Observing and Theorising the Learning of Songwriting through Autoethnography

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Abstract

This thesis contributes to the growing body of work on popular music songwriting pedagogy by developing a theory of songwriting praxis, from the position of practitioner-as-researcher.

The literature review draws primarily from scholarly material on creativity, and on popular music, which are discussed from within their respective domains to explore the scope of our current understanding of songwriting. I apply these works through the following thematic lenses:

- Authorship

- Imagined Audience

- Style

- Valuing in Songwriting

The methodology proposes a Merleau-Pontian phenomenological ontology of songwriting as a lived experience. This process is then developed through autoethnographic and reflective practice applied across a data collection, observation, and interview participant selection.

The five core chapters discuss the observation and theorisation, through the four lenses outlined above. In 'Observations,' autoethnographic reflections are presented as a naturally occurring narrative of developing a songwriting style. In the proceeding four chapters, these observations are then theorised in the context of the literature and triangulated with interviews from other songwriting practitioners. The theorising chapters are as follows: 'Models of Authorship in Songwriting', in which a model is constructed to depict the flow of authorship; 'Identifying the Imagined Audience', which describes how songs are written with an audience in mind using the songwriter's 'structuring knowledge' – knowledge acquired from immersion in the domain, elsewhere referred to as Domain Acquired Knowledge; 'Style and Voice', balances the previous structuring knowledge with the songwriter's creative agency; lastly, 'Valuing in Songwriting' focuses on how the previous concepts are applied in the context of the songwriter's intentions. In the conclusion, the theories are contextualised within a systems model.

The outcome is a critical lens through which to observe and theorise how songwriting is learned rather than an epistemology of how to write songs. It is hoped that this approach will contribute to the pedagogy of songwriting.

Dedications and Acknowledgements

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my grandfather, Norman Whiting, who was my role model in how to be a wise, considerate, and loving human being. His unwavering support has guided me throughout my life, and I hope I can carry this forward.

I am forever grateful for the love and support of my wife, Dr Caroline McCardle, who has been the sympathetic shoulder and kick up the rear I needed to get me through. My parents, Jonathan and Julie Whiting, have been of moral and financial support, patiently listening while I tried to explain what I was doing all these years.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Reflection both during and after the songwriting process is crucial to the cyclic nature of creativity. Therefore, time and space are needed for this reflection on the part of the learner. (Gooderson and Henley, 2016, p. 268).

To develop a pedagogy of songwriting requires an understanding and application of both teaching and learning. Other studies have investigated teaching songwriting (Gooderson and Henley, 2016; Scott, 2016; West, 2016), the practice of professional songwriters (Toynbee, 2000; Bennett, 2014a; McIntyre *et al.*, 2016), and how popular music students learn musicianship (Green, 2002). This research contributes to these works with a method that draws insight into the practitioner-learner's perspective of learning to develop songwriting skills. I will demonstrate my method by utilising reflective practice as a tool to support learning songwriting. My aim is twofold: firstly, to devise a methodology which can be applied by songwriting students and teachers, both formally and informally, that supports their ability to assess, describe and rationalise their practice. Secondly, the method produces new channels of developing personal knowledge and praxis of songwriting from and for the practitioners themselves. My research has been conducted as an autoethnographic investigation into how learning is constructed and perceived in popular music songwriting by the learner-practitioner. As the autoethnographer, my intention was to make the connections between my pedagogical position and my own creative practice by observing the applied knowledge and developing approaches in songwriting. As the practitioner being observed, my aim was to develop praxical knowledge of popular music songwriting skills in a studio composition environment. As such this research has three lenses of investigation and three corresponding positions of investigation: The Songwriting Practice – Practitioner, The Autoethnographic Method – Autoethnographer, and the Pedagogical Evaluations – Researcher (as illustrated below figure 1).

| The Songwriting Practice. | The Autoethnographic Method of observing and theorising the songwriting practice | A Pedagogical Review of the theories and application of the Autoethnographic Method |
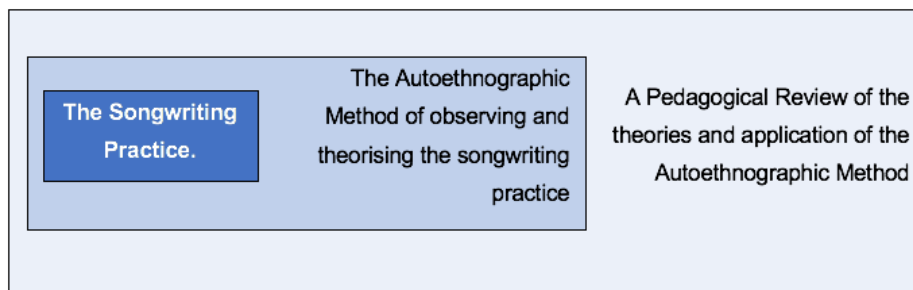
Figure 1 Lenses of Investigation

The structure of my autoethnographic method is aligned with the nature of creative practice and learning. An experience is observed through the practice of creating, introspectively

reflected on, explored with critical reflection, and from the critical reflections the practice is developed through reflexive plans and actions. As the creative practitioner is constantly seeking to create something 'new, surprising and valuable' (Boden, 2003) they are in a constant state of learning or relearning their own practice.[1] My autoethnographic method is also representative of the overall structures of the research method and the thesis. In the framework below (figure 2), my autoethnographic method is aligned with David Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1984) to facilitate the pedagogical agenda of this research. The key aspect of overlap between creative practice and pedagogy is the developing and refining knowledge and praxis and is the core interest of this research. It is intended that future research will expand on this to incorporate the teaching aspects of pedagogy.

 The practice was observed through a phenomenological mode of perception (based on works of Merleau-Ponty (1945; 1963; 1969)) which concentrated on the lived experience of songwriting. The observations were captured through reflective accounts as reflective practice is a professional mode of learning (cf. Boyd and Fales, 1983; Schön, 1995; Finlay, 2008; Johns, 2009) which has developed from phenomenological ontologies thereby supporting the development of the songwriting practice and generating data for this research. The data from the reflective accounts (videos, journals extracts and stimulated recall writings) was processed using a Grounded Theory Approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Charmaz, 2005) to identify the themes of the observations. This grounded theory approach was applied using nVivo to process the qualitative data and was processed alongside the practice and observations. This concurrent approach to data generation and processing guided the reflective practice until the data had become saturated to indicate the themes of these observations. The resultant themes from the ground theory analysis are then analysed using a structural analysis to identify incidents of agency and structure. While the application of structural analysis is based on Bourdieu's approach to analysing practice, and whose work on habitus features heavily in the analysis of this research, I have not taken the same approach as Bourdieu in breaking with phenomenology (Harker *et al.*, 1990, pp. 6-7).. As this research is based on a pedagogical agenda, my intention is to keep my position as a researcher as close as possible to my position as a practitioner, and so I have kept with the phenomenological ontology and applied my structural analysis to be more in keeping with the direction Merleau-Ponty's latter works (cf. Merleau-Ponty, 1969).

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[1] While this is true and that the method proposed here would have many benefits to practitioners at all levels, the outcomes of this application were regarding a learner-practitioner in developing certain aspects of practice which may already be firmly established in a professional practitioner.

Regarding figure 2, Learning through Structured Practice, Reflective Practice (data) is the introspective aspect of the reflective practice cycle as described by Rebecca Finlay which concentrates on descriptions and feelings. In Finlay's model of reflective practice, introspection is followed by critical reflection and reflexivity. Critical reflection is when other theories and perspectives are used for a comparative analysis of the introspective reflections. In my research these are the works discussed in my literature review and the ethnographic data of other songwriters interviewed. Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi's (1999; 2002; 2013) Systems Model of Creativity is a key theory in the critical reflections to identify the structures and agents involved in creativity. This systems model demonstrates the field of forces in which structure and agency are in play. In Csikszentmihalyi's model there are three components, the individual, the field and the domain, which interact with one another. This research is primarily concerned with the perspective and interactions of the individual and how the field and domain inform the structure and agency afforded to the individual. Ethnographic interviews (first and second source songwriter interviews) were used to corroborate and/or adapt the critical reflections toward my concluding theories: Authorship, Imagined Audience, Style and Voice, and Valuing in Songwriting. These theories were then used to inform the reflexive actions in the songwriting practice and the observations.
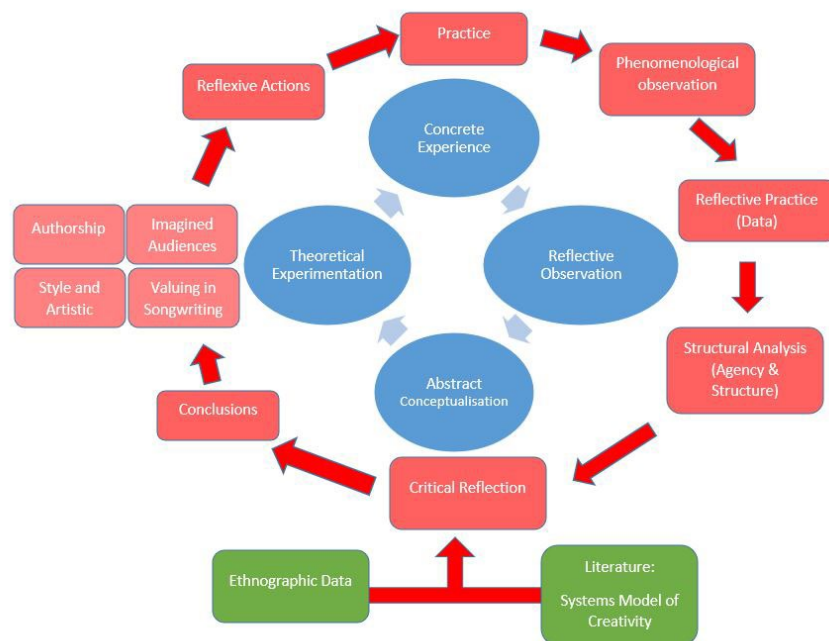
Figure 2 Learning through Structured Practice

Recognising that the role and actions of the songwriter have been previously inaccessible, distanced or neglected, my intentions as a researcher are to demonstrate a method that will contribute to filling the gap of the songwriter's voice and experience within the songwriting

pedagogy. As a relatively new position of inquiry, there is still a lot to be discovered and discussed about popular music songwriting from the position of its creators – the songwriters, producers, engineers, and performers – and so this research has focused on the development of songwriting habitus as perceived within the wider context of a systems model. I have applied Csikszentmihalyi's Systems Model of Creativity as used by other researchers in popular music and songwriting, as will be discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 2). While focusing on the phenomenon of *songwriting,* an effort has been made to avoid analysis and evaluation of the song, but it is observed that there was a trajectory of development in the observed songwriting, as evidenced by the increasing success of the resulting songs.[2] The outcomes of the three previously identified lenses – practitioner, autoethnographer and researcher – feed off and into one another. The practitioner aims and outcomes were in the stylistic development of the songwriting practice, which was enhanced by the autoethnography and pedagogy – these aims and outcomes of the practitioner are not the aims and outcomes of this thesis but are the objects of study for the autoethnography. Based on the practitioner's focus toward stylistic development, the autoethnographic findings of the observed practice are: of a model of authorship in popular music songwriting; the application of an imagined audience as structuring elements that guide the commercial trajectories of songwriting; the development of style and voice as forms of agency; and the criterion of appropriateness and effectiveness through which songs are valued during and after songwriting (respectively). The reflective autoethnographic findings can be evaluated through a pedagogical lens to generate new forms of knowledge and channels of investigation for practitioners and researchers, which were previously inaccessible, distanced or neglected.

