I did not really understand all those layers, and it appeared to me that some literature was quite removed from the body itself. Further reading of Grosz's (1994; 1995) work gave me some insight into linking perspectives of the body, space and place, and addressed some issues of the body through a gendered and cultural perspective which was significant to my reflections.

As discussed in the Literature Review, Amann (2003) proposes a model of somatic learning which includes four overlapping aspects of learning: kinesthetic, sensory, affective and spiritual. She suggests that these four aspects are fundamental to embodied/somatic knowledge and

learning. This perspective of embodied learning incorporates the possibility of there being many overlapping areas within the generation of embodied knowledge and learning, and supports a multilayered perspective for theorising the body. I have drawn from this basis in my theorising of body learning as a multilayered and subjective experience.

In reflection, I had interpreted my own experience of embodied learning as having held meaning for me in quite specific ways. This was influenced through my training and professional practice in massage, through practice of yoga, and through body awareness/ meditation techniques. These kinds of practices reflect a perspective of embodied learning more specifically termed somatic learning (Amann 2003; Freiler 2008) and are associated closely with focusing awareness and attention directly on the body (Freiler 2008:39).

I include this section on initiating the inquiry in order to bring to light some of my own process regarding embodied/somatic learning. It was only after the reading of a variety of perspectives that I came to understand that there are so many variations on the theme of embodied learning and that it is open to interpretation through various applications of it. The epistemological foundations of embodied learning are wide, and there appear to be many long and complex paths we can enter in the exploration. This may suggest that the role of the body in learning is far reaching and that there is not only one, correct, way to approach it. That there are several different approaches to the subject of embodied learning does not invalidate one or the other, but may serve to reinforce that there are many, varied applications of its role.

I began to think of embodied/somatic learning as a way of exploration of alternative ways of knowing. I began to consider that seeking to establish a balance of both mind and body may be a useful goal in exploring the position of the body in learning. I began to explore creative and practical ways of learning the body through a transformative learning perspective. Using visualising techniques, body meditations, and creative expression in music, verse and writing, I sought ways to express the body's knowing and experience which anchored in a creative-expressive aspect of learning. Although I had already intuitively engaged in this, I had not previously considered it as an academically viable position. Seeking an integrative approach, I began to look for ways of blending my background in the arts and in massage therapy as ways of learning the body experientially, and as methods for learning how to write the body expressively.

READING AND LEARNING THE BODY

The body does not communicate in the language of the intellect. It uses symbolic and poetic language and visual representation of memories and feelings. It uses physical expression and an overwhelming, but underplayed, announcement of its physical needs. It communicates physically in sophisticated articulations, through its anatomy, and it communicates in the deeper strata of its being, which may utilise the mind's interpretation of events, experiences and feelings.

Perhaps in analysing the body too intricately through the intellect there is a danger of perpetuating the mind/body split. Here, the focus of control and implementation of ideas moves into the domain of intellectual thinking, rather than focusing on the body itself and listening to the body's intrinsic and subjective intelligence. As Davies (2000:13) suggests, much theorising of the body appears to have become disembodied and some theories of the body virtually 'ignore the body' (Davies 2000:13). This stance, that theorising of the body has become disembodied, is one which I attempt to address, through my approach to interpreting, listening to, and writing the body. Through bringing the body into a centrality of focus (Davies 2000; Grosz 1994;1995; Somerville 1999; 2004) we are perhaps more able to understand its value in learning and to re-establish methods for accessing bodily ways of knowing.

Many writers (Aposhyan 2004:24-25; Damasio 2006; Doidge 2010: 213-214; Gustafson 1998:54; Merriam & Caffarella 2006:189; Stuckey 2009:32) cite Descartes as having made a mistake in the proposition that mind is superior to body. Through the assertion that mind and body are entirely separate, the notion of a duality of mind and body has been emphasised and perpetuated. This division of mind and body has created a seemingly unbridgeable philosophical argument in Western thought for centuries. The refocusing on the body as an equally important aspect in knowing and learning underpins much of embodied learning practice and literature and underscores this chapter.

I suggest that body knowledge cannot be read through intellectual processes alone, but must be experienced through the body itself; through engaging with the body. If this experience is articulated through the intellect, through utilising the mind as a tool for expression, then the language used may better serve the expressive, body-learning experience if it is articulated through the mind as observer rather than as controller. The over emphasis of mind-over-body has created a dilemma in our Western, cultural inability to trust the body. Nevertheless, there

also appears to be a cultural swing that is moving towards focusing on integrative approaches to body and mind.

My individual methods of working with the body, body learning and exploring body knowledge are based in a personal history of learning through massage therapy, yoga, meditation and body relaxation/visualisation techniques (Cohen 2003; Dychtwald 1977; Freiler 2008; European Rolfing Association 2013; Stuckey 2009; Sussman & Kossak 2011), as well as drama techniques and voice work (Meyer 2009; 2012; Butterwick & Selman 2012). Over time, my experiential learning of the body has combined with learning about its anatomical structure and blended, naturally and intuitively, into a process of learning which draws on multiple ways of knowing (Stuckey 2009). Engaging the body in creative work through methods of drama and voice also helped me to lay some foundations for exploring the body's ways of knowing and for understanding the connection of the body to learning.

Learning the body through practices such as yoga (Cohen 2003), and through various types of body/mind focusing techniques (Stuckey 2009; Sussman & Kossak 2011), may contribute to creating an awareness which is not solely directed or constrained by intellectual thought. The mind may then be a useful tool which is able to articulate the learning which is experienced within the terrain of the body. However, importantly, it is not the over-riding leader of the exercise.

Body awareness techniques such as yoga, Feldenkrais, Alexander Technique, Tai Chi, Qi Gong, and meditations which focus the mind on the body (Amann 2003:5; Beringer 2010; Brennen 2004; Cohen 2003; Freiler 2008; Gustafson 1999; Stuckey 2009; Sussman & Kossak 2011) help to train us to let go of the dominance of intellectual thought and enable us to be more present within our own body. These techniques often require us to move the mind out of the way, to train it to take a back seat, and to enable the body to be in focus. In order to learn the body, and to really access body knowledge, it is useful to be consciously aware of the body. Rather than chase ideas of the body around within the parameters of the mind as leader, learning to be more consciously aware of the body may assist us to be better able to enter the realm of the body's arena, and to allow it to be the main player, the actor, and let it speak.

Intuition (Lawrence 2009; 2012a), creative expression (Stuckey 2009; Hoggan et al 2009; Lawrence 2005; 2012a), meditative imagery (Stuckey 2009; Sussman & Kossak 2011) and writing

(Davies 2000) each have a part to play in learning the body through accessing creative and alternative ways of knowing. Body awareness techniques, bodywork/massage, movement and dance, (Beringer 2010; Brennen 2004; Lowen 1977; Dychtwald 1976; European Rolwing Association 2013) also have a part to play in accessing bodily knowledge and for facilitating transformative learning. These methods and tools for reading and learning the body may also support connections for creative oriented transformative learning.

I have put some of these kinds of methods and techniques into practice and have attempted, over time, to become more attuned to the body's ways of knowing. I am not adept at knowing the body and its many layers of deep knowledge. However, I am still learning the body, have attempted to gain awareness of the body, have utilised some knowledge of the anatomical and physiological body-world, and have explored, and continue to explore, the allegorical perspectives of the body, its history, its creative impulses and its learning. This perspective has informed my learning, bodily and creatively, and has been a continuously strong characteristic of my learning through illness/wellness and throughout adulthood. I have used examples throughout the thesis of my own body learning and embodied learning in order to demonstrate how some of this knowledge has been processed and learned.

EMERGING DIRECTIONS IN ADULT LEARNING

Drawing from a background in natural therapies and creative expression, my focus on the body and learning draws from a somewhat different area to that of some of the academic body literature, such as Grosz (1994; 1995) and Merleau Ponty (1962). New directions within adult learning (Cohen 2003; Freiler 2008, Gustafson 1999; Hoggan et al 2009; Kerka 2002; Lawrence 2005; 2009; 2012; 2012a; 2012b; Stuckey 2009) are opening a place for further academic studies within an adult learning perspective which have, more traditionally, perhaps been the domain of natural health and spiritual perspectives. Some physical education perspectives (Aposhyan 2004:11) and artistic programs have also utilised some of these methods for learning. As a wave of interest in alternative ways of knowing and learning (Hoggan et al 2009; Lawrence 2005; 2009; Stuckey 2009) intensifies, more ways for understanding alternative ways of learning may come to light.

There appears to be growing interest in some literature fields (Hoggan et al 2009; Lawrence 2005; 2009; 2012; 2012a; 2012b; Stuckey 2009; Tisdell 2008) regarding the combination of creative,

bodily and intuitive aspects of transformative learning. Although such an academic literature base is not extensive (Hoggan et al 2009:20), there seems to be a growing awareness apparent within the literature (Hoggan et al 2009; Lawrence 2005; 2009; Lawrence 2012a; 2012b; Stuckey 2009; Sussman & Kossak 2011; Tisdell 2008; Butterwick & Selman 2012; Meyer 2012) as to the ways through which these creative, intuitive and alternative aspects of learning may be nurtured and better understood. These intersections of creative and bodily ways of knowing and learning are where my focus and interest are positioned.

'Theoretical discussions of embodied learning are becoming associated with holistic frameworks and innovative practices that link bodies and minds through multiple ways of knowing' (Freiler 2008:43). Those multiple ways of knowing include the use of creative-expressive methods. Utilising expressive modes such as 'metaphor, dance, poetry, visual art or dramatic expression, we draw on the affective, somatic and spiritual domains' (Lawrence 2005:4). Within the application of such methods, the 'traditional boundaries of knowing are beginning to fade in favour of innovative approaches reconnecting mind and body' (Freiler 2008:44).

Extra-rational processes such as the use of metaphor, music, symbols, images and kinesthetic sensory experience may enhance, support and express some of the meaning making processes that people connect to as having spiritual significance (Tisdell 2008:28). A spiritual focus of adult learning may help to reclaim parts of the self, reframe cultural symbols and earlier life experience, yield a greater sense of creativity and also facilitate healing from some forms of oppression (Tisdell 2008:32). Spirituality may also be identified with 'the ongoing development of some aspect of identity' (Tisdell 2008:31). Such experiences may foster transformative learning through facilitating reflection and understanding toward a more 'integrated sense of identity' (Tisdell 2008:32).

The term *spiritual*, when used within this thesis, largely refers to ways of knowing and learning that are identified with such subjective meaning making (Amann 2003:7; Merriam & Caffarella 2006:195, 204; Tisdell 2008), rather than with specifically religiously affiliated practices. Although I have previously participated in learning through some meditation teachings from various traditional, Eastern perspectives, and also learned, from childhood, some Western perspectives of prayer and practice, I maintain that meditation does not need to be affiliated with any particular religious perspective, but is available to any individual through various techniques for stilling the mind and for promoting focused relaxation of the body (Sussman & Kossak 2011:56-58). A key

to the growth in popularity of Eastern forms of meditation and spirituality in Western cultures has been 'delinking these practices from the religious systems with which they had formerly been associated and understanding them in the context of transpersonal psychology, which studies the transpersonal, self-transcendent, or spiritual aspects of human experience' (Sussman & Kossak 2011:57).

Reference to meditative, body relaxation techniques in this thesis then, refers to non-religious meditative processes, accessible by anybody given the tools to learn. My first experience of a guided, body relaxation/visualising technique came through workshops in drama as an eighteen year old, undergraduate university drama student. This was a creative context of learning and the body. I continue to use these kinds of body learning techniques within a creative context. Participating in drama work initiated, for me, a discovery and awareness of the body as a creative site of learning and expression.

Although there appears to be a wide acceptance that Eastern traditions of meditation and spirituality treat the body and mind as one (and this may be true of some), I have also experienced some Eastern based teachings that have portrayed the body as the enemy; something to be contained, tamed, overcome and transcended through an enlightenment of consciousness. It is perhaps a mistaken notion of Western interpretation that anything non-Western must be automatically integrative of body and mind. Many Eastern philosophies of health do adopt an approach that is more integrative of body and mind than mainstream Western approaches, whilst some Eastern traditions appear to ignore the body in search of enlightenment of spirit.

Through exploring a number of Eastern meditation traditions, I learned, over time, that the forms of meditation with which I feel most at ease, are those which accept the body as a place for reflection and experience, rather than as something to only be overcome and mastered. In reflection, meditations and body relaxation techniques which focus upon the body as a living part of ourselves have held greater meaning for me, subjectively, as meaningful ways of learning the body, and as ways of integrating the learning of the body and the learning of the mind. Positioning the body in a creative context for learning, we can also begin to learn new ways of interpreting and understanding the language of the subjective body.

WRITING THE BODY

Learning through the body is considered a 'valued alternative way of knowing' (Freiler 2008:37) and has practical applications for reconnecting mind and body. Extra-rational (Dirkx 2001:64) ways of learning and knowing are an integral part of learning through the body within some contexts and perspectives of somatic learning. Experiencing a sense of increased bodily awareness may help contribute to greater body-mind understanding, learning and connection.

22/2/12:

At this point in this writing, I stopped writing, and reflected on why the words were not continuing in flowing more freely. Feeling that I had reached a point of resistance, suddenly feeling stuck, or somehow caught in the lack of flow, I decided to employ some free writing and see what came of it, in order to get my thoughts clearer again.

I wrote:

Perhaps you are trying too hard to fit within the confines of the mind and body dualism, within an academic context.

Where is that intuitive flow of writing that you used to tap into?

It is there in the body. So let the body talk.

It seems almost as though I am trying to hold the flow so that I can write it from the head, rather than allowing it to flow from the source of it; from the body inside.

This free writing example moves between first and second person. It writes as it writes. The notable phrases to me within this writing ignite the sense of letting the *body* write; the sense of allowing the writing to come from the body, in a rhythmic flow of words, coming to be.

Rather than trying to validate, intellectually, what I am thinking, and to demonstrate that I am indeed able to think, writing from the body frees the flow of writing, to an extent, and enables it to be a creatively expressive venture. The words arise, not by solely thinking about them intellectually in the immediate moment or through conscious, critical reflection, but rather by accessing some creative feeling, a creative sense of it, within the body. It writes as the body moves the fingers at the keys, typing, and as the body sits in the chair, with feet on the floor or cross legged on the chair. Somehow the words make sense. It is not an act of only the body, or only the mind, but of a body and mind integration; perhaps a creative integration of body and mind.

It is this creative integration of body and mind that I emphasise as being a way through which to extend learning, understanding and meaning-making. Writing from the body does not mean that we cannot think and access our minds as well, both intricately and simultaneously. It means, rather, that the body and mind work in a more co-ordinated effect. They work creatively, as the awareness moves from mind to body in a way of allowing movement and flow between the two.

This way of writing, in connection with a focus on body learning, draws also on the body as an 'alternative way of knowing' (Freiler 2008:37), using the body's knowing and an extra-rational (Dirkx 2001:64) perspective of learning. It connects in with creative ways of knowing and learning also, and in keeping with the methods through which I play and write music, the body becomes a kind of instrument for improvisation and expression of a deeper knowledge that lies, in waiting, in the beneath and in-between spaces.

EXPLORING THE BODY'S KNOWING

In exploring our bodies' ways of knowing and learning, it may be useful to reflect that memory does not work through a 'veridical storage' (Davies 2000:46) system, but is 'endlessly creative, working afresh sets of images and stories that may come in part from present discourses or desires, from the memories of others, from dreams or from imagined events – as well as from things that actually happened' (Davies 2000:46).

In considering the inscribing of the body and landscapes, Davies (2000:45-46) describes memory and the body as an interactive experience, with memories being influenced by environment, others' experience, our own perceptions and our bodies. Memory within the body is not necessarily an exact replica of events and the body's experience, but is also influenced by other factors.

Memories... are not written on the body in indelible and minutely legible ink. Politics, desire, patterns of language use – each play their part in constituting how we read our own bodily (in)scriptions, what we find there, what we search out in some prior-to-naming space in the depth/surfaces of our embodied beings.

Davies 2000:45.

Davies (2000:43-51) describes some collective biography workshops, facilitating aspects of body knowledge through collective processes of writing, storytelling and retelling that are not based in our practised ways of communicating words. She specifies that words sometimes can 'occlude the embodied detail in favour of culturally normative or desired or politically appropriate explanations' (Davies 2000:46). Here, Davies (2000:46) suggests strongly that using words alone to describe the body's experience of inscription may be a fallible technique, influenced highly by the mind and perception rather than listening to the body speaking of its own 'prior-to-naming space' (2000:45).

In utilising body awareness exercises and techniques, influenced through various kinds of meditations, postural awareness, bodywork/massage, yoga, and other focused, therapeutic relaxation techniques (Cohen 2003; Brennen 2004; Dychtwald 1977; Freiler 2008; Gendlin 2003; Lowen 1976; Stuckey 2009; Sussman & Kossak 2011), I suggest that we can learn to listen to the body in its 'prior-to-naming space' (Davies 2000:45) and allow it to tell us, non-verbally, or perhaps supra-verbally, what is there in its bodily learning, 'before-the-naming' (Davies 2000:50). We can later put these experiences and learnings into words, images, movement, or sound, whether poetically, artistically, visually, musically, or verbally through storying and restorying.

18/2/12:

Sometimes it is also good just to let them go, to watch them drift up from the body and move into a sense of otherness within a distance of memory, now viewed from the position of observer/witness, rather than as analytical purveyor of truth or knowledge. At times, this is all the body needs; to be allowed to breathe the stories through and out; to articulate them in ways that the mind can see, observe and reflect in learning, though not hold onto, but rather allow their transience to be replaced by the experience of a lighter sense of being in the body. This in itself is one way through which the body communicates its knowledge, by allowing restrictive tensions in the body to be released, perhaps through the rhythmic feel of the breath, and replaced with an integration of learning through the experience of it.

The body is poetic. The body is artistic. The body speaks in symbols and metaphor, and the body also may speak through a clear, unrestrained memory of our experience.

I wrote the above passage after having completed a relaxation/meditation focusing on the body. I had been experiencing pain in my ankle and foot for several days and decided, after writing some of the body oriented work, to do a body focusing meditation myself, with this body.

Relaxing... laying still ... breathing easily...

Surprising images from the past arose from focusing on the foot and ankle at this time, through breathing into that space of the physical and 'in-between' (Somerville 1999:14). I had not expected, nor tried, to access or remember any of these particular memories, and they surprised me in their clarity of mental visibility as they simply floated out of the body space.

Imaging the body in this way is not about trying to forcibly draw images from the body, or from a particular area of the body. Rather, it is about focusing on that area, while breathing, allowing flow, and relaxing. I breathed with the images, and let them flow in and out of a consciousness of sight. Then, afterwards, I got up and I wrote the above passage. I wanted to let the body's experience of learning speak for itself, rather than analysing or writing it directly.

In the few days later, however, strangely, I found myself standing with a particular posture of that foot, the ankle folding in slightly and, at times, the toes wanting to curve under slightly in a way to hold tight. I noticed the posture and let myself relax into it. It felt secure somehow. I then remembered a photograph of myself as a thirteen year old, standing this way with the ankle drawn down slightly toward the ground, foot partially turned over.

Writing details of the images is unnecessary at this point, and somehow seems to detract from the experience of the body (as written in the free writing passage), having let those images arise and leave. However, for the reflection of the body's ways of knowing it is perhaps useful to note the process here, as an example of how the body tells its journey and its story and prompts us to just let it go sometimes. The body held her own, specifically subjective, experiences of images and memories and created her own, subjective process. I also noticed over those few days that the pain had gone; there was no sign of it. Whether this was co-incidental or not, I cannot be certain. Nevertheless, connections of body learning were formed through the experience and a process of learning was activated through exploring such bodily ways of knowing.

FORMULAIC NOTIONS OF THE BODY

Some popular writers (Hay 1988) appear to postulate that there are specific connections of body and mind, regarding the body's space, illness and health. I argue against relying upon overly simplified generalisations, proposed within a rigid model of body and mind connection, in a system which connects specific body illnesses directly to specific emotions, as though all are psychosomatic manifestations. Although some of those connections might be loosely applicable at times, when viewed through a metaphorical perspective, I suggest that it is important to not rely on simplistic associations applied as some kind of diagnostic certainty.

This approach may all too easily draw conclusions through intellectual assumption without deeper consideration of the lived body (Grosz 1995:33) as a subjective, experiential site of learning. The lived body includes 'the lived experience of the body, the body's internal or psychic inscription' (Grosz 1995:33). Additionally, taking note of the social and medical body, the notion of an inscriptive body 'conceives the body as a surface on which social law, morality and values are inscribed'(Grosz 1995:33). Taking into account such internal, bodily inscriptions and external, social and environmental inscriptions made upon the body, I draw out the argument throughout this chapter, that the body and mind connection is not simply mirrored, but has a complexity of layers. There is 'neurological, physiological and even philosophical complexity behind the search for a true understanding of the body-mind relationship' (Aposhyan 2004:12). The consideration of the body-mind relationship is complex and multilayered.

This is not to say that theories of the body which acknowledge and explore a connection of body and mind are incorrect or inappropriate. I argue that the subjective body is not so easily defined. Not all bodies may respond in exactly the same way to environment, experience or illness. Likewise, highlighting a contradiction, there may be areas that do seem, at times, to equate with some theorised body/mind associations, within individual bodily experience. With this in mind, such systems might provide a general starting point for exploring the body's knowing.

Nevertheless, relying only on simplistic notions of defined correlations between mind and body, may also proliferate misconceptions of the deeper aspects of body/mind connection. It is difficult to outline a decisive argument definitively for or against this, as exploring bodily ways of knowing and learning requires non-logical ways of viewing learning and the body. However, addressing the notion of over simplification is a key consideration, as there are potential issues

that may emerge through applying simplistic analysis regarding illness and the mind/body association.

It is not my intention to critique various popular literature interpretations of psycho-physical associations of the body, other than to suggest that some of those popular treatises on the body (Hay 1988) may be overly simplistic in their analysis, although the intentions are sincere regarding insight into the body, wellness and knowing. Some interpretations of body/mind connection are very loosely based in areas of deeper, somatic psychology (Aposhyan 2004:6-10) and some have distanced connections to some Eastern systems of health and philosophy (Dychtwald 1977:24). I acknowledge both of these in-depth areas as useful guides for an integrative exploration of body and mind. My argument is not against somatic psychology or Eastern systems of health and wellbeing. Rather, it is against the over simplification of such influences, creating interpretive models that may inadvertently accentuate psychophysical constraint, and perhaps even subtly proliferate elements of discrimination toward those with illness or disability in some contexts. Epistemologies which draw from body/mind connections need to take into account complex emotional, social, psychological, environmental and physiological experience.

Drawing from some Eastern systems of health and wellbeing (Gustafson 1999: 254-255; Cohen 2003; Dychtwald 1977:24; Sussman & Kossak 2011: 56-58), alternative ways of knowing may become a guiding aspect for learning the body and of rediscovering the body as a site of learning. My criticism regarding some popular health literature is not that it may draw indirectly from alternative ways of knowing the body or from Eastern systems of health. Rather, I address the possible risk of assuming a simplistic, formulaic notion directed toward explicit causality between mind and body; one which *still* emphasises the superiority of mind over body, and thereby continues a dualistic notion of body and mind. The body as an epistemological site (Gustafson 1999:249) is more subjective and fluid, and is much less open to extreme, direct definitions.

Socio-culturally, a potential risk emerges through intellectual oversimplification of the body and mind relationship. There is room for misinterpretation and the misidentification of illness or injury as being all in the mind. Such misinterpretations may inadvertently produce powerful, negative images and social stigmas, inscriptions and discriminations, rather than facilitating a focus of support for transformation and learning. Bodies are also biological beings, and as such they are also vulnerable to environmental toxins, genetic predispositions, and also to viral and infective agents. In a seemingly contradictory perspective, I note that there is also value for

meaning-making, for gaining insight and understanding, through exploring and reflecting upon metaphysical or metaphorical associations regarding illness, wellness and the body.

Rather than approaching the body through formulaic agendas, if viewed through a frame of exploration, with listening and respect, we may uncover aspects of ourselves that are expressive and resourceful.

In approaching the body with *respect*, we shift out of regarding it as a machine and approach it with more humility; we move from an attitude of *changing* it toward an attitude of *listening* to it and allowing it to express itself. As we listen, we discover a great variety of resources, qualities, intelligence, and experience within ourselves. Important parts of ourselves emerge with different strengths and needs.

Aposhyan 2004:15.

Over time I have drawn, to an extent, from some theories of bodymind and bodywork (Dychtwald 1977; Lowen 1976; European Rolfing Association 2013), somatic psychology (Aposhyan 2004: 6-15; Gendlin 2003; Lowen 1976) and body-mind psychotherapy (Aposhyan 2004) within practical methods of learning the body. In context, these theories and methods work closely with the subjective body in processes integrative of body and mind, rather than isolating the mind and body as separate. It is important to consider the body in context, rather than separating it through theoretical frameworks that disembodify the practice and theory.

Contesting the dominant, Western paradigms of knowledge construction, experiential learning based in other ways of knowing may provide methods which extend the boundaries of learning. However, simply applying other systems through the filter of rationalist, dualistic thought does not necessarily lift the barriers to enhance understanding of the body/mind connection. Within the contemporary areas of somatic psychology and body psychotherapy, the connection of mind and body/body and mind plays a central part (Aposhyan 2004:12). This emphasises the subjective and experiential element within the body and mind connection. Let us not forget that the body is a biological being, and that environmental, genetic and other physical life/world factors also have an influence on the body's way of being and wellbeing. At the core of all this we need to consult the subjective body. We need to ask the body and not just rely on theoretical concepts.

A MULTILAYERED APPROACH

Although I have used an integrative approach to body learning in my own life, I have not trained in psychology or philosophy. My areas of training and experience are in massage and creative expression, and it is from that perspective, through using a multilayered approach of bodily, meditative and creative inquiry, that I address the body and mind relationship.

Some epistemologies of the body do view the body through a multilayered approach (Aposhyan 2004; Cohen 2003; Davies 2000; Freiler 2008; Gendlin 2003; Lowen 1976; Somerville 1999; Stuckey 2009; Lawrence 2012; 2012a; 2012b; Meyer 2012; Butterwick & Selman 2012; Swartz 2012). This is a vital part of the division between rationalist based approaches and bodily, creative, subjective perspectives. In the earlier body learning example, this body fluidly, and vividly, speaks of memories and lets them move through and out, if I allow it. However, if I simplistically assume that my ankle pain must be *such and such*, because *somebody* says it is so, perhaps I block that freedom of movement through, and in, that very restriction. In applying such rationalist based ideas to learning bodily ways of knowing, perhaps we are more likely to block the very thing we seek to know; the learning of the subjective body and its expression.

Somerville (1999:12) writes of her body feeling exhausted and fragmented, and being symbolised in dreams of fragmentation. Having 'fallen into the abyss of Western dualistic thinking predicated on separation rather than connection' (1999:12), she walks with a friend in the gorges in nature, and finds that she is forced back into her body through the sheer, hard, strenuous, physical activity. Her 'mind/body split' (1999:12-13), she explains, was felt to be in need of repair and she sensed that in this connection 'lay the extra dimension of body/place that [she] was unable to articulate' (1999:13).

Further to this, Somerville (1999:13) entered into learning the body through massage sessions with Carmont (cited in Somerville 1999:13), and this exploration of the body as symbolic of landscape and expressive of emotions moved Somerville into a new area of her bodily exploration. In an environment of safety, where she 'could risk madness, speaking images that surfaced from tissue, organs, joints and bone, without the need to make sense' (Somerville 1999:13), she entered an exploration of the body through the technique of 'expressing images which occurred in the in-between space made by the movement of the body surfaces...' (1999:14). This type of body learning taps into the bodymind, associating allegorical perspectives of the

body expressed through images and integrated as experiential learning. I have also worked in these sorts of ways in my own subjective, bodily inquiry, and through massage therapy.

Stuckey's (2009) ideas of working with the body also appear to be more in keeping with the sense of a fluidity of the body. In her methods of accessing bodily knowledge, Stuckey (2009; 2009a) acknowledges the body's wisdom and knowing, and writes that 'the body is its own river of knowledge' (2009:29). She works with creating lines of communication between the psyche/mind and the body, using body awareness techniques and visualising to harness this information or knowledge, and by using creative-expressive components to express and reflect upon those bodily experiences.

Through an example of writing the body, Stuckey (2009:31) explains that in using metaphor, she was able to understand what her body already knew. Her image of a dungeon and skulls, whilst a dark image, drew her into a somatic sense of not being as well as she had thought, regarding her illness, and was a catalyst for learning and change. It became a transformational experience for her, from where she could explore further images and metaphor for the body (2009:31). The use of metaphor as expression is a powerful technique for understanding 'the lived experience of the body in a conceptual pattern, which opens up opportunities for transformation' (Stuckey 2009:31).

Such multi-layered ways of exploring the body's knowing give respect for the body's knowing and a respect for the subjective experience of bodily insights. There is a creative and bodily exploration and expression of participants' individual, subjective experience which is honoured and made meaningful. I draw on similar types of experiential techniques of learning, through viewing the body as a fluid and creative, organic being.

I make use of imagery and meditations, in parts of the thesis, as examples of learning that I have experienced through the body and as a way of journaling those bodily experiences for learning. Stuckey (2009:36) notes that the additional journaling of some of these meditation reflections may be 'helpful as a source of journaling memory, noticing opportunities for transformation and shifts in perspective along the way' (2009:36). Another aspect of such meditations is that we can sometimes return to the feelings that they engender even when not in the meditative state. 'It is good to return to these feelings of peace and calm when they are most needed, and reading about them can bring somatic sensations' (Stuckey 2009:36).

A DYNAMIC, ORGANIC, AND CREATIVE PROCESS

Body learning is dynamic. It is a dynamic process. It is not a static experience that explicitly states that once it is learned it is known and done. It is constantly changing and evolving. The more we touch on the in-between communications and spaces within the body, and connect deeply (listening deeply) with the body, the more we may open ourselves to ideas about learning the body.

Body learning is a fluid and creative process. It is a way through which to connect into methods of creativity coupled with conscious awareness, whilst creativity and conscious awareness provide methods through which to connect with body learning. Body learning is a subjective process. There is not one theory or imagining that represents every body's body. Every individual body holds a subjective body of learning.

Although some body psychology theories (Aposhyan 2004: 6-15; Gendlin 2003; Lowen 1976), the concept of bodymind, and bodywork methods (Dychtwald 1977; European Rolfing Association 2013) may give us insight into some roughly generalisable ways of viewing, understanding and making meaning from bodies and bodily experience, these methods are *anchors* for body learning, rather than providing rote learned, strict rules and regulations. Just as different musicians can improvise a different interpretation of a song on the same instrument, so too, will two bodies provide a completely unique interpretation or expression of the theories linked with bodymind and body psychology.

The body, being a fluid and dynamic, organic being, represents a unique set of experiences, even though some of those experiences may be shared in some general levels of social interaction. Each individual body will have a somewhat different take on a similar external experience. Therefore, methods resting in postural analysis, bodymind and body psychology (Aposhyan 2004; Dychtwald 1977; Gendlin 2003; Lowen 1975; European Rolfing Association 2013) are portals through which to view a dynamic process, rather than the tools by which to lay down ultimate truths across the board, for unique, separate and subjective bodies.

Creative processes such as meditative, body-focusing visualisations provide a vehicle for reflection and analysis of experiential body learning perspectives, whilst creative-expressive tools are a valuable focus for transformative learning, to express the body's learning through image, art,

word, music or dance/movement. A core aspect of this focusing on the body and bodily learning then, is that bodies are fluid, organic, not static, and that body learning is also not static. It is a process; dynamic and creative.

WORKING WITH THE BODY

The concept of bodymind (Dychtwald 1977) rests in the notion that emotions and experience are experienced through the body, and that some of those stories are held within the body (the body's mind) through deep musculature tensions. The human body 'provides the perfect structure through which to generate an exploration of body-mind unity and creative self-development' (1977:17). Becoming more aware of the distinctions within our own, individual bodymind may help bring us to 'a position of greater self-awareness' (1977:19). However, it is also important to not oversimplify such ideas, to use aspects of bodymind as a formulaic system or as a means for criticism or fault finding (1977:19).

In order to apply frameworks for learning the body, it may be necessary to step outside the rational and logical approach to learning, and to enter the deeper world of the subjective body, from the perspective of the body. It is important to take into account that there are many subjective factors and inscriptions (Davies 2000; Grosz 1995:33) involved. However, a loose, theoretical framework for body/mind connections may also assist in providing a starting point in determining how body and mind can work together.