The method for applying reflective practice to songwriting was a form of artistic research as 'research *in* the arts' (Borgdorff, 2010, p. 46) as, while it is a study *of* songwriting as a practice – as interpretive research in the traditions of social sciences and humanities – it also contributes new knowledge *to* that practice – as technical research and material knowledge. However, it is the application of the creative practice as a 'methodological vehicle' that the research unfolds (Borgdorff, 2010) that supports the autoethnographic lens of this research: the revealing and refining of questions and methods, intertwined, contribute to academic, technical and praxical knowledge. As is so often the approach in artistic research (Barrett and Bolt, 2007; Smith and Dean, 2009; Biggs and Karlsson, 2012; Nelson, 2013), this research draws from mixed methods (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Plowright, 2011) to construct its

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[2] This success is determined in the standard commercial manner, regarding the increase in streams – from >1000 to <3000 – and inclusion in radio playlists - including BBC Radio Newcastle – and curated Spotify playlists – including Your Own Music.

own method seeking to find the questions and answers, as an 'experimental systems… open to allow these indistinct things to come into view; enough space must be present to produce what we do not yet know.' (Borgdorff, 2012, in Draper, 2013). While this could be considered a musicological contribution, it should be noted that the artistic research, as incorporating practice, exceeds this disciplinary definition. Musicology is, at its core, the study of music as an object and while there are studies of music practices within musicology, they remain closely associated with the musical objects which includes the language and techniques developed for the study of musical objects. My repositioning of observing songwriting practice as artistic research follows Pete Astor and Keith Negus' beliefs that

> songwriting practice should be more central to the study of popular music and that understandings of songs are far more determined by the process of songwriting than is allowed for by musicology and sociological approaches to reception. (2015, p. 228)

1.1 Background

Prior to undertaking my PhD studies in 2015, I had been lecturing in songwriting and popular music at Newcastle College for four years.[3] During this time, I had led modules in songwriting, music production, contextual studies, music theory, music technology, and studio practice; undertaken my MMus in Songwriting at Bath Spa University (2012-14); researched and designed a foundation degree (FdA) in Songwriting; delivered papers on songwriting and teaching songwriting at IASPM and HEA conferences; and performed original material at various venues across the North East of England, including the Sage Gateshead. Although I would consider my teaching to have been successful – as indicated by student feedback and their on-going professional work and academic ascension – I knew there was more that I could learn to further my teaching. My teaching was driven by the facilitating of safe and engaging creative spaces for students to explore and develop their songwriting abilities and unique styles, and while I applied as much theoretical context as was available to me, this was mostly through non-academic 'how to' texts (such texts are identified below). However, from my experience, I felt that students who entered Higher Education (HE) with an established mode of practice often struggled to grasp the theoretical aspects that were crucial to academic success – and what I believe is crucial to a lifelong success as an expert learner – as indicated by Jo Collinson Scott (2016) who states that

> students have been shown to lack a model of how to assess creativity or to describe and rationalize it (Bennett, 2015; Toynbee, 2000; McIntyre, 2008). This is partly a product of the way in which songwriters tend to learn their craft: in an informal manner and therefore via tacit means (Green, 2002). (p. 198)

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[3] Newcastle College is a vocational education college delivering programmes from levels 1 to 6, with Higher Education programmes being validated by appropriate awarding bodies (circa 2011-15).

However, Matt Gooderson and Jennie Henley (2016) demonstrate the tensions between songwriting in HE and professional practice, concluding that some of the core skills of a professional songwriter are not indicative of undergraduate curricula. Despite these shortcomings of HE, many songwriters achieve success without a master's level qualification and many without any formal training. Such concerns of alignment between professional practice of songwriting and pedagogical issues in HE represents some of the areas that previously held back my teaching at Newcastle College. I propose that what is required is further understanding of 'what songwriting is' and 'how it is *currently* being learned by the student' before we address the latter issues of 'how do we teach it to them'?

1.2   The field of songwriting in popular musicology

Currently, the literature on songwriting practice[4] is a small but growing field. Many other writers have commented on the 'partial attention' (Long and Barber, 2015, p. 556), 'scant' (de Laat, 2015, p. 226) and 'limited' research (Gooderson and Henley, 2016), being 'largely tacit' (Scott, 2016, p. 191) 'concerned with the endpoint [song]' (Long and Barber, 2017, p. 558) and similar criticisms of the focus on 'product' over 'process' in academic research (Bennett, 2014a). These writers – and others including Negus and Astor (2015); Mark Finch (2016); Phillip McIntyre *et al.* (2016); Andy West (2016); Nadav Appel (2017); Rob Bugess and Toulson (2017); Mark Marrington (2017); Mark Toulson and Burgess (2017); Justin Williams and Williams (2017) – are contributing to this growing area of academic research in songwriting musicology, mostly, through ethnographic methodologies. Outside of the academic sphere,[5] other writers are contributing to the technical knowledge of songwriting through, what Paul Long and Simon Barber (2015) refer to as, 'how to' books (Pattison, 1991a; 1991b; Rooksby, 2006; Stolpe, 2007; Blume, 2008; 2009; Findeisen, 2015). Being freed of the rigour of academia, these writers draw mostly from their own experience and professional knowledge through which they assert their validity. These non-academic texts were very useful to demonstrate and explain the tried and tested methods and theories of practitioners in the classroom. However, these would fall short of aligning their theories and practices to larger models, systems, or theories, which often made them vulnerable to becoming outdated or lacking critical insight into the nature of their practice. An essential aspect of the reflective practice is critical reflection (Finlay, 2003; 2008), which requires theories and other practices from which to compare and draw conclusions, without which the reflections will be restricted to introspection (this is discussed in depth in the Methodology).

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[4] Excluding literature of songwriting in music therapy. This exclusion will be discussed below.
[5] Where works are subject to scrutiny such as peer review.

Joe Bennett's (2014a) work combines the personal experience (auto-) with the rigour of academic methodologies (ethnography, in this instance) to inform and ground his understanding of songwriting, which gives it a robustness and generalisability that non-academic works fail to achieve being 'typically uncritical and lack[ing] the kind of analytical overview that might establish themes and commonalities' (Long and Barber, 2015, p. 144). As noted by Bennett, research into creative practices was often restricted by the reluctance of practitioners to engage with researchers (2014a, p. 34). This frustration is shared by other researchers of creativity and creative practice, including John Sloboda (1985), and Csikszentmihalyi (2014b), and somewhat overcome, with limitations, by Tasos Zembylas and Martin Niederauer (2018), and Thoumas Auvinen (2017), who utilise previous relationships to gain insight into the mind of the composer, while others have used their students as research participants (Green, 2002; West, 2012; Gooderson and Henley, 2016). Being unable to either observe or actively interact with creative practitioners, these works were positioned with a distance between the researcher and the practice, which resulted in my feeling, as a practitioner, that the theories presented were not for me. As a practitioner in music, I have always been keen to engage in research that has applications to my practice, and while I will admit to my own naivety, this subject-distanced research did not resonate with my experience. However, Bennett's autoethnographic approach spoke to me as research that shared my position, as a practitioner and researcher, and in a sense granted me permission to undertake this research in a similar vein and style. Being of the same field and similar methodology, Bennett's work features heavily in my research as an approach which I have chosen to follow.

Long and Barbour highlight this historical barrier to the knowledge in making cultural artefacts such as songs

> as with many areas of the cultural industries… details about what these workers do and how they do it are often obscured, shrouded in mystery, or at the very least bound up in mythology that precludes detailed investigation. (2015, p. 144)

While the non-academic works *explain* the various aspects and facets of songwriting, academic research seeks to demystify the creative practice by tackling the romantic mythologies (Boden, 2003) that serve to elevate the value of the creative practitioners as a naturally 'talented genius' (Schön, 1995; Scott, 2016). It is a core aim of this research to further contribute to the demystifying (Schön, 1995) of the songwriting practice and to empower students of songwriting with a method to enhance learning, and applicable theories and lenses of investigation for teachers and researchers.

As a practitioner and autoethnographer, I was motivated by myriad questions such as 'How do songwriters develop a commercial practice?', 'How is style learned in songwriting?', 'What forms of knowledge are used in songwriting?' 'How are gut-reactions or instincts learned for songwriting?' Much of what these questions gravitate around are the intuitions of songwriters in the creative moment; what romantic mythology refers to as the flash of genius or 'sudden revelatory vision' (Scott, 2016). If the artist is drawing her knowledge and inspiration from the domain of previously accepted ideas, which impose on her work the constraints/expectations that it must meet for her work to enter the domain, then many of the large-scale decisions are somewhat pre-determined (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013; McIntyre *et al.*, 2016). In the domain of chart music these constraints can include a diatonic key, 4/4 time signature, romantically themed lyrics, a verse-chorus form and typically 2-4 minutes in duration (Bennett, 2014a). However, the work must also be 'new, surprising, and valuable' (Boden, 2003) and therefore the process is neither completely pre-determined or totally free. And so, it is in *how* she presents these pre-determined components in her *style* that recreates these components anew. Although less defined than Bennett's (2014a) constraints or Csikszentmihalyi's (2013) domain, Margret Boden (2003) refers to her notion of conceptual spaces as 'structured styles of thought' (p. 4) from which the artist may: combine two previously unrelated ideas; explore the range of possibilities within a given constraint; or transform these constraints. Therefore, it is not in the pre-determined content that we find the voice of the artist but in the style in which it is presented. As Christopher Watkin states 'The response elicited is not one of repeating a truth but of individually performing a style.' (2015, p. 41) As such, the learning of developing style and voice is an aspect that can present new knowledge and understanding of the songwriting practice and has therefore been a focus of this autoethnographic method demonstrated in this research.

Paul Draper (2013) use the analogy of the blind monks describing an elephant by feeling isolated parts of the elephant, highlighting the multifaceted nature of the investigation and the confusion that can follow. In the case of songwriting, we have the findings of music analysis, sociology, psychology and their various sub-disciplines contributing to the larger question 'why and how does who say what to whom and with what effect? (Tagg, 1982, p. 40); or more succinctly 'What is *that music* doing?' (Draper, 2013). Phillip Tagg (1982) elaborates on his meta-question to indicate how this is answered through interdisciplinary cooperation to address the various aspects of this question. Previously, it has been suggested that 'musicology produces music for people who want to compose or play it, sociology produces music for people who consume or listen to it' (Frith, 1996, p. 267) due to the differing musical experiences. However, this falls into the trap of the previously discussed, of product over process. How much can we learn about *songwriting* from a *song*?

Which, in turn, raises the epistemological question 'how can we know the mind of the composer?' (Bennett, 2018, p. 2). As this research is concerned with pedagogical song*writing*, the processual activity undertaken by a song*writer*, the readings and critical listening of the song are all by-product analysis of the product song, none of which are focused on the learning-to-write-the-song. Seeking to understand the creative moment of songwriting, to know the mind of the composer, this can be accessed by being the composer in question and so in pedagogy we can empower the student to recognise their own learning. This is supported by my application of a phenomenological ontology to guide my approach in observing my practice.

Some of the previously mentioned research into songwriting has focused on the politics and power dynamics of songwriting (Negus, 2011; de Laat, 2015; Finch, 2016) perhaps due to the easier access to data in collaborative songwriting teams where ideas and decisions need to be discussed out loud. There is little doubt that popular music songwriting is a collaborative practice (de Laat, 2015; Auvinen, 2017), and this is best expressed by Bennett (2010) when demonstrating that popular music is a commercially market-driven practice and that the standardised practice of commercial songwriters is to collaborate. However, returning to the aim of this research, to further the development of a songwriting pedagogy by a *deeper* understanding of how one experiences and perceives learning to write songs, requires that one should have a personal experience with the creative moment(s) when the song is created. Scott (2016) suggests that

> When it comes to examining creativity in the context of teaching, learning and assessment, the development of systems theories of creativity has led some researchers (e.g. Bindeman, 1998) to suggest that phenomenology is the most appropriate method for its study, because its focus is on lived and shared experience - such as between artists, their audiences and critical structures - rather than on examination of objects (i.e. 'objective' examination of product). (p. 191)

As the practitioner, I sought to develop and refine my personal approach to songwriting, while as an autoethnographer, I sought to understand my personal approach in a manner that I could refine my learning and share such a method as an educator. This personal approach to songwriting is what I will be referring to as the songwriting habitus as adapted from Pierre Bourdieu (1993) by Phillip McIntyre *et al.* (2016) as the 'feel for the game' of songwriting, which informs the creative decisions. It is in this moment of creativity that the songwriter seeks originality by pushing at the boundaries of 'one's own habitual horizons of possibility' (Long and Barber, 2017, p. 567), not the boundaries of the entire songwriting discipline, but of the songwriter's 'sample' of domain knowledge (Simonton, 2010). As such, I take the 'creative moment' as the centre and look out from here to investigate the peripherals of agency and structure that inform the songwriting process. To gain the greatest

intimacy with the creative moment, I have followed the example of Bennett as an autoethnography allowing me to use my lived experience through reflective practice and the suggestion of Scott (2016) in using a phenomenological ontology – these are discussed further below. Unlike Bennett, the scope of the research is focused on the creative moment while recognising and referencing the wider context of agency and structure within the systems model of creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014a).

Being based on my songwriting practice, this research is also situated at a developmental point of my practice. At the start, I felt my practice was entering a crossroads or a significant milestone, moving towards a more commercially mainstream orientated practice in a much more central stream of popular music. Undertaking my MMus studies, my songwriting practice was comfortable, banal, and routinized (Long and Barber, 2017, p. 569) in which 'embodied knowledge may challenge explication… as academic research' (Draper, 2013). The MMus programme instigated a change in my practice, and by the time I was ready to start my PhD studies (one year later), this change became the foci of this research. The mode of practice undertaken in this research places me as a 'conscious-incompetent' (Benner, 2001) where I am aware of what I need to learn, facilitating my ability as a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1991) to observe my experiences of learning. This re-orientates my practice as something 'foreign' to me and allows a greater degree of space for the things I did not know (Draper, 2013). Maintaining a sense of open-mindedness to learn supports my approach as an educator to be student centric.

As a practitioner and autoethnographer, I feel it should be a maxim of songwriters and songwriting researchers, that there are as many ways to write a song as there are songs. A position that is shared by Dean Keith Simonton when he states that 'it is critical to recognize that there is no such thing as a single 'creative process' (2010, p. 169). Therefore, it is not the intention of my autoethnographic method to conform to positivistic standards of verisimilitude through replicability but to find typicality through the generalisable theories of practice. Draper identifies four commonalities of artistic research, as undertaken by record producers:[6]

> i) a quest for the development of musical self; ii) fit for purpose critical listening schema; iii) pathways which reflexively expose creative interactions between musician and technologies, and iv) the adaption of mixed methods reminiscent of the social sciences and humanities. (2013)

My autoethnographic method demonstrated here draws attention to point iii and the significance of critical reflection and reflexivity to both research and practice. Scott (2016)

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[6] The term producer will shortly be addressed for its inclusion in this research.

highlights the need for reflecting on songwriting as 'crucial' to a student's learning, while Gooderson and Henley (2016) reveal the high-level critical reflection of professional songwriters, and Long and Barber (2017) identify the reflexive understandings that songwriters have of their practice. To this end, my autoethnographic method engages with reflective practice of the researcher and the practitioner in a natural and reciprocatory manner and as such is applicable to both teaching and learning.

1.3   Themes

The terms song, songwriter and songwriting present several issues that require addressing to make the focus and scope of this research clear. These terms are often applied as product-based definitions towards the song, as 'lyrics and music' (cf. McIntyre, 2001; West, 2016). As such, songwriters are those who write words and music, and songwriting is the activity of writing these words and music. McIntyre (2001) demonstrates the historical origins of this definition as drawn from notated music but that contemporary practices have outgrown this definition requiring the inclusion of 'form and structure, rhythm, harmony, arrangement, performance and production' (p. 110). These definitions are still object orientated, constructed definitions based on the components of the song. This research adopts a practice-based definition where being song-orientated is the requirement to be songwriting as a songwriter. This is similar to Negus and Astor (2015)

> The point here is that the music… was not created first as instrumentals per se, but as lyric-less songs, structured architecturally with an awareness of the will to have words added and with some sense of the style and substance of those words. (p. 232)

By this definition, all activities that contribute towards the song – words and/or music – are considered to be songwriting, even when those songs are not followed through or are repurposed for other means.

While Allan Moore (2012) offers a clear means of separating the song from the track, the practice observed here has been predominantly studio-based composition through Digital Audio Workstations (DAW) whereby the song is performed and captured as part of the songwriting process. This mode of songwriting is common in contemporary popular music-making practices but could also be referred to as production. Long and Barber (2017) state that 'a song is not reducible to a recording, although many songs are indeed formulated in the studio as part of that process.' (p. 557). In considering the term 'production', Auvinen (2017) suggests this to cover 'the overall "making of the record"' which consists of songwriting, arranging, performing, engineering, and production, and later he includes the term 'tracker' too as 'the guy tapping at the computer', all of which would include my practice. For example, while focusing on aspects that are typically referred to as song – for

instance, lyrics, melody, and harmony – the practice can also be concurrently performance aspects - such as reverb or delay - and in these circumstances, both become interdependent and reactive. As a result, the interchanging reference to song and track is a common theme in my practice.

These blurred boundaries of popular music-making, while not being entirely new, have been progressed and complicated by the affordance of music technology – DAWs, home studio technology and the Internet – as demonstrated by Bennett (2018) as well as the outsourcing of music production on a freelance basis (Auvinen, 2017). Auvinen also points out that

> producers of the younger generations nevertheless do not have to change their working habits, as they have not had the chance to develop these in the first place. Producers in the making are confronted with the prevailing system directly. (2017, NA)

While Kim de Laat's (2015) position seems to assume that the role of the producer is now encroaching into that of the songwriter, Auvinen (2017) suggests that the 'process of songwriting and music production constantly intertwine and cannot be separated from one another'. Therefore I would argue that the 'new school' (de Laat, 2015, p. 233) writer/producer hybrid is comprised of a mixture of songwriters and producers, each utilising the technology to their own ends.

This paper is not a study of the music industry, but it is worthy of mentioning at this point that at the time of writing the music industry is deemed to be in a state of flux and that many of the terms applied in this paper 'have not been strongly conceptualised' (Auvinen, 2017).

The commercially-orientated aspirations of the songwriting practice were a significant aspect in the motivations behind the creative decision making, and as such require some consideration in how these aspiration influence or bias this research. At the start of this research, this was an intrinsic decision to move my practice in this direction based on both my musical taste and career trajectory. However, the commercial intent focuses the scope of my autoethnographic method to exclude cathartic and therapeutic songwriting whose goals and objectives in songwriting are very different. As such, what remains is an extremely broad remit of commercial that includes any songwriting that is intended to be heard by someone else other than the songwriter. While this would certainly include songs that are written with the intention of a monetary transaction, it also includes songs that could be used as a gift, such as a bespoke birthday song, or to be performed in exchange for praise or a non-monetary transaction (such as an email address, which is often a first step in a marketing funnel towards a monetary transaction). This also corresponds to the nature of popular music as a market-driven practice (Bennett, 2010) and ensuring that, whether successful or

not, the practice is within Csikszentmihalyi's (2014b) Systems Model of Creativity. This trajectory is not an absolute polarising of art and commodity, but as an occupying of two worlds, art-making and commerce satisfying (Long and Barber, 2017), and indicates the observed creative moment is within the Systems Model of Creativity, even if it does not engage through the entire cycle. The value of the observations in my autoethnographic method, are not the commercial or creative values, but the pedagogical value of how the practice and how praxical knowledge are learned in and through the creative moment.

1.4 Structure and content of this thesis

This thesis is comprised of the following chapters: 2. Literature Review, 3. Methodology, 4. Autoethnographic Observations, 5. Models of Authorship in Songwriting, 6. Identifying the Imagined Audience, 7. Style and Voice, 8. Valuing in Songwriting, 9. Conclusion and 10. Pedagogical Evaluation.

The literature review indicates the theories and concepts that have been accepted into the discourse on creativity and popular music songwriting. The inclusion of discourses on authorship from post-structuralism is used to indicate the way my theories of popular music songwriting have been addressed. This link was previously indicated by Toynbee (2000) and was an effective means of developing his theories of popular music-making and how such a practice operates as a market-driven practice.

Observations describes what was observed and could be considered as a 'findings' chapter. The chapters – Models of Authorship, Identifying the Imagined Audience, Style and Voice, and Valuing in Songwriting – theorise on their titular themes drawing from the observations, and are therefore discussed through the practitioner and autoethnographic lenses, with pedagogical considerations evaluating each theme incorporated into the discussions.

Observations is presented in four subheadings that reflect the journey as experienced in practice – Developing the Voice, Amalgamating the Voices, The Audience, and Putting it all together. These themes are derived from a first-order analysis of the data collected and, while not strictly representative of the various overlapping projects, it does describe the overall journey as reflected on.

Models of Authorship in Songwriting

Transmitter: Writer Songwriter	Constructed Transmitter: Artistic Voice		Conceived Transmitter: Author Authorial-Voice	Work: Text Song/Track	Conceived Receiver: The Imagined Audience		Receiver: Reader Listener

2.

3.

1.

4.

Style and Voice	Valuing in Songwriting	The Imagined Audience

Songwriting Practice

Song

Songwriting Product
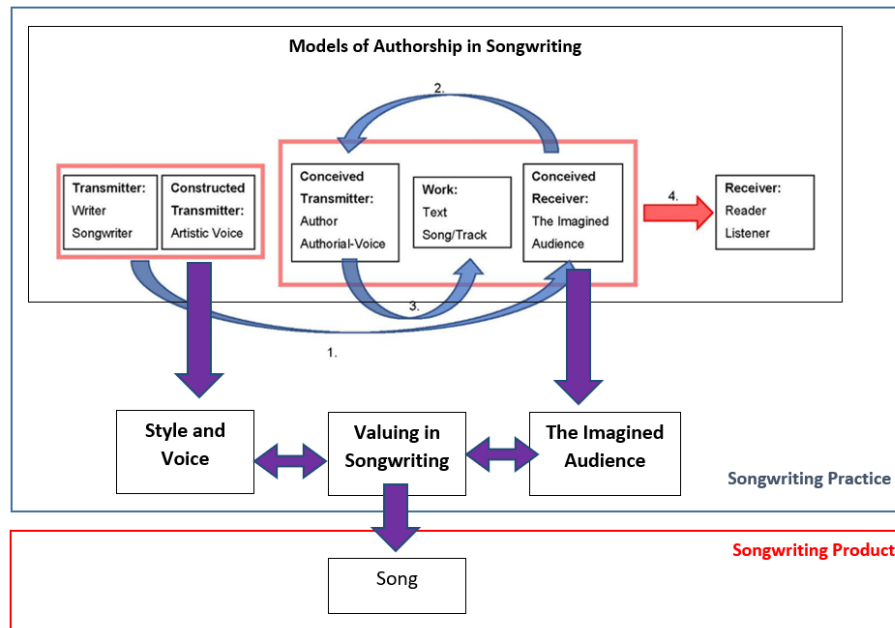
Figure 3 Autoethnography Structure

Figure 3, Autoethnography Structure, illustrates the flow of the themed theories when set against the perception of songwriting as devised through my autoethnographic method. The top layer is my Model of Authorship in Songwriting (which is discussed further in Chapter 5) as this is most closely linked to the established theories, namely those on authorship as discussed in the Literature Review. As such, my Models of Authorship in Songwriting re-establishes the author as the *artistic voice* – both being postulated by the reader/audience – and offers the corresponding theory of a postulated audience, which I refer to as the *imagined audience*. I propose that these postulated perceptions are present in the songwriting practice within the creative moment and are driving forces behind the creative decision making. As such, these are discussed in their relevant chapters: Identifying the Imagined Audience, and Style and Voice. These two considerations of songwriting are not discrete from one another but are interdependent and reflexive. The songwriting practice is an art of balancing between *meeting* and *challenging* the expectations of the audience, the balance of structure and agency. The final theorising chapter, Valuing in Songwriting, draws the two preceding chapters together to theorise on the modes and means in which valuing is performed in songwriting regarding the imagined audience, and style and voice of the song. This is an attempt to capture and appreciate the tacit nature of the whole songwriting process, where creative decisions, regarding the voice and audience, will often be made without explicit cogitation.

The Literature Review is broken down into six subsections, the first three – Creativity, Songwriting, and Models of Authorship – each deal with discrete domains of knowledge that are drawn on in this research. Csikszentmihalyi's (1999; 2002; 2013) Systems Model of Creativity is the fundamental basis for the understanding of creativity and the model in which theories of songwriting practice are contextualised in this research. This model is explored and developed through its application by other songwriting theorists (Bennett, 2014a; McIntyre *et al.*, 2016). Other significant theories of creativity that are used include Margret Boden (2003), Bourdieu (1990; 1993; 2010), Keith Sawyer (2012), and Anne Craft *et al.* (2001).

The literature review on songwriting draws on some of the previously discussed research – namely Bennett (2010; 2012a; 2013; 2014a; 2014b; 2018) and McIntyre (McIntyre, 2008; 2016b) – but with an emphasis on the findings and theories of popular music songwriting. Other works that contribute to this research's epistemology of popular music songwriting include Roman Ingarden (1986), Simon Frith (1987; 1990; 1996; 2012), Antoine Hennion (1989; 1992), Jason Toynbee (2000), David Collins (2005; 2007), Andy West (2016), Justin Williams & Katherine Williams (2016; 2017) and Zembylas and Niederauer (2018).

Section 2.3 reviews literature on authorship outside of songwriting to draw from works that can be considered as active in the creative moment. The only works on songwriting authorship available address the post-facto legal implications of authorship as ownership (Negus, 2011; Finch, 2016), such works are not applicable as this research is focused on the creative moment of songwriting that precedes these discussions. As such, this review utilises theories of authorship from Roland Barthes (1977), Mitchel Foucault (1979), Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946), and Saam Trivedi (2015).

Section 2.4 conceptualises the previous literature focusing on how the concepts of voice and style are identified, along with the commonalities of the theories of the perceptions and modes of development.

Section 2.5 conceptualises the literature into the songwriting practice with a focus on how previous theories have identified various concepts of the imagined audience. Drawing links between commonalities of the theories in how the imagined audience is perceived and addressed in songwriting and compositional practices.

Section 2.6 is based on the theory of how songwriters value the song in utero for which there is scant literature – most likely due to the difficulties in engaging songwriters in closely

observed research and the intuitive nature of the practice. As such, this literature review draws from the few sources that have investigated or consider this concept of valuing. As before, commonalities from these works are drawn together to clarify the position and terminology that I have chosen to apply.