Methods for working with the body may draw from different perspectives of approaching the body. Bodywork and body psychotherapy draw from techniques aligned to different ends of a spectrum, while each aims to integrate learning of body and mind. Bodywork begins with the feeling in the body; the tension or holding pattern of the body, felt in the muscles, ligaments and tendons. Body psychotherapy (Aposhyan 2004) locates the feeling firstly in the emotions or mind and then, through this, generates the focus toward bodily feelings. Body psychotherapy begins with, and focuses on, the feeling, emotion or thought, and moves to a bodily focus in order to experience and understand that feeling bodily. Bodywork begins with the feeling, sense, limitation, restriction, tension or pain, felt physically in the body, and then explores emotive or affective connections within the context of bodily experience and the release of tensions through physical therapy. Both therapies are transformative based therapies which may support transformative learning.

Some techniques such as Feldenkrais Method (Beringer 2010) and Alexander Technique (Brennen 2004) work directly with body awareness exercises in order to cultivate a better understanding of, and a more balanced relationship to, movement, posture and the body. These kinds of exercises may facilitate a more connected perspective of the subjective body through a physical approach which takes into account a mind and body perspective. Techniques which incorporate creative expression or creative ways of exploring body knowledge are also many and varied. Collective biography (Davies 2000:43-51), narrative, poetry, metaphor (Stuckey 2009) visualisation techniques (Stuckey 2009), embodied theatre processes (Buterwick & Selman 2012; Meyer 2012), and meditative forms of inquiry (Sussman & Kossak 2011) are some of the ways through which we can learn to understand and express the nature of bodily knowing through creativity. These creative ways of knowing the body draw on aspects of both body and mind, and help to integrate learning of bodily and creative ways of knowing.

These are just some brief examples of methods we can draw upon for learning and knowing the body, though there are many others. I have used these examples to illustrate drawing from different ends of a spectrum, regarding working with integrating body and mind; firstly from a stance that begins with a focus on the body, and then from a stance that begins with a focus on the mind. There are many other methods for working with the body, including body awareness techniques, massage, meditation/relaxation techniques, and somatic psychology influenced methods. Massage and bodywork techniques that work through a perspective of bodymind integration are many and varied and there is a wide variety of body awareness methods which can be drawn upon. I have referred to some perspectives and techniques here, briefly, simply as a way of identifying some methods of working with the body which aim to integrate mind/body knowing techniques and which can foster transformative, somatic learning.

NEUROSCIENCE PERSPECTIVES

Reading and learning about some aspects of anatomy and physiology may help us to learn the body and to elucidate more understanding of embodied/somatic learning. This is not only because we learn something theoretically about where things are positioned physically and how they operate, but because in relating to the body through visualising techniques, we know where we are visualising spatially within the body, and what we are looking into from a biological

perspective, even if only at a fundamental level. In a similar way, exploring neurological perspectives of learning may also add to our base for learning the body, adding to a holistic perspective of the body, rather than relying on one perspective or assuming that the learning body is separated from the biological body.

Just as learning and practising the technical foundations and processes of music assists and enables me to play music, to express creativity in music rather than inhibiting it, so too, learning and being aware of some of the technical aspects of the body (its anatomy and physiology) assists and enables me to learn and experience the body's ways of knowing. Rather than inhibiting or restricting the learning of the body, knowing some foundations of its anatomy can help in exploring body learning and body knowledge. The awareness may then move between the physical, anatomical structure of the organs, muscles and bones, to a deeper level of body learning based in subjective meaning-making. Learning 'more about the biological basis of learning' (Zull 2006:8) may also assist in trusting the process of learning (2006:8).

I do not enter into in-depth explanations here, or have a deep understanding, of the complex biological processes regarding the brain and neurological processes. I am not a neurobiologist and my very basic level reading/understanding of these areas comes from an interest in learning the body and learning about the body. I touch on these topics only lightly and generally, in order to acknowledge their relationship to learning, the body and creativity, rather than to create an in-depth account of neurobiological processes. It is, most simply, to note some value of considering the brain as part of body and the body as connected with brain, rather than as separate and discordant entities, each present but existing in isolation. In a relationship of mutual feedback loops with various body systems, the brain also relies on the body for feedback (Aposhyan 2004:26-27).

Neurological perspectives of learning are becoming increasingly studied as an area applicable within transformative development and learning (Cozolino & Sprokay 2006; Sheckley & Bell 2006; Swartz 2011; Taylor 2006; Wolfe 2006; Zull 2006). Neurobiological findings 'offer a distinctive neurobiological, physically based pathway to transformative learning' (Taylor 2008:8). With new technological advances, studies of the brain allow us to see, through various types of medical imaging, the ways in which the brain changes during learning and stimulation (Wolfe 2006:35; Stewart 2005:304). This extends to creativity, and the brains of artists and musicians have been studied in order to decipher what it is within the creative oriented brain that responds

or changes differently, or similarly, in comparison to more logical brain application (Stewart 2005; SBS TV Australia 2010:online; Levitan 2012; 2013; 2013a). Research into the brain and creativity is an emerging area, within the field of neuroscience.

Neuroscientific understandings regarding the brain, such as the processes of neuroplasticity (Doidge 2010; Stewart 2005:207) or neural plasticity (Cosolino & Sprokay 2011:12; Swartz 2011:23), and 'Fire Together Wire Together (FTWT)' (Sheckley & Bell 2006:43) are demonstrative, physiologically, from the perspective of neurology, of the brain and its relationship to learning. They show that the brain's response to learning is not a static process and the brain is not a static instrument. Neuroscience developments have shown that the mature brain is not hard wired or immutable (Stewart 2005:304) and does not develop into a static plateau of learning. As we learn, the brain changes physically (Zull 2006:4).

Processes such as 'Fire Together Wire Together (FTWT)' (Sheckley & Bell 2006:43), and 'Change of Body State (COBS) experiences' (2006:43) are described in detail by Sheckley and Bell (2006:43) in regard to the relevance of these connections to learning. Briefly, FTWT refers to the formation of multiple neuron connections, where neurons which fire together repeatedly are thereby able to form new, durable connections (Sheckley & Bell 2006:43). COBS experiences refer to both simple and complex experiences of the body, in either repeated or intense, isolated events, which form experiential connections in the brain and impact on the formation of FTWT (Sheckley & Bell 2006:43). 'Increased signalling by cortical neurons generates the growth of more branches, which increases the density of cellular material and enhances their ability to connect with other neurons – to form more synapses' (Zull 2006:4-5). With experience, our neurobiological 'networks may become more complex'. This 'neurological complexity' is a 'biological form of knowledge', and may be 'a component of wisdom' (Zull 2006:7).

Consideration of such processes potentially may provide reflection and support for understanding, regarding the notion that embodied learning is connected to mind, body and brain as an integrated learning system. The brain, as a physiological organ, also holds an embodied connection of, and to, learning.

Studies in neuroplasticity, learning and musicians' brains (Stewart 2005; Levitan 2012; 2013; 2013a; SBS TV Australia 2010) have shown that the brains of practised musicians may come to be wired in a way that appears to be different (Stewart 2005; SBS TV Australia 2010) to the

logical focused brain. However, this is considered to be developed through training and practice rather than being a predetermined trait (Stewart 2005:304), as 'the result rather than the cause of skill acquisition' (Stewart 2005:304). Increased processing between brain hemispheres in musicians suggests that 'interhemispheric connections are enhanced in musicians'(Stewart 2005:305). It is suggested that trained musicians may provide a model for understanding neuroplasticity (Stewart 2005:307).

This also provides some basis for the exploration of other creative processes as ways of integrating body/brain/mind connections to learning. The encouraging of cross hemispheric processing, regarding brain activity, connection and integration, may be a concept that is open to further exploration through creative engagement in activities which enhance creative aspects of body learning and mind/body integration. Using creative processes to enhance learning is a significant aspect to consider within the area of neuroscience and transformative learning. Approaching learning in a way which seeks to access an integration of learning of body, mind and creativity can draw from neuroscientific findings and understanding of the processes of the brain. Earlier in this chapter, I have referred to the concept of creative integration of both body and mind in seeking to understand somatic/embodied learning. These kinds of areas can potentially be explored through research into neuroscientific perspectives of learning, as well as through experiential learning within subjective processes of body/mind integration.

Autobiography, storying, writing-to-learn, the role of emotions, and journals can be utilised within a neurological perspective of transformative learning (Taylor 2006:72). Narrative, journals, autobiography and free writing are tools which can enhance the brain's function in terms of neural pathways and activity (Taylor 2006:76). Adults accessing memories in and through autobiographical writing may 'maximise neural network integration' (Cozolino 2002:63 cited in Taylor 2006:76) and also organisation (Taylor 2006:76). 'Engaging in autobiographical narrative can also support a shift in self awareness associated with development of greater cognitive complexity' (Taylor 2006:76).

The position of the body in adult learning and the perspective of neuroscience in adult learning are not integrated (Swartz 2011:15). However, there is an opening for some integration of perspectives to develop through embodied and neuroscientific approaches to transformative learning. Swartz (2012:17) suggests that there is a strong interconnection of body/mind processes in embodied learning. She states that embodied mind is an interconnection between systems in

the body, especially the endocrine and nervous systems, and that embodied learning is a 'highly brain influenced process of emerging' (Swartz 2012:17). Looking further to neuroscientific perspectives of learning may support 'a deeper understanding of the evolving neurobiological body and its connection to wisdom' (Swartz 2011:16). Neurological perspectives of learning may provide some further insights of ways of learning through the body and may form part of an integrative methodology of connecting to bodily learning. In addition, such perspectives may assist in developing new understanding of creative ways of knowing and learning.

The perspective of neuroscience in adult learning is a developing field, and one which may provide some insight into creative and bodily learning. I have only touched on this area briefly here.

WHOLE PERSON METHODOLOGIES OF THE BODY

It is suggested that the body is a threshold or a hinge (Grosz 1995:33), 'placed between a psychic or lived interiority and a more sociopolitical exteriority that produces interiority through the *inscription* of the body's outer surface' (Grosz 1995:33). Whilst psychoanalysis and phenomenology may place a 'focus on the experience of the body as it is experienced' (1995:33), and made meaningful, 'the inscriptive model is more concerned with the processes by which the subject is marked, scarred, transformed, and written upon or constructed by the various regimes of institutional, discursive, and nondiscursive power as a particular kind of body' (1995:33).

Body awareness techniques and body-mind oriented processes, some techniques of massage and bodywork, and creative-expressive techniques, may assist in accessing and understanding the body's knowledge through its depths and surfaces. The notions of inscription and lived experience may each be addressed (partially), or reflected upon, through utilising some of these techniques, in ways which integrate body and mind, and inclusive of the influence of cultural, social, historical, gendered and medical inscriptions upon the body's interiority. In this way, the inscriptive model (Grosz 1995:33) and that of the lived body (Grosz 1995:33) may overlap and be intertwined, drawing together an integrated model of lived body experience, inscription, 'scription' (Davies 2000:16) and the reading, learning and expression of the subjective body.

Integrating a whole person methodology of learning the body is a perspective which may include creativity, creative expression, physicality, and the addressing of varying layers of social, cultural, medical, and learned inscriptions. Such methodologies of learning the body may aim to identify possibilities of body learning within various frameworks of understanding and meaning making, and draw from the body's knowledge in order to understand and make meaning of experience, thereby initiating transformative change. They do not superimpose the mind's presumed, intellectual predominance over the body nor equate the body with simply being an instrument of the mind. They do not suggest that all bodily experience is caused by the mind's projection being simply and directly superimposed upon the body.

Whole person methodologies of the body may facilitate an exploration of body-mind connection but do not enforce unwavering verdicts regarding such connections. They may take into account a broad range of bodily experience and integrate it into a perspective of experiential, subjective learning of the body. A whole person methodology of the body may aim to focus on body-mind integration, incorporating a respect for the body and its wisdom, whilst also recognising the benefit of utilising creative-expressive and meditative techniques. The understanding and exploration of the body's knowing requires some integration of different perspectives of learning and knowing the body.

This kind of body knowing/knowledge incorporates a subjective, extra-rational (Dirkx 2001:64; Lawrence 2009:129) learning, which may be facilitated through using various tools and techniques to observe and reflect upon the experiential learning of the individual body. It puts the focus into the lived, physical and emotional body. It takes into account social/landscape inscriptions (Davies 2000; Grosz 1995:33-36). It draws upon intuitive and creative ways of knowing (Lawrence 2005; 2008; 2009; 2012a; Hoggan et al 2009; Stuckey 2009).

It does not necessarily require an established system of examining the body, although some systems of examining the body may have been learned and integrated subjectively into aspects of this learning and knowing. There is a focus on listening; to the deep sense and senses of the body, the 'in-between' space (Somerville 1999:14), the 'prior-to-naming space' (Davies 2000:45) and the body-felt-sense. Deeply listening to the body may involve stilling the mind, drawing attention into the body, and allowing creative processes of meaning-making and expression to draw from that bodily knowledge and learning.

Moving the body from the periphery of consideration to a central position (Davies 2000; Grosz 1994: ix; Somerville 1999) of exploration and awareness of learning, the subjective body becomes a core aspect of, and instrument for, learning. Placed at the centre of analysis (Grosz 1994:ix), the body then becomes a subject for knowledge and meaning-making, rather than being relegated to a position which is subordinate to that of the mind. Rather than ignoring the body or treating it as an irrelevant accessory for learning or knowledge, it is given priority and centrality.

STORIES OF THE BODY

Some of the stories of the body presented here, and in other chapters, speak of the body in a social context and some speak of the body's experience within a medical context. These stories address some social and medical sector bodily inscriptions, with the issue of bodies and people being undervalued at times in the medical world; treated less like a body/human within a bodily, lived experience, and more like a number/object. Some stories, such as some of those elsewhere within this chapter, may present some lighter examples of learning the body. I have also presented some stories of the body within other chapters of the thesis.

Some of the stories, throughout the thesis, locate the body through an interior landscape using visualising techniques (Stuckey 2009) and imaginal (Dirkx 2001:68), intuitive (Lawrence 2009), body-focused meditative techniques (Sussman & Kossak 2011) to explore the interiority of the body. Some stories position the body in a context that is creative and fluid, whilst some present the body as viewed through a perspective of experiencing difficulty or discrimination.

I hesitated to include some of the body stories, as they are personal in some ways; close to the body. I reflected on some of the issues regarding this: "Is it too rude, too brutal, too female?" I asked. "Is it too close to the body?" I questioned whether I would even want to share them written in a dissertation. However, some of those stories are meaningful through their underlying and linking themes, and demonstrate some of the ways through which I experience, learn, read and write the body. They also highlight some of the medical inscriptions imposed, and superimposed, upon the body. Importantly, they reiterate that having ME/CFS and autoimmune illness has not just been about being tired, but can include complex and co-related medical and bodily issues. As the space is limited, there are several stories of the body I have not included, even though they may be illustrative of living, learning and reading the body.

There is vulnerability in disclosing some of the details in the stories of the body to the reader. However, I chose to include them because they may illustrate some sense of the insensitivity of some medical situations, as well as some of the complexity of entering the health scenarios and medical world of the patient. Some may also highlight some techniques for viewing the body creatively and each may offer some insight into the body in relation to learning.

Using autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner 2000) and writing as a method (Richardson 2005), these stories are about representing a story I have experienced, and through which I have reflected on

learning. They are not about holding onto staid, stuck images, but rather are reflective and creative representations of experiential and bodily learning.

Ultrasound

21/3/11

I do not need to be told about your partner's ex-wife (his children's mother), the difficulties you have relating to her, how 'strange' you think she is, the dynamics between her, your partner and their children, or any other of your personal, life stresses or dramas, while you are carrying out an internal examination of my body, using an inserted ultrasound instrument, investigating the cause of my ovarian-uterine pain and recent, distressing symptoms.

This was surely inappropriate.

I said nothing afterwards, but lay there silently after a time, hoping you would stop talking, and you eventually did. I refocused on my own body and breath. Perhaps the inappropriateness of the situation suddenly stood there glaring at you.

Perhaps you wanted to make conversation in order to take my mind off the procedure being carried out with my body. However, I felt no need to be distracted from it.

Why tell me about your problems when I am being examined for distressing medical issues of my own?

You had asked me if I had children. The conversation led quickly to your personal issues.

Why do some healthcare workers seem to think it is acceptable to use an appointment as an airing of grievances to the patient? It is the patient's time for attention and care, not the time for debriefing about life stressors in the practitioner's life.

The ultrasound was done badly, with the left and right sides confused on the scan report. I had to go back to have it done again. I did not mention children or partners. I specifically, intentionally, spoke only of my uterus and ovaries, to keep you on track of why we were there.

Ultrasound 2

Several months later, I visit my GP back in Sydney, and she refers me to a women's hospital in the city in order to have a thorough check on the situation, which appears to have resolved from the earlier, hemorrhaging, complex ovarian cyst. The practitioner who sees me at the hospital is wholly professional and competent, and is very thorough, well mannered and calm. I feel looked after. I feel as though I am in good hands. I breathe in relief as I lay on the examining table. She shows me, displayed on a large monitor screen, the high resolution imagery of the ovaries, follicles and eggs. All those little eggs, sitting in a nested clump, 'look just like fish eggs', I thought. The image astounded me in its clarity. Here, projected through cutting edge technology, were high resolution images of the internal body; an image from the lived interior of my own, organic body, relayed onto a large screen with overwhelming clarity and detail. Everything had been resolved, and all looked healthy and clear. 'You still have plenty of eggs', she said.

This whole incident made me miss the city.

Centrelink

(occurring in 2002)

The Centrelink disability officer /social worker spoke to me matter-of-factly about some basic matters, and noted that partial deafness was included in my case notes. Suddenly, as if out of nowhere, she said to me, 'It may sound trite, but what don't you want to hear?'

I am calm and say little, although I am quite stunned by the directness of the query within these sterile surroundings. Was this a question actually directed to me with the expectation of a response? Inwardly, I am somewhat angry, yet also mildly amused. I sit calmly, knowing the answers to her difficult question, but not prepared to enter conversation about it, and also wary, not wanting to make waves or mess up my chances of assistance or support.

Later, I reflected cynically: More pearls of wisdom in inappropriate situations, coming from people who've just met me. The five-minute-experts who want me to praise their wisdom, as though I've never looked into this myself.

I really didn't expect this in Centrelink, of all places.

I have reflected many times, about the allegorical, body-mind connections of deafness, and regarding that question being put to the body. Nevertheless, it is entirely inappropriate for anybody to assume anything of the physical disability. At the extreme end of inappropriateness, is an appointment with a Centrelink officer/social worker, where, with no warning or suggestion, and without any consideration of sensitivity or of the environment, she breaks into superficial pop jargon at my expense. What am I expected to say? I can only assume, as I weighed up at the time, that if I had challenged her and spoken of such allegorical associations in intimate depth, and of my deeply learned, experiential lived-body learnings, that she would not have listened, nor have been interested in listening.

Her manner was somehow authoritative, though also assuming a gentleness of tonality. Yet, there was no real *asking* in the question. She was not asking me anything. She was asserting a dominance of position, in some sense, and my position, as the subject, could not be one of authority. In sincerity, to ask such a question requires a safe and nurturing environment, perhaps in a therapeutic or learning situation, and requires sensitivity on the part of the inquirer or therapist. Such questions should never be asked in an insincere charade for therapeutic novelty.

It was not the first time I had been asked this question as an adult, nor of it having been asked in inappropriate situations or insensitive environments, and that is why I include this story of the body.

Neurophysiology and MRI

Whilst having some neurological tests undertaken at a hospital in Sydney (in 2011), with electrodes placed on head and body in various places, the practitioner had directed me to 'just relax and focus on your breathing', saying that I would be lying there for quite some time while she performed the tests. I did this, whilst she carried out the examination. During, and again afterward, she noted that she wished every patient would be so relaxed for her during those tests.

I had taken her direction and focused on my breathing, laying calmly on the bench, and entered into a light relaxation state, focused on the body and breath. She had said that even if lying still, people may be tense and that does not help the examination. She told me that if the body is really relaxed, the neurology tests are much easier and quicker to perform. This makes her job easier.

She also, however, made it easier for me to relax through her own relaxed, calming, and professional manner, and I found the tests were neither physically or mentally stressful.

If only I could have been so relaxed during an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) head scan a couple of years prior (in 2009). At that time, I tried to focus on my breathing and to relax during the scan. However, it was a much more stressful experience, personally, as the noise of the MRI was quite deafening and the hearing protection provided was completely inadequate. Perhaps the flimsy little ear plugs had not been used effectively or perhaps they were simply not enough protection to begin with. The technician did not give enough instruction as to what would happen during the scan, and hearing protection was not taken seriously, although it should have been. Consequently, it was a stressful bodily and emotional experience, one through which I did not succeed in achieving a relaxation state.

In the waiting area near the MRI room, a red sign reads: 'Hearing Impairment! Danger!' I enquire about this, having received no information prior and having not ever experienced an MRI scan previously. The technician abruptly assures me that there is no issue, even though I tell her that I am completely deaf in one ear and am having this MRI *specifically* because of issues with the other ear. She is not concerned at all and waves at me impatiently to sit down in the waiting area.

The scan is a highly stressful scenario for me and afterwards I liken it to a torture chamber. Bombarding, loud, industrial-strength noise pounds close to my head and ears, whilst lying in an enclosed tube large enough to encase the body, and having a cage-like, head stabiliser around the face. 'Just get me *out* of here', I want to yell, but I remain motionless, without voicing my distress. The technician had appeared to have little patience for such trivialities and I did not want to annoy her any more than I already had.

I endured the torture and anxiety for the duration of the scan procedure, all the while wanting to escape from this machine. I breathed, I imagined nice scenes in nature, and calmed my mind as best I could; but I could not escape the bombarding sound, pounding, too close and too loud. Nor could I completely relax from the unfounded fear of the claustrophobic space, felt perhaps as a threat, bodily, to my primeval sense of safety (within a bodily flight or fight response). Afterwards, I had ringing ears, and had to take a seat in a quiet corner of the corridor by the elevator. The elevator ring sounded far too loud every time its doors opened and my hearing had become hyper-sensitive. For twenty minutes I sat there resting, and hoped that my hearing would

return to its more normal sense. Over this time it did improve, but did not return to normal. Ironically, I had a prearranged appointment for an audiology test booked for the next day.

A couple of years later, I watch a documentary on TV (SBS TV Australia 2010) which includes functional MRIs being used in imaging musicians' brains. As a test subject, I wonder how Sting can deal with this and still continue to mentally compose music under the MRI test situation (SBS TV Australia 2010). Clearly, they must have used a different kind of MRI scanner to the one they used for my scan, I reflect; either that or they provided the subjects with more highly adequate and safe hearing protection. A musician such as Sting would never have been subjected to the level of industrial noise to which I was exposed during that MRI.

MRI 2

June 2014:

Fast forward to June 2014, and another brain/head MRI scan at a different place is in complete contrast to the first experience. The two young women at the reception desk are warm and understanding, helping to put me at ease in my queries and concerns when I go in to make an appointment. They take patients' concerns seriously there, as many people feel uneasy about MRIs, I am told. They tell me that MRI scans have come a long way since 2009, and I hope this is true. They take time with me and do not rush me out. They explain things to me and speak to me as though I matter. I feel looked after already through their well mannered, gentle approach.

I have been advised to bring a CD of music for my own enjoyment and relaxation during the scan, and been assured that they will also supply adequate hearing protection in addition to headphones. After various preliminary questions from the receptionist, I am taken for the scan. The radiologist technician reassures me even more, as he talks through every part of the scan with me. It will take roughly forty minutes. I will have earplugs, headphones and some music. He gives me a buzzer to press if I feel I need to stop. I have told the technician I am a musician and completely deaf in my other ear, and he is supportive and understanding, commenting positively about this and acknowledging clearly the need for the care of my hearing.

Adequate hearing protection was my number one concern. This was addressed without any hint of inconvenience. In fact, they said to me that they actually recommend to everybody to bring in a CD of music to help relax during the scan. The first clinic gave me no such option.

On a practical note, since 2009, MRI scans have improved. Although the noise of this current MRI scan was quite loud to very loud in some parts, because I had hearing protection and headphones the noise was not an issue at any point in time, and my hearing and balance were completely fine afterwards. Another difference between the newer scanner and the older, is that the machine is slightly wider, so there is just a little more room, so less feeling hemmed in. The overall experience was nothing like the first MRI scan, and although I had put off having it for several months, I was glad in the end that I did it, as I now knew the difference between the two experiences. I also experienced being taken care of as though I actually mattered.

The contrast to the first scan and clinic is foremost in my mind, as the difference is so highly significant to be almost astounding. It was made very clear, at the second scan, that my wellbeing and feeling at ease was important to their practice.

Embodied Learning and Creative Expression: The Body at the Site of the Piano

27/4/12:

Played piano a short while last night. Felt good to do this. Gentle and soft, and reconnecting.

I've hardly been playing these months – too busy with the academic work.

Recently it feels as though I have become disconnected from the creative emergence/mergence.

Perhaps I have just become distanced in an attempt to maximise my focus on other, more 'sensible' things.

Sometimes it seems as though I have become more critical of the musical process – more analytical, rather than being focused on the process itself.

... more critical, judging what I am writing or going to play before I write or play it, rather than being in the action of playing and in the emergence of creativity.

... more logical in my music at the piano. It seems to have blocked the flow.

Instead of just playing, it's as though I have tried to make a good piece of music, by thinking about it. That doesn't work – at least, not for me.

Playing again last night reconnected me.

It's the feel and touch of the fingers to the keys that moves the music – the embodied action of creative expression and creativity; embodied, expressive and emerging.

It seems similar to how I've felt frustrated recently about getting stuck in my head at times when I've been attempting to write about the body analytically for the Body Learning chapter. It doesn't flow when it's too cerebral. I need to be in the body, present.

The body at the piano. The fingers on the keys.

As I touch the keys and glide over them gently, the music seems to negotiate the patterns for me, but only if I let it, rather than force it to an outcome.

The music seems to negotiate the space of creativity, through the body, to the piano.

I am there as a guidance of where the technical work is applied and how. But in the core of it, the stream of flow and music is an embodied experience, and is not a thinking of the mind.

It's a creative integration of body and mind.

This Body Likes

20/9/09:

This body likes:

exercise,

good food and nourishment,

clean, fresh air.

This is a basic level requirement.

At its deeper strata of being, this body may enjoy, and partially relive, good memories in places or situations that rekindle an essence of vitality. This nurtures and nourishes at the deeper strata.

Bodies, being individual, vary in the level, degree and type of exercise that suit, invigorate or balance. Some respond well to high impact, high energy activity. Others prefer a gentler, more meditative approach. This body likes to be exercised, nourished and given fresh air. The body knows what it needs.

This body likes:

to be exercised

to stretch

to walk

to do light weights training

gym workouts

yoga

to be walked in nice places

to feel fresh air in the lungs

to swim in the sea

to be in water –

thermal mineral springs from the deep and ancient earth,

spa bath, swimming pool, bathtub.

to rest

to sleep well.

In return, if I give this body these things regularly, she responds generally by being fitter, more flexible, stronger and more well-balanced. I can then also pursue my other life interests of creative and academic work, which require a more sedentary posture of the body.

She has: Better posture, better flexibility, release of muscular tension, more muscular strength.

Without working this body physically she feels: Heavy, with a more compressed posture and with a lack of purposeful existence.

I can't always swim in the sea or immerse my body in thermal springs. However, these are body treats which I can do on occasion. My body always responds to these activities with a deeper level of relaxation and ease. Immersing this body in the thermal springs of New Zealand/Aotearoa has given a feeling of both deep relaxation and aliveness in the same experience, which this body knows is a good thing.

That experience has also been one of connecting to place and belonging.

Full moon, Aotearoa, Dec 2008

body immersed in rock pool thermal spring,
in the deep and ancient Earth of Aotearoa.

Quietly,

rain drops begin to fall,

and

in the darkness surrounded by intermittent
silver moonlight

the rock pool

appears like a primordial pool,

with bubbles splashing on the surface,

steam rising from dark, black, water,

mountains in the distance.

The darkness

transports to a different

time frame, and the

ancient earth conjures images of

a primordial swamp.

bubbles are forming from splashes

of rain drops,

or are they bubbling up from below

the black water?

I imagine,

with

body immersed,

in this deep

and ancient earth.

This body likes to be massaged, and to receive hands-on-healing, by a competent, compassionate practitioner, and she responds well to herbal medicine and good nutrition.

She is not in perfect working order, but I can support her efforts and help to make the job easier.

Admittedly, recovering from a chronic, debilitating illness, this body has not been in complete balance, does not have ultimate strength, and has not been a fine example of perfect health. However, through a slow recovery, over years, she has reminded me of what she can accomplish with the use of some practical tools, and how I need to work with her in a mind-body partnership. Whatever her weaknesses, I need to work gently and take these into account. If I overdo it, I suffer consequences of fatigue and illness. If I can manage a regular routine which includes adequate physical exercise and rest, then I am more likely to attain a reasonable level of balance and wellness.

Some people seem to be able to push their body to the extreme, and take it for granted. I cannot. Chronic illness brings into sharp focus the fragility of the body and the need to nurture, protect and maintain; because this body is where I live, and it's the only one I have.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have drawn out an argument that theorising learning the body needs to engage practically with the body on various levels, and that some theories of the body appear to be separated from the body. I have suggested that operating through a dominant focus on cerebral or logical perspectives for body theorising may, at times, stifle practical understanding of bodily ways of learning. In analysing the body too intricately through the intellect there may be a danger of perpetuating the mind/body split. We need to engage the body in order to understand some of the ways in which we can learn through the body.

I have suggested that applying overly simplistic associations of mind/body connection might, at times, hinder understanding of body/mind relationships to learning and wellbeing, if the body is not engaged actively and subjectively in such exploration. However, some models of mind/body connection may also be useful as starting points for exploration, and body psychology oriented methods may be a way to further bodily learning in subjective and collective ways. There are some contradictions apparent within this argument, and the body, illness/wellness and body/mind perspectives are complex and multilayered.

I have approached reading and writing the body through my own theorising that incorporates a holistic, multilayered approach to learning and knowing the body. I have drawn from literature that encompasses a variety of perspectives, but which ultimately acknowledges the body as a source of knowing. In a practical sense, I have described some techniques that can be utilised as methods for learning the body. I have addressed the notion of body learning also from a creative and metaphorical perspective and I have written of how I have learned the body through subjective experience. I have included some stories of the lived experience in order to highlight some socio-medical issues, and I have also included stories that engage in creative ways of reading and writing the body. I have written of various creative ways of engaging with learning through the body, such as writing body stories, writing the body in creative verse, and practising body-imaging meditations.

I have explored and theorised a developing perspective of learning through the body, through integrating creative and somatic ways of knowing, and focusing on a creative integration of body and mind. This has involved the combination of creative, bodily and intuitive aspects of transformative learning.

CHAPTER EIGHT: NOTES ON SOUND

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reflects upon experiential learning through the bodily experiences of hearing and sound. It illustrates some elements of how I have drawn from creative-expressive action and from bodily ways of knowing and learning for transformative learning. It draws from the body's ways of knowing (Amann 2003; Freiler 2008; Stuckey 2009) and incorporates ways of learning the body which reflect experiential, embodied and creative ways of learning.

In this chapter, I extend the reflections on embodied/somatic learning (Amann 2003; Cohen 2003; Freiler 2008; Gustafson 1999; Lawrence 2012; 2012a; 2012b; McConnell-Imbriotis 2004; Somerville 1999; 2004; Stuckey 2009), reading and writing the body, and learning the body, through using a more in-depth, experiential example. I draw on creative and expressive ways of learning the body (Stuckey 2009) and ways of accessing creative engagement in order to facilitate transformative learning (Hoggan et al 2009). Through providing some examples, I connect bodily and creative ways of knowing and learning. Some stories of the body, which are written through a social/medical context of experience, are included, reflective of some of the inscriptions (Grosz 1995: 33-36; Davies 2000) sometimes imposed upon the (social and medical) body.