1.4.2   Methodology

Methodology opens with a phenomenological ontology that the truth of the phenomenon is only achieved through our experiential interactions with that phenomenon (Merleau-Ponty, 1945): the phenomenon in this instance is songwriting. That both I and the world exist and are connected through my body as a conduit of experience and perception mean that my ability to connect, and therefore understand the world is both facilitated and limited by my body. This leads to the use of autoethnography as the method through which to engage with the phenomenon of learning songwriting, as this incorporates both my own experience and perceptions, with an unrivalled intimacy with a creative moment. Much of the data that is collected and used in this research is formed from reflective practice. The reflective practice of this research contributes to both the creative practice and the research practice as critical and reflexive, as a symbiotic relationship and forms the core of my autoethnographic method. The theories produced from this research are triangulated by interviews with a selection of songwriters – who represent the various demographics and practices of songwriting from early career to professional – and Higher Education teachers of songwriting to validate the concepts as being typically present across their various approaches and beliefs of songwriting and songwriting pedagogy.

1.4.3   Observation

The autoethnographic findings of this research are delivered in progressive stages of Developing the Voice, Amalgamating the Voices, The Audience, and Putting It All Together. These stages are derived from the grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Charmaz, 2005) where the data collected was thematised until saturated during the fieldwork, and is presented here in what I consider to be the natural narrative order. Links are drawn from the various stages to the reviewed literature to support how such observations were made and to signpost the forthcoming application to the theories of this research as part of the songwriter's learning inventory.

1.4.4   Theories

Models of Authorship in Songwriting demonstrates how the previous models of authorship
have applicability in developing a commercially-orientated songwriting practice, such as the
distancing of the *authorial-voice* from that of the writer/songwriter, and the converging of
texts and voices into a singular authorial-voice as something greater than the writer and sum
of these parts. Uniquely, this chapter offers a new extension to the concept of a collaborator
introducing the *pseudo* and *hypothetical collaborators* as modes of collaboration through
mindsets that contribute to the aforementioned distancing of the songwriter from the
authorial-voice. The model that is presented for Authorship in Songwriting builds on the
theories of Barthes (1977) and Foucault (1979), and develops an additional aspect in how
the postulated author is constructed which facilitates the preceding theory of the imagined
audience.

Identifying the Imagined Audience applies Trivedi's (2015) 'competent yet fallible audience'
and Hennion's (1989) description of the production-consumption process to this research's
observations to identify what I term the imagined audience. The imagined audience is a
conceptual target of the commercially-orientated songwriter built on the knowledge of the
domain and field as structuring forces and applied in the creative moment prior to the
engagement of an actual audience.

Style and Voice are the forces that brings creative balance to the theory of songwriting as
presented. Where the imagined audience is constructed of the structuring forces, identifying
what the song *must* do to appease the field and domain, the style of the songwriter is the
agency to challenge and frustrate the domain and field with songs that are novel. However,
this stylistic agency is not an open field but is itself a funnel that draws the possibles into a
singular authorial-, artistic- and *brand-voice*.

Valuing in Songwriting pulls the various forms of knowledge, previously discussed as
structuring and agency, together in a criterion of appropriateness wherein the values of
structures and agency are assessed against the values of the intended field and domain.
This creative sub-task is presented as part of the songwriting habitus where the intuitive
ability to generate creative ideas that are 'new, surprising and valuable' (Boden, 2003) is
dependent on the bodies of knowledge that have been previously presented as structures
and agencies.

1.4.5   Conclusion

The structure of this thesis is designed to guide the reader from the established discourse, through the observed practice and into the theories that are drawn from my autoethnographic method. From my observations, I constructed my model of authorship in songwriting within which are the theories of style and voice, the imagined audience and valuing in songwriting. These are triangulated with the experiences and perception of the songwriting interviewees to demonstrate that the theories are relatable and present in a cross-section of the songwriting practice, and to songwriting educators to demonstrate their place and purpose in a songwriting pedagogy. The theoretical findings I am presenting may feel to be an established ontology to some practising songwriters (although certainly not all), the significant contribution I am presenting is my autoethnographic method through which the practice can be observed and theorised as a tool or lens to develop learning and theories of learning.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This literature review is structured in six sections grouped in two groups of three. The first half is made up of reviews of literature on Creativity, Songwriting and Authorship. The second part is made up of thematised reviews of the previous literature regarding the key themes of this thesis Style and Artistic Voice, the Imagined Audience and Valuing in Songwriting. This is to demonstrate how this literature has been aligned to inform the theorisation of the songwriting practice.

2.1   Creativity

As I am concerned with understanding the learning of the creative practice from the pedagogical position, I have restricted the scope of this literature review to the knowledge of the creative practice or that which facilitates the understanding of creativity in practice as demonstrated in the observed learning. Therefore, this literature review covers research on the following topics: established social constructs of creativity; the spectrum of creative acts; modes of creative thinking; forms of creativity; metaphors for articulating creativity and creative thinking; and two dominant models of creativity from psychology, the Systems Model of Creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; 2002; 2013), and sociology, the Field of Cultural production (Bourdieu, 1990; 1993; 2010). A comprehensive literature review on creativity is beyond the scope of this research. This, in part, is due to certain disciplines of research into creativity not being applicable to this thesis, such as psychological studies of why creatives are creative, or neuroscientific studies on the chemical conditions which facilitate creativity.

Socially constructed ideas of creativity and previous theories have often centred on the individual as 'divinely inspired, as the product of an extraordinary individual or genius or as a symptom of mental illness' (Boden, 2003, p. 27). Boden (2003) describes these views as inspirational and romantic, and states that such views have blocked the understanding of creativity by claiming creativity to be 'humanity's crowning glory' and therefore, should not 'be sullied by the reductionist tentacles of scientific explanation.' (p. 14). When explored by psychologists, Csikszentmihalyi (2009) suggests that theories are still concerned with creativity as a mental activity, while 'sociologists have focused primarily on social and cultural structures determining creativity, where a producer is seen to have little or no agency' (Fulton and Paton, 2016, p. 27). The theories that follow all aim to take account of creativity through a wider lens, to present a holistic view of the interconnectedness of all agents involved, and the various processes that are applied in the creative moment.

In attempting to draw a definition of creativity that may be applied to the present research, it soon becomes apparent that applications of the term creativity are wide-ranging and not always complementary or compatible. Simonton suggests that

> it is necessary to distinguish ordinary creativity from exceptional creativity. Where the former refers to everyday problem solving, the latter is confined to creativity that yields products that contribute to a particular discipline, whether the arts or science. (2010, p. 159)

Much literature concerns itself with the higher levels of creativity, the creation of renowned works or ground-breaking theories. However, there is also work concerned with the everyday creativity, which Craft *et al.* (2001) refer to as little 'c' creativity (LCC). Boden (2003) suggests that 'creativity is the ability to come up with ideas or artefacts that are new, surprising and valuable.' (p. 1) and demonstrates how such a criterion works across all creativity. She identifies the higher-level creativity as Historical creativity (H-creativity) whereby '(so far as we know) no one else has had it [this idea] before; it has risen for the first time in human history' (p. 2). Boden uses the term Psychological creativity (P-creative) to identify the lower-level creativity, where an idea is new, surprising, and valuable to the person coming up with it but may not be new surprising or valuable to the wider society. Naturally, all H-creativity would also be P-creative. Craft does not cite Boden when discussing LCC and does not apply a similar criterion. Instead, she identifies the creativity that is applied when a person adapts either themselves or their environment to facilitate changes, such as finding a new job or career path when the previous one is no longer achievable. Although this would be a valuable form of creativity for that individual, this may not meet Boden's other criteria as surprising and would often fail to be considered new. It does, however, demonstrate the range of what may be considered creative by the author, the reader, and the practitioner. In contrast, others talk of the 'merely novel' (Boden, 2003, p. 51) and 'fading into the background like music in supermarkets' (Becker, 2008, p. 63), implying a dismissiveness towards such low-level creativity. Although Craft's concept of LCC may be broad, it places a significant value on creativity in everyday lives. This research acknowledges the broader spectrum of creativity as part of the larger creative process as I believe there is pedagogical value to be drawn from both the low and high thresholds of creativity.

Boden (2003) identifies three forms of creativity: combinations, exploration, and transformation. 'The first involves making unfamiliar combinations of familiar ideas' (p. 3) such as a metaphor that combines previously unrelated ideas. The second is the exploration of a conceptual space which she describes as a 'structured style of thought, [a] disciplined way of thinking that is familiar to (and valued by) a certain social group' (p. 4). It is through exploring these conceptual spaces that one discovers new possibilities that were possible

but had not previously been recognised or acknowledged, such as a band jamming or improvising to discover new ideas or their style. The third is transforming the space as demonstrated by Pablo Picasso when he transformed what he considered possible, or plausible, as a painting. An example of such in popular music could be Baz Luhrmann's 'Everybody's Free (To Wear Sunscreen' (Luhrman *et al.*, 1999) which is a spoken word song based on an essay published in the Chicago Tribune.[7] Each of these forms can conform to Boden's criteria for creativity in that they can be new, surprising, and valuable, as well as P-creative and H-creative.

Metaphors of creative practices, or art, as a form of communication can certainly be useful in developing theories of how the content – emotions, ideas, or semantic content – are considered, deployed, and negotiated. Sawyer's (2012) use of such an analogy to explain the prerequisite of knowledge prior to application is apt, such as the prerequisite of language to talk. The necessity of a transmitter and receiver for communication and art to occur, as described by Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990), and McIntyre *et al.* (2016), help inform us of the conditions under which a creative practice is possible. However, such analogies become a distraction when applied to the semantic content of art. As stated by Mikhail Bakhtin (1994) 'Words are not learnt out of the dictionary', they exist in context, and these contexts twist and reappropriate words into new meanings. The context of words can be the grammatical context of the sentence or the lived context of their utterance, i.e. the tone of voice or the body language. The application of communication theories by West (2016) to the educational setting to assess creativity becomes a counterproductive, and possibly a destructive, approach to understanding creativity, because of the implication that creative works are successful because they communicate as clearly as words. Such an ideology would be immediately undermined by the expressive performer described by Greil Marcus who finds a thrill 'when entering the world where anything can be said, even if no one can know what it means' (in (Frith, 1996, p. 158). Such an application of communication theories to the understanding of art and creative practice will prove useful in articulating some areas of the creative process observed in the present research. However, rigidly pursuing these metaphorical ways of describing unpalpable processes will be avoided so that the

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[7] Examples of transformative creativity are rare in mainstream popular music due to its nature of drawing its own creativity from non-mainstream domains. For example, 'Everybody's Free (To Wear Sunscreen)' was preceded by spoken word examples from Gil Scott Heron, the sampled drums and instrumental loop derived composition are drawn from sample-based music-making practices such as hip-hop and dance music genres derived from House music. A stronger example could be the tape looping compositions of Steve Reich which challenged and changed perceptions of what can be considered music.

observations are descriptive and not creatively illustrated. Further discussion on the meaning of work and intentions will be continued in the Authorship section below (2.3).

It has been established that creative works are not *ex nihilo* (Boden, 2003; Ferguson, 2011) but built on pre-established ideas (combine, explore, and transform). Further to this, these creative works are not conceived prior to their realisation but are unique to that moment of creation, as conception and realisation in an inseparable process. This convergent moment, where the creative idea happens in the present-at-hand will be referred to as the creative moment. Outside of the literature on creativity, Jack Reynolds (ND), in discussing Maurice Merleau-Ponty, describes how, 'All papers, analytical or otherwise, are not written in the head, entirely worked out, before they are laid down. The process of laying them down inevitably effects alterations.' In devising a definition of creativity, as represented by the practice observed, it should draw focus towards the act of creativity itself and not on the resultant creative output. This aligns with McIntyre's (2008) definition of creativity as

> a productive activity whereby objects, processes and ideas are generated from antecedent conditions through the agency of someone, whose knowledge to do so comes from somewhere and the resultant novel variation is seen as a valued addition to the store of knowledge in at least one social setting. (p. 1).