I explore some experiential and bodily learning through the context of a drawn out incident related to the ears, sense and perception, within a post-viral relapse of some months, using writing as a method of inquiry (Richardson 2000; Richardson & St. Pierre 2005; St Pierre 2002) and drawing upon research journal entries, verse and reflective discovery. Pathways to learning my way through some bodily experiences are described largely through an experiential learning focus and include the use of music, sound and body focused learning. I note here that all reference to the ear in this work comprises the whole ear, inclusive of the outer, middle and inner ear, not the auricle that is visible at the sides of the head.

The chapter continues the use of autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner 2000; Ellis & Flaherty 1992) as a method, employed throughout the thesis as an integral aspect of this creative-expressive, research exploration, within a subjective storytelling component of the research. Arts-based (McNiff 1998; Barone & Eisner 1997; 2006) elements of the research are continued, in method and presentation, using verse both to reflect upon experience and as an expressive tool whilst

immersed within experiences, and drawing on music and sound as learning mediums within the lived experience. In some instances a reflective style of verse also serves as a vocal contact point for body-oriented, experiential learning.

Throughout this chapter, the journal reflections and explorations into aspects of bodily learning demonstrate that body/mind connections may be complex and multilayered, sometimes accessed through symbolic representations and sometimes shown through memory (Stuckey 2009; 2009a; Davies 2000:45-46). These reflections suggest that the body's condition and the mind's association with that condition, and the body/mind integration (Aposhyan 2004:15) of those associations, can be understood, or reflected upon, from a deepening perspective that draws from an array of techniques for reading and learning the body. To mark and scar the body (Grosz 1995:33; Davies 2000:15) by assuming a simplistic notion of that body's experience is to, perhaps, enforce an oppressive and disempowering stance upon the body and patient.

Metaphor is a powerful tool for exploring the body's knowledge (Stuckey 2009; 2009a) and body/mind awareness techniques allow us to use methods through which to facilitate and view a dynamic process, as do creative ways of representing and exploring the body's knowing. I have utilised metaphor for writing the body throughout this chapter and journal writings.

The chapter is not a catharsis of personal experience, but rather is a reflective account of learning through illness and wellness. It is represented as an expression, creatively and bodily, of some of the personal, physiological, emotional, and societal interactions subjectively experienced by the writer.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

The main objective of this chapter was to present a more in-depth case of how I learned my way through a body/sense/illness experience. I had wanted to show that it was a powerful experience in terms of the body and the senses, that it was not straightforward and not cured by a quick trip to a local doctor. I did not want to trivialise it, and I did not want to over-emphasise the experience of darkness so that it is difficult to read. However, it was a dark and, at times, intense, sensory experience. Playing it safe seemed impossible if I was to relay some level of honesty of depth. Importantly, I also wanted to emphasise the transformative learning experience and the process through which transformative learning developed and progressed.

24/7/12:

How can I get around this, in order to demonstrate the darkness and difficulty of the situation/experience, but also, importantly, the transformative work and learning involved, and the ever-optimistic focus I usually try to maintain?

Perhaps this is partly how; to write of this.

I did not want to try to make light of the situation. However, I also did not want to drag the reading into the depths of despair. Maintaining an optimistic outlook and focusing specifically, clearly and strongly on transformative processes for growth has been particularly important to me throughout the time of chronic illness. It is this which I seek to emphasise. However, to only relay such transformative learning focus without addressing any of the disorienting experience (Mezirow 2000:22; Cranton 2006:20) or the dark, difficult passages of illness, may give a false sense of perspective that it is all really easy and all one really needs to do is to *magic it away* by thinking well and happy thoughts. This has not been the case. There are dark places to visit during the passage of chronic illness. Focusing on transformative outcomes and processes has been a learning *process*, a process of coming to be, which takes time, determination, focus and some manner of stamina and resilience. This is important to address.

I have included this case example of learning my way through the experience of a long (six month) relapse, a post-viral exacerbation of CFS with concurrent ear issues, but the methods and focus I have portrayed extend over years of transformative learning processes and application. I have attempted, with this more specific case example of a body illness/wellness story, to navigate my way through some of the learning journey by keeping a research journal throughout that time. In drawing from some of the writing recorded throughout that process, I hope that some of this multi-layered learning process may come to light for the reader.

Aspects of knowing and learning presented here, draw from a range of natural health modalities and body awareness techniques learned over years of time, and work with transformative learning theories (Mezirow 1994; 1996; 2000 Cranton 2006) through a lens of creativity (Hoggan et al 2009; Stuckey 2009; Lawrence 2005), somatic/embodied learning (Stuckey 2009; Freiler 2003; Amann 2003; Cohen 2003; Gustafson 1999; Lawrence 2012), artistic ways of knowing and learning (Lawrence 2005; 2005a; 2008), nurturing soul (Dirkx 1997) and mytho-poetic (Dirkx 2000:1) ways of learning for transformation. The transformative learning (Mezirow 1994; 1996;

2000; Cranton 2006; Dirkx 1997; 2000; 2001; 2008) focus is an all important facet of learning through this specific and drawn out illness experience, which is a shorter duration experience set within the wider experience of living and learning with the chronic illness of ME/CFS. Some aspects of learning regarding health social movements (Brown & Zavestoski 2004:679) and transformative learning for social change (Freire 1972) and empowerment are highlighted within the stories of the medical body.

Learning through illness experience has, at times, also been haphazard, chaotic and disorganised. Being able to pursue the level of natural and integrative healthcare/health management and treatment I had wanted, and needed, requires money. Financial constraints (at times extreme and at others not so) put a heavily pronounced restriction on the level of healthcare which I could afford to maintain, both in orthodox and natural therapies. This has been a stumbling block throughout ME/CFS, and I have had to learn to improvise to create some of my own, self-supporting ways of management for health support/healing because of this. This was also a cause of great frustration at times, as I had learned of so many different and useful ways through which I may have been able to support better health and wellbeing, but was unable to afford the cost of many therapies. In addition, specialist medical practitioner fees are at times astronomical, and to obtain that level of orthodox medical expertise was quite out of my price range. I have done what I can. However, I know that there is so much more that *can* be done for managing ME/CFS, health and wellbeing. Perhaps, through some of this improvisation, I have learned (deeper) ways of focusing upon transformative learning through the illness experience.

BEGINNINGS

When I was twelve years old, I became deaf in one ear: silently, suddenly, overnight, and without warning. I woke during the night feeling as though everything was closing in on me, went back to sleep after some time, and woke in the morning with one blocked, deafened ear. At the time, at age twelve, I dealt with it, quietly and silently. It was a disorienting experience (Mezirow 1991: 168; 2000:22; Cranton 2006:20). Nevertheless, I adapted over time, as was needed. Perhaps I was a resilient child, or had to be. I was later diagnosed with total sensori-neural hearing loss in one ear. At various times, as a learning adult and as a musician, I have reflected upon and explored some of this experience, uncovering various layers of personal meaning-making through the inquiry, drawing on allegorical and creative perspectives of body learning.

Each time I seemed to discover something new, perhaps a new level of bodily learning. I have reflected upon some of that subjective, bodily learning within the thesis and research journal. Some of those insights and understandings have been made only recently, through the very writing of it. Some of them are years old. Some of them have been experienced through more recent bodily experience and through reflection on that experience. All of them have included listening to the body and listening to the self, a listening within to my own inner body-voice: my voice.

Voice Body Self

I wrote about this experience through my research journal notes, many years later, while I had been experiencing a time of being unwell, with some internal ear inflammation which either intertwined with, or developed into, an extended ME/CFS relapse. That relapse, my doctor suggested later, was potentially brought about through a new level of post viral syndrome after a strong bout of flu (which she retrospectively suspected may have been H1N1 Swine Flu in 2009). Due to a combination of factors, including the distance to travel and physical incapacity, I did not get to see my regular doctor at the time of acute illness. It was not until later that I consulted her, and I had been to a couple of local doctors for the interim.

Through the journal notes, I used writing as a method of inquiry (Richardson 2000; Richardson & St. Pierre 2005; St. Pierre 2002) within verse, free writing, and reflection. Through that writing and reflection, I came to some newer and personally significant insights about the experience of life and self as a person and musician with partial deafness. I was surprised about, and very resistant to, this new development of the bodily self emerging as something to consider within my dissertation. I had not expected, nor planned for, anything regarding the subject of partial deafness to enter the research or reflection. It was not in my plan. Yet, it continued to urge me to reflect on and explore its connections to learning. There may have been something resting deeper in the body, I later reflected, perhaps accessible through alternative ways of knowing and learning (Hoggan et al 2009:19; Lawrence 2009; Stuckey 2009), which urged me to look into the relevance of such bodily history.

Through the methodology of writing as inquiry (Richardson 2000; Richardson & St. Pierre 2005; St. Pierre 2002), I reflected in my research journal on some of the social and personal issues with which I have dealt through having partial deafness as a teenager and adult. I also explored some of the issues associated with hearing which overlapped with ME/CFS. Significantly, issues concerning the ears and the sense of hearing were a factor during the onset period of ME/CFS

and continued throughout ME/CFS to varying degrees, as a key aspect of the condition. As a musician, with one perfectly functioning ear prior to that time, those physiological concerns brought a great deal of disorientation to my perspective of who I was and how I operated in the world. They brought disorientation to my sensory perception on bodily, social, emotional and creative levels. This disorienting, sensory experience created a sense of disorientation to my perspective of self in the world, and of self as experienced through my sense of hearing and being. This formed an extended prelude (of one year) to ME/CFS.

I include here some extracts from the research journal explorations because of the focus that the ears, hearing and listening took on within some of the ideas of the thesis. Partly, the experience brought to the fore the reality and challenges of being a musician with partial deafness, and partly it brought into question, again, the relevance of the ears (in my case) in regard to ME/CFS. It emphasised ongoing issues regarding the ears and the sense of hearing, which re-intensified during that illness relapse and research period. This bodily focus is pertinent to a subjective sense of creativity, connectedness and learning and presented itself within the research through a period of time during which I was seeking answers in both bodily and creative perspectives.

The links that surfaced during the writing of this thesis sometimes took me by surprise. The links into the twelve-year-old experience emerged as one of those times. I made use of writing as a method of inquiry (Richardson & St Pierre 2005) to creatively explore the somatic learning (Stuckey 2009; Freiler 2008; Amann 2003) of the experience, reflecting both on the historical life/body event and on the current experience. Although I had explored this area previously, a new level of learning emerged through the writing and exploration of it, in relation to my learning as an adult, through the thesis writing process, through the experience of ME/CFS and through music. I do not enter here into in-depth explanations of the complete story as adult or youth. I have attempted to reflect, experientially, on some of the experiences that pertain to my subjective, bodily and creative experience of hearing and sound, and my experiential learning in the world as an adult learner and musician.

I decided to explore the area because writers such as Richardson (2000; 2005) and Ellis and Bochner (2000) encouraged me, through their writings, to do so as part of the research experience. As both researcher and subject, I found that the issue of partial deafness as a musician became a strong catalyst for reflection. This was a catalyst for transformative learning, and learning continued in a cyclical way as I wrote about it. Within a creatively focused,

exploratory thesis dealing with illness experience, transformative learning and body learning, this aspect was almost unavoidable. Nevertheless, it still surprised me, as it was completely unexpected.

In line with actors' guides to improvisation techniques (Meyer 2009), I have chosen to go with it, to *just say yes* in some areas of the research as various scenarios arose during the research period. 'To truly surrender to the game or the scene being played' (Meyer 2009:154) in improvisation, an actor must be willing not only to allow what they are creating 'to transform in unexpected ways, but also be willing to be transformed themselves' (Meyer 2009:154). In some respects, I have treated the thesis research, at times, as an improvisation as well, sometimes allowing for changes in direction, and following leads that go into areas that may not have always been planned or expected (within some parameters). Improvisation tools, used as learning, can be applied to body learning as well as to creativity, writing and research and may be a creative way of facilitating transformative learning.

Richardson (Richardson & St. Pierre 2005:965) notes that 'the ethnographic life is not separable from the Self' (2005: 965). She suggests that 'writing stories' (2005: 965) contextualise the research experience, and are part of the 'situated nature of knowledge'(2005: 965). Pieces of writing stories are incorporated within the thesis in parts because I have used writing as a basis for exploration. I have included some of these, as vignettes of life and living through the time of research and health management, to mirror and to illustrate the process of learning involved throughout ME/CFS, through health management, recovery, relapse and recovery again. Some of these vignettes may be, hopefully, mildly entertaining, while others reflect a darker experience.

As a research student exploring the illness experience and recovery through a narrative of my own subjective experience, using creative expression as a fundamental part of that framework and including embodied learning in that framework, I was compelled – not altogether willingly– to bring some exploration of hearing and sound into the picture. I did not intend it to happen. It evolved out of the process of writing through illness. I resisted it strongly. As it evolved, however, I learned to allow it to tell me its story, so that I could listen to the body's learning and to learn through the experience of the body, developing into a process of transformative understanding and meaning-making, and one perhaps of greater creative action and participation.

LEARNING MY WAY THROUGH ILLNESS

During the experience of that CFS relapse and ear inflammation, there was concern regarding some specific antibiotics I had been prescribed and taken. Viable fears arose regarding potential ototoxic (toxic to the ears) side effects of those drugs, and the emotional sense resulting from the initial discovery of this possibility was quite overwhelming. I dealt with the intense, sensory experience in part through writing, through body learning, through conscious relaxation techniques, and eventually through music and song. This is how I learned my way through the experience. In stark contrast to the calming and uplifting experience of the music which came later, the (at times) almost overwhelming emotions experienced, in relation to a very tangible, physical experience of the subjective body's fragility, were not easy to just dismiss. Nevertheless, I endeavoured, specifically, to remain calm and allow the ear to heal as possible. I also scheduled medical appointments with Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) doctors and later had scans and hearing tests, as well as utilising natural therapies such as acupuncture, chiropractic, herbs, and continuing with Sound Therapy (Joudry & Joudry 1999; Joudry 2012).

Embodied/somatic learning is a key element in the learning through this experience. Writing about it helped me to grasp a deeper understanding of some of the ways in which I learn and to then apply it within a theoretical context of learning. The body is central to this experience of learning, and creative expression supported a transformative learning perspective of the time. Bodily and creative ways of knowing and learning underpin the methods through which I endeavoured to process the experience. Reading and writing the body are engaged through some of the exercises that I have noted as examples within the chapter.

I have presented some of the experience here through autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner 2000; Ellis & Flaherty 2002), in storytelling of the subjective experience as research. I do this, not to indulge in the drama of illness, but rather to demonstrate some of the tools of learning with which I engaged body learning and learning through the body, incorporating alternative ways of knowing in the meaning-making of experience. Through autoethnography there is space created for the reader to enter into this story of the experience. There is an element of arts-based (McNiff 1998; Barone & Eisner 1997; 2006) methodology within the story presentation, as the writing melds into verse and explores a creative aspect of researching through writing and the body. This chapter also links in with the writing of some of the thesis music, some of which developed directly out of this experience, using creative expression as an anchor for transformative learning.

HEARING

11/10/09:

I want to go see the new film *In Search Of Beethoven*, but I will have to wait for this ear inflammation to resolve first... No doubt it will arouse musical passion and emotions, if it's anything like *Immortal Beloved* (another film about Beethoven).

Now, as I contemplate the feeling in my head, the temporal bone surrounding the ear, the fogginess of it, the dulling sensation, I have no idea which way it will go. Sudden hearing loss struck me as a child. The odds are unlikely, I am told by the doctor. However, I feel tense and stressed by the possibility. I cannot think of it. I tell myself that there could be a simple resolution. I do not know it. Yet I have to believe it. I feel afraid, but I need to have some hope.

I lived well for over two decades as a musician with partial deafness. I did not view it as a disability. It was sometimes an inconvenience, but I never felt it as a disability. I continued to write, record and practise music, and to have fulfilling social connections through my teens and much of my adulthood. I was not anxious about the health of my other ear because it was healthy, although I did need to maintain that health and condition by looking after it perhaps more than people generally think about their ears. Ears and sound can be much taken for granted.

In the year prior to the onset of ME/CFS, recurrent and chronic inflammation and infection affecting the second ear initiated a highly disorienting, sensory experience. I have consistently sensed, bodily, although it has never been confirmed medically, that susceptibility to this chronic inflammation/infection had some influence on, or relationship to, the onset of ME/CFS for this body. The cause remains uncertain, and vague medical diagnoses seem comparable to the diagnosis of symptoms within ME/CFS. These symptoms may present as apparently general symptoms to the practitioner, but they affect the patient in much more pronounced ways than just vague disturbances of health and wellbeing. This issue has never been fully resolved, although various Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) doctors have investigated at various times, to varying degrees, and with various attitudes.

BODY STORIES AND SILENCES

Where'd Ya Hear About That One?

Some of the ENT doctors I consulted showed annoyance toward me by my insistence that something was wrong, when general, initial examination showed them little for concrete diagnosis. I asked questions, seeking to know what could be done about this chronic inflammation, and how I could be more autonomous in my healing.

'What can I do about it?' I asked one doctor, in sincere hope of suggestions of a healthful approach of prevention and cure.

'Learn to live with it!' he snapped, aggravated and stern, 'Like everybody *else* does!'

Silence.

Another, seated behind his large desk, laughed with his head thrown back when I inquired of a possible cause.

'Where'd ya hear about that one?' he scoffed, in derision of my reading of medical literature and health information.

Silence.

In that year preceding ME/CFS, I was planning on undertaking Masters level studies in Audio and Sound Design at Sydney University, and had been accepted into the course. These plans were put on hold, however, after issues involving my ears began to chronically disturb my sense of clarity in hearing and spatial perception. I decided to pursue it at a later date after resolution of the issue, which I certainly expected to occur within six months. I mentioned this to the latter ENT doctor briefly.

The doctor showed no sign of empathy, nor acknowledgement of my being a musician, certainly not of music being important. Instead, he flippantly suggested a psych consultation. To his credit, he also referred me (on *my* suggestion) to a dental jaw specialist. Returning to the ENT doctor later for follow up, he did pursue some further tests, which I acknowledge was an appropriate course of action. However, more in-depth examinations were still needed to fully investigate and to hopefully understand the cause, and yet he did not pursue it further. His (continued) condescending approach was completely unnecessary, and various experiences through

consulting that practitioner consistently reinforced messages that I was not of value, nor worth taking the time allocated.

The sense of such an interaction may be quite disempowering for the patient, and led to this patient feeling that she was on the wrong end of the medical system, unable to grasp what was needed in order to receive adequate and useful care, and more importantly, who to consult for such help.

Unfortunately, when facing conditions as complicated as CFS and fibromyalgia, less prepared practitioners may tend to resort to the erroneous assumption that the conditions are psychosomatic, or that symptoms are "all in your head". Too quick a tendency to start indiscriminately handing out antidepressants and ignoring physical symptoms is a sign that you may have a practitioner who doesn't understand CFS or fibromyalgia.

Shomon 2004:254.

Who Says Whom is to be Taken Seriously?

I reflected around this time on why it could be that it seemed I was not taken seriously by those particular ENT doctors. I was already totally deaf in one ear since childhood, so I could not fathom why they appeared unconcerned to search for a cause of this complaint, but simply stopped searching when the initial examinations showed them no obvious, direct cause. Were these not experts, specialists in the field, versed in the area, with a passion and dedication to finding ways of exploring, investigating, and *learning the ear*? I wanted them to work with me on this and to help to facilitate some kind of discovery and understanding.

Perhaps it was my manner, I reflected, trying to grasp what I had done to irritate them. Perhaps I came across as overly concerned, being a musician with one totally deaf ear and now disoriented with the other one. Am I an inconvenient, difficult case, I wondered? Do they dismiss me as an hysterical woman (Shomon 2013) even though I think I speak to them, generally, with clarity of tone, an ease of manner, don't demand anything, am polite, outline my symptoms as clearly as possible and, sometimes, also note that I am a musician? Do they make assumptions based on my age, being neither very young nor very old? At the time, I was in my mid-late thirties. As a teenager, the ENT who treated me was compassionate, sincere, well mannered, and treated me

with respect. Why, now, is it so different as an adult? Do I look as though I am not to be taken seriously? I am left without answers, but have sensed on several occasions that this appears to be a difficult case, even though I am quite certain that I am not a difficult patient.

On further reflection, during the writing of this experience, I realised that perhaps some of those doctors may have considered that a patient who asks questions, reads medical and health literature and uses some complementary therapies, is indeed a difficult patient (Shomon 2013; 2012). The realisation stuns me for a moment as I begin to understand its magnitude.

I acknowledge that there are limitations to the level of help that medical specialists can offer. However, I am far less accepting of the attitude which appeared prevalent with some doctors I consulted during that particular time period, and later with ME/CFS. It involved a reluctance to inquire further, to carry out in-depth investigations and to acknowledge the human experience of the situation. It included dismissive responses to my legitimate questions, as though I was usurping their role as wise knowledge-maker, when they did not see an immediately obvious cause for the symptoms, rather than delving more deeply into the case. The attitude that prevailed was that there was nothing really wrong, they were not interested, and that I was wasting their time (Shomon 2012; 2013; Torrey 2011).

I have consulted some compassionate minded and respectful medical practitioners for various reasons over years. These stories of experiences of disempowerment and of respect not being enacted through the system (McConnell-Imbriotis 2004:134) reflect an aspect of socio-medical issues experienced by some with chronic illness, especially illnesses that are not easily understood or easily cured. Nevertheless, it is also important to note that there are many caring, thorough medical practitioners working within orthodox healthcare, natural healthcare and integrative healthcare practice. However, there is still room for improvement in the way in which orthodox medicine treats and evaluates people in situations such as this, when patients present with what may sound to be vague symptoms, but which cause anything but a vague impact on them (Shomon 2010; 2012; 2013; Torrey 2011).

I have returned for follow-up consultations over time to some of those specialist medical practitioners who have demonstrated empathy and who have conducted further, more in-depth tests. I acknowledge those practitioners in their attempts to ascertain a cause for the problem, and for taking my symptoms more seriously. Even though none have completely got to the

bottom of it, or been able to offer a complete cure, I certainly appreciate being taken seriously rather than being dismissed and feeling disempowered.

I expect to work as a team, in some kind of learning investigation partnership with a healthcare practitioner or medical specialist. I expect them to want to investigate and to do some research, as well as to facilitate learning regarding my understanding of the condition and management. Perhaps, some doctors do not see their role in such a way, but that is how I see it. They have certain skills, knowledge and experience that I do not, and I have certain symptoms and experience that they need to investigate through their learned skills of deduction and expertise. I often ask a lot of questions, because I want to understand, and learn, not because I want to be an annoyance. Some doctors do not like such active participation, whilst others appreciate a patient who is proactive, inquiring and self-directed in their own healthcare, learning and wellbeing (Shomon 2010; 2012; 2013; Torrey 2011).

Just Answer The Questions

As I entered the consultation room and sat down, the female ENT registrar doctor spoke to me with an abrupt and curt manner (at a city hospital outpatients clinic, a free healthcare service to some patients). I noticed it, but tried to not take it personally. I had cheerfully and politely greeted her on my entrance. I listened to what she had to say. I answered her questions. Perhaps she was just busy and impatient, I reflected, although the waiting room had been nearly empty and I had only waited five minutes.

'No elaboration please', she had demanded, 'Just answer the questions!'

Toward the end of the consultation, she asked me if I was clear about what she had said. I then specifically relayed back to her, clearly, a summary of what she had said to me regarding the case, medically and anatomically, in some parts word for word. She looked startled, surprised that I could possibly have understood all that. After a pause, her look of astonishment vanished and her tone of voice now somehow changed to a more gentle, pleasant one, as she said 'Yes! That's it ... exactly!'

I had listened to her and I had understood. I had also previously undertaken much self-directed learning on the issue over time, through holistic and orthodox healthcare perspectives, and I knew the general anatomy of the ear.

'Does this surprise you?' I had wanted to inquire.

Instead, I silently felt somewhat assured, for clearly articulating what she had spoken about, now that I was actually *allowed* to speak, and for momentarily breaking the curt, ice-like, detached atmosphere, with some signs of human acknowledgement. Perhaps she will be more human next time.

Audiology

Over several years I have been to an audiologist at that same Sydney hospital for hearing assessments, and I have great respect for his approach and his expertise. He knows sound. I am fussy with that. He takes it seriously. This gives me hope, as I am also serious about sound, although I am not an audiologist. He explains things and he demonstrates empathy. He works in a sound insulated, sound booth studio, consisting of two individual rooms separated by a glass panel, similar to a professional music recording studio.

This audiologist uses hand signals rather than mechanical buttons to acknowledge that the patient has heard the sound. He explains this to me, saying that it provides a more personal, visual, and embodied contact between the audiologist and patient, through the glass window. He suggests that it is good for the patient to engage their body in this simple, direct way, which I find interesting. He suggests that this is important and I agree. He acknowledges that sound and perception are important to this specific human's being. He shows direct recognition that, as a musician, I have something to deal with through having partial deafness and ongoing ear issues. He treats me like a human being and communicates warmly. He also has a highly professional manner and has been working in the field for many years. He works with audio technology, and he also knows how to work with people.

A Primary School Radio Health Program

At ten years old in a primary school lesson, our class was listening to a schools radio program about health, where listeners had written in regarding various health matters. The doctor on the

radio answered these questions on air for school students. One question stayed in my mind after the program. A child had written in, asking about ringing in the ears. He had written something to the effect of, 'I can sometimes hear a noise in my ears, like a high-pitched ringing sound. What is causing this, or am I just imagining it?' I remember vividly that the phrase 'am I just imagining it?' was the final phrasing in this question.

The doctor responded optimistically to this question with, 'Yes, you are probably just imagining it.' That was the extent of his diagnostic analysis. His tone was quite reassuring. I recall being strongly taken aback by the doctor's response, even as a ten year old child, feeling that he had not done the child's question any justice. I thought, 'That kid is hearing this sound in his ears, and the doctor is telling him he is imagining it. That can't be right – can it?' I wanted to ask the teacher more about this ringing in the ears, and why the doctor had acted as though it was not real. Knowing that I would likely be hauled to the front of the class to be punished for my insolence in questioning authority, I resisted the inclination. However, this question perturbed me, not so much because of the ears, as I had no known ear issues at that stage, but because of the doctor's response to the child's experience.

Many years later as an adult, I learn about tinnitus, and I remember the child who wrote his question to the radio doctor. Although I didn't know who he was, I wondered how he was doing these days, and if he had ever received any help for his tinnitus condition.

IMPOSED INSCRIPTIONS AND SILENCES

The contrast between the audiologist and less empathetic practitioners is striking to me. It demonstrates a great contrast of health provision, of one that is focused on wellbeing and one in which it appears that the patient is not really given respect and is not listened to with respect. All health practitioners need to be aware of the human element within healthcare, rather than simply operating through the science. I have experienced empathetic care from a wide range of healthcare practitioners, both orthodox and complementary therapists, just as I have experienced healthcare consultation which was lacking empathy, including from some alternative health therapists. Unfortunately, some of those negative experiences are all too easy to remember, and appear to sit as a disempowering experience for the patient, disallowing their need of being listened to.

These stories present just some of the experience of feeling silenced (Chamaz 2002:303) through some encounters within healthcare and the potential impact of social and medical inscriptions (Davies 2000; Grosz 1995:33) imposed upon the patient, bodily, through such medical and cultural experiences. These silences (Chamaz 2002:303), invalidation (Travers 2004) and inscriptions (Davies 2000; Grosz 1995:33) are not limited to Western Orthodox Medicine but may be present within natural/alternative healthcare as well. These stories represent an element of the social/medical inscriptions that may be imposed upon the patient/body, and sit as a reminder of the need for a medical model that takes the need for empathy, compassion and understanding seriously, as well as the need for thorough clinical investigations. The stories provide a contrast between a practitioner/patient experience that is meaningful and respectful, and which acknowledges the body as an important source of learning (as in the audiology story) and other examples of delegitimising/disempowering patient experience, also illustrating some of the power relations apparent (though at times subtle) within health/medical care.

McConnell-Imbriotis (2004) discusses some themes of oppression and disempowerment experienced as a patient in the orthodox medical system. She suggests that there is a lack of respect throughout the medical system (2004:134) and provides examples of her own experiences where some medical practitioners demonstrate a condescending approach and a lack of respect (2004:177). Her questioning of the expert medical knowledge and status quo was met at times with assumptions that she was overplaying her experience of illness (2004:154) rather than her being seen as a woman asking legitimate questions in order to help herself heal physically and to find a stronger sense of wellbeing. She expresses feelings of disappointment and betrayal and a subsequent loss of trust in her practitioner (2004:154). Such power issues do not support patient wellbeing with respect and compassion. These stories I have shared also represent the experience of oppression and disempowerment, as a woman seeking wellbeing and understanding regarding my own healthcare, wellbeing and bodily knowledge.

Pushing the patient to a position where they are not given permission to ask, know or learn, while revering the medical practitioner as an all-knowing, wise, knowledge-maker, is perhaps a disempowering practice, marking the patient as unknowledgeable and the medical professional as expert. This is not to say that the medical practitioner is not highly skilled, expert, with expertise, experience and knowledge, but that there needs to be a respect that also acknowledges the patient.

Discussing socio-medical inscriptions may be an important aspect towards understanding chronic illness experience and social aspects of learning. Sharing stories (Bulow 2004) of learning the body and collectivised, socio-medical stories, may bring to light shared experience of patients and highlight the need for a more compassionate and respectful medical model. Understanding imposed silences (Chamaz 2002) current within the medical model, regarding patient experience, is also an important aspect toward understanding how patients may be either empowered or disempowered. Health Social Movements (Brown & Zavestoski 2004:679) are important sources for empowering patients further. The action of patients pro-actively seeking solutions and becoming more empowered (Shomon 2010; 2012; 2013; One Click Group 2010) is an important addition to the momentum being gained through progressive health social movements.

Perhaps it is possible to arrive at a workable partnership wherein the patient and practitioner work in a co-operative, collaborative project of research. This engages participatory learning within a medical system that acknowledges the patient and which also identifies the body as a source of knowing. Some medical practitioners do have more of a sense of such participatory work (Myhill et al 2009; Myhill 2010b), and there is a cultural shift and open mindedness that those people generate. Nevertheless, even with more practitioners becoming interested in integrative medicine (Cohen 2004), I suggest that Western Orthodox Medicine, as a whole, still has a long way to go in grasping, through practicality and practice, a more holistic medical model which takes into fuller account a patient oriented, compassionate, system of care and wellbeing.

Likewise, natural and holistic practitioners may need to understand that there are complex emotional, psychological, physiological, environmental and sociological aspects (Aposhyan 2000:12) that interplay to mark and scar (Grosz 1995:33; Davies 2000:15) the body, and that body learning is a multi-layered process. Some holistic practitioners appear to have an understanding of the complexity and multi-layered learning of the body and wellbeing, rather than viewing the body and wellness through formulaic approaches. Nevertheless, it appears that within both natural healthcare and WOM, there are practitioners who practise through a compassionate, co-learning, participatory model, and those who appear to operate through a more formulaic or less compassionate stance.

LEARNING FROM ILLNESS TOWARD WELLBEING

In these next excerpts from the journals, which are about the process and experience, I note various body learning methods and experiences described through the journal work. I write about my subjective bodily experience and I draw, loosely and intuitively, from body psychology oriented practices, meditative techniques, yoga and some natural therapy work. I reflect about how I learned through this process and in what kinds of ways I tried to move beyond the restrictions toward transformative learning.

Journal Writings, 11/10/09:

I take heart that this bout of inflammation will subside and resolve. I do not know that it will, yet I have to hope that it will.

I have not been playing music this week. Overload. I played and sang one afternoon for an hour, until it became too much for my ear. It was like an overload of sensory stimulation, too many layers of sensory information.

Later evening, 11/10/09:

I read further about some antibiotics I have taken in the past two weeks. Ototoxicity, I read, is listed as a side effect. I am very concerned to learn that this class of antibiotics is known to potentially cause ototoxic complications – or side effects. Somewhere in the reading I learn that those with hearing loss, especially Sudden Sensori-Neural Hearing loss (SSHL), as I have, are at greater risk from ototoxic drugs. I presume I should not really have been taking these drugs. Yet I have taken them, and have completed the prescribed course.

As I read, my emotions and mind go through a swirling chain of cataclysmic reactions, through denial, fear, anger, worry, and then the cold, hard logic that I simply have to let it settle, and to see if it *will* settle. It is an emotional, sensory and bodily experience.

I am left, through the hours of the evening, with the stark reflection on the importance of the ear and its health. Although I watch a DVD movie tonight, my mind is half on my auditory sense of perception, my auditory sense of self, simultaneously. I use subtitles throughout the movie, as I often do. As I turn on the subtitles, I try to imagine, and then

try to forget. I don't want to know. I tell myself that all I can do is to take it a step at a time.