Although there may be some contention in the opposing notion that creativity does not occur in the mind, this concept of creativity does align with that which was observed in the present research. This definition establishes *when* creativity occurs. Advancing from this position, the present research wishes to explore the *how creativity occurs in that moment.*

Csikszentmihalyi (2013) describes four main conditions within this moment that can be applied to my autoethnographic method, to focus the observable parameters

> First of all, the person must pay attention to the developing work, to notice when new ideas, new problems, and new insights arise out of the interaction with the medium. Keeping the mind open and flexible is an important aspect of the way creative persons carry on their work. Next, one must pay attention to one's goals and feelings, to know whether the work is indeed proceeding as intended. The third condition is to keep in touch with domain knowledge, to use the most effective techniques, the fullest information, and the best theories as one proceeds. And finally, especially in the later stages of the process, it is important to listen to colleagues in the field. By interacting with others involved with similar problems, it is possible to correct a line of solution that is going in the wrong direction, to refine and focus one's ideas, and to find the most convincing mode of presenting them, the one that has the best chance of being accepted. (pp. 104-105)

Having expressed a requirement of knowledge prior to an application in a creative practice, (Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, 1990; Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; 2002; McIntyre, 2008; Sawyer, 2012; 2013; McIntyre *et al.*, 2016), it should be made clear that this knowledge is

required by both parties in the communicative model. Howard Becker (2008) describes these participants (both the transmitters and receivers) as 'well socialized members' (p. 42) or the more specialised 'small circle of innovators and aficionados' (p. 52). However, John Swales (2004) and West (2016) describe them as a 'discourse community' whom 'share a set of communitive purposes, and rationale' (West, 2016, p. 179). The discourse community of innovators and aficionados, as the gatekeepers of higher creativity, assess the creative value of works through their elevated knowledge of the conventions of their specific field. In contrast to the discourse community, the wider community (or audience) of well-socialized members are only required to have knowledge of the 'conventions known to all or almost all well-socialized members of society' (Becker, 2008, p. 42), including 'materials deeply embedded in the culture' (ibid), such as gender roles. Boden (2003) uses the example of Schoenberg, whose reimagining of tonality could only have been achieved through his knowledge of tonality and can only be understood, and therefore appreciated, by those with a similar knowledge of tonality. This example demonstrates how, for creativity to be recognised, it not only requires an audience but an audience with the right prior knowledge that aligns with that of the creative individual. My autoethnographic method will be limited to the observable knowledge being applied by the creative individual (which is also, itself, limited by observation). However, an understanding of the Other's (the imagined audience) knowledge applied within the creative moment will be explored in my autoethnographic method as this would be essential to the creative practice in the wider context of the Systems Model of Creativity.

McIntyre (2016b), quoting Priest (2010), highlights how research into culture and the people involved 'must be understood as whole systems, not isolated parts' (p. 48; p. 25), such as focusing on individuals, creative products, social agents, or cultural constraints, as has been criticised earlier by Csikszentmihalyi. To account for the bigger picture of how creativity operates, Csikszentmihalyi offers a Systems Model of Creativity reduced to the three essential components, the individual, the field, and the domain (figure 4). This holistic view of the creative system demonstrates the interconnectedness of the components 'as non-linear, complex, and scalable, reinforcing the idea that each element in the system "affects the others and is affected by them in turn" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, p. 329).' (Fulton and Paton, 2016, p. 30).
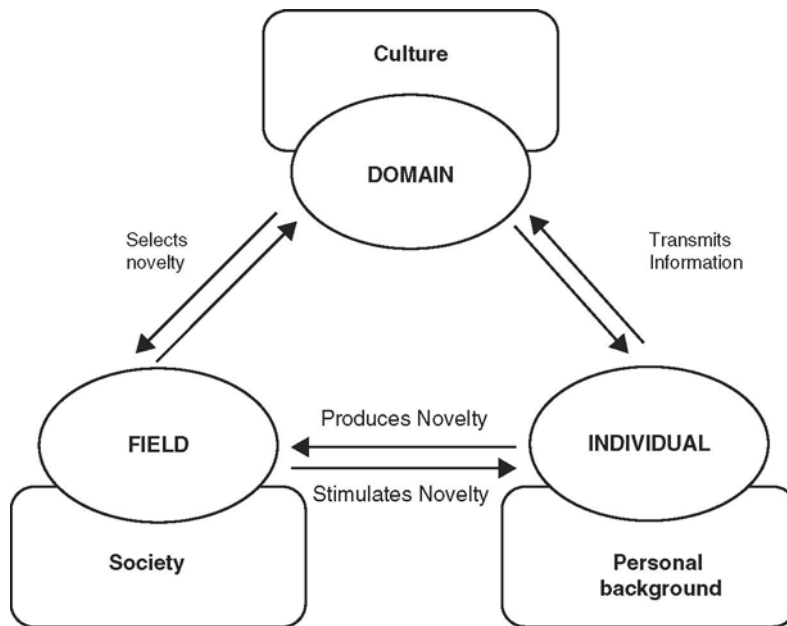
Figure 4 The Systems Model of Creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p. 315)

The domain is 'the body of knowledge, the set of rules and procedures, the symbolic system, which is used by the individual agent to produce variations.' (Fulton and Paton, 2016, p. 29). It is the cultural component of the system which informs the creative individual on what has previously been created, how it was created, why it was created, and, to a greater or lesser degree, what it means. This domain knowledge can be as broad as social conventions of gender roles, which operate outside of art but, as demonstrated by Becker (2008), are used in art to inform the narrative plot as 'conventions of the art so well known that they are also part of the culture every well-socialized person knows.' (p. 44). Or, returning to the earlier example of Schoenberg, knowledge of tonality is acquired from the study of music as a specialized (or scaled) domain of knowledge. It is important to note that 'there must be an existing culture, with traditions and conventions in place for an individual to refer to, before a difference can be produced and that creativity is inherently social.' (Fulton and Paton, 2016, pp. 28-29).

The field is the social component of the model, comprised of people, groups, and organisations who operate as gatekeepers as to what will be included in the domain. In real terms, this includes everyone who engages in culture from the community of artists, publishers/manufactures, journalists, through to the consuming public. At the thin end of this spectrum, we find a greater value placed on specialist knowledge of the domain, i.e. the discourse communities or aficionados, while at the thick end the value is from mass consumption in a commercial market. This spectrum is an example of the scaled nature

Elizabeth Paton referred to earlier. However, non-linear complexity is added by the access to resources, such as the funding of a private commission where the access to these funds is only available to a small group with a specific agenda. Such considerations will be explored more deeply through Bourdieu's concept of capital below. Another aspect of scalability (cf. Thompson, 2016) in the creative system is in how the creative work is often developed by teams and engages in iterative cycles of consultation with the field (cf. Hennion, 1989).

Despite the move away from previous ideas of the individual as the source of creativity whereby the individual 'is not paramount' the systems model retains that 'neither is the individual irrelevant' (Fulton and Paton, 2016, p. 34). The individual in the systems model is the creative 'who understands and uses that [domain] knowledge to produce a novel change' (Fulton and Paton, 2016, p. 28). Although the framework of the systems model may appear to be reductionist, Csikszentmihalyi contends that the individual is an active component whose agency, as informed by the domain in confluence with her personality (or habitus as discussed below), is unique and complex. McIntyre explores this further with what he calls 'nature, nurture and access' (2008, p. 3) where the personal qualities, background and access to the field and domain are accounted for.

The systems model in action is a non-linear, rhizomatic system and can be entered at any point. One may start at domain acquisition where the individual gains knowledge of the conventions, constraints, rules, symbols, and such from the domain, labelled as 'transmit information' (figure 4). Csikszentmihalyi (2013) refers to this as internalizing the system where '[a] person who wants to make a creative contribution not only must work within a creative system but must also reproduce that system within his or her mind.' (p. 47) McIntyre refers to one half of this as domain acquisition where the individual is immersed in the domain as part of extensive training from a range of sources such as: formal education; informal learning including auto-didacticism or ad-hoc mentoring; and absorption of familial influences and popular culture. The other half of internalizing the system is the 'absorption of the criteria of the field… [to] convince the field of the variations value.' (Fulton and Paton, 2016, p. 36). McIntyre (2016b) describes this knowledge as becoming what is referred to as 'second nature' (Schön, 1991), 'feel' (Braheny, 1990), or 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1990; 1993; 2010), which will be key to the observations in my autoethnographic method and is explored further below.

When new works or ideas are presented to gain entry into the domain, it is the field who must judge that it is appropriate or valuable enough to be included. 'These individuals, groups and organizations act to stimulate or filter innovation according to an (often internalized) set of criteria of judging what is good or bad, valuable or useless, acceptable or

unacceptable, new or old.' (Fulton and Paton, 2016, p. 36). The knowledge applied by the field is similar to the domain knowledge previously identified in the individual as indicated by Simonton (2010) when he states 'each individual member of the field obtained, during the course of education and training, a personal sample of the ideas defining his or her chosen domain' (p. 160). When the work or idea is presented to the field this is labelled as 'produces novelty' (figure 4). When the field is interacting with the individual it is 'stimulating novelty' (figure 4) because, as already indicated, the model is non-linear, and each component affects the others interdependently.

Lastly, the interactions between the field and the domain are labelled as 'selects novelty', whereby those in the field as gatekeepers select and allow or promote the inclusion of the work or idea into the domain. Here is another point of complexity, as selections are not made purely on the value or appropriateness of the creativity.

> Fields engage in a constant struggle for power based in each field's own use of symbolic capital, but agents within the fields are also in a struggle for position, also dependent on their accumulation of the various forms of capital. (Fulton and Paton, 2016, p. 37).

Therefore, the commercial opportunities (economic capital) or credibility (social capital) may sway the field to allow less creatively valuable or appropriate works or ideas into the domain. Although the framework does not stipulate it, there is clearly a 'transmission of data' between the field and domain similar to that between the individual and domain, as indicated by Simonton (2010), as the agents within the field have a similar domain knowledge as the individual. In many cases, as discussed earlier, this domain knowledge is required of the field to appreciate and accept the novelty. These agencies and structures operate within the music industry, as a systems model of creativity, and while beyond the scope of this pedagogical research it is important to recognise the wider context of the practice, and the aspirations of the practitioner beyond the creative moment.

McIntyre *et al.* (2016) expand on Csikszentmihalyi's Systems Model with Bourdieu's Field of Cultural Production insofar as the striking similarities between the domain and field of works, and the individual and habitus (each respectively). Working on the principle that creativity is not *ex nihilo* but is instead built on previous ideas, both the domain and field of works can be viewed as this body of knowledge from which creative 'possibles' [Bourdieu's term] are drawn. This knowledge is comprised of the 'rules, conventions, techniques, tools, guides, procedures' (Fulton and Paton, 2016, p. 33) that are demonstrated or evidenced in, around, and about the creative works which have been accepted into the domain/field of works. Sawyer (2012) furthers Bourdieu's field of works to include 'all of the creative products that have been accepted by the field in the past' (2012, p. 216), which may be applicable in a

grand theoretical model but becomes less applicable in the real-world application of creativity. Simonton (2010) suggests that the individual works from a personal sample

> Because few if any individuals can master all of the ideas constituting the domain, each sample constitutes a subset… Not only will each individual possess a mere subset, but also those subsets will be heterogeneous rather than homogeneous. (p. 160)

Susan Kerrigan (2013) applies this to her own systems model of creativity when analysing her documentary process, referring to a micro-domain and micro-field. This approach that individuals only work with and within a subset from a personal sample of the domain is a fundamental notion from which this research is developed – as the learning and mastering of a new subset is the condition where the practitioner is situated and that my autoethnographic method can observe.

Csikszentmihalyi (2013) also accounts for the personal traits and attributes that the individual brings to creativity, and Fulton and Paton (2016) explain these qualities through Bourdieu's concept of habitus. 'Habitus explains why an individual acts in a certain way in certain contexts and how they have come to act in that way' (p. 36) developing what Randall Johnson (1993) refers to as a second sense or second nature. Fulton and Paton (2016) describes this as an internalisation of the domain, as well as absorption of the criteria of the field, which in other areas may be inter-changeable with embodied (Barrett and Bolt, 2007; Shusterman, 2012; Nelson, 2013), situated and tacit knowledge (Barrett and Bolt, 2007; Smith and Dean, 2009), as well as Merleau-Ponty's (1945; 1969) concepts of the body and sedimentation, which will be discussed later. It is the application of this knowledge that is of key interest within my autoethnographic method.

McIntyre (2008) and McIntyre *et al.* (2016) make one final use of Bourdieu in recognising the significance of capital that is required of the agents within the systems model. Through Johnson (1993), they concur that the individual requires both symbolic and cultural capital to engage successfully in the field of cultural production. McIntyre (2008) incorporates this in what he refers to this as 'nature, nurture and access' (p. 3). My autoethnographic method will be confining its observations to the specific interaction between creator and work, previously identified as the creative moment. However, due to the iterative editorial process, it is impossible to ignore the significance of capital (in particular cultural capital, which is most prevalent in Valuing in Songwriting: The Knot of Relations (p. 135)) that is present in the creative process and its implications on the development of the practitioners learning.

The spectrum of creativity, from high (H-creativity) to low (P-Creativity and LCC), has been applied to capture an unbiased view of the observed practice and include all aspects that

contribute to learning and developing the creative practice. Boden's (2003) forms of creativity are used as the concepts applied to describing the creative processes and outputs. Comparative systems, such as communication and language, as have been previously deployed in articulating creativity have been used in this thesis, but sparingly, to remain objective and avoid interpretations or creative readings of the observations. Four parameters, as identified by Csikszentmihalyi (2013), will be used when observing the creative moment: the developing idea; the aims of the individual; the connection(s) with the domain; and the recognition of the field. The four parameters clearly operate best when theorised within the systems model, which accounts for the prior knowledge from the domain and the criteria of the field as they are applied in the creative practice. Following the example of McIntyre *et al.* (2016), this research utilises Bourdieu's field of cultural production to enhance the depth of understanding and recognising the complexity within the creative system.