In retrospect, with a somewhat more objective stance, I was concerned that this subjectively situated writing might appear as an overly emotional representation of the experience.

Subjectively, the ears connect to the world emotively and creatively in relation to music, life and sound. It is a bodily, sensory and emotional experience. They connect music to this body, and are a creative connecting point for expression, learning and being. They are intricately involved in the hearing, sounding, writing and playing of music, linking to a core of subjective essence and existence. To be confronted with the potential loss of sound as a musician already with one totally deaf ear and attempting to deal with the unknown aspects of its outcome can be an experience of intense concern. Autoethnography (Ellis and Bochner 2000) brings into focus these personal experiences as research and validates the use of such emotional stirrings within qualitative research.

Working through some of this experience through writing (Richardson & St. Pierre 2005) helped me to put things into perspective and to learn my way through the experience. Putting it onto the page also helped me to come to new insights and realisations. I include some extracts of this journal writing, as it demonstrates some of the methods used and the value of writing my way through the experience. I have not included all the journal writings, but rather have given several snapshots of the experiential curve of change, with transformative learning developing through critical reflection (Mezirow 2000:20-23; Cranton 2006:58), creativity, body learning (Hoggan et al 2009; Lawrence 2005; 2012; Stuckey 2009) and awareness of the need to integrate new learning (Cranton 2006:20).

Richardson and St. Pierre (2005: 975) suggest writing data in different ways, such as through poetry, as a narrative account, or as readers' theatre. I have presented my writing through narrative, poetry, stories and music, and sometimes have blended these. Creating a 'working metaphor' (Richardson & St. Pierre 2005: 975) through mooring oneself in creative ways of presenting the research is a method for writing which I have also taken into account throughout this whole thesis. I have also utilised elements of layered text (Richardson & St. Pierre 2005:974), inserting analytical statements both between stories and inside them, blending poetry within some of the body learning sequences, and moving between an analytic voice and an artistic one.

In the writing process, it seemed that on occasions, 'some stories were painful and took an interminably long time to write, but writing them loosened their shadow hold on me' (Richardson 2005: 965). I also used this chapter as a subjective research experiment and rose to St. Pierre's (2005) challenge to chart what can happen by taking seriously the charge 'to think of writing as a *method* of qualitative inquiry' (St. Pierre 2005:967).

I wrote further on some of the experience and came to some realisations and understandings of a deepening sense of learning. Later, on reflection, drawing on the notion of the body as a site of learning, I realised that these writings were, in some way, an expression of the art in the body. These reflections draw on metaphor (Stuckey 2009; 2009a) as a way of learning the body and making meaning of experience.

11/10/09: *Expressions of the art in the body*

And so I listen, look and seek to understand what it is within those tiny, delicate walls of the ear's being that is needing: The sensitivity of the anatomical structure, the delicate balance within the Labyrinth, the Spiral Organ of Corti, the fluid of the semi-circular canals within the inner ear, and the tiny muscles and bones of the middle ear. What does it say to me?

Connectivity.

On reflection I realise: The anatomy of the ear somehow speaks to me of connectivity. The sound waves of an external force set off a reaction within the ear. These sound waves are directed from the external auricle, which is like a satellite dish picking up signals, through the ear canal to vibrate the ear drum (tympanic membrane), which in turn vibrates the tiny ossicle bones of the middle ear, which articulate together and provide further momentum for the vibration of sound. This momentum is further gathered through the fluid of the semi-circular canals in the inner ear, and eventually progresses to the tiny hair cells of the cochlear, which transmit, through neural pathways, the sense of hearing to the brain.

I experience a distinctly poetic *and* scientific orientation in my interest of the anatomy of the ear and the physiology of hearing. As former massage therapist and as musician, I inhabit the worlds of both anatomy and of art. The ear is a delicate mechanism and organ (and the cochlear is called the spiral organ). Indeed, it is an instrument. I uncover in this the reflection of my artist self.

Here I realised in the writing of it that the internal ear seemed to be akin to the embodiment of my subjective, artist self. These reflections came about through a focus on the body as being alive, organic and connected to the experience of self and being, not as a separate, disconnected appendage to be overcome. The body, as a site of learning, as organic, fluid, and creative, presented symbolic and poetic ways of learning through metaphor (Stuckey 2009; 2009a), with the image arising of the ear as embodiment of the artist self. It embodies a creative aspect of being.

11/10/09 cont.

The ear is 'the artist', symbolically, metaphorically, embodied, represented in the body, reflecting my artist self.

It embodies the creative aspect of my being.

Through the ear's sensitivity, I may be sensitive artistically within sound and music. Yet, through its sensitivity, I realise that I am also potentially vulnerable, physically, to the harshness of damaging, environmental influences. The ear is sensitive physiologically to environmental toxins and infectious agents. I wonder whether this may also link with my case of ME/CFS.

OTOTOXICITY

It is well established that some antibiotics and specific classes of pharmaceutical drugs can cause ototoxicity (Mudd 2012:online; Selimoglu 2007). In those with existing hearing loss, the risk of ototoxicity is increased through the use of some of those drugs (Mudd 2012:online).

Unfortunately, patients are often not informed of the ototoxic risk of the drugs that they are prescribed. Hearing loss may occur after a single dose or during the weeks or months after the

cessation of some drugs, and may be irreversible. Vestibular toxicity may also occur (Mudd 2012: Online; Selimoglu 2007).

Aminoglycosides are cleared more slowly from inner ear fluids than from serum and therefore a latency exists to the ototoxic affects of aminoglycosides. This latency can result in progression of hearing loss or onset of hearing loss after cessation of aminoglycoside treatment. Continuing to monitor the patient for cochleotoxic and vestibulotoxic effects up to 6 months after cessation of aminoglycoside treatment is important.

Mudd 2012:Online.

It took approximately six months for the ear inflammation to settle down again, and for the vertigo to resolve. I had several attacks of true/positional vertigo (the room appearing to spin continuously whilst I lay still) over a period of six months, along with other balance issues and a milder form of vertigo. Tinnitus (ringing in the ears caused by damage to the inner ear hair cells) increased during that same six month period and lessened after this time. It appears, anecdotally, that there may have been some ototoxic effects from those drugs. Twelve months later, there were still lingering, vestibular, vertigo associations and imbalance and some mild hearing loss.

Journal writings, Oct/Nov 2009: Listening to the Body.

I remember now, at one point in the reading on ototoxic side effects this afternoon, how I felt within my body, that in reading this information, somehow, suddenly, from the pit of my stomach, I felt like shouting out loud, 'Not *this*... Not this!'

I had curtailed that primal, physical urge of the body, and breathed a breath or two, deeply, instead. In through the nose, and gently out through the mouth. In recalling this, I suddenly, and *spontaneously*, envision myself atop a high cliff top, overlooking the great crashing sea, arms wide open to the wind, taking life in.

From where did that image arise?

When I thought of screaming, and I recalled the deep *body* urge of feeling like screaming, I suddenly and spontaneously transplanted the image to the cliff top and sea, mentally and visually shouting out to the wide open space, in a void of time. And the sea crashes back at me. I open my arms and I breathe it in: Life and sound, and the crashing, beautiful, *audible* waves.

This image stays with me for some time, and I decide that I will recall it if I feel afraid or anxious of the state of my ear. It becomes a solid anchoring for calming and focusing over the next period of several weeks: A body learning.

SOUND THERAPY AND LEARNING

Sound Therapy (Joudry & Joudry 1999; Joudry 2012) has been a catalyst for my reflections regarding the ears as more than just hearing devices, and these reflections gathered momentum partly by considering the ways through which Sound Therapy works within the ear and brain. Sound Therapy (Joudry & Joudry 1999:14; Joudry 2012) works with varying frequencies of layered sound and music, listened to through headphones. It connects with bodily learning within the sense of sound/hearing through the receptivity of the ears and the neural connectivity of the ear to the brain.

Some studies support that the ear is a conduit for learning (Joudry 2012a; Richards et al 2012). Positive results have been attained using the Tomatis Technique (Joudry & Joudry 1999:172-186; 57-68), which is the basis of Sound Therapy (Joudry & Joudry 1999:4; Joudry 2012b), and other similar techniques such as those used in Sound Therapy, for children with learning difficulties and Autism (Joudry & Joudry 1999:172-186; 57-68; Joudry 2012a). Subjectively, I experienced that Sound Therapy appeared to help stimulate mental clarity, and physically I experienced a general improvement in equilibrium and a lessening of tinnitus.

It was partly through the work of Joudry (2009; 2012) that I also began to consider the ear as a more artistic element, symbolically, within a connected soundscape of the ear and the body, and within an experiential learning focus of hearing and listening. Joudry (2012) and Sound Therapy also facilitated a way of thinking about *listening* as a focusing activity rather than *hearing* as a passive activity. Listening is a connectivity experience.

LEARNING THROUGH ILLNESS TOWARDS WELLBEING: A BODILY AND CREATIVE APPROACH

Writing the body in this way, through my research journal, allowed for a freedom of creative exploration, and led to new understandings about how the body may be, subjectively, part of a connected, integrated domain of learning, creativity and expression.

The emergence of these ideas developed through a process of exploration, over time, through allowing the story to unfold, and for me to learn it, bodily and creatively. It also required that I put aside my resistance to its expression. It was not a logically thought out, planned and executed process. It was haphazard, chaotic, fluid and flowing. The learning in it is an exploratory process. It is not a linear, logical progression, but rather is fluid and moving, dynamic and, ultimately, transformative. It was a process which incorporated the body, creativity, critical reflection and poetic reflection (Stuckey 2009; Lawrence 2009; 2008; 2012; 2012a; 2012b; Mezirow 1991; Cranton 2006; Dirkx 1997; 2000; 2001; 2008; Davies 2000; Cohen 2003; Amann 2003; Freiler 2008; Hoggan et al 2009). It revolved around the body and it integrated aspects of bodily and creative learning.

This kind of transformative learning is informed by non-logical, extra-rational and bodily learning processes, within an intuitive framework of learning and the body (Stuckey 2009; Freiler 2008; Amann 2003; Gustafson 1999; Lawrence 2012). Such extra-rational approaches to learning (Dirkx 1997; 2000; 2001; 2008; Hoggan et al 2009), involving intuitive senses (Lawrence 2009), imagery (Stuckey 2009; Lawrence 2005) and writing (Richardson & St Pierre 2005; Davies 2000) are employed here, and draw upon knowing within an exploratory, experiential learning.

Here, I now move into more creatively reflective methods of writing, verse, music experience, and body learning focus. This is an experiential process of learning and is connected to creative, bodily and transformative ways of learning.

12/10/09 *Afternoon:*

I want to shut off now,
nurture you,
protect you
from any outside
harm.
But this is a
bitter
sweet
silence
in the peace.

I lay down then, and closed both palms of my hands over my ears, warmth penetrating the skin, flesh and depth, from each hand to ear. I visualised a blue-purple colour, entering the ears, a colour I like to visualise for healing, soothing and calming. I continued this for several minutes.

I gently worked my thumb and fingers around the skull surrounding the ears, working on the temporal bone and mastoid process (above and behind the ear), lightly and meditatively, for a time.

I put my middle fingers lightly into both ears, just enough to close off the entrance to the outer ear canal, and I hum soft, single tone, sustained vocal notes. I hear the resonance in my head, the overtones and harmonics. I continue this for five minutes or more, keeping the pitch of one single note for the duration of a breath, and changing the pitch of each breath's note as I feel.

Slowly, I begin to feel that I have begun to move.

How have I begun to move? This speaks metaphorically through the use of reflective writing within the experience. The movement begins within the body focusing exercises. The body focus is beginning to change and the learning focus is beginning to move, as I begin to move

into a new direction for learning.

Below, I highlight the transformative learning process through which I progressed, the critical reflection (Mezirow 2000:20-23; Cranton 2006:58) initiating and anchoring learning, and how I used music for learning. There is subjectivity involved in this process of learning. It is not presented through an objective, logical analysis, but rather through a lens of creativity and subjectivity.

14/10/09:

Over the next few days, I begin to use music and creativity to process the experience. It is a body and mind, sensory experience.

Although the muddiness of sound in utilising more than one instrumental sound in music recording feels somewhat disorienting, I am able to focus into solo piano, and quiet vocals with more of a sense of centering, balancing calm.

I begin to write a piece, and some words flow. A sense of grief and outpouring of life impassioned emotion pours through me, gently, as I sing softly. In time, I will sing this without tearful emotion. It will only take a few practices. Yet, for now, in this initial outpouring of music, song, sound, words, it all seems to move at once, like a slowly surging, torrent of cleansing.

Voice Body Self

I then record the basics of the music, the solo piano. Next day, I play it to listen to it, and I hear it with a new objectivity, as a piece of its own. I begin naturally to sing the words, and they evolve.

The impassioned, raw emotion of the initial writing and playing is gone now, metamorphosed into a more lyrical and softly sung, poetic song. I will work on this further. The music is almost complete, as a simple, melodic piece for piano and voice.

13/10/09 *Night* :

I put an old (analogue) recording of mediaeval and renaissance music on the stereo while I work. A favourite period of music to me, it begins to draw me into a different world, a space, of music. The methodical rhythms of its metred pace give me a sense of ease and

stability. Even the faster tempo of the rhythmic, drum-beating, 13th Century dances has a vibrancy which urges my musical self to celebrate.

'I will get through this', I remind myself. I sense that I am already progressing through some transformative learning.

Next Day:

I visit a new natural health practitioner, a chiropractor. She seems supportive and understanding of the need for healing. On the way, walking along the street, the sound of the environment, the traffic, seems muffled and yet too loud, too strong for my sensitive ear. I want quiet and rest, not city streets.

The chiropractor, after a thorough consultation and discussion, works on neck, head, and back. She is optimistic that something can be worked with here. During the session, I feel a sudden, gentle release, a tiny 'crackle-click-change' somewhere within the ear or the area surrounding it. I am encouraged by this. I can feel it physically 'freeing up' something, in my body response to the change. During the session, heat from her hands also penetrates my skin and gives a warming, soft, sensation of healing. I notice after the session that I am distinctly moving more freely, as though some blockages of resistance have been removed. My ear feels somewhat different, mildly clearer, even though not fully free and clear.

Over the next few weeks, I consult with doctors, continue with chiropractic, use some (different) prescribed antibiotics, and later, herbal medicine.

Here, at the listening to the mediaeval music, there is a change in how the writing develops through the journal. It seems to gain a momentum through the process, as I experientially and intuitively move into a way of working that is transformative. That listening was a self directed desire to come out of the disorientation and to anchor myself in the experience of music as a learning tool for transformation.

29/10/09:

After a local ENT doctor consult, I go to a nearby cafe, to sit for a while and write, where I can be among people, not loud but alive, around fellow humans in a social environment,

yet in my own space of focus. The softly playing, ambient-groove sounds of the music pleasantly permeate the atmosphere and help me to focus differently. I am moving away from the stressful bodily experience, my hearing clear enough now to enjoy the sounds of the softly playing music in a different space from home.

Later, driving home, as I near the corner to my street I am suddenly surprised by a billboard advertisement in the not far distance.

In big, bold letters, simply is the word... 'HEAR'.

I am touched by the serendipitous experience of this word in my vision, with the backdrop of the sky ahead of me.

'Okay,' I respond.

The advertisement is for a radio station, noted in smaller writing at the base of the billboard, and not related to health oriented material. Nevertheless, it is personally symbolic and reflective to my experience of the time, and provides a visual metaphor linking to transformative learning.

29/10/09:

After I return home that day, I play a recording of my piano music, a draft recording of soft, solo piano which I have not yet perfected. I listen to the flow of the sound and enter the piece of music, as I go about some mundane, house tidying tasks in the music studio room (AKA bedroom). I decide to work on it now, to play it and to re-record it (Music: Momentum).

I am listening. Self Body Music

I record the piece.

Even if it may not be perfect in dynamic expression, when I listen back to it, it seems that it's the best recording yet of it, and I feel satisfied with that. Today I am happy to have recorded, and to have heard, felt, and listened to, the music.

Following this, I then play through, and afterwards sing, the song I had begun to write through the intensity of a couple of weeks prior. I sing it from a perspective which is different to that time now. The ear is still recovering, adjusting, changing, but the sound is clearer and I am centred in the music. This song comes now into a sense of

determination within, to respond and move beyond restriction, and to feel a sense of freeing in the expression. This is a transformative focus of learning through music and creative expression.

I then move into working on some other instrumental work and recording, then some more piano, and I am absorbed into music for over two and a half hours.

How do I learn my way through this?

I have been exploring the body knowing, and the body learning. I have explored some of the deeper layers, the conscious and sub-conscious feelings of hearing. I have explored medical options and natural therapies.

I am learning my way through *listening*, in part, to a sense within my own being, and my own body, and I am trying to learn how to heal.

I am learning my way through, in part, by listening.

CONNECTING WITH THE BODY THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The following is a spontaneous and creative body learning exercise where I intuitively 'followed the prompts', like an improvisation exercise. The process then led into some interesting learning and understanding coming from, or arising through, the body. This exercise contributes to how I am writing the body, learning and accessing body knowledge. It follows a way of accessing bodily knowledge that rests in creative and intuitive ways of knowing. I have dotted other examples of intuitive body learning exercises throughout the thesis.

21/5/10:

Sitting at the kitchen table at home, in solitude, I began tapping gently around my ear, on the temporal bone region, and focusing on the sensations of the tapping. I'd been out to see a doctor for further ear inflammation symptoms, and home again after some errands. My mood was calm, although I felt as though I had really had enough of the persistent, recurrent, ear symptoms of the past few weeks. Whilst tapping, I spontaneously began to (invisibly) write some words in my mind, arising from formless images, wording some phrases, speaking them softly to myself, seemingly sourced from the body through the

gentle tapping. Afterwards, I attempted to retrieve some of it and to transfer it to the page. Although much of the wording was lost in transit, I recalled the general core of the feelings that came through the tapping and subtle bodily sensations of the ear and temporal region.

Use of this tapping technique is very loosely based on some of the basic Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) work (Craig 2012), although I had only a very rudimentary knowledge of some of the most basic ideas of EFT. EFT works by tapping along meridians used within Eastern medicine traditions (Craig 2012). However, I worked through a different approach with my own simple tapping, focusing only around the specific body area of interest; the ear. I had earlier improvised this technique spontaneously one day, whilst unwell, after having read a summary introduction to EFT. I began utilising tapping in this particular way, around the ear, perhaps a little impatiently, rather than learning the complete technique of EFT. I realised later that there was meaning in following this intuitive, body prompted process. To my surprise, I discovered some spontaneous unfolding of bodily memory at that time, and became aware of an element of bodymind integration (Aposhyan 2004:15) occurring. I have used this very simple technique on only a few occasions since then. I speculate that the tapping, in my method of it, serves as a physical focal point, creating an anchor for body awareness, and helping to create, or to activate, a centred awareness of the body and mind working together.

I note these musings of the body here, as they were aligned clearly to the work I had been writing on the ear and sound. They connect to bodily learning, and the creative exploration of themes of power relations, art, learning, listening and hearing. The writing that follows is an arts-based (McNiff 1998; 2006; Barone & Eisner 1997; 2006), creative representation of the body learning (Stuckey 2009; Lawrence 2012) that took place in this intuitive process. This verse is a vocal articulation for that bodily learning.

Sister Mary treated me like

a valuable artist.

She nurtured my artistic

sensitivity,

and showed enthusiasm

in the musical passion

ignited in the fires

of my youth.

She recognised my joy

in music.

said and unsaid.

The music was a

shared connection,

a creative, nurturing

sense of art.

Sister Lucy treated me

like trash.

As though I needed to be

forced into playing.

as though I needed

to be thrashed,

and chained,

tied to the piano

to do proper practice

and proper scales

in a proper and lady like fashion,

though silently and with poise.

Nineteenth century poise!

Threw me out of the choir
in disgust of having to see
my face anymore.

Refused to teach me any longer.

I was glad to see the back of her techniques of destruction,
destroying young artists in new bloom.

But,
now
I had no music teacher,
and I needed one
to nurture and
defend my
art
in its newly ripening
state.

I was saddened
Sister Mary moved
away,
elsewhere.

I've never forgotten you.
You encouraged and nurtured
my art in its infancy,
and gave me
the courage to continue
in the face
of almost
anything.

CONCLUSION

I have included these experiences of the body as subjective inquiry through autoethnography, drawing from research journal entries, creative expression, and reflections on the experience of being a medical patient. Experiential learning, body learning and transformative learning, alongside the methods of autoethnographic writing, writing as a method of inquiry, and creative exploration through music and sound, are intrinsic to the nature of how I learned my way through much of this bodily experience. Moving toward a transformative focus and outcome, after a disorienting experience, I specifically and intentionally embarked upon a journey of learning my way through that bodily experience and the surrounding disorienting experience.

I have included some stories of the body in the context of the medical world, from the perspective of the patient, whilst also acknowledging that there are areas of grey within orthodox and natural healthcare sectors, and that specialist, medical intervention is not always able to guarantee results. I have also suggested that a starting point of attaining a reasonable and compassionate patient/practitioner relationship is a valuable part of healthcare, whatever the outcomes of the medical exploration.

I have illustrated some of the processes I utilised personally, learning my way through a subjective, bodily, sensory experience, using writing, body-focused inquiry, creative expression and music, within a transformative focus. The exploration of such a subjective experience through using experiential and experimental methods, such as writing, body learning, drawing upon metaphor, and creative expression in music, may lead to transformative learning. This process may initiate new meaning-making, and in utilising the methods I have discussed, may facilitate transformative learning through both personal and socially focused contexts.

CHAPTER NINE: MOVEMENT, PLACE AND BEING STILL

'The whole country is sacred.'

(Aboriginal women's text, quoted in Somerville 1999:38).

These next two chapters reflect upon a journey through some of the places of my learning and being. They are intended to be a story of learning, subjectively experienced through different places and landscapes, and reflecting upon contexts of place. They reflect on themes of movement, transience, being still, and belonging, and how these became intertwining themes throughout illness and recovery years. Physical relocation, over several years in several different locations, added another dimension to the illness/wellness and creativity journey. Throughout those years, place, movement and a need for a sense of belonging became a dominant theme and a personal challenge to managing health and wellness.

In these chapters, I draw on, and reflect on, experiential methods of learning in connection to place, based in alternative ways of knowing and learning, through extra-rational and creative-expressive aspects of learning (Lawrence 2009; 2005; Hoggan et al 2009; Dirx 1997; 2000; 2001; 2008). I also address (perhaps an interesting word in this context, although a different definition of the word *address*) issues of real estate and unaffordable housing in the inner city of Sydney because this was such a highly prominent aspect of my life and living within that city environment, and one which impacted many choices through those years. This aspect of real estate and housing also had an ongoing repercussive effect, one which is still playing out in various ways even years later.

I moved away from the city during the time of writing the thesis and it seemed that the time would coincide quite well with completing the chapter I had planned about movement, place and being still. I had written of the theme of place within the city environment and I wrote of nature through a context of city life and short journeys away. Living away from the city I discovered, through experience, that my daily walks became a new source of material, or data, and learning. Through being in a new, more natural environment, I engaged in a way of learning in place that was somehow different to my place learning in the city environment, although it was viewed and

experienced through the same body. This change brought about a new perspective to my writing of place, and I write in two, defined chapters because of that move.

Some of the writing in these chapters sits within an arts-based research (McNiff 1998; Barone & Eisner 1997;2006) presentation. I make use of verse extensively and have also expressed some of the personal meaning of place through music. The verse forms a (sometimes non-linear) storyline which rests against the background of place, weaving through aspects of different places of city and country which held meaning for me.

Within these chapters, I also draw on research journal entries. Many of these entries were written with the specific intention of being used as reflective writing sections within the thesis, and are a hybrid form of thesis writing and journal reflection, written whilst the experiences of place were unfolding during those times. These writings arose as an integral part of the exploration of place, and are included largely as integral chapter writings, rather than as intermittent journal references.

There are unwritten lines between the writing. How do I write of all the detailed, lived experience of moving and being moved on, of being nearly deported from Scotland because of Immigration rules, or evicted with little notice from an affordable house in inner city Sydney because of rapid gentrification? How do I write of the desire then for both freedom and settledness? I cannot write of it thoroughly in these pages, in this space. So, I write some of it, and leave the spaces in between. I write pieces of my story, interwoven through years and across two countries, with silences of unsaid memories and moments, shared through brief stories of some of those times of the subjective, lived experience of place and belonging. I write some of it in verse, as this allows for the pauses and the space in between. It calls for the reader to move into a different space of reading, one which engages an arts-based approach, engaging a non-logical and non-linear perspective, a way of reading that ventures into the space and rhythm of the silences alongside the words. As I move closer to the present time in the writing, the writing of place becomes more linear and detailed, with less space between.

In considering these two chapters, after much of the data collection writing had been done, and much material was located in separate files and under different journal entries, I felt at some loss as to how to bring it all together and to form it into a coherent whole.

I wrote in the morning pages:

'How on Earth to get the chapter into shape and context and flow, this movement and place chapter? There is so much material and I have it all in separate files but not coherent...'

Later, the phrase 'How on Earth', suddenly stood out to me. It seemed somehow fitting that I had written this, unconsciously, in relation to the place chapter. 'How on Earth', I had reflected; and in that reflection I began to find more clarity.

9/7/09:

Moving

I have moved a lot in my life.

I'm tired.

I want to be still.

But not inactive.

I want to rest,

but not to die,

whilst also reaching up and out,

moving forward.

To do this,

I want a nurturing

home base.

Something simple is fine,

with trees, and garden,

birds, nature nearby.

and yet ...

I also crave a cultural space.

I *like* the arts

and

a cityscape

in some respects.

balance

I am an urban/nature type.

I have evolved that way,

over time.

I know it,

and I don't mind.

I am at home with it.

But I need to live where I

can breathe and be free.

Nurture, relax, heal, be well,

create,

enjoy the beauty of my surroundings.

I suppose I need a breather from the city,

so that I can reclaim my

breath and being with nature.

so that I don't feel smothered or encumbered,

by people, buildings, and real estate values,

by the gentrification process that seems

inclined to overtake wherever I have

moved again in the city.

... The breather

Even though I crave it,

I resist it as well.

And even as I resist it,

I crave it all the more.

10/7/09:

This City

This city hides its homeless.

It destroys bus shelters
where people have made
home,
to show the world
we are a perfect city,
a perfect place.

Long benches at railway stations,
in the CBD, and in Hyde Park,
are removed
and replaced
with safe looking seats that
do not allow for reclining
horizontally.
No sleeping allowed.
We are a perfect city.

Beneath its veneer of beauty,
perfection,
and ever developing
construction
for real estate
satisfaction,
it is no perfect city.

Every city has an underbelly.
The darkness of this place
contrasts its beauty
and light.

On and around the harbour
everything seems happy,
fun, and beautiful.
I am uplifted when I am there.

We have been moved on
many times
from where we lived,
in the
inner city.

Gentrification and real estate
values dominated.

The area was
sterilised of any 'bohemian'
life influence.

The streets are sterile
of 'those' inner city types
and now belong,
predominantly at least,
to those who
saw it,
wanted it,
and then destroyed it.

Sterilised of controversial influence,
Political, social awareness, activists,
artists, musicians, actors,
living on the edge,
No more cafes with noticeboards
lining their walls.
Buskers,
none.

Gone.

Pushed out.

signs now say 'No busking without permission'
in the CBD railway tunnels.

I busked there,
years ago.

The acoustics are nice.

There is not music there now.

Only the sound of footsteps,
approaching and leaving.

Hospitals are closed, and changed into
ritzy apartment blocks.

I can count five without any difficulty.

At one time,

in the year before the madness of the
real

estate wave began,

I lived behind the Opera Centre,
an arts rehearsal space in the inner city.

My two house mates and I

enjoyed the sound of the

singers' practice,

and

delighted

in the arias drifting

into our small garden backing onto the centre.

Sandwiched comfortably between this arts space and

Belvoir St Theatre

just a few doors up on the other side of our street,

it was a cultural atmosphere,

and sometimes a play spilled out

onto the street
at night
between our place and theatre door.

...The artistic inner city...
I found my city niche here.
But all too soon,
it was lost to the real world.

The real
estate
world.

Where I live now,
artists, musicians, political activists,
all are in the surrounding area.
a green belt of consciousness,
radicalism and sub-culture,
living side by side with conservative
establishment precedents.

Where I live,
is not a bad place
all in all.

Multicultural diversity, a world melting pot.

I am connected, to some extent.

At times.

There is some element of community
that I feel a part of.

Even if I just hang out for a while
in a cafe, I can see it
is there,
and I feel a part of it all.

But real estate values are dominating again.
And the survival of the fittest and strongest
is the battle cry,
in a battle

I cannot compete.

...We live in an inner suburb,
for nearly four years now.

We are now the only renters
in a row of seven, semi-detached houses,
worth more than
they could possibly be worth.

The sense of the place has changed,
even in these few years.

Gentrification is on its way.

It has almost arrived.

It is already partially here.

And we will be gone soon enough.

23/9/09: *Dust Storm*

Dust storm in Sydney. Red dust haze blanketing the city this morning. I wake through the early hours, several times, to the sound of the wind against the window.

Early morning, red foggy glow, smell of earth in the air, a sense of something... long past... but familiar.

Strangely, it makes me feel I am closer to home now. It stirs a feeling in body and brain.

Reminiscent of home. Makes me want to go bush. My body, perhaps, knows this sense in a way I cannot verbally articulate.

The red dust seems to stir ancient memories of the land. A message of Dreaming on the wind. Ancient rituals, life paths, dreams. There is something mysterious in the experience of it.

Later in the day, I scribble 'gone bush' in the layer of red dust on the back windscreen of my car. I'm feeling pleased with myself, because the feeling of what that means to me, and how I feel connected through that act, is suggestive of a gesture against the traffic of the city, and ignites a sense of freedom. It's playful though ironic, given that the car is only a small, three-door hatchback.

EXPLORING A RELATIONSHIP TO PLACE

Somerville's (1995; 1999) *Body/Landscape Journals* explores the relationship of the body to place and to learning, positioning the body at the centre of learning, and at the site of learning (1995; 1999; 2004). It was through reading this work that I initially began to reflect upon and explore place pedagogy as a subject located within academic research and learning. Place pedagogy (Somerville et al 2009) was new territory to me at the time, and I was fascinated to find that my personal experiences of place and movement perhaps had found some kind of validation for writerly exploration. I had long had a fascination for the possibility of writing some of my story of moving, travelling and unexpected departures. However, I had not anticipated that I might write of this within an academic context such as a dissertation.

Somerville et al (2009:3) urge us to think about place differently, encouraging us to initiate new conversations and to move 'beyond the limits of our current thinking' (2009:3). They approach theories of place and space through a context of learning, and ask how we may learn new ways to 'inhabit, and to know place differently?' (Somerville et al 2009:3). Aiming to explore and develop a new pedagogy of place, Somerville et al (2009:3) suggest that although technical and scientific solutions are important regarding complex socio-environmental issues, changing our relationships to place is just as important (Somerville et al 2009:3).

Within the reflective, poetic and journal writings of these two, linked chapters, I focus on my relationship to place and how that relationship may be mutable or strongly anchored, interdependent on place, country, body and creativity. That relationship has also been defined and influenced to an extent by varying regulations of Immigration, by social and economic influences, and by a personal sense of place which draws me to those places which hold a feeling of subjective significance to me. I explore my subjective relationship to place and to landscape (Davies 2000) and reflect through symbolic contexts of 'country' (Rose 1996:7). I reflect on how that relationship has changed over time, and in varying contexts. I reflect on some of the ways in which the body may be identified as a central aspect to learning in place (Somerville 1999; Somerville et al 2009:9; Davies 2000). I integrate bodily and artistic ways of knowing and expression into the learning of my place. These are integral aspects to learning through my relationship to place, and form key anchors within these chapters.

Clover (2002:169) also refers to the necessity for reviewing our relationship to place, and suggests that creativity has a part to play in this. We can talk about our relationship to place and nature, through an adult learning perspective, in ways other than those addressing physical needs (2002:169). We can express our relationship to place and nature through telling stories, writing poems, and creating drawings 'about lives that include the larger life-world in more cultural and spiritual ways' (2002:169), thereby engaging an awareness of our relationship to place and nature. Clover (2002:169) suggests that 'Learning in place is more than studying interrelationships in our environment. Equally important is experiencing these relationships. It is an interchange among the body, the mind and the senses' (Clover 2002:169).

In these writings, I establish and explore a relationship to place through reflectively theorising a subjectively focused, creative place learning, and I explore my relationship to some specific places through focusing on creative and bodily engagement, which includes the body, mind and senses.

That creative engagement may at times be expressed through a poetic representation of an experience and at other times it may consist of reflections on the experience of a bodily and sensory awareness whilst situated within a specific place. It may draw, to some extent, on the notion of Indigenous knowledge (Lawrence 2005:3) regarding intuitive and experiential ways of learning a place. It draws on Aboriginal ways of learning and experientially knowing differently, through listening with respect (Paton & Brearley 2009; Ungunmerr-Baumann 2002), and rests also with the Aboriginal notion of country being a living entity (Rose 1996).

I have attempted to encompass a bodily and creative approach to some of my place learning. A bodily and creative approach to place learning is an interactive process between body, creative self, place and space, an interactive process of experience and reflection, and a process of coming to know differently. Place learning, when viewed through this perspective is an experiential learning journey, interactive between place, body and self. This can add a layer to exploring a relationship to place, also expressed through artistic and symbolic representations. In the writings in chapter ten, I have focused on initiating such a creative and bodily engagement with place and space.

Bodily engagement and consciously representing alternative and invisible stories may contribute to developing a new place pedagogy, alongside a new way of being in the world and a new way of knowing the world (Somerville et al 2009:10). Body and self have 'a reciprocal relationship with objects and landscapes, weather, rocks, and trees, sand, mud and water, animals and plants' (Somerville et al 2009:10). This notion, Somerville et al (2009:10) describe as 'becoming other' (2009:10), or becoming 'other-to-ourselves' (2009:10). The self that is in process of becoming is extended to an 'emergence as becoming-other' (2009:10). I have explored this relationship throughout a subjective learning and knowing through the body in place, immersed in the specific sites of my travelling.

PLACE STUDIES AS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY AREA

Place studies is a newly emerging, interdisciplinary area (Somerville et al 2009:3,6) and may have an opening to link with new and emerging arts-based methodologies (2009:10). New methodologies of place studies are now emerging because there is an emphasis 'on undoing dominant stories of place (decolonisation) and the collective and relational making of new place

stories (re-inhabitation)' (2009:10). Place pedagogy may need to adopt and integrate a multiplicity of forms in order to express alternative interpretations of place.

Within these writings, a merging of a bodily and creative approach forms some of the basis of my exploration of a relationship to place. Exploring these creative and bodily ways of learning through multiple, mixed methodologies, is intended to articulate an alternative perspective and representation of place as seen through a subjective experience and expression of place. This subjective expression of place learning is based in autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner 2000), arts-based learning (Barone & Eisner 1997; 2006; Hoggan et al 2009; Lawrence 2005; 2009; McNiff 1998), and embodied learning (Amann 2003; Cohen 2003; Freiler 2008; Gustafson 1998; 1999; Lawrence 2012; 2012a; 2012b; McConnell-Imbriotis 2004; Somerville 1999; Stuckey 2009).

This creative based perspective of learning place also potentially has a part to play within a wider place pedagogy, supporting an emphasis on relearning how place is perceived, and suggesting other ways of knowing and learning our places. The concepts of decolonisation and reinhabitation (Gruenewald 2008:319) are notable within a focus on telling place stories.

Dominant stories of place that have caused injury, oppression and harm may be recognised, in decolonisation, and reframed, through acknowledging and telling other, untold or contested stories of place, that draw on cultural knowledge to heal, affirm, empower, and nurture people and ecosystems in a process of reinhabitation (Gruenewald 2008:319). The junction where these multiple and contesting stories exist is the contact zone (Somerville et al 2009:9), and the arts have a place in the exploration of these stories.

I have focused on an expressive place pedagogy through using bodily and creative-expressive ways of knowing and learning, as well as, in parts, honing in, indirectly, to an indigenously inspired, although subjective, sense of a spirit of the land (Rose 1996; Paton & Brearley 2009; Ungunmerr-Baumann 2002). Through creative processes we can also 'begin to know the world anew, and each expression is part of a larger ongoing process' (Somerville et al 2009:10). That larger, ongoing process includes representations of our own and others' stories of place through multiple formats and explorations. 'Every time we make a single representation of our places, it exists beside a proliferation of other representations, a pause in an iterative process of representation and reflection through which we come to know differently' (Somerville 2007, cited in Somerville et al 2009:10). Utilising multiple levels of knowing for engaging and exploring stories of place may bring into focus more ways of working toward reinhabitation.

MORE THAN A PASSIVE BACKDROP

Place may have been previously regarded as a 'passive stage or a backdrop for the dramas of social life' (Mayne 2009:175). Place and space were considered as having an 'ahistorical universality' (2009:175), and were 'disconnected from the entanglements and particularities of social life and action' (2009:175.) Referring to 'the broader phenomenology of landscape as an enveloping social milieu', Mayne (2009:176) suggests that historical landscapes include many contradictory and conflicting elements that 'embody the lives, practices, identities, aspirations, and memories of the diversity of people who have been associated with them' (2009:176). He describes landscape as being 'a milieu inseparable from human imagination and interaction' (2009:176) and notes that 'earth is ecologically connected with all interacting agents' (2009:175).

In my wanderings and walking through bush, beach and city, I reflect on, and refer to, place and space as an interactive and connected domain, wherein I am both moving and moved. There is an inscribing of (part of) my own (body's) story, somehow, on the landscape (however small) through my metaphorical and physical footprints/ footsteps, as the landscape interactively inscribes some of its story onto me, through my lived body, and into my life. This notion of 'inscription' (Davies 2000:11), of an inscribing of the landscape onto the body (Davies 2000:11) and the body into the landscape, has both an artistic and bodily expressive quality to it. It is a way of learning that is connected intrinsically to the body and to the landscape, whether that is within a natural setting or in the city.

In the verses written on place and space within city and bush I have reflected through the experience of being in those spaces, and I have used writing as a method for articulating that experience of being, listening and knowing in place. These interactive, experiential learnings are not formed through a logical approach to learning, but rather stem from an interactive experience through the body, mind and place. Involving the senses, with seeing, listening, breathing, touch, smell and taste, the body is engaged in learning within the immediate presence of the space, while the mind is taking it in visually and mentally, to absorb and articulate it in artistic form.

In an interactive focus of place, I may also listen (in some way) with the body for an unsaid sense of those who may have gone before in some of these places. Whether imagination or reality, images sometimes come to mind of times and people past. Feelings emerge from rocks and trees and sky. Whether they are completely real or fictional imaginings of the mind, perhaps based in

white, historical perspectives of Australian settlement, I am interacting with the place as more than a passive backdrop and may begin to learn more deeply through engaging place and the body as a way of knowing.

DEEP LISTENING

An aspect of the concept of deep listening (Paton and Brearley 2009:38-41; Ungunmerr-Baumann 2002) may also be a part of this learning. Although this concept may not exactly refer traditionally to the body, listening deeply is also connected to learning and the body in place. I may, metaphorically, listen with my feet as I walk through a place. This is initiated through their physical contact with the earth underneath them, and experienced bodily as a sense of connection rather than a specific link with hearing. I listen deeply with the senses (through the body) for the sense of the place. I listen deeply to an instinctive feeling of the place in the bush and at the beach.

Paton and Brearley (2009:41) acknowledge that 'cultural knowledge goes beyond the human' (2009:41) and includes the animals, spiritual, and physical worlds. 'It includes the sun the moon, the rivers, the mountains and the sea' (2009:41). If we begin to listen deeply to these landscapes while we are in them, we may begin to interact in ways that are based in other than logical knowledge, and begin to engage in other ways of knowing and learning, both creatively and bodily. In my wanderings in some areas of nature, and at times in the city too, I cannot help sometimes but feel moved by the 'felt' stories, shared and unshared, somehow present in the rocks and land, and even of the buildings in a city, there in the landscape of my walkings. Deep listening, with the body and the heart, is part of this learning.

In Indigenous Australian cultures, deep listening acknowledges the guidance of the ancestors and old people (Paton and Brearley 2009:41) 'to teach us how to live together, how to live with the land and to respect the physical and spiritual worlds we share' (2009:41). Drawing from such Indigenous ways of knowing, we may be able to begin to listen more deeply to the landscape and begin more clearly to understand the intersecting of contemporary cultures within that landscape.

In order to co-create 'a place that lies between' (Paton and Brearley 2009), Indigenous ways of knowing and listening can influence and facilitate a learning of place in contemporary Australia. Paton and Brearley (2009:41) note that the ways of the Ancestors have been passed on through

the generations through stories. These stories are inscribed in the land, having been told and lived for generations, and mark their imprint on the landscape of our walking and being. Even if we do not know those intricate stories explicitly (although in time we can learn some of them), listening with the body and creating space for an interaction with land and body, allows some essence of the story of place to be heard.

CITY, GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT

Perhaps I am more naturally able to attune the body to the sense of the landscape in natural settings than in the busy street life of the city. The city has many intersecting and divergent stories, simultaneous, historical and multilingual. There is more noise in the city, both physically in the sound of it and in the rapid, physical, mechanistic, movements of the place. There are more distractions away from the body and its connection to place. Although I can be at home within the streetscapes of a city, I also require a natural space, for rebalancing a sense of body and self, creatively, physically and bodily. Living in the city, I have often sought the natural spaces of its landscape, in order to attune to this balance of activity and calm.

Grosz (1995:105) reflects on the notion that 'the body and the city have a defacto or external relation' (1995:105). Cities may alienate bodies, but the body and the city also reflect each other (1995:105). Cities may have become environments that do not provide the body with a context that is natural, healthy or conducive (1995:105). However, humans also make cities, and cities are therefore 'reflections, projections, or expressions of human endeavour' (Grosz 1995:105).

A city, however, may also grow to reflect dominant, social discourses and hierarchies of power, rather than the voices of all people who live there in that city. The city is a landscape of multiple and contested stories. Dominant storylines of place may 'depend for their justification and legitimation on the suppression of alternative stories that already exist, often as the shadow side of dominant stories' (Somerville et al 2009:8).

Grosz also depicts some contradictions within the notion of the interrelation of body and cities.

First: there is no natural or ideal environment for the body, no
"perfect" city, judged in terms of the body's health and well-being.
If bodies are not culturally pre-given, built environments cannot

alienate the very bodies they produce. However, what may prove uncondusive is the rapid transformation of an environment, such that the body inscribed by one cultural milieu finds itself in another involuntarily'.

Grosz 1995:109.

If there is 'nothing intrinsic about a city that makes it alienating or unnatural' (Grosz 1995:109), then why do people feel alienated who do not fit the perceived, dominant discourse of that city? During my residing in the inner city of Sydney, one particular discourse that alienated me most specifically was the dominance of real estate. This appeared to assert and reassert itself at every opportunity, through various media, that one simply *had* to get on the property ladder, as though there was no other way to live. Real estate prices were 'a frequent and prominent theme in the Sydney media' (Darcy 2008:28), and 'a particular obsession for the many people attempting to secure a stake in the Sydney housing market' (Darcy 2008:28). Even though my life did not revolve around this apparent discourse, in terms of my affiliations, social interactions and aspirations, I was affected in daily life by the bombarding media portrayal of this being the way of life to which we all must aspire.

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of this earth is sacred to my people...We are part of the earth and it is part of us.

Chief Seattle 1854, cited in hooks 2009:35.

Advertisements and articles in newspapers and magazines pictured the perfect and idyllic lifestyle, in the city or otherwise, and coined terms from other (genuine) walks of life that used to have true meaning. Two of these terminologies that stand out to me are *lifestyle* and *Zen*, although there are also others. Both these words have been misappropriated by the real estate/renovation takeover. *Zen* refers to a particular way of meditation and spirituality, not the layout of a kitchen or lounge room in a perfect-lifestyle-apartment-block. The term *lifestyle*, in the context of ecology, natural health and sustainability, as I have known it, has referred to the notion of balance in health and wellbeing, utilising natural, holistic ways of living for both personal and planetary wellbeing. I object to these words being overtaken by real estate. They have been a part of my

vocabulary in a meaningful way in my life. The trivialising of such associations for advertising campaigns intent on co-opting the value of them reduces the depth of these meanings on some wider social scale.

More recently (2013), I created a brief, light hearted, poetic reflection, regarding the supposed property ladder which we all must seemingly aspire to climb so as to grab a foothold in property market investment:

Don't wanna get on a property ladder,
Don't needa ladder,
needa home.
Got a ladder.

Housing Affordability

Over several years, affordability of housing in Sydney has become a serious issue (ABC News 2011). Sydney ranks as being 'one of the most expensive housing markets in the world and has for some time' (Darcy 2008:27). An estimated 600,000 Australians are in rental stress (ABC News 2011). Rental stress is most commonly deemed to be when more than thirty percent of income is paid on housing (ABC News 2011: online; McDowell & Bellamy 2011:7; Nepal et al 2010:212), although some sources suggest that there are more detailed criteria needed to measure true housing stress (Marks & Sedgwick 2008:219; Nepal et al 2010:220-222). Marks and Sedgwick (2008:219) note that paying thirty percent of income for housing is certainly associated with greater stress among households of lower income than those of higher income, yet this factor is not commonly applied in measuring housing stress.

The ABC 7.30 NSW program (ABC News 2011), as I watch it from my new, temporary home near the lake, reports that there has been a surge of people in rental stress in recent years. Less than two percent of houses advertised in Sydney and the Illawarra in April 2011 (ABC News 2011: online; McDowell & Bellamy 2011) were considered affordable to low income earners. There are long waiting lists for public housing in NSW (McDowell & Bellamy 2011:35). At the time of writing, there is a ten year wait for public housing in some areas (ABC News 2011).

Another issue surrounding housing affordability in inner Sydney in more recent years has been low vacancy rates (Craddock et al 2008; Dunlevy 2008). During a period where there was a high demand and extremely low vacancy rates, some prospective tenants began to engage in what became known as rent auctions (Craddock et al 2008; Dunlevy 2008), where the highest bidder for the rental property was able to secure the tenancy. This practice was not necessarily widely known to be illegal, although its ethics are questionable, and some real estate agencies appeared to capitalise on the phenomenon. Some sources state that it is, and was at the time, illegal, even though it was occurring openly (Craddock et al 2008; Dunlevy 2008). Meanwhile, those unable to pay the higher rates or to compete in the rent race were left out in the cold.

Gentrification

In the time that I lived in the inner city Sydney area of Surry Hills/Redfern, during the late 1990's and early 2000's, I witnessed, alongside many others, the rapid renovation and gentrification of the area. Over time, this gentrification process forced many people out of the area, including myself and my partner. Property prices escalated, and rental houses, especially shared, lower priced, rental houses as we had occupied, became less the norm.

The entire suburb was being renovated. We (my partner and I) later moved to a cheaper inner city area, the Inner West of Sydney, apparently becoming part of a wave of people moving to that area from the inner city, seeking more affordable housing. Drawing on the suggestion of Grosz (1995:109) again, perhaps through such rapid transformation of that inner city environment, our bodies 'inscribed by one cultural milieu [found themselves] in another involuntarily' (Grosz 1995:109), not so much just in the move to a new area, but more so through the changes so rapidly occurring in the established area of home, and feeling forced out of where we had called home and would have otherwise stayed.

Atkinson et al's (2011) study reflects many of the same experiences I encountered through rents, real estate and movement, beginning from the late 1990's in inner Sydney, including the extreme competition with other tenants. All participants in Atkinson et al's (2011:46) interviews, relayed difficulty in finding a new home and spoke of 'their anxieties at being placed in such severe competition with others for housing' (Atkinson et al 2011:46). At many viewings of rental properties, in my experience, it was common for there to be thirty or more people (Craddock et al 2008:online). At some viewings there were up to fifty people.

In some respects, this era of gentrification appears to reflect some similar aspects of housing at the time of Darwin's (1836:373) visit to Sydney. In describing Sydney's housing situation of the time, Darwin (1836:373) tells us '... not even near London or Birmingham is there an appearance of such rapid growth. The number of large houses and other buildings just finished was truly surprising; nevertheless, everyone complained of the high rents and difficulty in procuring a tenancy' (Darwin, 1836:373). My partner drew my attention to this passage from Darwin's (1836) book some months after we had been evicted from an established and affordable, shared house (originally built circa 1860-70's). Darwin's (1836) account of Sydney led us to reflect on comparisons to the inner city during such a period of rapid change over a century and a half later.

Atkinson et al (2011) highlight many of the issues that I, and others, faced regarding the rapid gentrification of inner Sydney. Many experienced the displacement as a time of difficulty in their lives (Atkinson 2011:44). Many felt 'upset and challenged' (2011:44) by being 'priced out of the areas they lived' (2011:44). The concern of losing one's home because it was not affordable 'generated profound worry about how such a situation would be resolved' (2011:46). Many were evicted in order for property to be either renovated or sold (2011:44). I experienced each of these situations repeatedly over the course of several years.

Eviction and displacement may also bring a certain sense of powerlessness to the tenant, not only generating feelings of anger or resentment about the enforced move (Atkinson et al 2011:45), but more overwhelmingly, a sense of disempowerment. That sense of disempowerment was also reflective of 'a more widespread sense of an ongoing squeeze on the choices and housing options of many tenants' (Atkinson et al 2011:45).

Being dislocated in these ways created 'significant levels of fear and worry about finding another place in such a hot market' (Atkinson et al 2011: 45). Atkinson et al (2011:45) note this as a major impact. Added to this, the increasing intensity of gentrification seemingly generated a 'sense of fatalism' (2011:45) for some participants, who understood that 'the landlord had a right to raise the rent' (2011:45) or felt a sense of 'inevitability that rents would go up' (2011:45). All of these issues are reflective of my own personal experience of the time.

In my own experience, the first sense of eviction-stress was initiated when we were given just two weeks notice to vacate an established house for its total renovation (the circa 1860-70's, colonial

era house). Around eighteen months previously, we had also been given sixty days notice to vacate the Belvoir St terrace house for its sale (built circa 1890's). However, that was not experienced as being really stressful, as there was still, at that time, a reasonable selection of (old style share house) places for rent in decent condition, though rents were beginning to rise and places to rent were becoming fewer. I was also in good health at that stage. It appears that was the beginning of an era of rapid change in the area and, even though things were beginning to change, there were still affordable houses available to rent. However, in the later case, just eighteen months later, looking for a place to rent was extremely difficult with high competition between prospective tenants.

For two weeks, it seemed that almost every waking moment was spent on searching to secure an affordable house to rent in the neighbourhood. Rents were rising dramatically and there were fewer properties available to lease and with much greater competition. Although it may seem impractical in hindsight (given the knowledge now learned experientially, over time, of the real estate world of inner Sydney) we did not plan to move from the area at that time. It was our established neighbourhood, a place of belonging. I had settled there, and my partner had lived there for much longer than I. We looked instead to move within the same area. We could not have predicted the coming years of real estate growth that ensued.

Viewings of properties to lease were busy times. Many of them were in narrow terrace houses and many people negotiated narrow stairwells in these small houses together. On general, light conversation basis with some, we all squeezed in and out and up and down those houses. Some of those people we saw again and again at one period of viewings. It became a light hearted, but semi-desperate, acknowledgement between unknown-known faces, that we were all in the same real estate boat.

I had a sense of belonging in that inner city area, for several different reasons. There was a sense of community, art and culture. It was not the conservative, cleaned up, hyped-up-real-estate-valued area, that it seemed to become later. It was inhabited by a wide range of people; families who had lived there for decades, artists, musicians, political activists, students. There were long-established businesses and restaurants which were iconic of the area for visitors and residents alike. It was a melting pot of interesting and multilayered culture. There were art galleries, theatres, a theatre school in an old church building, bookshops, and a sense of culture in the street. There was also an underbelly of it, with a gritty, inner city, street edge to it as well.

The sense of a loss of diversity and social authenticity of places where people had made home is notable (Atkinson et al 2011:45) through inner city gentrification, with the loss of diversity being particularly pronounced. It was felt that diversity was 'antithetical to the new wave of capital and investment which was responsible for "unseating" them from the neighbourhoods they had been living in' (Atkinson et al 2011:45). These sentiments also reflect my own experience. I noted bookshops closing, again and again, new and old, and a surge of lighting shops opening, over a period of a few years in the area. It seemed to be reflective of the loss of diversity and cultural interest of the place. Cynicism grew and a sense of displacement within the landscape seemed to increase little by little. This seemed apparent to myself and to others I spoke with, who lived in the area at the time, regarding the changing face of inner Sydney.

Displacement

Atkinson et al (2011) also make note of 'serial displacement' (2011:46-47), where people, such as myself, moved more than on one occasion as a result of gentrification and the resultant price pressures. Echoing my subjective experience, several tenants in Atkinson et al's (2011:46-47) study described how they moved to a new area, in order to be able to afford the rents, 'only to find that the process continued and they were forced to move on again to find more affordable accommodation' (2011:46-47). The prospect of moving home is known to be a challenging stressor in people's lives (2011:47), so such continued displacement through 'this kind of serial migration clearly posed major psycho-social problems for those affected' (2011:47). I have not always equated moving with such stress or destabilisation, depending on the context. However, such serial moving resulting from enforced necessity has been a different matter and has, subjectively, been experienced as an ongoing negation of place and belonging.

Another concern that is noted in the displacement literature (Atkinson et al 2011:44-45), is that when people are forced to move they may experience a grief, or a mourning, for the area they have had to leave behind (2011:44-45). After moving from the area, there was a strong element of still longing to belong there, and we regularly checked in with the place for some time to come. Certainly, there was a deeply etched grief involved in my leaving Scotland a few years earlier. From there, I had several months of having no-fixed-address, with nowhere to really dock, having *come home to no home* back in Australia, and feeling like a foreigner in my birth country, residing in transition between Sydney, Wollongong, Byron Bay and Melbourne. I then settled in

the inner city area of Sydney, though I subsequently had to move house several times over the next few years. I could have lived anywhere really. Byron would have been my choice as the most felt and known home town, and potentially the easiest to re-adapt and re-settle, with connections in place from years of previously living there. However, I wanted to be located more in-the-world than living in such a small town, especially having been living in such a culturally creative city as Edinburgh, and I needed to try to make a break in the arts/film working world of the city, whether Sydney or Melbourne.

In the double displacement of being forced to move from Scotland, at a time when I would have chosen to stay, and then of being caught up in the continued cycle of inner Sydney gentrification, with the subsequent rental squeeze and serial moving, the experience of serial displacement was a strong current running through my subjective experience over several years. This occurred during the two to three years prior to the onset of ME/CFS, and continued through the years of ME/CFS. It formed a long running theme of place, belonging and displacement, both before and during illness, and most notably at a time of illness when I needed a stable home in order to rest, be well and settle.

Displacement, survival and moving on were significant issues I experienced throughout the years of ME/CFS that had an immense impact on life and wellbeing. Unable to work for some time, with a level of physical disability, the affordability and availability issues of housing in inner Sydney became a major stumbling block regarding being settled, established and feeling safe, being able to rest well and to promote wellness and wellbeing. This had a major impact on my subjective, personal experience physically, emotionally and socially.

28/6/12:

I have never considered myself to have been homeless. I have never been on the street, homeless. I have been in transit, without a home, travelling, or staying temporarily in backpacker hostels until I found a place to live in a new city/town.

It seems sometimes that the word *homeless* is used so freely, these days, as a way of describing not-being-settled, between-residences, house-sitting, travelling, temporarily itinerant.

That is not homelessness in the context in which I've generally used that word.

No, I have never been homeless, although I have been without a home.

However, now, I am forced to consider this and reflect upon it.

Have I, in fact, experienced some kind of transitory homelessness, even though not living on the streets?

Or have I, more so, inhabited transience ?

I am not a displaced person fleeing war torn areas and moving to a new country in hope for a life of safety and opportunity. I am not a refugee.

My subjective story enters an area of marginal displacement and transience of home, place, being and belonging.

Whether by choice, or enforced, I have, at times, inhabited transience.

I have previously sought literature that might articulate the sense of the gentrification experience, specifically regarding inner city Sydney, from the displaced tenants' perspective, through a personal storytelling perspective perhaps, rather than from development or economic perspectives. However, many reports I came across seemed to approach the gentrification process from a development or economic perspective. Although some projects do aim to identify areas of social need, there appears to have been an emphasis on quantitative research regarding Sydney city housing issues, with the lived experience omitted from the data. The apparent scarcity of qualitative literature based in this perspective led me to consider that it is an area that still needs further research. Such storytelling perspectives, as well as artistic representations of those stories, may have some contribution to make in bringing light to some of the issues of housing in the city. Finally, through Atkinson et al (2011), I read of a sense of the brutal displacement felt personally through that rapid gentrification process in the city of Sydney.

I know other people who went through it, and I certainly did not experience this as something that occurred only in my life. However, it has been suggested on occasion by some people I've known (who were *not* living there through those years or since) that it wasn't all that bad and we weren't so desperate.

27/6/12:

Trivialising the experience. Just like CFS and some autoimmune illness experience is trivialised. The lived experience is as it is lived. It is not as other people objectively and distantly perceive it in relation to some other un-walked landscape of their being or awareness. I feel the murmurings of my own unsaid response, just as I do regarding some

perceptions of chronic illness experience: 'Just because you were not there, does not mean it didn't happen'.

It *was* that bad. Perhaps because we survived, there may have been the assumption that we were merely making too much of it all. We are not now desperate or struggling, so perhaps there are easily-made-assumptions that it was not difficult then. Somehow we survived it. After reading Atkinson et al's (2011) study, I was led to reflect 'How did we survive all that?' Suddenly, I realised, through a feeling in my body, a kind of startling bodily recollection, 'Oh... I suppose... I didn't really survive it so well... I got really sick quite soon after the initial eviction.' It seemed to be like a last straw for my health at the time, and there were also several other contributing factors involved in the health scenario, impacting the body and self through multi-layers of physical, mental, emotional and material challenge and survival.

Overall, I did survive it. However, there are issues in that survival of learning in a rapidly changing city landscape that are not based on economic strategies for change and growth. People's lives, and bodies, are affected and changed. We had to learn through the changes, but the impact of those changes provided an ongoing challenge. My body, immersed in one cultural landscape and experience, was rapidly thrown into another without my choosing. This body perhaps did not adapt so readily to the extreme changes, needing recuperation, after having already been subjected to displacement and change too rapidly in the few years prior. The ability to change is 'written into the body' (Davies 2000:16). However, sometimes bodies can also be worn down to exhaustion and debility through extreme, excessive or continued change (Davies 2000:16).

THE URBAN/NATURE SELF

For some years in Sydney, I seemed to be seeking out 'the beautiful places', and trying to link with the natural beauty of the place. There are many beautiful places to find. This was not so much in order to *see* the beautiful places, but to *be* in natural places where I could feel a sense of nature.

The dichotomy of an urban/nature self has appeared as a contradicting notion during the years of CFS and recovery. Objectively, at times it seems logical to have simply chosen to move to a

more natural environment, where I could live a gentler lifestyle, live near nature, and have space to breathe. At other times, however, the space of the city lures me, interesting and complex in its social layers of culture and sub-culture, of arts, and of living. It is a complex relationship, that relationship to city and to nature. The balance of both influences my subjective sense of wellbeing. I sense it. I know it. This dichotomy has had some impact during CFS and throughout recovery time, and has been one which I seem to have been almost endlessly trying to bridge. Perhaps I never will, and may need to spend time living in a more natural environment, just as I have gone between city and country for years, long before CFS occurred.

17/11/09:

I am an urban/nature type. I yearn for and need the balancing space and calm of nature, and I also crave artistically, the vibrant, cultural intensity of an inner city life. I've lived in both, am pulled to both in different ways, and draw on different facets of being from each.

I grew up in a small, inland, country town in Australia. I learned a love of nature through being in it. I didn't think a lot about it at the time, though I felt a depth of connection to be in the wide, free spaces of the Australian bush, the National Park walks, the feel of it, the air of it. When I explored the wider world as an adult, I entered a cultural and artistic world I had not known, but had craved as a young musician. I had wanted to be part of something more artistic than my country town upbringing had provided, and I began to learn experientially of it when I moved into adulthood.

Now, years later, having for perhaps too long been engrossed within the cityscape of living, I crave some form of return to a country space of peace, without the hum-hum-hum of city life. Or do I? In truth, I want the balance.

Urban/nature may be a contradictory term, but it encompasses an essential notion of why (and how) I have lived in both city and bush. Living in this city has a vibrant flavour which is inspirational and exciting to live with, both artistically and culturally. I hear accents from all over the world in my neighbourhood. If I move to the country, will I miss the exciting hub and multiculturalism of it? Perhaps I will take some *bush leave*, for

an extended time. I have alternated between city and country several times throughout my adult life. Now, however, I fear that if I leave I may never return. Perhaps if that is the case, it will be no bad thing.

10/7/09:

Gotham

One evening I was on a train
near dusk,
travelling homewards.
As we passed near the clock tower
of Central Railway
the fruit bats were flying
all around
on their evening migration
from the Botanic Gardens.
In the late dusk light,
with a full moon hovering,
bats flew across the light of the moon,
and circled the gothic structure of the clock tower
and buildings nearby.
The scene was transported into
a film frame.
Someone on the train, with a Kiwi accent,
said to his friends
'Look! It's not Sydney,
it's Gotham City!'
Indeed, it was.

Scenes such as these can take us into a living artscape.

CREATIVE AND BODILY ENGAGEMENT IN PLACE

12/11/09:

After a doctor's appointment, I stop at Centennial Park, the favoured scenic detour on the way home. I walk briskly (*allegro*, in musical terminology) half way around the lake, and sit under a tree in the shade, sheltered from the midday sun. In my gazing over the water, I notice that stress has got to me in some way, subtly. There's an edgy sense of "C'mon, haven't got time for this. Got stuff to do! Got to catch up!"

Yet I sense that this water gazing is an important part of managing that stress. Being in nature is a vital part of my personal wellbeing maintenance, especially while living in the city. It may include physical exercise, yet it is time for reflection and contemplation as well.

I acknowledge my edginess, and remain seated, on the ground, breathing calmly, and allow the space to calm me. When I stand after a time, perhaps ten minutes, and continue walking, I proceed in a calmer approach, reassured that this is no waste of time.

I pass by the grove of paper-bark trees, near old Busby's spring. Spontaneously, going up to one of the trees, I press the palms of my hands into its trunk, and look up into its branches. In a moment, I notice a discarded cicada shell on a nearby branch, and become suddenly more aware of the chorus of cicadas in the vicinity, higher in the trees above me. Noticeable also, and always intriguing to me, is the texture of the paper bark peeling and hanging from the branches and trunk. It was this which initially prompted me to walk over to the tree. If I were a visual artist, I would be compelled to paint paper bark trees in my art work.

Instead of rushing impatiently home, I take my books now and sit by a tree near the water, and spend an hour in the shade by the lake, working in a gentle, relaxed space.

17/11/09:

It is only later that I contemplate the symbolism of the discarded cicada shell. I can, I suppose, reflect on its relevance to my own state, symbolically, of discarding the old and outworn, and hopefully moving onto new and better things: Transformation.

This spring, there are several cicada holes in our inner suburban back garden, and discarded shells dotted about the place. It's not such an unusual discovery, but that there are so many— fourteen at last count – within a two metre radius. I am told that cicadas can hibernate and grow underground for many years, so perhaps many years ago there could have been a tree in that position in the garden.

The history of the place we live often intrigues me, as the house was built in '1906 Sydney', and many changes have occurred over that century of time. At times I have pondered the people who may have lived there, the garden, the steam trains at the time, two world wars. It was a different place in a different era. When the house was being sold a few years ago, and we were the tenants, I viewed the original plans and the 1906 titles. I was fascinated by this world of life in different eras. I imagined a world lived in the same place in different eras of time. We were lucky this time, as the investors who bought the house wanted us to stay on as tenants with the same real estate manager.

PLACE AND ORIGINS

19/05/09:

I have been reading the *Body/Landscape Journals* thesis, by Margaret Somerville (1995). I learn in it that she also wrote a book through her research into the stories of some Aboriginal women in Coonabarabran, and refers to this work at various times in the writing so far. This has brought to surface some of the roots of my own being, regarding the significance of place, as I was born in Coonabarabran and lived there throughout my childhood.