2.2 Songwriting

2.2.1 The Songwriting Question

Despite the earlier statement in my introduction, that too much attention has been focused on the product and not the process, it is necessary to elaborate on the song as product so that what the songwriter is aiming for can be agreed and as such provide scope and focus to the autoethnography. A quick scan of definitions, from dictionaries and musicological works, would often identify the core elements of song as words and melodies (or music) to be sung (West, 2016) and of music as 'unique, replicable sequences of pitches and durations' (Kratus, 1989, p. 166). However, as highlighted by Phillip Tagg (1982)

> no analysis of musical discourse can be considered complete without consideration of social, psychological, visual, gestural, ritual, technical, historical, economic and linguistic aspects relevant to the genre, function, style, (re-)performance situation and listening attitude connected with the sound event being studied. (p. 40).

Tagg's critique is derived from musicology's use of 'traditional tools' (p. 41), which focus on the notated parameters of music, thereby overlooking such qualities of music that are highly regarded in popular music. Like the previous critique of creativity, a holistic view of the phenomenon is required to develop a fuller understanding. Tagg (ibid) offers us a vague but all-encompassing description of music as

> that form of interhuman communication in which individually experiencable [sic] affective states and processes are conceived and transmitted as humanly organised non-verbal sound structures to those capable of decoding their message in the form of adequate affective and associative response. (p. 40)

Such a description does capture much of the essence of music in which the details can be inserted. It also corresponds with earlier ideas of creativity as a form of communication (whilst avoiding the semantic pitfalls), reliant on prior knowledge based in a social context. To develop the research question, Tagg (1982) poses the question 'Why and how does who say what to whom and with what effect?'. This is the meta question of music that requires an interdisciplinary approach to be answered. Tagg suggests that the *who*'s are answered by sociology with a bit of psychology, the *why* (with some psychology) *how* and *what* by musicology, and the *with what effect* by psychology. My autoethnographic method is concerned with the *how* from the perspective of the creative practitioner and less so of the musical output. Therefore, while the practice is musicological the autoethnography is pedagogical, focusing on the development of practice. As such, I am mindful of Tagg's earlier critique of focusing solely

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on notated or even musical aspects of the phenomenon and overlooking the holistic nature of the creative practice.

In focusing my autoethnographic method on the *how* (pedagogy) it is important still to ask *what* (musicology). Tagg's description helps recognise the fullness of the phenomenon, but more detail is required to recognise Western Popular Music as the *what*. Ingarden (1986) refers to music, in the abstract sense, as a pure intentional object which has no determining qualities. However, as previously indicated, all creative ideas are dependent on drawing reference from the domain. Therefore, to be recognised as music there must be some determined quality from the domain that establishes the idea (or intention) as music. West's (2016) summary of song draws closer to the musical object as

> mobile and portable works of individual accent that possess, with varying levels of affective, dynamic, intellectual, visceral, repetitive, contrasting, expressive, literal and metaphorical qualities: words, performance, production, arrangement and importantly, music. (p. 11).

Through Madan Sarup (1993) and Susanne Langer (1957), West (2016) elaborates on the metaphorical quality of music as being a language that transfers meaning with regard to human feeling and experience. Drawing in closer still, Frith (1996), when listening to the lyrics of pop songs, identifies three things: words, as semantic meaning; rhetoric, words used in a musical way; and voices, the human tones as meaningful signs of persons and personality (p. 156). Although Ingarden's pure intentional object is too broad to draw any definition of music or song from, I will consider music and song as *in potentia* insofar as the abstract concept of song or music is undetermined but has specific qualities that must be determined in specific functions or contexts. These qualities are those that have been identified in other descriptions (Frith, 1996; West, 2016) as the essential components of music and song. The functions and contexts are the 'interhuman communication' (Tagg, 1982) that facilitate the transfer of the metaphor of feeling and experience (Langer and Knauth, 1957; Sarup, 1993; West, 2016).

A definition of composition or songwriting is naturally pervasive. As a creative act, it is required to produce new, surprising, and valuable products which require a similar degree of innovation in the process. Instead, my autoethnographic method draws from a range of approaches to understanding the creative acts of composition and songwriting. John Kratus (1989) considers composition to be the 'fluid thoughts and action[s] of the composer in generating the product.' (p. 116), which aligns with the earlier idea of the creative act occurring in the moment between the creator and the work. From this position, Collins (2007) posits that the composer is both a

problem solver and generator. Bennett (2014a) concludes that songwriting occurs between the upper and lower thresholds of creativity as a generated problem wherein the upper threshold is the necessity to produce a work that is recognisable, and the lower threshold is the requirement not to plagiarise another work. These thresholds operate within the systems model of creativity as the domain supplies the knowledge of what will be recognised and what has already been done, and the field applies such knowledge to make judgements of the work. Regarding problem generating Geraint Wiggins (2001) and Collins (2007; 2016) describe composition as the processing from an ill-defined problem through to a well-structured problem 'through decomposition into a series of smaller well-structured problems spread across temporal space.' (Collins, 2007, p. 243). Such a process operates as previously indicated as determining the qualities of the work as from *in potentia*. West (2016) discusses this as a threefold process: an impetus or feeling of valuing an idea; a flow of uncritical creativity; and an editorial phase (p. 177). However, this is not necessarily a linear process as West demonstrates when quoting professional songwriter, Iain Archer, that 'a songwriter is able to discern good or bad ideas as they emerge' (ibid). This is further supported by McIntyre's (2016b) findings that the songwriters he studied regarded songwriting as a second nature or feel having been 'so thoroughly immersed in the domain of contemporary Western popular music' (p. 52). As with creativity in general, songwriting and composition are also social acts 'that take place within a community and [are] thus inherently what we might term "practice-," "discourse-," or "tradition-," related.' (Benson, 2003, p. 41). In terms of the systems model, the creative act of composition and songwriting are interdependent, with the field i.e. managers, record labels, publishers, the media, and the consuming public. Collins (2007) demonstrates the active nature of this interdependent relationship when elaborating on Marvin Minsky and Otto Laske (1992) as 'setting up particular expectations for the listener - melodic, rhythmic, harmonic and so on. The creative and imaginative process then involves the composer attempting to work out how to frustrate such expectations.' (Collins, p. 243). In this example, it is demonstrated that the problem is generated from the listeners' expectations and the frustrating of them. In my autoethnographic method, it is observed how the practice operates in this mode of problem generating and problem solving identifying how the constraints are applied and where they are drawn from, and the processes and tools that are applied in resolving the problem. The constraints applied when engaging with the systems model of creativity, such as Bennett's (2014a) upper and lower thresholds, are less of a concern as I believe there is pedagogical value within a practise that would be plagiarising.

There are still several issues and limitations with regard to how songwriting and composition can be understood. Keith Swanwick (1979) poses the question 'How do we know what the composer felt during the period spent working on this movement?' (p. 13) which would seem to be a legitimate reason not to pursue research that explores the composer's intention. However, it is the intentions of my autoethnographic method to bring new insights and approaches to understanding the composer's feelings and intentions in the compositional process. This will be developed through the application of literature on the intentional fallacy and models of authorship discussed below (section 2.3).

Bruce Ellis Benson (2003) criticises the dichotomy of composition and performance, which is an issue in the observed practice. Benson suggests that this may be resolved by subsuming composition and performance under the broader concept of improvisation. This may resolve issues of the fixity regarding the perceptions of composition (written and recorded) as a finished and therefore fixed object, and as Benson suggests that the terminology should give way to the practice. However, the term improvisation is a loaded term which could be misread as *ex nihilo* creation. I will adopt the term 'play' instead of 'improvisation' as a response to the explorative and enjoyable flow state as described by Boden (2003) and Csikszentmihalyi (1999; 2013) (respectively). Boden (2003) elaborates on this as

> Like much play, creativity is often open-ended, with no particular goal or aim. Or rather, its goal is a very general one: exploration - where the terrain explored is the mind itself... the artist may explore a certain style of thinking so as to uncover its potential and identify its limits. (p. 59).

Further still, I do not consider play to operate in a borderless terrain but instead identify that within play there are constraints, aims, and intentions that are applied to the creative practice which structure the problems generated, provoking the creativity applied in their resolution. This terminology and application also align with Bourdieu's language and description of habitus. It has been demonstrated that composition and songwriting operate as an intuitive process of feel and second nature (McIntyre, 2008; McIntyre, 2016b; West, 2016). Although this is expressed as the highest form of songwriting, it has not been explicitly expressed as the only approach to songwriting. My autoethnographic method observes where the creative practice draws from explicit knowledge. This is represented as a developmental process described by Carol Inskipp (2004) as: unconscious incompetent, conscious incompetent, conscious competent, unconscious competent. This model is similar to other theories of learning where the subject starts with no knowledge, but at the highest level applies knowledge intuitively (Benner, 2001) or skills as naturalised (Bloom and Krathwohl, 1956). Inskipp's model also recognises the

subject perspective of self as being conscious/unconscious of their ability. As an autoethnographic study, it is necessary to be conscious of the knowledge and skills being applied and observed. I am also aware of the critique that learning is neither linear or hierarchical – as sometimes read in such theories – and that earlier skills and knowledge can be forgotten, revisited and relearned – such as Jack Perricone's (2000) application of songwriting theory when his intuitive skills could not resolve a songwriting problem.

Frith (1996) discusses in great detail how the listener of popular music is participating in 'imagined forms of democracy and desire… of social and sexual', that 'musical identity is both fantastic… and real.', and that 'music gives [the listener] a real experience of what the ideal could be' (p. 274). Livingstone and Thompson (2009) describe this as 'an affective sandbox for safe emotional exploration' (p. 95) which they link to Aristotle's paradox of tragedy. Although the paradox of tragedy refers to the darker or macabre aspects of the experience Frith's (1996) assertion that the listener is experiencing forms of identity is still apt but broadened beyond the ideal to include exploring all aspect of identity. However, this appropriation of music and song is not thoroughly explored from the perspective of the songwriter/composer. As previously indicated in the introduction to this thesis, I do not explore psychological nor therapeutic aspects of songwriting such as might be applicable to form identity through a creative practice. Instead, the focus will be regarding the commercially-orientated aspect of the identity that is created and presented in the work as the *artistic voice*.

2.2.2 Agency and Structure in Songwriting

Regarding the agency of the songwriter, it should be noted that the present research follows the example of Zembylas and Niederauer (2018) in considering agency as collective or distributed agency, and not as cognitive capacities. Like the previous sub-chapter where theories of creativity were negotiated away from the romantic individual toward the holistic systems model, agency is not perceived as the individual's ability to enact change, but all the surrounding components and factors that influence and enable this agency. Models of agency by Giddens (1991) and Emirbayer (1998) include 'unplanned, spontaneous and improvised actions' (Zembylas and Niederauer, p. 2). As the active individual within this theory of agency and the systems model, the songwriter is the pinch where old ideas become new ideas. The songwriter solves the problem, which she may have generated or have been commissioned, by the application of her domain knowledge and her internalization of the system (McIntyre, 2016b) to create a song that is recognisable as a song but sufficiently unique from other songs so as to be

original. The songwriter's agency is limited by thresholds of creativity, as described by Bennett (2014a) above.

McIntyre highlights the interdependency of agency and structure in the songwriting process in that both require and effect one another (p. 56). The function and impact of structure has been explored in the previous subchapter on creativity. This can, in a simplistic manner, be transferred to songwriting by stating that the songwriter's knowledge of extant songs (domain acquisition) informs her of the possibles that will be accepted by the music industry and market (the field). Assuming that our hypothetical songwriter has been tasked with writing a generic pop song that will appeal to a large and diverse audience, this song will be heavily influenced by structural aspects such as conventions, constraints, and rules of a domain. Bennett (2012a; 2014a) has detailed an extensive list of the constraints that are common in popular music based on top 40 charting popular songs of the past 50 years. Applying the majority of these constraints, such as a diatonic key, verse-chorus form, romantic lyrics, 4/4 time signature, approximately 3minutes in duration, and such, would construct much of the song before the songwriter has played a note. Decisions, such as instrumentation and key, may be resolved based on available instruments or musicians, and their ability or range. In this scenario, the songwriter has very little agency in which to compose a song that will be novel enough stand out in a burgeoning marketplace. This is not necessarily a negative constraint on the creative process and, as Benson (2003, p. 50) highlights, Mozart's talent and speed for composing *opera buffas* were facilitated by such constraints.