Although I have moved from the area long ago, I maintained a connection through family visits, for many years, until my Mother later moved to Brisbane. My adult connection was not so much to the town, but to family. Some connection to the place and country in the power of its landscape remained, perhaps a less tangible experience of my history.

My story and experience is different to the women in Somerville's (1995; 1999) work. However, my connection to place, and the evolution of myself as a person from having lived there, the

connections formed from that earth or through the land there, are perhaps, in some deeper way, part of my own story, of body, mind and spirit.

19/5/09 cont:

I learned experientially as a child of the beauty of the night sky, the vast, open, amazing expanse of stars. We lay on our backs watching the night sky as kids, and later as adults visiting we renewed the connection. It is the only place I have ever experienced it in such fullness. We bushwalked through the Warrumbungles and picnicked by the river. Emus, wallabies and kangaroos were always by the roadside as we drove into the place. There was a feeling of silent reflection within myself when entering the National Park, even as a child. There seemed to be a sense of a respect for the mountains. Although I didn't realise it at the time, there was a sense of belonging and of being, in some way, connected to the earth of that country. Growing up in that country, perhaps gave me an affinity for nature, the sky, and the spirituality of place.

In reading Somerville's (1999:183) portrayal of her stays at the cottage in the Warrumbungles, and in her writings about Siding Spring Observatory (1999:214-5), I was unexpectedly reconnected, through the storying of her experience, to a place that had significance to me. I saw, in my mind's eye, the place as she described it. I pictured the area. I knew the feeling of the land, the lay of the land. I pictured the winding road going up to Siding Spring and remembered the many times we visited there as children and as adults. In her descriptions from Malcolm (Somerville 1999:214-5) of why the observatory is there, and of the mountain, I remember my own learning of this, of visiting the observatory through school excursions, family outings and as a place to take our family visitors. I remember the mountain and the observatory as far back as I can remember, and of it being a part of our lives.

1/6/11:

Last year, when speaking with our young nephew who is studying astronomy at school, my older sister tells us the story of how she and her school class watched, years ago, as the huge, telescope lens was driven by trucks past the school, on its way to be installed at the observatory. Our nephew, like us and like the others in his generation of family, has been to the observatory there on the mountain. Though he now lives across the other side of the country, I reflect on some returning, and continued, significance of that place and sky to myself and to our family.

I realise, in later reflection, that through this reading, Somerville (1996; 1999) also showed me the importance of 'writing stories' (Richardson 2005:965), making the researcher visible, and demonstrates how the researcher's personal experience can be relevant to the reader's interpretation of the research, not only through contextualising the research, but also contextualising and situating the reader's experience of that research within their own potentially related experience.

DREAM REMEMBERING

7/10/09:

And this reminds me of my dream again from last night (whilst reading in Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005). On *Nomadic Inquiry*, St. Pierre (2005) mentions how things she reflects on are seemingly unrelated to her research project but are 'absolutely unleashed within it' (St. Pierre 2005:970), and this triggers for me the memory of the dream thread.

I dream again of my mother's home, where I grew up, and from where she had relocated only less than two years before she passed away. I am there, sitting out the back in the warm sunshine. My two brothers are inside. I am very aware that the new owner of the house might return at any time, and catch us there, enjoying ourselves in the sanctity and peace and comfort of it. I remind my brothers that we are really trespassing, but they seem to think it will be ok. I hear the woman return, from her time away wherever she has been. I feel nervous and edgy. We have left it too late to retreat.

I feel worried and apologetic. I know we are in the wrong. But she is friendly, and again as in other dreams I have had, makes me feel welcome. 'Of course you want to be here, this is your home', she gives the message of it without actually saying those words. In fact, she seems to want me to be there. She is understanding, warm, and wholly hospitable. And I feel incredible relief, as though I have found home, and come home, and am allowed to be home now, finally. I still have my mother's safe haven to visit, and I can always go there. I am always welcome. Even though my mother has gone and somebody else lives there, in the dream it is still acknowledged as my home and the place of my birth. Family, home, belonging.

SONGLINES

The notion of place and identity was stirred for me through my reading of Somerville's (1995;1999) work. Previously, my subjective reflections on place, in relation to the lived experience of learning, had been strongly influenced through my return to Australia from Scotland, under a UK Immigration enforced departure, and the sense of displacement and disorientation that ensued, bound within a sense of feeling like a foreigner in my own, birth country.

In Scotland, and the city of Edinburgh, I felt a strong sense of home. I felt connected to land, and I felt connected to city and contemporary culture, but I missed the Southern night sky. In Scotland I felt connected to some aspect of my genetic heritage or of long ago past roots, country and culture, but not so much with the Northern sky. I missed the Big Dipper of the Southern hemisphere, the Southern Cross, the familiar lay of the stars. In time, the Northern Sky grew on me, as I learned in the Scottish Highlands to recognise some (now forgotten) constellations. Nevertheless, I never really felt it in my heart as *mine*, as *my* sky.

In Scotland, a new friend gives me the book *The Songlines* (Chatwin 1987). She had read it whilst in Australia, a year before. I ponder on the interest of this, as an Australian newly living in Scotland, reading about an Australian Indigenous concept, of spirituality, land, movement, and song. The idea of there being personal songlines of my own particular travels through the world, and in my own body, was beginning to form in my awareness. My friend lived in the rugged highlands of Northern Scotland, taught me some Gaelic, and introduced me to a clarsach (Celtic harp) teacher, with whom I took some lessons, and learned some Gaelic songs. A childhood dream was realised then in playing the harp. I had wanted to do so since the age of five.

Later, I formulated the notion of there being songlines of this body and the notion of my own body's songlines being voiced and developed through my travels and life. Perhaps these personal songlines were establishing themselves through a conceptual singing of the body through my own way of making tracks in this world. At that time, I reflected on a parallel concept between the Indigenous notion of the world being sung into form, the body being sung into life, and the body's life being inscribed upon it through its travels, experiences and being. Although these are not exactly the songlines that are represented in Aboriginal tradition, the notion of the song, the voice, the body and place interested me as having an interlinked, travelling, organic relationship;

interrelated and interactive, inscribed and inscribing. It is not my intention to co-opt traditional, Indigenous terminology or to misuse it. I am merely adding a dimension within a conceptual analogy.

The concept of the songlines originates through the Aboriginal Dreaming (see Rose 1996:26), and involves an intricate system of knowledge of the land, passed down in songs and stories through the generations. The Aboriginal concept of the songlines goes far deeper than an individual's travels and the individual's body, and is an intricate system of songs and stories told and sung through generations of Aboriginal knowledge, connecting country and people, a way of learning and passing down knowledge through generations.

In Aboriginal creation rituals, people and place are sung into being each time the ritual is performed. In the ritual performance of these stories, the landforms and water, the plants and animals, are sung into being in particular places. Individual songs and story places are connected across the landscape through songlines. Singing the country is an essential part of nurturing country. Singing is knowledge.

Somerville and Perkins 2010:22.

Song stories hold a dynamic relationship to place, and singing the country is essential to nurturing country (Somerville & Perkins 2010:22). Song makes meaning of the world and knowing songs is equivalent to knowing country (Somerville & Perkins 2010:22).

Connecting with the notion of the songlines of the body, Somerville (2004) also speaks of 'bodylines' (2004), and 'tracing bodylines' (2004) which appears to draw on a similar conceptual idea. The notion of the songlines of the body draws on not only the lived travels of the body, but also of the life that is inscribed onto and within the body, emotionally as well as physically and culturally. This links with the inscription on the body by the landscape, as Davies (2000:11) suggests, and the inscription of the body's story within the landscape. The songlines of the body are a *metaphorical* singing, suggested through my connection to voice as a singer and musician. They are emotions and feelings of the body, memories and experiences. They are the drawings to, of, and from a place or experience that stay with us, and in our body, after we have left.

Equinox, Jervis Bay 22/3/10 : The Body at the site of Dreaming

I waded into the darkness of the water's edge,
Lights dotted around the bay.

Mesmerising Sea,

Darkness glistens at the edge
in the meeting of the deep sea
and deep sky at the horizon.

Stars light in the sky.

No moon tonight,
Southern Cross bright by the milky haze of the
Magellanic cloud,
Navigators' guide,
Lights my way.

Water shallows lap around my feet,
a sound soothing of a calming bay.

Feet sink into sand, and out again.

Dream for a while

with

Sea and sky,

darkness, depths.

No need to make it happen.

Just be there.

Just being there,

and being in the body.

Morning Swim, Equinox.

This is the same place, the next morning, where at night I had watched the dark sea meet the Milky Way and Southern Cross in the sky.

I slowly immersed my body in the cold, calm sea, and floated, dived, relaxed and breathed. The body adapted to the cold of the water, in just a few minutes, until it seemed normal for this body to belong there in that floaty world. Dive gently under the water. Movement turns to dolphin-jumps and shallow dives. Feel the sense of the space around me in flesh and water. Taste of clean, salty water rests around my face. I float a while, watching the space out to sea, nothing but water, sky and the body. Check for sharks. None that I can see. Float again. People are nearby, but distant enough, and I feel safe. Swooshing the water past my face and body in the dive, swim under water, come up for air, gasping briefly but enlivened. Spend time doing nothing but chilling out in water, and feel enlivened for the simplicity of it. Exit, revived and uplifted.

Barefoot Over Rocks (North Maroubra, Sydney, late 2009)

Walking barefoot over rocks by the seaside. Light summer rain begins to fall, just lightly enough to be pleasant, and not for long. The day is cloudy, cool, soft. I walk up the hill, and over the rocks of the headland, to the cliff top view overlooking the sea, the open sea horizon, with waves below me.

Suddenly, unexpectedly, I am captured by a momentary recreating, physically and tangibly, of my visualised image of weeks ago, of self at cliff top, overlooking the wide expanse of sea, and the 'crashing, beautiful, audible waves' below (in chapter 'Notes on Sound').

Hearing. Senses. Body.

Is this a body memory, reminding me? This is the scene, captured almost, in physical reality, tangible and real.

I look out over the water, sea wind blowing strong.

Sign says 'Danger. Don't go close to the edge.'

'I won't ', I promise.

Eventually the wind drives me to a more sheltered space, so I move to the South side of the cliff top rocks and gaze over the water, just taking it in.

A nurturing of the self,

Reflecting,

Drifting without aim,

Dreaming.

Through this embodied experience of being in place, being in nature, barefoot by the sea, the body, somehow, spontaneously registered a reminder for me, whilst on that cliff top. It was a reminder of the body's learning. The mind and body, had somehow 'taken it in', that earlier imaged learning, and in some indirect way of knowing and meaning-making, had pulled it out of the vaults for me to remember at this particular time. I did not consciously seek to establish a comparison between that physical scene in tangible reality and my spontaneous, visualised image of a somewhat similar scene in my mind. It happened spontaneously and of its own momentum, unexpectedly. The body-mind presented it to me.

11/6/10:

MUSIC: A Soft Flight in a Soft Light (June 2010)

A Soft Flight / Somewhere over Broken Hill

Need to move,
been here too long...
I know it.

 But moving is hard,
 when you've been
unwell,
and not yet recovered
these years.
needing space to heal.

Been moved on too many times,
when I didn't want to,
When I wanted to stay still, and have a home
to come home to,
to rest,
to play music,
to be used to it.
now the need to be still,
rest,
nurture and allow,
is not less than before.

 but the place is not the place for me.
and the restlessness pervades
 in ever increasing increments
over time.

Not being moved on forcefully
this time.

Not yet, at least.

The choice is mine, ours.

There are goods and bads to this freedom,
Perhaps I'm not made for here,
 in this era of time,
 but at least I know where I will be waking up in
 the mornings for a while.
 and I'm near you.

Though, any time now,
the real estate boom could
shatter the illusions,
as rent goes further skyward,
above our means.

Recently, I took a flight across
the continent.
somewhere over Broken Hill,
I had the urge
to move there.
The colour of the land below me
was overshadowed
by the clouds
in that particular place.
but the feeling of the land was
there somehow,
 drifting up
into the consciousness of my sight,
 as I peered below me,
 from the plane,
 into the clouds.

Earlier,
on that clear sky day
the colours of the
landscape
changed

from west to east,
 blues and greens,
to dusty reds and ochres,
in the fuller depths of
 desert beauty.
shifting earthy tones,
and sun's reflection on the air.

Clear day's sky around me.
Deep blue.
Strong dark earth beneath me.
Deep red.

Somewhere over Broken Hill,
I felt
 my core pulled,
in a way that said
 this is like home,
this land,
 this earthy home,
 of red and dust and ochre.

Somehow
in the core of life
it pulled me,
In my body.
the songlines of the land perhaps,
I thought.

So...
I can dream that I
can
live with
that dusty red and ochre.
And then, to breathe

The lights of the city begin to
manically show me
that it is rush hour now,
below,
in the city.
Traffic moves along meridians of light,
it looks awful to me.
Do I really have to go there,
and be stuck in it?
On the taxi ride from the airport,
It feels like I'm going down into a hole,
suffocated and depleted of oxygen.
I long to look back to the sky,
see the red depths,
and the deep,
velvet blue of the skies,
in the west.
But I go home now,
to our little, semi-detached, inner-suburban house,
that is home enough for the time being.

CHAPTER TEN: TRANSIENCE AND BELONGING

THE MOVE AND THE PROCESS OF LEARNING

Movement

17/11/10:

I cull a lot of my belongings. I let go of some things I really would rather keep, and keep more than I probably should for an easy move and a light transition.

I carried many large and small pot plants on my moves around Sydney. They were my transient garden roots I laid down wherever I lived. Now I was letting most of them go as well; uprooting myself, and leaving the plants to others who might tend them, although some were just left on the street, in a recycling and sharing of goods. I had cultivated a portable garden that was mine wherever I took it. Now it was being left behind.

In my new place, which is bordered by some tall eucalypts at the back fence, there are also some low growing shrubs and herbs to the side and a small courtyard that needs plants. I already miss the healthy, potted plants I had tended for years; more evidence of my yearning for a stable home base and a garden that can stay where it grows and which I can enjoy from my place of stability.

During that move, we also put several items on the footpath outside the house, for the council to collect (officially) or for others to take and use. After the last items were put there, I had joked about wanting to make it an art installation, as it happened that various pieces of furniture all added up to make a comfy living room scene there on the footpath, beside the bottle brush tree – A lounge, an old recliner chair, table, pot plants, TV, lamp, small chest of drawers, mirror, and some other usable items.

We could have resided there, in an arts protest against real estate dominion, and to demonstrate about people having to live on the street, I reflected. I kind of regretted not just setting it up as a space, to have taken photos of the scene as an arts impression of life on the street, and left it that way until it slowly was disassembled by passersby and/or the (booked) council collection. It is an

artistic representation of living on the street, movement and transience, and is actioned also through a bit of humour.

We, ourselves, had collected various pieces of furniture left on our streets over years, in our earlier city neighbourhood, where leaving usable goods (within reason) on the sidewalk or back lane was communally viewed as sharing. We left some as well, guided by the unwritten rules of the city streets that recycling such items was useful sharing when it was of use to someone else. Recycling and sharing is still alive in some parts of the city of Sydney, even though it may not be everybody's idea of community.

9/10/10:

Sometimes it's better to stay somewhere even if it isn't perfect. But how do you know when it's inertia that has set in or if it's actually not a good time to move?

I don't like the idea of stagnation.

The move: It seems a ridiculous time to move such a long distance, I reflect. Why am I doing this to myself? At a time when I have much work to do and where I have some sense of stability of place, a good work space and some other home, community, health and creative routines in place, it seems that this may not really be a good time to make such a move. I am doing it in an attempt to gain better health.

I gather up my goods and belongings. Too many of them, too much stuff.

Long gone are the days when I took my backpack and guitar to a land across the sea, or the days when one or two car loads was my move. I have at times reflected that this newer gathering of belongings reflects my need and longing to belong, to be still, and to have a home where I can stay.

Like hooks (2009:3), perhaps I have, in some situations, been fearful of repetition meaning that I have become stagnant, stuck and going nowhere. Perhaps, at times, it suggests 'a static, stuck quality... where the same patterns of life repeat over and over' (hooks 2009:3). During five years of living at the one house in Dulwich Hill, in Inner West Sydney, I found that stability helps me to get things done. I can put my energy into doing the creative things I want rather than looking for a home to live and rather than being on the move. It means my energy can go into creativity

and physical wellbeing, spiritual nurturing and academic work. It means I can create a social network. Moving and travelling take energy. It also takes time to get to know a place. Stability, I discover, helps me blossom. However, this stability of place also needs to be in a good, nourishing place, a place that is conducive and nurturing for me to live and breathe and be and create and learn and be well. Perhaps there is a fine line between stability and stagnation.

During this move all of those feelings of being shaken and uprooted come to the surface. There seem to be so many unexpected complications within the plan for a simplified lifestyle. Although this move to the country is supposed to make things simpler, to be a move toward a simplified lifestyle, it does not happen that way. It does not simplify. It seems to complicate.

Belongings

Somerville (1999:183) asks 'What does a woman need to live, and what does she need to write?' (1999:183). She reflects on this and packs her trunk to go to the cottage in the Warrumbungles. I randomly opened the book at this page twice in one day in the last few days of the move. At the time, I was thinking about my move to the new house near the lake and of culling so many things for the move, whilst wishing I hadn't had to cull so many of my belongings, and simultaneously wishing I didn't have so many to move.

I had reflected in the weeks before, that if I had to, I could be happy with just a few belongings that matter to me. These now, however, are more than those of my lighter travelling days. Of course, it becomes more complex as I think about the details, and the list can grow, but for a moment in time I know that I can decrease my belongings when, or if, I have to again. For now, however, I feel some sense of belonging within these items of my creative and practical life.

All in all, these things are not so many – a few creative tools, physical comforts and some necessities. They are not an emergency survival kit. They are part of my life, my story, and creativity. Some are general, basic practicalities, some are creative tools of work for me, and some have emotional and historical significance. Some are extraneous gatherings of odds and ends and there is some amount of unnecessary bulk which I will eventually let go. They are part of what makes a home for me and part of what makes a creative life for me. They won't fit into a back pack, but that is no longer what I want, and I refuse to move without my piano.

When I went to live in Scotland, I cut down all my belongings. I sold most of them in a garage sale, including most of my books, or I gave them away. I kept a couple of suitcases and just a few books in Australia. Arriving with a backpack, bag, and guitar in Scotland, with a one-way ticket and enough money in my wallet for a short stay, I lived and worked there for nearly five years.

My time in Scotland, and Edinburgh specifically, was one of finding home at the time. I felt that I '(be)longed' (Davies ref 2000:37) to live there. I had felt drawn to go there to live, for music, and for a sense of connection I had previously experienced travelling through Scotland a year earlier. I felt at home and stable, a part of the life there. For much of the time I lived there, however, the Department of Immigration had other ideas. After my initial visa renewal expired, they held my passport and I was not allowed to leave unless I did so permanently. This was not that I had done anything illegal, but rather that my visa was in application, and appeals were in process almost constantly over those few years. I was in touch regularly with an Immigration case officer and they knew where I lived and worked.

This was a complex process which also involved in-person interviews with an Immigration officer, referee letters, letters of request from employer and music manager, phone calls with an allocated, Immigration case officer, discussions with an immigration lawyer, and more.

Immigration is a serious business. Although I was granted leave to stay for some time, eventually I was given the choice to leave the country or be deported. Deported to Australia? That was too much like a history lesson. I left voluntarily, though not of my own choosing.

Some people had suggested ways for me to stay illegally and leave through detoured exits later if I wanted. I couldn't live like that, to be always watching my back and never knowing when Immigration might show up and deport me. I knew a Scottish man, in Edinburgh, who had exactly that happen to him in Australia. We compared notes, and stories, and jokingly talked about trading places, as if it were possible, which it was not. He was held in detention briefly and deported from Australia when Immigration found him to have overstayed his visa by several years, through a simple, roadside check by police.

Now, years later, Scotland and Edinburgh may or may not hold the same sense of belonging for me as it did. I have not returned and life has moved along in new directions. I now live in Australia. However, an intense sense of disorientation and displacement was initiated through

the experience of leaving Scotland at that time, and this subjective experience reflects an initial disorienting experience to which Mezirow (1991:168) and Cranton (2006:20) refer in regard to transformative learning processes. These writings of place and belonging refer to those experiences through a lens of learning place. This is reflected upon as artist and traveller seeking home and belonging, and reflecting on the sense of finding home.

Endings and Transitions

Tues 9/11/10:

I am back at the old place at Dulwich Hill, in Sydney, doing the last day of the clear out and clean up. I am sitting in the bright, sunny, back room in the morning, overlooking the garden which I had tended and nurtured these five years, the lush growth of my plantings now thick and prolific by the back verandah.

Why are we leaving? There were mistakes and difficulties here, stresses to say goodbye to that I never want to see again. Yet there were good things too, and that is what I mostly see now.

The neighbouring couple's continued antagonism toward us – such underhanded, bullying behaviour is not something I will miss.

There seemed to be issues of power and dominance, of who has it and who does not. We were, apparently, expected to be unseen and unheard, invisible and undetectable, although they could do whatever they wanted, at whatever time or proximity.

We felt trapped and decided, eventually, to escape.

Other neighbours in the street were good to know, and I now will miss them. One, I sometimes call the matriarch of the street, my eighty-something year old friend, a vibrant and energetic woman, who has her history and story here, and lives a few doors away. We will keep in touch. She has been almost like a second mother to me in some ways, these few years. We moved here just a few months after my mother passed away, and there was my new friend, befriending me warmly as family. I have some community here.

What is home?

Home is where I can do music, write, sleep well, have solitude and company, feel relaxed and rested and also vibrantly alive. Importantly, home is *not* having to severely restrict my vocal expression or natural personality. Home is where I have a blend of nature and culture, and artistic community. Home is where my partner and I share a life together, and where our family and friends visit and share in our lives, and us in theirs. I have yet to find home.

Where I am going feels like an interim change. In transit; transition; again.

Interestingly, in these few weeks of this strange, moving, transition time, I have felt the most at home whilst driving in my car on the open road between Jervis Bay and Sydney, which I seem to have been doing quite a lot. I have had more of a sense of belonging in the freedom of the open space, green hills and countryside, and my car in movement, than anywhere else at present.

I am neither here nor there, in terms of place and belonging, throughout this deeply uprooting transition. At least I have the freedom of the open countryside and plenty of space, as I drive – and sing – and feel the freedom of it. Inhabiting transience.

Somerville (1999:196) speaks of the notion of inhabiting space and inhabiting place. She reflects on the idea of inhabiting space as a performance (1999:196) and draws from Bachelard's (cited in Somerville 1999:196) writing of inhabiting space, where 'all really inhabited space bears essence of the notion of home' (Bachelard quoted in Somerville 1999:222). Experiencing a sense of movement and transition, and reflecting upon this sense within my own space of liminality, in movement and travelling, draws also from some of Somerville's (1999:196, 206, 20, 80, 174) ideas and reflections on the inhabiting of place and of liminality. Turner (quoted in Somerville 1999:79) describes the liminal period as being a 'time and space betwixt and between one context of meaning and action and another. It is when the individual is neither what he has been nor what he will be' (Turner, quoted in Somerville 1999:79). In my movement I am inhabiting transience, and in my moving from place to place through real estate demands and being forced out of inhabited places, I have inhabited a transience of place, being and belonging.

Somewhere in my mind, this term *inhabiting place* must have resided in semi-conscious reflection, and later, as I drove and felt the at-homeness of it in the open space of countryside and

movement in freedom, I felt that I had inhabited a transience in my own life and in my relationship to places.

Inhabiting transience also refers to a meditative process, of letting things come and go, without too much attachment, and a reflection that life, in essence, is transient. It also refers to bodily and creative ways of being, as creative processes are always in a state of becoming, or coming to be. These processes are never absolute, even though a creative piece of work itself is a tangible outcome of part of that creative process. Bodily knowledge, health and wellbeing, are also in constant process of coming to be and body knowledge is not a final destination.

Wandering, Walkabout, Nomads

Wed 24/11/10:

Sometimes I think I could live a Nomadic life, move in a convoy of (old world) caravans, from place to place, singing, playing music, being sub-culturalistic, living on the boundaries of society in a community of fellow (gentle) travellers. Yet, I want some roots, and I want to belong to somewhere that is satisfying. Perhaps, somewhere in my body, there is a subtle yearning to not have to stay still, but to venture with others in a community of like-minded, migrant, nomadic artists, family and friends, in a way that moves beyond current, standard, Western, social expectations of home, having, being and belonging.

There is a deeply nurturing element within this imaging, of life, health and creativity, and of not having to live to the expectations of Western society's pre-occupation with wealth, status and possession.

Although I have lived, belonged and lingered somewhere on the fringes of a Western social framework rather than fully ensconced within it, I still feel the pressure to conform to those materialistic notions, at many turning points, especially as I grow older and am still less materially secure than one is apparently expected to be by my age.

Perhaps this nomadic image, the essence of this imaginal notion, connects with, or is part of, the liminality of space, movement and place. Perhaps there is a sense in this broader landscape I travel that pertains to movement and moving. Perhaps Australia *is* 'still in a liminal space'

(Robert, quoted in Somerville 1999:217), the space between, and we are 'becoming more Aboriginal... becoming more mobile, less interested in possessions' (Robert, quoted in Somerville 1999:217) and, importantly, are wanting to explore ourselves 'as part of this landscape rather than pitted against it' (Robert, quoted in Somerville 1999:217).

I have lived in several places, and in varying lifestyles. That is not to say that none of them were right for me. They were, perhaps, each right for me, at different times and in differing ways, providing a tapestry of experience and learning. Perhaps I learned something of place and belonging through all of these places, and each differently. I travelled and paused and travelled some more. I settled and became unsettled, and settled again. I am still moving. Life is a dynamic flow of ever changing landscapes.

Perhaps, I have been circling around and finding home (hooks 2009:3); circling around and learning of place, being and belonging. I may not find myself back at the place where I began (2009:3,6), but I have circled around, like hooks (2009:3), and have often reflected that I may be drawn back to one of those places where I have previously felt a strong sense of connection, of home and belonging, and to where I still feel a sense of connection. Perhaps I will also find there some 'essential remnants of a culture of belonging, a sense of the meaning and vitality of geographical place' (2009:23).

Beach Walk

15/11/10:

I walk along the beach on a soft, grey, misty, rainy day. Can hardly see the huge bay at all, the mist and fog obscures the edges and the distance.

I have been feeling hemmed in, at my small, newly moved to, suburban villa-unit, surrounded by houses, villas and townhouses in a nowhere land to which I don't (at least yet) feel connected, and where I feel encroached by a suburbia of nowhere-ness. I have not settled in quickly, but have felt out of place, restless, not at ease. At times I have been concerned about the decision to live there on my own, in a place where I know no-one, managing health issues, and where my partner will visit part-time but not live full-time. Isolation: different to solitude and inspiration. Have I challenged myself too much, again?

Today, I drive to the coastal bay and walk on the beach, as I have done daily for several days since I moved fully to the area this week.

I enter a picture-perfect painting of grey, calm water, grey sky, white sand, misty air, soft rain, boats on water. A calmness pervades the atmosphere. I walk, taking it in. Later, on my return walk, I stand and watch the water by the rocks, and realise, immersed in and surrounded by this astounding beauty of nature, and the soft, grey solitude in these natural surroundings, that drawing from something which comes from, or is present within, this very patch of water, earth and sky, that here, in my body and in this place, I can, and somehow do, feel a sense of home. It's not in the unknown suburbia, fearful of isolation, but in this present moment, in this present space and place. I feel it in my body that I am somehow at home, here, in this bay.

Making Australia Happy

Later that same night, I watch a show on TV called *Making Australia Happy* (ABC TV 2010). I am surprised to find that it is, co-incidentally, set around Marrickville, part of my old area in the Inner West of Sydney, which I have only just left this week. I have felt deeply uprooted to have left, and I have not felt at ease in my body.

The documentary is interesting, and I know many of the places shown in the filming of it. Some time ago, I had walked by the signage of a shop front called 'Happiness Headquarters' in Marrickville (which only now becomes apparent to me as the headquarters for the film), and, wondering what it was, looked closer but saw no sign of the premises being open to the public. That the documentary series is set in my old, settled area strikes me as strange right now, because I feel as though I am disconnected and connected at once, in the viewing of those places on a TV documentary whilst I sit in my new place surrounded by a nowhere land of suburbia, not yet home, and earlier today having walked in that most amazing, natural place whilst feeling a deep sense of connection with earth and sea and sky.

I feel tonight as though I am pulled in all directions, from the navel, from the gut, in my body. I have been feeling a heavy tension around that region of my body for several days since moving here, and am not at all comfortable with that sensation. My body feels

pulled in all directions. I feel isolated where I am. Yet, I reflect, I felt connected in that vast space of sea and sky when I walked and stood by the calming waters of the bay today. That connection goes far deeper than any material value of a building, real estate or otherwise, and resonates deeply within the body. It is like a resonance that connects body, earth and nature in a harmonious wellspring of being.

Perhaps my sense of being part of something, of feeling a sense of home in such places, comes from feeling deeply connected and aware both in the body and in a place. Perhaps some places in natural surroundings also help me to feel connected in the body and in place.

I also reflect at some point today, that although I own no home building of my own, and the real estate unaffordability has dogged me all through the years of CFS in some fundamental, frustrating theme of struggle and survival, today I stood and I walked in a place of astounding beauty, and all this was free. It didn't cost a cent to be there in the open, free, natural space.

There is a sense of home in that wide, open space that shelters me in its freedom. It provides space and tranquility, freedom to walk there, and freedom to be.

Place. A sense of belonging. A sense of connection.

Still, practicality requires that I have a roof over my head, reliable shelter and space around me, for a home base where I can play music, write, rest and feel at ease. For that, for the time being at least, I have to pay the rent.

15/11/10.

Home is:

A healthy body.

From there you can choose whether to do or
whether to stay

and you know that it will last the distance
of your choices.

16/11/10: *Morning Reflections*

In the years of CFS

I

have

had to move

many times,

and each time

I

longed

for one place

where I could

have a home,

stay,

be settled.

That is what I wanted

and what I still want now.

It's a longing

for belonging.

Davies (2000:37), I read at a later time to writing this reflective writing, connects the significance of belonging as a longing to be in relationship with place; to belong. She defines '(be)longing' (2000: 37) as a need to find, and a longing for 'a *secure relationship*, for an *affinity*, for a sense of being in our *proper* or *usual* place' (2000:37) (her italics). In bracketing the word as '(be)longing' (2000: 37) she emphasises the perception and emotion of longing. This notion reflects my subjective sense of *a longing for belonging*, and seems to resonate with a poetic sense of belonging and finding a place of belonging.

16/11/10: *Morning Reflections* (continued)

Nowhere is perfect.

Nothing matches the ultimate.

The grass is not always greener.

I am not naive on that notion.

Yet there are intrinsic needs

I have in a home space,
beyond the physical
need for shelter.

Community.

A feeling of wellbeing.

Some element of nature in
the surroundings.

Space to do music, to write and to reflect.

Space to share with my partner,
friends and family.

I am alone here,

There's an emptiness here.

My body resisted the move. I felt it.

I listened but protested,

And pushed on.

So now I am here. There are good things here too, though I feel it is a temporary stay,
and I will need to adapt to the new environment in a different way to the urban places I
have been living.

I look out to houses

all around.

What sort of nature sojourn is this,
when I feel
hemmed in by houses
more than I did in the
inner
suburban
city
where I lived?

I feel uneasy with the suburban sprawl of houses in my new environment, but I don't have far to drive to the astounding beauty of the bay, and I am hoping that is a recipe for revitalisation of spirit and body. Effectively, that was the initial reason for moving here; that, and the cheaper rent of it. Places are affordable to rent here.

31/5/11:

This move, to a quieter, gentler pace and place of living, with a more natural surrounding environment, even if temporary, is a move intended for health and wellbeing, although it is challenging to find my place in it and to not be engulfed by the isolation that is sometimes so strongly apparent to me.

LEARNING THE LAY OF THE LAND

16/11/10 :

I walk through the bushy streets to the lakeside walk. Many large suburban blocks have been built with complexes of villa-units (mostly single-storey, detached, simple, modern dwellings). Some blocks retain their bushy nature in gardens with big eucalypts. Others have been completely cleared. Holiday cottages, old houses, and new, large, double storey, brick houses with paved front yards, stand side by side, along with rows of modern villa-units, and older, established houses with manicured lawns or with bushy, native gardens. I find my way to the lakeside track and proceed down the slope towards it.

Soon, I become aware of a chill, discomforting sense in the air, an almost overwhelming sense of emotion. As though it comes from the air itself, it shocks me in its suddenness. I look around at the surroundings, the water's edge, scrub bush, the bush track where I am standing, and the waters of the lake stretching out in the distance. What is this feeling? Quite suddenly, I am overtaken by a physical sense of the emotion, somehow felt in the body, welling up. From where did this come?

Through some unknown, non-logical sense, a seeing in the mind's eye perhaps, I then experience a sense of an image about me, in these surroundings, of a small group of people, and some past feeling of the land; of people upset, shaken, and even angry. Disturbingly, I realise suddenly that I feel as though I am trespassing on sacred or private land.

Words come to consciousness:

'Permission was never asked'.

I stand still, stopped completely in my tracks by the unexpectedness and the sense of those words, still an overwhelming sense of emotion, loss or grief, felt somehow through the body.

Spontaneously, and respectfully, I pause, in stillness, and begin to silently ask:

'I ask for permission to be here.

I acknowledge the original inhabitants of this land.

I will not harm the land.

I will do my best to live here with respect'.

Those words flow naturally and spontaneously, without any effort of thought, and seem to come from some natural, instinctual, experiential sense of the landscape and my newly being in it.

I reflect also, later, that I am now accustomed to hearing the acknowledgement, in more recent years in Australia, of the original owners of the land, at various events and in some media, so this may form part of my sub-conscious awareness of the situation. However, those specific words were my own.

I still don't feel at ease, but I repeat the words, and gently resume my walking. I don't yet feel that I have been given 'acceptance' by the land, but decide to continue on my walk with a focused awareness and respect. The sense is that something may have happened in the place, although I do not logically know that. I may be completely wrong, but that is the sense of that feeling. It is like a sense of something gone, past, but inevitably lingering in the landscape. It's a strange and disturbing feeling, one that is difficult to put to words, or to logically identify, without using the words intuition, instinct, the body, the landscape and the senses.

That powerful and disturbing sense of sadness and grief stays with me for some time, and I am conscious of a sense 'in the air' somehow, that seems to convey that permission had never been given to white settlers to take this land and lake. Then these words come to my awareness, arising from some unknown place. Fluidly, they seem to roll from the air to awareness.

'They did not ask us.
They did not ask to join us.
They came and destroyed us
and took our land
without our permission.'

Gradually, over the forty-five minute walk, the intensity of the body-felt-sensation subsides and a feeling of lightness enters in its place. At the end of my walking, I squat to the ground beside the water's edge and, placing hands on the earth, silently again acknowledge the original owners of the land and lake. I feel somehow more at ease now, and somehow there is more of a sense of having been given permission to be here.

This is a profoundly strange, yet powerful, experience for me, relayed through the body sensation and emotions invoked by being in that particular place.

In this sprawling village-suburb, surrounded by bushland and birdlife, and bordered by water, I see many Australian flags fly, on front lawns, fences, and atop houses. I don't enjoy this sight. Surely we all know that we are in Australia. I have seen just one Aboriginal flag, placed in the front window of a house. I do not understand the flag

flying of a national flag in suburban front yards. It seems divisive to me; not a sign of uniting at all.

Myers (cited in Rose 1996:44-45) uses the terminology 'always ask' (Myers, cited in Rose 1996:44-45) in relation to the 'system of reciprocity and respect' (Rose 1996: 44 -45) between different Aboriginal countries relationships. This concept is underpinned by the understanding that 'knowledge is local, and strangers know little or nothing; it is in their interest to ask' (Rose 1996:44-45). Rose (1996:44-45) outlines that although Aboriginal people rarely would say no, if the request were reasonable and within that which 'is appropriate for a given place or use' (Rose 1996:44-45), there are very strong guidelines that insist on the right to being asked. There is a 'highly developed protocol for encountering places and people where or among whom one is counted as a stranger or a newcomer' (Rose 1996:44-45). This right to be asked is taken very seriously in Aboriginal culture.

During early white settlement, white settlers intruding and not even asking, with respect, for any permission to be there, also was accompanied by much more violent and aggressive acts on the part of white settlers. 'Most settlers failed to acknowledge Aboriginal ownership of land right from the start' (Rose 1996: 45). Rose (1996:46) adds that those white people who just 'came up blind, bumping into things' (Rose 1996:46) could damage country, and that damage to country hurts people, emotionally, spiritually and physically. Having an 'egocentric view of landscape' (Rose 1996:18), seeing oneself or seeing nothing, represents a manner of blindness, and is expressed in the sentiments of Aboriginal Anzac Munnganyi (Rose 1996:18). 'White people just came up blind, bumping into everything. And put the flag; put the flag' (Munnganyi quoted in Rose 1996:18).

Somerville (1999:5) notes that there is 'an overarching sense that all the landscape is marked by Aboriginal stories and there has been no resolution to the questions of whose land? and whose story can be told?' (Somerville 1999:5). There are unheard stories of this landscape where I walked. Whose story has been told and whose has been forgotten or never told? At the time of white settlement Australia had already been settled. It had been 'travelled, known and named; its places were inscribed in song, dance and design; its histories were told from generation to generation; its physical appearance was the product of specific land management practices' (Rose 1996:18).

I reflect on the sense experienced on that lakeside walk. How could it be that some of this land's story was relayed and experienced through an unknown way of knowing, the body's knowing, through a body-felt-sense and an image of people past, arising from the place itself? I reflect on the question of whose story has been told in this place and whose has been neglected. Although I do not know the full story and history of the place, walking with respect and with acknowledgment at least may help to initiate, to bring into perspective, a conscious consideration of place as learning, through viewing place as other than simply a passive backdrop.

Wed 17/11/10:

Yesterday that walk was good, though also weird. I wondered later about whether I may have also stumbled into a secret men's place, as the feeling by the lake when I turned the corner at the point was much calmer and more nurturing. Perhaps the West facing shore of the inlet is more female friendly.

Today, I walked along the West facing shore, in a Northerly direction. It felt more protected, gentler, and I felt I didn't have to keep watching my back. It was also more built up with houses near the village shops area, until it becomes more of a bush track further along. It was at this further bush track area that I quite suddenly, though gently, felt some (non-logical) kind of sense of the Mothers and Aunties, so perhaps I was right about it being a more female place. I feel an aversion now to the South facing shore of the inlet, and may keep my walks to the West shore now instead. The Mothers and Aunties seemed to welcome me there. At least, that was the body-sense-feeling of it. It was nurturing and calm.

I felt it in my body, a sense of the place, and an image of calm women, there by the water, seeing me, welcoming me, perhaps even saying as I walked there, 'There she is, that white woman who wants to belong'.

I felt it again on several occasions, over months of time, usually when I walked there in the mornings. At none of those times did I anticipate the sensation. It simply arose through being in the place and walking there, being in the body, quietly and gently. It was a gentle sense of being somehow welcomed and becoming known, as well as coming to know, through my walking and

being. Something in the landscape welcomed me there. It embodied a feeling of (almost) timelessness.

The spirits linger in the places where the Old People lived, the places that draw them back when they are near death. They are felt in those places in the material signs of their life there, like the scars on the trees where they cut their canoes or bark for shelters, the toe holds made for climbing and the objects left behind in the camps...

It is by sensing their presence in the everyday that we can begin to know them as benign presences there to watch over us.

Somerville and Perkins 2010:124

The ways of learning expressed through these particular experiences of being in place draw on experiential (Kolb 1984) and embodied (Amann 2003; Freiler 2008; Lawrence 2012; Somerville 1999; Stuckey 2009), sensory ways of learning. It involves the body, its senses and an active, engaged awareness of place and space. It draws on learning through an experience of being (deeply) aware of the body's (deep) sensations that connect with, or in connection to, a certain place in which we are present. Some senses may be more profoundly felt than others.

The earlier example of the experience at the Southern facing shore of the lake inlet draws on an experiential learning occurring through the body in place. It is not a logical learning process, not one which I can rationalise, and one which may appear to the logical approach merely as fantasy or illusion, fiction and imagination. Perhaps it was. However, through a body-sensory awareness I was able to somehow, non-logically, sense a feeling of place that may have gone long before I ever walked there, but which perhaps remained etched within the landscape of the place.

Perhaps this story was long 'inscribed' (Davies 2000; Grosz 1995:33; Rose 1996:18-19) in the landscape and I merely noticed things that pointed to its presence. This was experienced through the body's way of knowing (Amann 2003; Freiler 2008:38; Stuckey 2009). I also, at the time, did *not* intentionally seek to do this. I sought only to walk in the place and to learn the lay of the land for my own benefit and to hopefully put my mind at ease about living in the area. The sensation of the land's powerful expression was experienced somehow through the body in a non-logical way of learning and being; an experience of embodied learning in relation to place, and of learning my way in a new place.

Was this the old and ancient landscape now inscribing some of its lived story to a newly present body? Perhaps it was transcribing, symbolically, some of its story to a body that was newly there, one perhaps being open to new stimuli or experience, and immersed creatively and bodily within the landscape.

9/12/10:

This is new land to me. I enter it with a feeling in my body and self of having been uprooted from a place where I took time to feel connection, where connection grew over time, and roots grew deeper. I enter it with a feeling of respect for the land, but with a displacement in my body. This perhaps makes me feel more sensitive and aware of the nuances of change and landscape. Perhaps over the next weeks I settle and become less sensitive. Perhaps, I settle more and become both more accepting and more accepted. Perhaps that sensitivity to the nuances of body, land, and change brings me also to a space of learning through deeper perceptions of where I am. Perhaps my perceptions of where I am are merely extensions of my own emotions and experience, and not a picture of the Aboriginal people who once lived here with this land. Perhaps that is merely fantasy and illusion, urged on by a feeling of displacement and wanting to belong. Perhaps, however, it is an awareness of learning through a bodily perception of the land and space. It is not logical. I felt it in the body.

BOODEREE

Later, I learn that Booderee National Park, some fifteen kilometres away, is share-managed, the land being owned by the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council and leased back to the Director of National Parks (Dept. of Environment 2013; Heritage Tourism 2011). Increasing conflict over land rights, and the Wreck Bay people's commitment to pursue ownership of the land led, over much time, to several changes being made to the Land Grants Act and the Parks Act. The name of the National Park was changed to Booderee, the Aboriginal name from the Dhurga language, meaning 'bay of plenty' (Dept. of Environment 2013; Heritage Tourism 2011). This is one of only three National Parks in Australia to have Aboriginal (Koori) ownership, the other two being Uluru and Kakadu (Heritage Tourism 2011).

Booderee is a Koori owned place. It holds the evidence of the traditional

owners' ancestry, and with the wind, the water, and all life reflected in the past, it is the home and spirit of the Wreck Bay people.

Koori people are born of the land and have lived off the land forever.

Dept of Environment 2013.

Juxtaposed to the idea of conserving the area's natural beauty and history, the pristine area of Booderee and Jervis Bay narrowly escaped becoming a site for a nuclear power plant in the 1970's (Archives ACT 2011; Ellard 2002), with the proposed site near Murray's Beach (Archives ACT 2011). Archival maps (Archives ACT 2011: Online) show the area adjacent to Murray's Beach and the surrounding area being planned for use for the nuclear power plant.

Months of living in the area and visiting the Booderee National Park beaches and bushland regularly, shows me experientially that this is a special place. Now, share managed as a heritage area (Dept. of Environment 2013; Heritage Tourism 2011) at least perhaps *some* of the Indigenous story of place may be retained and valued in that landscape and relationship, and the land and sea (as a marine park) has been shown some respect of place and beauty.

Perhaps this is partly why I feel such a calmness and acceptance from the sense of the landscape within the area of the National Park of Booderee. There is both a sense of it being *given* acceptance and nurturing, and of it *giving* acceptance and nurturing, and this sense is somehow bound up in the elements of respect and care. Perhaps the sprawling suburb where I now live has still not really embraced that respect deeply and there are elements of the story lying dormant, unheard, (with)in the landscape, and it, the landscape, is still crying out for a sense of acceptance and nurturing. Joint management perhaps opens some way for the telling and understanding of the stories of the original owners of the land at Booderee, and importantly is an acknowledgement that the land and country belonged to other people as home.

In my walkings at the beach and at Booderee, I focus at some point during each visit on a silent acknowledgement of the traditional land owners, to the air, the sea, the sky, the land, for my being there. It is not a dramatic show of reverence, just a quiet acknowledgement in my own self and heart, and with some kind of felt-image, or body-felt-sense, of a sense of being granted acceptance, whilst also requesting permission to be there, not just taking the land as I want. Quietly, simply, I learn a respect of the place through walking and being.

LISTENING DEEPLY

Ungunmerr-Baumann (2002), of the Ngangikurungkurr tribe, reflects on the Aboriginal concept of deep listening, Dadirri (Ungunmerr-Baumann 2002). She notes that Aboriginal people have a deep understanding of the land and a deep relationship to the land, 'a deep respect for nature' (Ungunmerr-Baumann 2002). Dadirri is a way of listening. It refers to listening to each other, to our stories, and it refers to listening to the land, to nature. It is a deep and respectful listening and is also a reflective way of being in place in nature.

To be still brings peace – and it brings understanding. When we are really still in the bush, we concentrate. We are aware of the anthills and the turtles and the water lilies. Our culture is different. We are asking our fellow Australians to take time to know us; to be still and to listen to us.

Ungunmerr-Baumann 2002:3

Paton (in Browning 2012:~1.40secs) refers to Dadirri as being like a meditation, immersing oneself in the experience of nature through listening and feeling. Ungunmerr-Baumann (2002) refers to Dadirri as being a deeply respectful way of interacting with nature through engaging in stillness or reflection, as well as listening to each other and our stories.

Dadirri, or deep listening, is an 'inner, deep listening and a quiet, still awareness' (Ungunmerr-Baumann 2002:1). Ungunmerr-Baumann (2002:1) also describes deep listening as being like a contemplation, which 'recognises the deep spring that is inside of us' (Ungunmerr-Baumann 2002: 1). Paton refers to opening up to listening to our soul (in Browning 2012:~34secs). She notes that 'Listening to country is not just about what you see and hear with your ears. It's also about sitting on country, it's about being on country...' (in Browning 2012:~34secs).

I have suggested that the connection I experience of (consciously and purposely) listening deeply to place and space is connected also to listening deeply with the body, immersed in the experience of a nature place. Listening with/to the body in place is also potentially a deep listening, even though it may be only the body and the landscape at the site of learning. There is a deep respect for the landscape in such inquiry and learning, and the stories of past generations of

history have also informed that landscape of learning. Indigenous cultural ways of knowing and learning, importantly, acknowledge the natural landscape, the history, and unseen elements within the land as having an innate influence on our being. This perspective informs the method of listening deeply through body and landscape.

In my subjective inquiry into this place and space of being, I have been deeply informed by the landscape and the body. I am not formally experienced in the many intricate teachings of Indigenous Australian culture, but have learned along the way (over years of time), various understandings of some elements of Aboriginal culture and history.

Deep listening with the body to place, involves knowing and learning the body, and being respectful of place and body. It involves being present, in the body, aware of one's surroundings. It involves checking the heart (Atkinson, cited in Paton & Brearley 2009:39). It involves learning through, and being in, a context that may reflect the inscriptions of story, both in place and on the body. Deep listening with the body to place, in nature landscapes, may involve walking, sitting, watching, listening, breathing. It likely involves some form of bodily contact with the earth. It may involve the body as an active and passive agent in learning, both inscribing the landscape and being inscribed by the landscape.

I listen with my feet, where they are placed upon the ground, and listen with the body, to see and hear what the landscape has, if anything, to tell me. This places a conscious attention inwards to the body, and outwards to the space and place, whilst at the same time connecting visually through a conscious sight of the landscape. It focuses simultaneously inward and outward in presence, noting non-logically, but physically and subtly, the sensations that occur. These sensations may at times not even be perceptible or tangible to me, although I am possibly aware of something that changes in the body within the place where I am standing or sitting.

Listening deeply with the body. Connecting with place. Listening to place.

I am not always connected deeply to my body. I felt restless and uneasy initially in the new area after the move. This shows me that I may not be clear in my body and its senses, and that something is urging me to look more deeply, whether I accept the invitation or reject it. It may also be telling me that something is not quite right in the surroundings, or that there is something I need to avoid in that area.

Even though I am a white woman, I am learning to listen deeply to the stories of the land.

Deep listening – Dadirri – importantly, includes listening to the stories of each other and to their meaning. To me, listening with the body to the land is also part of this context of Dadirri.

WALKING

hooks (2009:2), searching for her own place to belong, makes a list of what she wants in a home, in a place where she can 'create firm ground' (hooks 2009:2). At the top of her list, she writes 'I need to live where I can walk. I need to be able to walk to work, to the store, to a place where I can sit and drink tea and fellowship. Walking, I will establish my presence, as one who is claiming the earth, creating a sense of belonging, a culture of place' (hooks 2009:2).

In my new place, I walk. I walk to learn the lay of the land, to find out the feeling of the air and the sight of the sea. I walk to find where I belong, and also, importantly, where I do not. I walk to see, and I walk to feel. I walk to engage in the sensory experience of the place, and to engage the body in the discovery of place. Like hooks (2009:2-3), perhaps I also walk to create a sense of belonging, to claim the earth and to establish my presence. There is a 'knowing that comes from walking and being in a place' (Somerville & Perkins 2010:21), and it may be present as both 'the everyday and the sacred' (Somerville & Perkins 2010:21).

My purpose here? I am working and walking. I said this to friends when they enquired as to what I was doing with my time living here, initially. Working and walking has been my way. Initially, walking provided my daily routine of grounding with the earth and establishing my presence of place.

I have walked at the beach and by the lake. There are certain places that have become favourite walking places, and with which I have felt an ongoing familiarity since coming to learn and know them. I have walked on every beach along this side of the bay, and through walking and being in those places, came to know them as home and as something more than a visitor. I gradually became more of 'a local', as I learned my way through walking. I came to know some of the animals and birds that inhabit these places as familiar sights; scrub wallabies, kangaroos, kookaburras, eagles. I watched dolphins from the beach often, and have seen whales further out to sea. There are places I have visited only once and felt an aversion afterwards to them; places that have told me experientially that I do not belong there, or provided a strong feeling that I do

not *want* to be there. There are places that have enveloped me, nurturing my body and self to belong and be part of their learning and being of place. These are the places to which I gravitate again and again. I am at home in them. I feel at ease there. I have learned this way through walking and being in place.

Walking also embodies a creative essence. I have often linked with creative ideas and inspiration through the physical movement and momentum of walking, both in city green spaces, and country, and in the contact of body with earth and sky. 'Ideas come to us as we walk. We also invite their quieter friend, insight' (Cameron 2002:2). Connecting with the creative essence and simultaneously with the sense of the body and the sense of place, brings with it an aspect of learning in place that can be a catalyst for renewal and transformation, through transformative learning, embodied learning and creative expression. Walking helps me to engage in my surroundings, bodily and creatively.

A MYTHO-POETIC PERSPECTIVE OF PLACE LEARNING

The experience of being in a particular place and consciously connecting, bodily and creatively, to an otherness experience of the land, and of drawing on a mythic sense of the representations in, or of, that landscape, may also draw upon a 'mytho-poetic' (Dirkx 2000) framework of transformative learning. Approaches that foster transformative learning based on a mytho-poetic perspective 'engage the adult imaginatively within the content or processes of the learning environment' (Dirkx 2000:2). Engaging both bodily and imaginatively within the context of the landscape and in the environment of my walking, I may not logically or intellectually be certain of the lived history of the place, but I have interacted with the place in a physical and embodied way, as well as drawing on an imaginal (Dirkx 2001:68) perspective of place.

In the lake walk example, through the change of focus from self to environment and the pivotal connection point between the two, a learning of place is facilitated and developed.

Through the experience of walking by the lake, this connection revealed non-logical ways of knowing and learning about a new environment to me, and accessed feelings of restriction and discomfort within the body, which later seemed to subside, being replaced with a feeling of lightness and some deeper, bodily felt understanding of self and place. This engages ways of knowing that are not directed by intellectual, logical thought; alternative ways of knowing which may work through similar processes as those which access artistic ways of learning and knowing.

My subjective process of writing and improvising music draws on an intuitive knowing, an implicit knowing, knowing that is subtly beneath the surface of consciousness, and expressed through a non-rational perspective. These 'artistic ways of knowing' (Lawrence 2005a) may extend the boundaries of learning (Lawrence 2005:3), acknowledging 'multiple intelligences and indigenous knowledge' (Lawrence 2005:3). A similar learning perspective is also apparent within this subjective process of embodied learning through place and space through activating and engaging an embodied wholeness and conscious participation of the landscape and the body.

A mytho-poetic perspective of place learning presents knowledge and learning through an extra-rational approach, listening to the body's language of symbols and poetic articulation of experience. This process of meaning making is extra-rational (Dirkx 1997:80; 2001:64; Lawrence 2005; Hoggan et al 2009) in its approach, imaginal (Dirkx 2001:68) rather than rational. In the lakeside walk example, the emotionally charged images of the landscape provided an extra-rational perception of learning in place, and of being in connection with place. "To begin to "see" the mytho-poetic manifestations of transformative learning within adult learning, we need to be willing to entertain learning and knowing as imaginative processes' (Dirkx 2000:2). Engaging in such imaginative processes during the lakeside walk, the perception of learning through the landscape and body was heightened.

Emotionally charged images are not in the control of the conscious, rational mind. Rather, they 'tend to appear spontaneously within the learning process' (Dirkx 2001:69). Dirkx (2001:69) proposes that their presence suggests 'a deep emotional and spiritual connection between our inner lives and some aspect of our outer experience' (Dirkx 2001:69). It is the imagination that can link these worlds and help to make meaning of the experience within them. Perhaps this experience is one of standing on the threshold, inhabiting the liminal space (Somerville 1999:16-17) of conscious and non-rational ways of experiencing knowing in the landscape. This does not suggest that this subjective experience of learning through the landscape and the body was imagined, fantasy, delusional, or not real. Rather, it suggests that the experience of learning through body and place may tap into an otherness-of-being, and multiple ways of knowing and learning that are not utilised within a logical approach to learning.

The role of body learning in this exploration is linked to visual imagery and imagination as well as to the deeper senses of the body. Practising a learning of the body through techniques which

focus on the feelings and senses of the body may help to hone experiential skills of body awareness, skills that may enable us to become more aware of the body in space and place. The practising of body awareness techniques, or various body-focused meditations (Cohen 2003; Freiler 2008; Gustafson 1999; Stuckey 2009; Sussman & Kossak 2011), therefore, may have a capacity to help us link more wholly within natural, environmental spaces, through a bodily engagement, in that we are able to connect perhaps more fully into a consciously embodied and physical experience of learning.

Transformative learning may involve 'personal and imaginative ways of knowing, grounded in a more intuitive and emotional sense of our experiences' (Dirkx 1997:80). This experience of learning in the land drew from some form of intuitive, emotional and bodily experience of knowing, sensing and being. The learning that perhaps came from this, involved listening (deeply) to the body and to the sense that it gave me, and spontaneously allowing those images to emerge to be seen. It involved, inextricably, a deep listening (Paton & Brearely 2009) to an intuitive sense. Essentially, the expression of this experience also vocalises 'imaginative and poetic expressions of self and the world' (Dirkx 1997:80).

AN INDIGENOUS MYTHO-POETIC APPROACH

A potential relationship emerges here, within the focus on the concept of a mytho-poetic learning of place and the use of creative-expressive arts within Indigenous Australian representations of country and culture. Artistic and creative representation of learning and country form an inherent part of traditional Aboriginal culture through storying, music, dance and art (Rose 1996:11). In my subjective, creative-expressive representations of place, I have drawn upon a notion of art as being expressive of place, and I have drawn upon a sense of a mythic quality to the landscape I am walking. Perhaps this echoes the significance of art and creativity as expressed through Aboriginal culture.

Aboriginal culture draws upon stories from *The Dreaming* (Rose 1996:26, 35-36), expressing a mytho-poetic (Dirkx 2000) framing of learning through Indigenous stories of Creation. Creation stories, songs, paintings and dances bring into being cultural learnings which are passed down through the generations. Aboriginal culture places great importance on creative-expressive, artistic, and bodily representations of place (Rose 1996). Perhaps as I walk through the landscape I tap into some intangible, but intimately inscribed, Indigenous concept (buried) within the

landscape; that of connecting to country through a sense of mythos, through poetry, through art and through music, as well as through the engagement of the body. Creative representation of country and landscape is really inherently an Indigenous concept, used by generations of Indigenous Australians to tell the history of place, creation stories, cultural law, and other elements of Indigenous culture.

I came to the concept of there being a parallel relationship between a mytho-poetic approach to place learning and aspects of an Aboriginal culture of place and learning as I sat on the rocks by the gently lapping, blue sea, on a spring-like, winter's afternoon, immersed in a sunny, calm, natural scene. I realised, whilst immersed within this landscape, including sea country and sky country (Rose 1996:8), that what I had been considering regarding a mytho-poetic connection to place was inherent, already, in an Aboriginal culture of place and learning. As I sat on those rocks in a place by water, the notion seemed to simply arise. It came from the landscape, and the seascape; where the sea meets the land, and where land meets body. In that moment I could almost glimpse how Aboriginal myths and stories might arise through images in and of the landscape, and a sense from the landscape of their Dreaming. It is a Dreaming Land.

6/8/11: (4.30 a.m.)

As I contemplated momentarily on the significance of a mytho-poetic connection to place and learning (at the rocks by the sea yesterday), I suddenly realised its relevance. It came through a bodily sense of it, a body-felt-sense. That is how Aboriginal people viewed the landscape – poetically – with an active engagement in the landscape; a bodily and creative engagement. They actively engaged with the landscape, poetically, mythically, bodily, and creatively. Of *course* creative engagement is relevant to learning in place! Aboriginal culture is steeped in the creative expression of the landscape.

There is a stark contrast of place here for me, in the natural landscape and in the sprawling nothingness of a suburb on the edge of paradise.

A culture of belonging: The landscape of nature here feels like a belonging. The nothingness of the sprawling suburb, neither urban nor natural, feels disjointed. Because I live close to, and have access to, a relatively unspoilt, natural area, I am perhaps more able to engage in this way of learning place. This is what draws me to this place, this area by the coast here. This is the culture of place and belonging, for me.

However, it is the conservative, white-suburban culture – or what I perceive as a lack of culture – that will ultimately drive me from this place.

In a new pedagogy of place (Somerville et al 2009:10), creative representation of place has an experiential and experimental part to play. It draws on a sense of creative expression that is integral to Indigenous Australian ways of perceiving the land. It may be a subjective, individual expression and representation of one person's experiential learning, or it may be representative of a specific, group-shared, collectivised experience of, or in, a specific place. It may articulate some essential aspect of how Australian Aboriginal culture draws upon art and creative expression as intrinsic to being, intrinsic to life, and intrinsic to a (powerful) relationship to the landscape.

CREATIVITY, EXPRESSION AND CULTURAL LIMINALITY

I later reflected further on the notion of Australian Aboriginal culture being based in a creative and bodily engagement with the landscape. In the Western society which I inhabit, music and arts are predominantly perceived as self-indulgent activities, or as entertainment, but they do not, generally, receive a respectful place in mainstream life. Music and the arts are not given a place of priority in a culturally engaged position in our society, even though we might presume that music is ingrained deeply within our society. As a creative artist, I experience that it is not given a place of respect.

Creative arts, in the society I have lived, appear to be characterised, to a large extent, by what is considered already successful, mainstream and marketable, profitable art. Globally, creative artists (of all genres) may be revered to heights of glamour and global celebrity if, or when, they are seen on that massive and unnatural scale as having great success, but are not particularly respected when they are struggling to make a living through a passionate commitment to art and creative expression. Creativity and creative self-expression are not given precedence in this society. They may even be scorned (Clover 2007:514; Shokotko & Walker 1999, cited in Clover & Stalker 2007:5). Neo-liberalism frameworks position arts as products or goods, valued for the ability to be possessed, rather than for meaningfulness (Clover & Stalker 2007:11-12). However, the arts are also powerfully transformative tools for learning (Clover and Stalker 2007) and I emphasise this perspective in regard to learning through engaging a creativity of place.

It is not considered a particularly worthwhile occupation to be a creative artist, unless one has already proven oneself to be at the top of one's game, one's art, seen and heard, famous, a celebrity, celebrated for success in a superficial, fickle industry. Rather than a celebration of creativity and creative expression, contemporary, mainstream, Western society celebrates fame and fortune. Artists are often only celebrated once they are *already* momentarily successful. The nurturing and cultivating of the creative heart of expression is, generally, not given a creditable (or bankable) position in this society. It is aimed, rather, at bankable success.

Indigenous Australian culture, on the other hand, has viewed art, music, dance and the body as essential components of a culture of engagement; integrated and nurtured aspects of a culture that engages wholly in a creative and bodily expression of life and landscape. The land and the body are one. Traditional Aboriginal culture does not perceive the arts, creative expression, and creative engagement as self-indulgent or as merely hobbies. These creative elements are an integral part of life (Rose 1996:11). A creative expression of the landscape, and of the body's relationship to the landscape, is an essential, integrative component of Indigenous Australian culture. It acknowledges both a creative and embodied way of learning.

Rose (1996) writes of the displacement of Aboriginal people from country, and how most white settlers did not identify Aboriginal culture as real, established and highly intricate in its systems and human activity. She notes that Aboriginal culture is steeped in art, music and dance and that much of this artistic expression stems from the deep and nurturing relationship of Aboriginal connection to country being a major focus (Rose 1996:11).

Life is meaningful, and much human activity ~art, music, dance, philosophy, religion, ritual and daily activity~ is about celebrating and promoting life.

Country is the key, the matrix, the essential heart of life. It follows that much Aboriginal art, music, dance, philosophy, religion, ritual and daily activity has country as its focus or basis.

Rose 1996:11.

This brings into focus the intrinsic nature of the relationship of arts and creativity to Australian Indigenous culture and of nurturing country. Drawing from the notion that Aboriginal culture is steeped in creativity and artistic expression, I have also explored my subjective relationship to

place through nurturing creative ways of representing, or expressing, my subjective, experiential learning within natural places.

In a context of place learning, the arts potentially have a critical framing as well as a creative-expressive context. 'The imagination and creativity are powerful tools inherent to all human beings' (Clover 2007:513). They may 'enable risk-taking, reclaim space, re-invigorate community development and engagement, by creatively and simultaneously exercising and contesting power within the neo-conservative landscape' (Clover 2007:513). The arts have a contribution to make regarding socio-political transformation and emancipatory adult learning (Clover and Stalker 2007). Creative expression and arts 'matter in our lives, in adult education and learning and in bringing about social justice and transformation' (Clover & Stalker 2007:1) and can address complex social issues (Clover & Stalker 2007:2) .

Learning through, and with, the landscape in a new pedagogy of place in Australia can involve tapping into some of that Indigenous engagement of creativity, the body, and this relationship to the land. Being inspired by our surroundings, engaging in, and with, our surroundings in a creative and bodily way, can contribute to working within a creative pedagogy of place. Creatively and bodily, to be present in the landscape and to allow a reciprocal, interactive relationship with the natural landscape, potentially brings to us an awareness of body, self and other, in an integrative, creative engagement of learning and place.

Of course, I am also influenced by my own cultural history, by my social context, my lifeworld. However, being willing to actively participate and engage in a new pedagogy of place, I have also drawn from aspects of my cultural liminality, occupying a space between Australian, white, colonised history, and a place explored through my adult life in travelling, creativity, arts, music, alternative health and sustainable lifestyles.

Initially, positioning myself in the exploration of creativity in place learning, I was somewhat apprehensive about this perspective being perceived as merely self-indulgence, when science-based, environmental educational aspects are generally considered as being the 'serious' aspects of place learning. I do not consider it to be trivial or self-indulgent and I also acknowledge the importance of environmental education and the need for changes toward sustainable ways of living. However, to explore a creative and poetic pedagogy of place is not an indulgent fantasy of place and history. Rather, it informs an active engagement with the landscape, and also perhaps

sits within some aspect of cultural liminality. Positioning ourselves within a context of critical reflection, and within that of nurturing an essence of the creative, we may be able to glean more understanding of the learnings which the connections between place and creativity offer us.

STABILITY AND FLOW

27/6/12:

In (what is expected to be) the later stages of writing my PhD, the real estate agent informs me that my house (the rented villa-unit) is immediately to go on the market for sale. My six month nature sojourn has turned into eighteen months, for various reasons, and settling in came in stages, both gently and with challenges.