Collins' (2007) observations of the composer indicate that a significant proportion of the time spent composing was given to 'small-scale tasks' and 'tinkering about', play, or, in general, being less serious. It is not clear if these small-scale tasks are exclusively editorial in their nature, but it is implied that they are mostly concerned with deleting, moving, or replacing. It is difficult to judge where creativity and editing start and end, but there is clearly a significant overlap in the two modes of thinking. Through these small tasks, such as 'trial and error' (Hennion, 1989, p. 411), the songwriter moves closer to the finished piece, and the song emerges from an abstract *in potentia* to a unique song. Through play and less serious activities, 'the self' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; 2002; 2013) emerges, where the songwriter can override the 'biological and social programming' (McIntyre, 2016b, p. 55) of structure and explore the potential agency that is essential to the song. This state of operating is what Csikszentmihalyi refers to as 'the flow' (2002), where feel, intuition (West, 2016), and/or second nature (Schön, 1995) (McIntyre, 2008; McIntyre *et al.*, 2016), derived from domain acquisition, are deployed.

This flow is the tacit ability to know the limits and potential for agency within the given field and domain. As these skills become honed with practice, they form the songwriting habitus that will be the way the songwriter writes, and the nature, or style, of the work she produces. To be successful, the songwriter's habitus should be attuned to an awareness of 'words and musical phrases that are pregnant with meaning' (Hennion, 1990, p. 198) and be able to locate and value their practice *within* the domain and *to* the field (West, 2016, p. 45). It could be said that songwriting in the Western popular canon is heavily influenced by the structures imposed from the domain and field, and that the songwriter has very little agency. However, what little agency she may have is extremely significant in creating the essential novelty. The autoethnographic observations have been focused towards the application and negotiation of structure and agency in the songwriting process and as such are presented as a cornerstone of the theories generated from this method.

2.2.3   Romantic Mythology of Songwriting

In describing the character of the songwriter, there are again interdependent characteristics that appear to be in conflict but are in fact part and parcel of being a songwriter. Being afforded the title artist, songwriter, musician or music-maker,[8] the individual is also afforded immunity from certain social norms (Becker, 2008, pp. 14-15) but only so long as they meet the social expectations of that role (ibid, p. 19).

> For instance, if the idea of gift or talent implies the notion of spontaneous expression or sublime inspiration (as it does for many), the business-like work habits of many artists create an incongruity. Composers who produce so many bars of music a day, painters who paint so many hours a day – whether they 'feel like it or not' – create some doubt as to whether they can be exercising superhuman talents. (ibid, p.18).

These expectations can also become a hindrance to creativity if the songwriter were to apply romantic or inspirational attitudes to their practice (Boden, 2003). Scott (2016) demonstrates how songwriting students can become subject to *writer's block* by believing that creative works come *ex nihilo* and are therefore unwilling to accept development and editing as part of the creative process. As the aim of my autoethnographic method is to reveal and develop pedagogical knowledge of the songwriting practice, such approaches, facets, and beliefs will be included in the observations and theories.

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[8] The flexibility of the roles and titles of popular music makers has been noted by many scholars of the field, such as Bennett, Auvinen, Long & Barbour, and West.

Further to this conflict of expectations, McIntyre (2016b) (citing Merriam, 1964) highlights the low-status but high importance of musicians in anthropological terms. A current example of this can be found in the relentless exposure to music, through public sound systems, the Internet, television, and radio, but the low price the public is willing to pay for this, as seen in prices applied to downloaded or streamed music, or the free and illegal acquisition of music via advertisement supported or peer-to-peer file sharing services (respectively).

The songwriter may be credited as the sole auteur of the work (assuming there are no co-writers) thereby conforming to a romantic idiom, but she will be working within a team of musicians, engineers, producers, record label and publishing personnel, which make up the art world as described by Becker (2008). West (2016) describes a two-step approach in songwriting where the songwriter creates a link between herself and the song, then between the song and the listener, whom we can read as anyone who is not the songwriter. Hennion (1989) describes in great detail how the creation of a song must go through many filters of widening audiences, starting with the immediate team through to the aficionados and eventually the unknown public. West (2016) infers a similar model when he states that the songwriter must 'engage in degrees of creativity' (p. 44) that acknowledge, by meeting or frustrating, the various listeners' expectations. These piecemeal, or trial and error, approaches to music-making with degrees of team influence may be construed as being too neoliberal or driven by capitalism and therefore counter to romantic myths associated with the socially constructed ideal of the songwriter. However, such songwriters are concerned with the commercial success of their works, livelihoods, and the option to continue making music is dependent on this for many. Therefore, the perception of being an artist that operates within the socially constructed expectations is part and parcel of being an artist. The present research is less concerned with the public image and perceptions of the artist and more concerned with the aspects paramount to learning in the creative practice. This being said, it is useful to note where the artist narrative (the story that may be told in press releases as part of neoliberal entertainment) may cross paths or distract from the creative practice being observed and that it can in-fact act as a vital influence on the creative process.

2.2.4   Materials and Immaterials of Songwriting

In establishing what can be considered the materials of songwriting and composition, it is worthwhile returning to Tagg's statement that no analysis is complete without accounting for all active components and influences in the work. Any analysis of any music that only accounts for

the notable aspects will overlook those of performance, production, and even ideology. It is agreed that popular music is an auditory art form (Tagg, 1982; Middleton, 1990; Negus, 1996; Middleton, 1999; Toynbee, 2000; Frith and Zagorski-Thomas, 2012) and therefore such a narrow analysis would not be favourable to the study of popular music. However, the practice of composition and songwriting has been understood as operating as a social act (Becker, 2008; Zembylas and Niederauer, 2018) intended to engage within a larger system (2002; Csikszentmihalyi, 2013; Fulton and Paton, 2016; Mcintyre, 2016a) through which creative problems and solutions are generated (Collins, 2007). Zembylas and Niederauer (2018) also highlight the significance of tools as materials involved in the creative process, in this case instruments, computers, and writing materials. Their significance being attributed to their 'dynamic affordance' (Cook and Brown, 1999, pp. 389-391) through which, when one comes into contact with an object, 'pre-existing knowledge comes into play, but new knowledge can be generated as well' (Zembylas and Niederauer, 2018, p. 33). This can account for the physical materials at large in the creative process, but we may also consider the impact on agency through immaterial concepts. McIntyre (2016b) describes the various components of song from lyrics and melody, through to performance and arrangement, as essential but with a 'decreasing order of importance' (p. 51).

> These components make up the conventions of the symbol system, the knowledge structure, the cultural capital residing in the field of works, that is, the domain that songwriters draw on to produce a contemporary Western popular song. (ibid).

As the symbol system is an abstract concept that is of social construction, these may be referred to as the immaterials of songwriting (Zembylas and Niederauer, 2018). Zembylas and Niederauer (2018, p. 21) consider these immaterials through to the audience as a force on the composer who is 'aware of the audiences' (ibid)importance and 'their [the composer] consequent dependence on it.' (ibid). From this position, it can be understood that the immaterials, which the composer/songwriter, is playing with are the intellectual and affective concepts that become connoted and denoted by auditory materials. Both the materials and immaterials are interdependent of one another and therefore, I have considered their interactions simultaneously at all times.

2.2.5 The Songwriter and the Team

Songwriting has so far been discussed in a somewhat loose manner as more of a creative practice than a specified craft, inferring a degree of prior knowledge on to the reader. As stated

at the start of this chapter, it is difficult to draw a definition on songwriting, and therefore songwriter, and this is due to what Friedemann Sallis describes as 'a sheer diversity of working methods' (2015, p. 7). It has been discussed how one can be granted the title of artist, songwriter, musician, and so forth, so long as one adheres to the expectations of that role (Becker, 2008, p. 19). However, the duties of a songwriter, and therefore, the expectations, have not yet been discussed. The expansive and variable nature of the role is touched on by West (2016), who states that:

> In recent times, the role of the songwriter, once confined to the structuring of words, melody and harmony, has expanded to incorporate elements that elevate the properties of the simple text to those of the record. The reasons for this shift are connected to a cultural switch in thinking. Increasingly accustomed to the high quality production and arrangement awarded by Pro Tools and Logic, producers are inevitably more inclined to be involved in the songwriting process. Consequently, in some fields the lines between songwriting and production are increasingly blurred. (p. 173)

Such blurring of these roles is highlighted by Mark Marrington (2017) and Richard Toulson and Burgess (2017) who discuss the practice of writing (or producing) music in the studio, charting the trend from Brian Eno to the concept of the bedroom producer. Paul Thompson (2016; 2019) has demonstrated how the song is the result of a studio-based and wider interactions with the field, and how these roles operate with operate with great degrees of flexibility and overlap. Nadav Appel (2017) identifies the 'singer-songwriter disposition' as a performative disposition, as opposed to an identity or style, which seeks expressivity over virtuosity, particularly vocal expressivity. This is demonstrated by such artists as James Blake, Bon Iver, and Kanye West who, through various forms of technological manipulation, produce music that is centred on the human voice and its expressive qualities. Although this is centred on those artists who are both writer and performer, the nature of this practice and modes of songwriting and production resonate with my practice. However, the terms songwriter, composer, producer, tracker (as explored by Auvinen, 2017) and even engineer, are all interchangeable in the practice and similarly to Bennett (2014a), the term songwriter is not a fixed term but refers to a variety of skillsets (p. 248). I will be including within the scope of my observations this subset songwriting, lyric writing, arrangement, production, engineering, and tracking as well as range of skills associated with these roles including musical, social, organisational, and administrative.

It has been alluded to that there are influences on the creative act of songwriting that are not of the creative act itself. These can be considered as the forms of capital as described by Bourdieu and discussed in the previous subchapter on creativity. West (2016) quotes Sean Devine stating

'You get a tweet from Adele saying she likes one of your records and all of a sudden everyone has to check you out.' (p. 204). This indicates the value of symbolic capital as afforded to Adele who can be seen as investing such capital in another artist's work. Had Adele been exposed to the record via the artist themselves or a mutual friend, it may also be an example of social capital whereby that network was exploited to gain exposure. Access to economic capital such as funding, and therefore resources, is paramount to the ability to produce works that meet the expectations of the field (cf. Thompson, 2019, pp. 91-110). Fulton and Paton (2016) elaborate on the importance of the domain (in this case, popular music) and how central it is to the culture as being vital to attract talent and the allocation of resources (p. 32). While popular musicians are of high importance, they are of low value (Merriam, 1964 in McIntyre, 2016), which creates a conflict in the access to such economic capital. It has been highlighted that access to funding for musical works has more often been awarded to other musical practices (folk and classical) over popular music despite its broader appeal (Till, 2016). Such concerns may appear to be beyond the act of songwriting but can be observed as to how they can influence the decisions of questions such as 'can I get… to sing on this?' (social capital) or 'could I hire a brass band to perform these parts?' (economic capital). These influences also complicate the value of creative works, whereby, as touched on earlier, works of lesser creative value can have greater success – in terms of metrics such as sales and streams – which can be attributed to the access to resources such as social, economic, and symbolic capital.

I will be regarding song as an *in potentia* abstract concept through which the songwriter's knowledge of the structure is applied to answer varying degrees of problems. These problems are the addressing of the components and aspects derived as structures from the domain, and the degree of agency afforded to the songwriter by the field. This subchapter on songwriting literature has described these components and aspects, which are accounted for in my practice and the autoethnographic theories that are derived from these. I have indicated my attempts to be perceptive of all available influences to present a holistic method of study. These include the structure that both limits and affords the practice, recognised as the domain and field, and the requirements of and access to various forms of capital.

2.3 Authorship

As previously mentioned, when discussing the works of Merleau-Ponty, Reynolds (ND) describes the process as 'neither the self-present subject, nor the cultural world, which determines the product, but the knot, the sum relation of all networks.' (p. ibid) This description resonates with the earlier discussion on creativity as being neither *ex nihilo* nor pre-written in the mind, but where the work is created *in* the act of creativity. The notion that writing is produced by the action of writing is very important to Merleau-Ponty as it means the ideas are discovered and refined through writing and not as a purely mental activity. Further to this, it has been noted in the review of songwriting literature that the songs are also an active process in which a reiterative cycle of editing is essential to discovering the song. Although songwriters and composers are not commonly referred to as authors both are described as writers and they share a common process and so we may consider the creator an author. The current literature on authorship is rich in discussions of authenticity, intentionalism, openness, object/style, and voice, which are informed from discourses on literary criticism, aesthetics, and post-structuralism. Much of this literature is concerned with the author, also referred to as the creator and writer, and the audience. The breadth of this literature gives a more balanced overview of the process than what is historically available in the literature of music, which has previously been criticised for being too concerned with the product and its reception. The following review attempts to draw on this body of literature as parallel to songwriting and composition, which has exceeded the latter in addressing the aforementioned issues, but which can be transferred to songwriting and composition with very little translation or interpretation.