Who knows what to do?

I haven't got a clue.

Can't really afford to buy it, even though I have been given that option by the owner and estate agent.

Make them an offer, if I like, before the end of the week, he said, and it might go to me instead of onto the market.

Guess we could've done the same with any house in inner city Sydney that was sold or where we were kicked out for gentrification or renovations: Apart from the money factor.

The last house in Dulwich Hill was on offer to buy after a year of us renting there. Sounds a viable option – only we didn't have the spare half million or more AUD\$. It was more.

We were lucky that it sold to investors who kept us on as tenants, but the whole process was a stressful interruption to our lives and we did not know the outcome until it happened.

I guess I won't be purchasing the little villa now, which I've become quite attached to in the time I have lived here. Technically it's affordable, but out of reach for the moment, and the rent has been easy enough. Rents and housing are affordable in this area.

'It has a really nice feel to it', says the estate agent, a lovely, gentle man, in his thirties or forties, with a friendly manner. He said it a few times, in fact, as though trying to pinpoint what it was.

That *feel*, I want to say, is *me*, 'That's my *vibe*, man...'

It's part of what makes a house a home for me, and it won't be here when I leave.

Does this writing interrupt the flow of reading from this section of the chapter? I sought an appropriate place to add this journal extract, after the news came to me of the house being put up for sale. Co-incidentally, I was in the process of editing the place chapter at that time. It occurred to me later that this interruption in the reading mirrors how the situation interrupts my life; suddenly, abruptly and unexpectedly. So the piece of writing remains where I placed it, in an interruption of the expected, stable, flow of life, and slightly displaced.

In adding this story, I begin to question how do I draw the line of where the chapter ends? I had wanted the blissful 'fade-into-the-sunset' ending written from Murray's Beach. That was definite. It contrasts the idea of the proposed nuclear power station being there instead of natural bushland and seascape. This was some of the history of place I had learned during my early time of living in this natural area, and these nature places had become special to me. I had decided on this poetic ending for the thesis, even when the thesis was still in process.

Considering this, I questioned, how do I add this new part without it *interrupting*? In that, I came to the realisation that the interruption mirrored life, creating a metaphor for reflection, regarding the repeated upheaval caused by real estate. However, I did not want that interruption to be the thesis ending, even though that was the more linear expression of chronological happenings of that time period. I wanted to focus on positive outcomes and an optimistic stance for transformative learning and direction. Yet, I also did not want to present a fake 'happy-ever-after' ending. This was a seemingly continuing process of learning and coming to be, a spiralling pattern of learning and reflection. It could go on for a lifetime, I reflected: It is a continuing process of coming to be.

Restlessness and Holding On

26/2/13:

Tuning into the feeling of restlessness and non-focus. Sitting quietly on the couch, writing the body.

This restlessness feels all
bound up inside me
like a torrent
of knotted pathways
pressing internally,
intimidatingly, against itself,
against me, against myself.

I focus on the feeling
in the stomach, around the navel.
It feels stuck and complicated.
Slowly, the strands of ends begin to unravel.

I realise that I've been holding on tightly of late to try to keep things together.
But now it seems a matted mass of fibres, not organised at all, just stuck together,
but not together in a good sense of the word.
... Too many things to do lately, too much to get together, too many plans uprooted...

An image arises...

Push my shoulder against the weight of a closed hatch door, where I am hunched from
the strain of it.

Open it up and look outside from the hole in the ground it seems I have been.
Open hatch door wide and let it fall open. Spring up with hands either side of me to
support myself. Climb out. Sit. Observe the panorama about me. Just rest there a while
and allow the sense of the space to open to the horizon and to accommodate my
newness in it.

Just watch the view for a while and let it speak to you.

This body imaging meditation arose through a context of feeling destabilised and disempowered, through further experiences of real estate, renting and enforced moving. Although I sometimes let body learning examples speak for themselves, it is perhaps also useful in this case to briefly outline some of that context.

The villa was sold and I was given notice to vacate. Although technically I was given reasonable notice, in the end it did not work out time-wise for me, and there were several complications to the situation. There was an over-riding sense of being situated as non-descript, in-between, standing in a no-one's land of belonging and displacement; belonging, but marginally displaced.

The above body imaging meditation draws a direct relationship to this experience. It was written some time after having moved to another house in the same local area. It helped me to put into perspective where I was situated and how to better deal with it, even though there was frustration regarding such continuing temporariness of location. To 'watch the view for a while, and let it speak' to me, seemed to give some clarity, through metaphor, of the need to be still for a while, to be gentler on myself and allow things to come together, without pushing against the pressure.

CONTRADICTIONS OF PLACE

This chapter has been a process of learning to belong and finding my way in a new place and nature environment; a process of becoming. That process is ongoing and does not end at the conclusion of the chapter or thesis. I wanted these two chapters of place to show some of the tumultuous changes and upheavals, but also some of the harmonising, sense of belonging experienced in some nature places. I wanted them to show the dramatic intensity of the effect of rapid, inner city gentrification, but also, importantly, to make clear that the city has a cultural and artistic quality/ life to which I also belong. These are some of the contradictions of place and belonging. I need my place to be mine culturally and socially, not only in the nature places of it, and I need some amount of nature in my surroundings of my places, not only a sense of cultural connection.

I wanted to portray some of the contradictions of place. In so attempting, there are many parts of the story that have gone untold. It is not possible to relay every detail or situation within this space of writing, and there are many details that overlap in different complexities or contexts of

place, movement and belonging. I did not want it to come across that I dislike cities, as that is not the case, although I do have a strong preference for the greening of cities. Cities also hold aspects of belonging for me. However, I did want to express some of the disorienting experience and learning processes involved, through which I meandered my way in some of the years of living in Sydney and in moving away, and to illustrate some of the challenges. In so doing, I may have left out illustrations of the good a lot more than I had intended. Partly that is because of limitations of space for writing the whole, in-depth story of place, moving and belonging. Likewise, there have been other challenges that have gone unsaid within these pages. This learning of place and belonging continues. It is a process of becoming and coming to know. This chapter has been a reflection on some of those interactions with place and belonging.

In coming to live for a time in this place so near nature I have come to an understanding and deeper learning of my place in nature, of how I may come to know a place, and of how a natural environment brings me into a deeper sense of belonging. Over time, I have adapted much more to the slower, gentler pace of the area and have felt a strong sense of connection with the country here: Sky country, sea country, earth country. It seems to be a place of belonging for me, in the nature areas of it at least.

I have not, however, addressed any of the wider social issues which are apparent in the area, on the edge of paradise, notably those of youth boredom, unemployment and various aspects of crime. Those social issues sit in stark juxtaposition against the background of such a paradise place, another contradiction of place and belonging.

LOOKING FOR SIGNS AND FEELINGS IN THE LANDSCAPE: READING THE LANDSCAPE

A poetic learning of place incorporates the delicate and the intricate details of place. It incorporates a leaning toward the visual and descriptive, the sensed and the felt. Intricate details of a place may provide an essence of the poetic, and how we relay those details may inform how a place is learned and understood from, and through, a creative context.

Somerville (Somerville & Perkins 2010: xiv) explores the idea of finding meaning in a place through observing the everyday, in patterns of life there. Finding more questions than answers in her search for a special meaning of one particular place, she looks to 'reading the intimate details

of the marks on the vast sandy estuary' (Somerville & Perkins 2010: xiv). In taking notice of the small, everyday details of a place we can perhaps begin to establish some connection to the visual space and intimacy of the place. Through describing some of these intimate, visual details of the place, Somerville (Somerville & Perkins 2010: xiv) gives the reader insight into the nature of the place and of her process of learning in that place.

Through a different place context, hooks (2009:2) also finds meaning in the descriptions of the everyday, in the routine and rhythm of the daily life and movement of a place. She connects to the land through memory and experience, and in the rhythms of walking she reflects upon place as a connected, active space. I have written of my walking and learning in place and of finding an active and embodied connection in place through walking.

I have also used visual and rich description of some of the images and sense of place, in order to relay some of the process through which my subjective learning, understanding or meaning making of particular places developed. This visually descriptive information is intended to draw the reader into the space of the place surrounding my learning.

At Chinaman's Rocks 25/11/10:

'The whole country is sacred' (Aboriginal women's text, quoted in Somerville 1999:38). These words echo and linger with me, on my walks some days later, after re-reading them. 'Our dreamtime stories extend to the north, south, east and west. The whole country is sacred' (Aboriginal women's text, quoted in Somerville 1999:38).

I am at the beach, sitting on high rocks overlooking the blue expanse of the bay.
Waves splash and breathe below, in... out... in... out. Blue as far as I can see.
I drift into a dream-like wave of breathing and seeing, meditative, gentle, calm.
The waves coming in ... and going out. Breathing.
The sound of the sea pulls my auditory sense of awareness into it.
Just the breath and the sea.
Through the sound of it, I reflect on how the sea just keeps on going and going,
through aeons of time...

I pull myself back to the physicality of the rocks and place of my sitting.

'I don't want to get too spaced out from the beauty of it all', I reflect, half jokingly, half not.

Rise to my feet. Barefoot, climb over rocks, feel earthed and grounded, the feel of the rocks strong and a little jagged beneath my feet, giving a gentle massage to the soles of the feet, stimulating to the foot reflex points and to the nervous system of the body. Being well grounded is important for this body. I need to maintain a balance in my relationship to the body, and in place and space.

This learning and being draws on alternative ways of knowing. Through the body's senses and breath, the sound of the water in rhythmic movement draws me into a state of heightened consciousness or meditative awareness, whilst simultaneously being aware of my body sitting on the rocks, and of the rocks beneath my feet. In this situation, alternative ways of knowing draw on a bodily way of relating to place and space as well as a creative imaging in the mind and focus.

What learning is taking place? What did I *learn* here? Is there any tangible, *real* learning going on? I am learning the body, and learning the place. I am learning how to be in the place where I have recently moved. I am learning to be in the stillness of listening to the place so that it can calm, reassure, nurture and allow me to follow what it teaches me. I am also learning where I feel at ease and where I do not. I feel at ease in that place at the rocks. There is a gentleness there. We watched dolphins play there recently, my partner and I. They came in really close.

I sit beneath the cave-like overhang of the cliff side rocks, in the midday shade. Feels cool. I think of people of ages gone that have sat in that very place. Community. Place. Body. Bodies. Water. Dreaming. A water dreaming place.

I reflect later on Somerville's (1999) work regarding the centrality of the body in the performance of space and place. 'This place exists here in my performance of it. In telling the story of place it comes into being as a particular landscape evoked by a particular body, just as I come into being through that performance' (Somerville 1999:4). In telling my story of how I began to come to know and learn this place, I begin to, metaphorically and physically, dance and sing the body into the place as a way of knowing place. In telling my story of how I connect with that place, I begin

to learn of other ways of being in place that nurture country (Rose 1996:49), body and self, in and through my learning.

Chinaman's Beach 2/8/13:

This is a later reflection on my earlier concern of whether the awe-inspiring beauty of being immersed in such natural spaces might space me out too much, as noted in the previous, *At Chinaman's Rocks*, journal entry:

In fact, it had quite the opposite effect. I felt grounded, nurtured, and earthed by being in these surroundings. I began to feel more deeply connected to these spaces as I walked and learned through them and allowed their sense of space and nature to strengthen in my bones. Over time, this land country and sea country and sky country had made its way into my sense of self and my sense of space. Although I dreamed, I did not space out. Although I wandered, I did not feel lost, but felt connected to earth and place. I was drawn into these spaces, and in turn, they nurtured and enlivened me.

City Visit 6/5/11:

What is it about these streets that they make me feel at home? I am surprised in some way to feel so at ease and part of the place. They are familiar, even through their changes over these years. I lived in the area for seven years. Though I haven't lived here for some years now, in this city area, this is the inner city niche of which I wrote. It has changed, but the streets still hold a known sense of home in some way for me as I walk the familiar terrain. Culture, art, history. History – Some of my history is here too.

I walk past a row of terrace houses dated 1870 on their front wall, past the old hospital where my sister was born. It's now converted into apartments. I notice that one of the apartment buildings is called 'Alba', the old Celtic or Pict name for Scotland, another old home of mine.

I walk past small art galleries, inner city cafes, and people on the street. There is street life, and it is so different to where I have been living these months; vibrant and alive with life in the city streets. I find, easily, in the momentum of walking, that in some way, I fit. I meld in. In some way, here, I can be who I am, and nobody particularly notices, and I don't mind.

We talked a little with people in the cafe last night, you and I, and we both felt we were somehow at home here. People of many walks of life live here. There is a vibrancy and diversity I can still see in these streets, even though I have complained many times about the heart of it being ripped out. Perhaps that heart is not entirely gone, but something remains, and new people came and made something more since those times of emptiness and renovation madness.

16/5/11:

Soft,

powder-fine,
white sand,
slides across my feet as I
walk through it.

How can I leave this

effervescent blue day scene?
a blue world
of perfection.

Just as I sit to take in the awe of its splendour,

a dolphin pops up from
the satin sea,
Just four or five times,
then gone.

What more could I ask of the day?

But to let this scene, quite blissfully, wash over me.

15/5/11: *At Murray's Beach*

Sitting in Paradise

You and I

on the beach

this autumn

sunny day.

Blue of water,

sky,

and mountains in the distance.

A lone kangaroo bounces

gently

along the sand

by the bush track.

Pauses several times,

to eat, and

to peruse the scene.

notices us,

looks intently,

eyes uncertain now

which way to go.

We sit,

unthreatening and

lower in height,

and watch

from our distant human

perspective.

Bounds off behind us in
the bush
like a spring,
and ballet like in
the momentum.

We turn again to face
the sea,
the Paradise Sea,
as
dusk slowly arrives,
and colours change
on a perfect
blue lit afternoon.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: CONCLUSION

ME/CFS, CHRONIC ILLNESS AND LEARNING

ME/CFS is complex physiologically, medically and socially. As a multi-causal and multi-factorial illness there is still much research needed to be carried out regarding causes and treatment.

Patients are often met with disbelief socially, possibly due to some of the misinformation that has been promulgated through misinterpreting /misrepresenting the name and partly due to a lack of awareness by some medical practitioners. Patient advocates and support groups are important sources of information for patients, and are part of a larger movement of health social movements. These movements support transformative learning on a social level as well as a personal level.

ME/CFS, and other chronic illness, may be a catalyst for transformative learning in several ways, both subjectively and through a wider social movement for patient empowerment and medical awareness. Some transformative learning processes related to chronic illness experience are not necessarily cognitively based. Extra-rational processes for learning, such as creative-expressive, imaginal and intuitive ways of knowing and learning are valuable ways of learning through chronic illness experience. Emancipatory transformative learning also provides a strong socio-political foundation for learning through chronic illness.

I have explored some of these ways of learning through the chronic illness experience, and have presented some of the experiences of dealing with chronic illness through reflective poetry, storytelling, song and music. Through depicting some of the stories of the body, I have demonstrated some of the medical-social experiences subjectively associated with having chronic illness. Through describing some of the meditatively focused, body learning processes, I have demonstrated some of the techniques that are available for exploring a bodily and creative approach to learning.

I have made note of the importance of the silences and the stories within illness/wellness experience as learning and have noted some of the ways in which imposed silences are manifest. My stories and silences relate to my own subjective illness experience. Nevertheless, through such autoethnographic writing, there is space for others' stories to overlap and intersect, finding common ground in the storying of illness/wellness experience.

The storying of my own illness/wellness experience intertwines creative-expressive aspects of learning, learning through place and belonging, and bodily ways of learning. Within these specific areas, aspects of learning are evident in several layers, including transformative learning through a perspective approach, an extra-rational approach, and an emancipatory approach.

Although there may seem to be several separate, diverse, complex notions presented in this thesis regarding learning and chronic illness, those living with debilitating, chronic illness are presented with many divergent and conflicting issues of complexity in dealing with illness. These complexities span not only the illness itself, physically, but also include elements of social, medical, and political issues, and personal, subjective life experiences that may serve to complicate illness management further and, likewise, some which illness may complicate further. The topics regarding learning that I have put forward here, represent some of the socio-medical-political and personal, subjective life issues which I have encountered through chronic illness, and some which have been impacted in turn also by having a chronic illness.

CREATIVITY

Creativity and creative expression are forms of learning and knowing, and may draw upon imaginal and intuitive ways of knowing and learning in various contexts. Through using music and writing as tools for creative research and learning, I have explored some of the ways through which these kinds of knowledge can present as learning. This has been partly viewed through the perspective of composer/songwriter/musician, writing of the process of musical expression whilst immersed within that process and while observing a musical context throughout the musician/researcher's day. It has also partly been explored through the use of poetry and writing as descriptive text or metaphor for bodily learning, forming an expressive, vocal wording of images that arise through purposive, body-focused, meditative inquiry. Writing of place through a context of viewing the body as being centrally located in that place, and using verse and writing to describe and explore a relationship to those places, through an experiential discovery and learning, I have also explored ways that creative expression may hold a valid position within the realm of place pedagogy.

Writing music is a dynamic, intuitive process, yet also draws upon other areas of more cognitive based learning that have been practised over the years as a musician/composer. This dynamic

process draws upon multiple ways of knowing and, in the context through which I have described a subjective process, accesses imaginal, poetic, creative aspects of knowing within processes that lead to transformative learning.

This type of creative work is a creative engagement in learning. It enhances a connection with multiple and alternative ways of knowing, allowing for greater access to creative, intuitive, and also bodily ways of knowing and learning. The transformative processes of learning which are sometimes involved in writing music can lead to a sense of creative enlivenment, even while the body is unwell. Nurturing this sense of creative enlivenment is a transformative process and is connected to creative, intuitive and bodily aspects of transformative learning.

Such creative engagement with learning through creative expression can connect to transformative learning through nurturing soul (Dirkx 1997), through exploring affective aspects of learning (Dirkx 2008; 2001; Lawrence 2008) through embodied learning (Amann 2003; Stuckey 2009), and through creative and intuitive ways of knowing (Hoggan et al 2009; Lawrence 2009; Lawrence 2005; 2005a).

The arts and creative expression also have important roles to play in social change for emancipatory transformative learning. Although I have only touched briefly on this area, there is much room for such research in this field, and it is an area that I hope to pursue further in later research. Clover and Stalker (2007) have opened up this area of research for many artists and researchers to apply within their respective fields of the arts and adult learning. Positioning artistic ways of learning and creative-expressive aspects of learning as methods for transformative learning has a position in place pedagogy also, and is applicable across a platform of learning areas.

The Arts are valid transformative learning tools, applicable both through a perspective transformative learning aspect and through emancipatory transformative learning for social change. I have described some of my own, personal process of creative expression and music writing through a perspective of personal change and transformation, and I have noted aspects of social change present in some areas of music making and creative expression. The Arts are validated as having a role to play in transformative learning. As tools for expression and exploration of alternative forms of knowledge making and learning, they have several areas of

use, including personal, transformative learning, social transformation, learning the body, embodied learning, and place pedagogy.

LEARNING AND THE BODY

Theorising of the body is complex and multilayered. In this autoethnographic research project, I have reflected on some of the various ways that embodied learning and learning the body have been significant to me during the course of dealing with chronic illness. Learning the body has been an integral aspect of my learning through adulthood, beginning with my experience as a drama student, where I first learned of a creative visualising technique, and following on with learning yoga, body awareness techniques, meditative techniques, practising massage work, and voice work.

In this dissertation, I have considered somatic learning as a way of exploring alternative ways of knowing. I have explored some practical and creative ways of learning the body through a transformative learning perspective. I sought ways to express the body's knowing which are anchored in creative-expressive aspects of learning. I have taken the position that theorising of the body needs to place the body at the centre of the experience, engaged and participating, rather than theorising a disembodied body.

I have argued that body knowledge cannot be learned through intellectual processes alone. In order to really learn the body, we need to engage the body itself, and to listen more directly to the body's ways of knowing. I have taken the stance that some theorising of the body appears to have become separated from the body itself, perhaps through an overly cerebral focus, neglecting the physical, biological, learning body. There needs to be an addressing of the balance in a way that enables a learning of body and mind, acknowledging both as relevant sources of learning and knowledge. I have attempted to address some of this through my approach to interpreting, listening to and writing the body. I have approached this from a stance of seeking a creative integration of body and mind, and I have emphasised a creative integration of body and mind as being a way through which to extend learning.

Body learning is a dynamic process; fluid, organic, creative and subjective. Methods resting in bodywork, body psychology and body awareness techniques are portals through which to view a

dynamic and creative process rather than providing specific, strict rules and regulations for learning a general body of experience and knowing.

Embodied learning and learning the body in social contexts also, however, plays a role for understanding where inscriptions and silences may need to be addressed. Social inscriptions and the silencing of the body's experience are important elements to be addressed within learning through bodily focuses. Medical-social inscriptions and invalidations experienced by those with chronic illness are also presented in this thesis, as significant issues which relate to body learning and body theorising, regarding inscriptions and silences imposed upon the unwell body.

PLACE PEDAGOGY

Viewing place learning through ways other than science oriented, technical solutions, creative and bodily ways of knowing and learning may have a part to play in learning how to listen to the stories of the land and people, and to re-represent place stories, through place being viewed as other than just a passive backdrop against which to live everyday life.

Listening deeply, to the stories of others, of ourselves, and of our bodies, situated both in the landscape and through our own experiential stories, has a part to play in changing how we may view a new place pedagogy. Artistic and creative-expressive ways of representing place, and for exploring our relationship to place, have a valid role in a new place pedagogy and have been inherent within indigenous Australian culture and relationship to the land for many, countless, centuries.

Aspects of place and belonging are also influenced by social inscriptions, invalidations, and pressures, including real estate pressures pushing many to the edges of belonging and homelessness. Transience, whilst essentially a creative, fluid, and potentially vibrant symbol of freedom, is also potentially a stressful, unstable and socially sidelined position in the overall, current, mainstream, Australian view of home, having and belonging, but is one which many people have been forced to experience when they might otherwise have stayed stable in one particular home or place. In Sydney specifically, this has been influenced by strong trends in real estate and unaffordable housing issues during an extended real estate boom, since the late 1990's.

Individual ways of interacting with place and natural landscapes may take on subjective perspectives through creative-expressive, experiential ways of learning place. Through becoming aware of the body as a central part of place and belonging, and as a site of learning, we may find that we are able to become more alert and aware of some of the nuances of a place, in the general lay of the land and in the intricate details of a place, both visually and through listening. Deeply listening, with our bodies as well as with our sense of hearing, when we are in a natural place, can aid in our experience of learning place and of learning to listen to the stories of place.

Deep listening (Paton & Brearley 2009) as a research methodology may incorporate many aspects of listening, learning to listen to the stories of the land as well as the stories of each other. It may involve learning to listen to the silence as well as the sound. It may be like a meditation and a sense of resting in a quiet, still, awareness of the body and the place. It involves listening with respect.

I have integrated creative-expressive aspects of learning and knowing as valid learning tools for exploring new perspectives of place pedagogy. Drawing on new and alternative ways for approaching our learning of place has a role to play in the reinhabitation of place, and also centres in the deeper listening to the stories of others.

These place stories which I have relayed, and my exploration of my relationship to place during the time of chronic illness, also portray a storytelling aspect of research in autoethnography. These stories of place learning, and the exploring of my relationship to old and new places (to me), enter a reflective journey into how I may inhabit space, place and the travelling within it. They are also relevant aspects to the period of chronic illness, in my subjective experience. They reflect and highlight how having had a chronic illness has influenced that relationship to place, and how that relationship has had to become more fluid, and at times has been transformative, as I did not have a continuously, stable base of home for much of the time of illness.

My own story of marginal displacement, caused partly through rising city rental housing costs, and immigration law, traverses several layers of the themes of place and belonging, and brings into reflection the stories of home and belonging as familiar, chosen, territory or as imposed change.

LISTENING AND SILENCE

The themes of listening and silences are discussed through the thesis in several, juxtaposing and parallel ways. These related themes became apparent, over time, during the course of the research and writing, developing more deeply as interrelated themes, as newer ways of understanding the experience began to come into view. I did not set out with an intention of incorporating listening and silence as interrelated themes within this research.

Listening is presented as a theme especially within the chapter, 'Notes on Sound', and in the chapters 'Movement Place and Being Still'/'Transience and Belonging'. However, the contexts within which I have explored a sense of listening are multi-layered. Nevertheless the need for the action of purposefully listening is still resonant within each context. Learning to listen differently is one aspect of learning that comes into focus within these contexts for learning, and draws, somewhat, from the concept of deep listening (Paton & Brearley 2009) as a research methodology.

The theme of silence rests in similar reflection. I have reflected on imposed silences through a context of the patient whose healthcare practitioners have not really listened with respect, juxtaposed with examples of practitioners who have listened with respect. I have reflected on the need for listening more deeply and with respect within these same contexts. Likewise, imposed silences regarding whose stories have been heard and whose have been silenced, are referred to in the chapter on place learning. This sense of imposed silences is evident across varying contexts, and relates specifically to illness and healthcare as well as directly to the need for reinhabitation regarding stories of place.

The theme of listening also takes on a context within the framework of listening to the body. In the body learning chapter, I relate several examples of body/mind awareness exercises and meditative focus. Such exercises may help us to focus on the body and to learn to listen to an inner stillness that we can tap into and also interpret creatively through use of metaphor, writing and music, or other creative expression.

The aspect of listening also applies to the musician/composer/researcher, going about my day and listening to the music in the background, as it plays itself in my head, and working on it creatively even though not always fully aware of it consciously. These are different aspects of

listening and many of them relate to learning through alternative and multiple ways of knowing and learning.

The symbolic, connected themes of silence and listening also, most clearly, belong to the writing of the sense of hearing and the bodily aspects of learning experienced through having had partial deafness since childhood. Considering the ears as more than just hearing devices is an aspect of learning to listen more deeply. Reflecting on the embodied artist self being portrayed symbolically, through the deeper layers of the inner ear, subjectively, is taking this theme into another creative-expressive mode and an embodied/somatic learning perspective. Using such metaphor can create powerful imagery for subjective learning and meaning-making. Learning the body in these sorts of ways also is a bridge to further understanding how creative ways of knowing and bodily ways of knowing can intertwine. These bodily and creative ways of learning underpin the various aspects of the thesis.

The aspects of listening and silence as explored within this context in the chapter, 'Notes on Sound', also highlights the experience of exploring the body's experience symbolically, as a direct response to simplistic, imposed, notions that the body is simply portraying something I did not want to hear. These observations demonstrate that there are much more complex, oblique and cyclical ways of learning through the body and that simplistic notions of causality are not valid to impose upon those with illness or disability.

METHODOLOGIES, THEMES AND MULTIPLE WAYS OF KNOWING

This thesis has woven themes of creativity, the body, place and chronic illness through various perspectives of learning and transformation. I have explored, through mixed methodologies, some of the ways in which I have learned through the course of time of having been managing chronic illness, and have noted some of the ways through which learning in chronic illness is also influenced through, and connected to, socio-cultural and socio-medical contexts.

Research methodologies such as autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner 2000) require the researcher to position themselves within the research, to make the researcher visible within the writing and the research. In my own autoethnographic research I have made myself visible, and also audible through presenting music as a deepened layer through this arts-based, creative research. Writing

as a method (Richardson 1992; 2000; 2005; St Pierre 2002; 2005) also allows space for the researcher to become visible and to explore creatively the areas of research.

Autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner 2000), using writing as a method (Richardson 2005) such as through nomadic writing practices (St. Pierre 2005), and arts-based (Barone & Eisner 1997; 2006; McNiff 1998), creative-expressive methods for research, place the researcher in the research. Through subjectivity, heightened descriptions of experience may lend themselves to a poetic and creative style of writing through verse, song and creative writing.

In this thesis, arts-based, creative aspects of research blend with writing as a method and autoethnography, presenting some of the research through the use of reflective styles of verse and creative writing, and also through music and song. Bodily focused writing draws on creative-expressive aspects of research also, as well as autoethnography and writing as method, through writing the body in metaphor and reflective poetry, or as descriptive text within analogies and interpretations of the body's text.

I have explored creative-expressive approaches to learning through integrating learning the body, embodied learning, place learning, and in exploring musicality through its process of becoming/composing. Imaginal, artistic and intuitive ways of knowing run through the thesis as ways of drawing upon transformative learning processes. I have explored creative and bodily ways of learning and knowing through a context of place learning and body learning. I have combined these creative and bodily ways of knowing and learning. Through integrating a creative approach and a bodily approach, I have integrated ways of learning in place and learning the body through a creative-expressive angle. I have also addressed some socio-cultural-medical issues around bodily inscriptions and place inscriptions.

Creative-expressive ways of learning are not put forward in this thesis as a cure for chronic illness. I have employed and explored creative-expressive aspects of learning as methods for exploring my own subjective journey of learning through the chronic illness experience and as ways of meaning-making. However, creative-expressive ways of learning and knowing, and bodily ways of learning and knowing, are aspects of learning that may support a patient in their healing/learning journey in multiple ways and on varying levels.

Methods for learning through chronic illness may draw from subjective experience, from technical health information and from social contexts. I have drawn from each of these areas for learning and meaning-making. Although I have utilised creative-expressive aspects for learning in this research and in my own life history, I already had an established focus on creative work prior to having to manage a chronic illness. With this in mind, it is not suggested that creative expression, somatic learning or place pedagogy focuses are cures for chronic illness, or that all people managing chronic illness will find an interest in such modalities of learning, expression and experience. Nevertheless, these creative aspects of learning and exploration of learning benefitted my personal experience in learning and research, and helped to establish and support some transformative learning focus that continues to be of value to me. They are empowering, supportive learning tools that may be useful to those working through chronic illness experiences, and support transformative learning through the contexts of subjective experience, collective experience and social action. There is space for further research into the ways through which such methods may be utilised regarding chronic illness and learning.

Creative, artistic, imaginal, and bodily ways of knowing and learning have a place in the management of chronic illness for meaning-making and for creating a deeper understanding of the subjective body's knowing. These methods and tools for learning are useful for those without chronic illness too, yet may be especially valuable for those managing chronic and debilitating illness, for supporting new or alternative ways of learning for coping and managing during their subjective illness/wellness journey and for empowerment.

Combining creative and bodily ways of knowing and learning has a place for those managing chronic and debilitating illness, both as methods for accessing greater creativity and as methods for learning the body. They are not cures, but they are ways through which people may learn stronger resilience and gain understanding of their experience, as well as potentially heightening awareness of their own creative strengths, abilities and insights. They are supportive, transformative learning tools, which can aid personal exploration and discovery, both creatively and bodily.

Creative, bodily and imaginal ways of knowing and learning also have a place in the development of new place pedagogies. Artistic, creative ways of exploring and representing place and place stories, listening to the land and listening to the stories of others, writing the landscape and writing the body in the landscape, all draw from a poetic and creative representation of place and

learning. They also have the potential to support a move toward reinhabitation in stories of place and belonging. In this, they also support a move toward creative praxis through an emancipatory perspective of transformative learning.

I have explored transformative learning in relation to chronic illness through perspectives of personal transformative learning and social transformative learning. I have utilised creative and bodily ways of exploring some of these aspects of learning. I have presented artistic ways of knowing, have presented some artistic and creative expression of experience as learning, and I have demonstrated some of the value of the arts as valid transformative learning tools. These tools extend to both perspective transformative learning and social transformative learning in several contexts. The notion of chronic illness as a catalyst for transformative learning is also demonstrated, through discussing and exploring some of the practical, social and creative processes of learning that may be linked to chronic illness. I have shown chronic illness experience to hold viable connections to transformative learning. Further research into the ways that people learn through chronic illness, through both personal and social perspectives, may bring to light other ways in which alternative and multiple ways of knowing can support transformative learning in such contexts.

Linking bodily and creative ways of knowing for learning and meaning-making has a role to play in management on some levels regarding chronic illness experience. Creative processes of learning may offer a way for individuals and groups to better understand illness/wellness experience through using metaphorical ways of writing the body and learning the body. There is an opening for bodily and creative focuses of learning in relation to place pedagogy for personal transformative learning and for socially transformative learning. The writing and telling of stories of belonging and transience experienced within natural and city landscapes has a place in social transformative learning, implemented through actions which support the nurturing of a culture of respect and belonging. Creative-expressive aspects of learning through music and song have a direct capacity to enhance transformative learning processes. As artistic ways of knowing and learning utilised for the processing, understanding and storying of experience, they are applicable to learning on a personal transformative level and at a socially transformative level.

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