2.3.1   The Intentional Fallacy

William K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley's 'The Intentional Fallacy' (1946) draws an academic focus on the issue of intentionalism, and while based on the judgements of poetics, the concepts has been applied to other creative practices also. Resonating with Sawyer's (2012) feelings towards the composer's intentions, Wimsatt and Beardsley state 'that the design or intention of the author is neither available or desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art…' (p. 468) They offer five propositions, which they claim to be axiomatic, from which to judge a poetic work. Firstly that 'A poem does not come into existence by accident. The words of a poem… come out of the head, not out of a hat' (p. 469). Secondly, 'One must ask how a critic expects to get an answer to the question about intention' (ibid) and that if the answer is not within the work presented, then the work is

deemed to have failed. Thirdly, 'judging a poem is like judging a pudding or a machine. One demands that it work… A poem can be only through its meaning' (ibid). Fourthly, 'We ought to impute the thoughts and attitudes of the poem to the dramatic *speaker*, and if to the author at all, only by a biographical act of inference.' (p. 470) thereby giving further distance between the author and the work. Lastly, that the author has the right to revise the work as to 'better achieve[d] his [sic] original intention…' (ibid). It should be made clear that my intentions are to observe and theorise learning and development of the creative process, while Wimsatt and Beardsley's intentions are to make judgements on the creative product. It would be counter-productive to criticise Wimsatt and Beardsley because of the differing objectives but their notions are still valuable as they concern how the work is received. As proposed by Hennion, such thinking informs the creator in the creative process, this idea of user-centric thinking is further explored in Identifying the Imagined Audience below (section 2.5).

Wimsatt and Beardsley attempt to validate the judgements of the critic by applying an objective methodology to the judgement. To this end, they attempt to distance the author from the work so as to disregard the author's intentions, which are 'neither available nor desirable' (p. 468). Trivedi (2015) proposes a degree of flexibility in determining, what he calls, work-meaning by appealing to a hypothetically 'competent or appropriately backgrounded though fallible audience' (p. 710). Such an audience would have the contextually appropriate domain knowledge and would be of the intended field in terms of the systems model. Further still, Trivedi provides a stratified notion of intention in three parts: the art-making intention, which is the intention to make art; the categorial intention, what category the work is intended to belong to; and the semantic intention, which pertains to the work-meaning. Such an approach aligns with my earlier position that songs are *in potentia* with a prescribed agenda of qualities that must be determined, which then related to the satisfying or frustrating of audience expectations.

Such an ideal is pursued further still by Barthes (1977) and Foucault (1979) whose poststructuralist essays pose that reading is a performative act in which the meaning of a text is only realised by each unique reader in each unique reading. Similar to creative psychology's attempts to move away from the romantic ideals of the genius, Barthes states that the

> text is not a line of words realising a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. (p. 6).

Therefore, the text presented is not the sole product of the genius mind, but the reappropriation of other texts by the author. From this Barthes suggests that texts should not be deciphered but disentangled, resonating with Merleau-Ponty's 'knot of networks', as these are so entangled that it would be impossible to undo, and if it were undone it would no longer be recognisable. Foucault (1979) also suggests, in his four characteristics of the Author Function, that [1] 'texts are objects of appropriation' (p. 14), that are [2] 'linked to the juridical and institutional system' (p. 17) such as the use of the domain and field demonstrated in the systems model of creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013), but with a degree of responsibility. [3] Foucault claims that these texts are not spontaneous, but instead are developed, as per the appropriation of texts. Foucault also creates a distance between the author and the text by suggesting the that the Author Function [4] 'does not refer purely and simply to a real individual,' (p. 17) but that the author we perceive within a work is of that time and context in which the work was written, to be performed in the time and context of the reader. Westphal demonstrates this distancing, between the writer (the real person) and the author (as perceived by the reader), in the pseudonym writings of Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard would create the character of the author through which to write and, also, to discover the text, stating that 'To the corollary that he is a (co)reader of his own writings Kierkegaard adds the corollary that the reader is a (co)writer of these texts.' (p. 36) In my observations and theorising, I have explored the positioning of the author within the song based on its appropriation of texts, the sense of responsibility as affordance and burden, and how such concerns are entwined in the creative process.

2.3.2   *What is an Author?*

The title of author can be linked to the notion of authority as Roger Chartier (1994) states that an author was 'someone whose social position could lend 'authority' to an intellectual discourse.'(p. 59) Chartier (1994) also stresses the significance of the author's portrait so as 'to reinforce the notion that the writing is the expression of an individuality that gives authenticity to the work.' (p. 52) Both notions of authority and authenticity, with their etymology deriving from the Latin *augere*, to originate, infer a higher degree of truth and of ownership or responsibility. In the fields of scholarly and medical texts they 'become part of a corpus of works continually cited and tirelessly commented upon' (p. 58) which give the works, and therefore their authors, their authority. This application of authority is similar to what was observed in the systems model of creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; 2013), where a frequently cited, appropriated, or applied creative idea gains greater significance within the domain. As such, artists can become an authority on or within their mode of practice. In my

autoethnographic method, I have observed how I approached and negotiated my authority and authenticity within the creative products.

Although Chartier's notions of the author, as authenticity and authority, are very much focused on the individual, there are issues in works of multiple authors. Foucault suggests that 'discourses are objects of appropriation' with responsible owners. However, these texts are not spontaneous and can be gathered and reappropriated as he demonstrates with the example of Homer's Odyssey which has no actual author but is a collection of poems from various locations and times. Such an example can be demonstrated many times in popular music, where teams of writers or sampling are used to gather and/or reappropriate texts into new works, most prolifically in sampling. In my practice, there are examples of multiple writers, as well as contributors and influencers, in which the ideas and positions of authority and authenticity are explored. There are no examples of sampling of other copyrighted material in the present research as it is not part of my usual practice.

In 'What Is an Author?' (1979), Foucault addresses limiting his subject to that of the literary author, and not including 'painting, music and other arts' (p. 18) by broadening the potential subject to being the author of 'a theory, tradition, or discipline in which other books and authors will find their place. These authors are in a position which we will call "transdiscursive".' (ibid). That is to say that they overarch multiple discourses. Elevated from this position, Foucault suggests that Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud may be considered archetypal *founders of discursivity*, insofar as their works have sired ideas that have been taken up into theories and disciplines which stand apart from any previous theories or disciplines. Foucault elaborates on this position so as to re-examine the work, *Das Kapital*, is to modify the theory, Marxism, unlike re-examining Galileo, which would not modify cosmology. There would seem to be little opportunity for a founder of discursivity within the arts, but certainly cases of transdiscursivity where an artist has been the author of a theory, tradition, or discipline. In *Rewriting the Death of the Author*, Chris Watkin (2015) applies Jacques Ranciere's observation that

> in the age of digitally distributed text and conceptual art, the idea of the author as owner has not disappeared but has shifted, and the locus of ownership is now not the object but the idea (p. 38)

Foucault's suggestion of the transdiscursive would appear to precede Ranciere's notion of ownership shifting to ideas. Watkin continues this theme by stating that

> mechanical reproduction and the loss of the isolable 'original' work did not stop the virulent resurgence of the cult of the author in French avant-garde auteur cinema… Nor was the pretension of the auteur blunted by the collaborative nature of filmmaking or the technical

and industrial mediation standing between the genius and his or her public... with conceptual art the idea of the work became radically independent of the physical shaping of any particular material. (p. 39)

Returning to Foucault's characteristics of the Author Function, Watkin's observations of auteur cinema's blatant collaborative nature, with people, technology, and industry, propels Foucault's suggestion that authorship does not refer to an individual. The multiplicity of creative and technical inputs attests to the texts – or voices – that are appropriated into the work, and that the work is not spontaneous but constructed from these texts. However, there remains a system of ownership as that film will be branded under the name of an individual, usually the director. Based on the autoethnographic observations and theories, my model of authorship in songwriting draws from the models and systems of authorship, as discussed above, in the creative process as well as the perceived models of authorship that are constructed within the creative work. The collaborative nature of songwriting practice is recognised as is the auteur branding of the resultant song. The listener's perceptions of the song are considered but are acknowledged as unobtainable as a primary source in the creative moment. In response to the listener's perceptions, I have developed my model of authorship in songwriting to include the conceptions of the songwriter. These conceptions are the signposts for the field to use in valuing the effectiveness of the song.

2.4 A Thematic Review of Style and Voice

Having established that the role of the author(s) is to create and be responsible for an idea beyond that of the text, using the term text to incorporate all forms of artefact production such as book, composition, or artwork, Watkin (2015) highlights that the law does not protect the idea. 'Ideas are not owned; instantiated ideas are owned. […] the idea itself cannot be sold, owned, or protected because copyright law protects the expression of ideas, not the ideas themselves.' (p. 41) I attempt to circumnavigate post-facto issues applied by law, such as ownership and copyright, that 'originality and ownership refer, and have always referred, to idea and material in parallel, to that amalgam of idea and material called "style"' (p. 41) as a mind-set that is shared in historical and social practices; this tangible example of the style could be referred to as a proof of ownership of an idea. Merleau-Ponty (1994) suggests that in the creative act the artist 'puts his [sic] *style* there, and he has to win it as much from his own attempts as from the paintings of others or from the world' (p. 89), that is what Csikszentmihalyi (2013) would refer to as part of the domain acquisition. Further still, Merleau-Ponty (1994) states that the artist does not have the work laid out before them, but it is through the artist that the work is created with 'neither total determinism nor a total freedom' (Landes, 2013, p. 37). The deterministic aspect of creativity has been explored as applied through the systems model of creativity, and that the product is therefore constructed

of many other texts (Foucault, 1979) and through many other voices (Becker, 2008). In discussing style and artistic voice my autoethnographic method attempts to uncover the agency which is afforded to the songwriter(s), and how a unified voice is constructed by the multiple texts and voices as those which apply structure.

It should made clear that the term artistic voice is used here not to refer to the bodily human voice of a singer, but the disembodied voice that we perceive within the song. As Frith (1996) states, the '"[v]oice" in this sense describes a sense of personality that is familiar as the special way a person has with words: we immediately know who's speaking.' (p. 184) Who is speaking in the case of my practice is the (postulated) author of the song, not the writer(s) or the singer. It is the amalgamation of all the texts and voices into a singular siphonophore. Hennion (1990) describes the manner in which the singer embodies this voice, as found in the text, 'in the form of the "character" he [sic] impersonates' (p. 188) to which I would expand to acknowledge the multiplicity of voices that are incorporated in conceiving the singular voice of the character. Frith (1996) states that 'song language is used to say something about both the singer [as the embodied character] and the implied audience' (p. 166), but I have not included the listener's perception or responses to the song as my observations are limited to the creating of the song as it occurs between artist and work in the creative moment prior to its engagement with the systems model. It does include my intended responses, as informed by my knowledge of the field (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013) but this will be discussed in the Imagined Audience below (2.5). The term voice, despite being disembodied, is appropriate whether spoken or written as it refers to the way in which we assess the sincerity and trustworthiness of other people. As Frith (1996, p. 197) highlights, it corresponds with our ability to trust in the singer, to feel like we know them and therefore like them. Similarly, Long and Barber (2015) in their discussion of voicing passion, highlight the importance of passion as a 'quality that serves to affirm individual integrity and authenticity.' (p. 152) as part of the personal reward in the affective labour of songwriting. While they concede that this is a romanticised aspect of the practice, I would support this as a fundamental aspect that facilitates the songwriter in being sincere. Such sincerity they later refer to as integrity when discussing how audiences attach themselves to work (specifically, the works of Paul Williams (p. 153)), these concepts of integrity and sincerity will be explored in more depth when discussing how songwriters construct the imagined audience as a means for valuing creative decisions (section 2.6).

Understanding and theories regarding the explicit components of music, melody, harmony, rhythm, etc. are well established. Style, however, remains allusive as many seek to answer, 'what makes this sound so good?' but struggle to grasp it beyond those explicit components.

> The meaning in question is to be found "down below," in those areas that carry the public's imagination, its secret desires and hidden passions—one could almost define such categories as *socio-sentimental*. They include key phrases, sounds, images, attitudes, gestures, and signs, *infralinguistics* categories which are all the more difficult to pin down insofar as they escape definition by the official language, and are not autonomous but inseparable from the social context within which a given group attributes a special significance to them. At the same time these infralinguistic categories are ephemeral; as soon as language intervenes, they give up that terrain and re-form elsewhere. Slang, a form of dress, a hair style, a motorcycle, and above all music, that music which "means" nothing, are all the expressions of that which cannot be put into rational discourse—which is always the discourse of other people. (Hennion, 1990, pp. 185-186) [my italics]

Hennion's discussion refers to the *socio-sentimental* and *infralinguistics* as informing the *meaning* of the stimulus in my research this would be the song. And corresponding with the previous discussion on authorship, these *meanings* are contingent on all other factors, such as time, place, subject and object, and, therefore, cannot be fixed. West (2016) develops his ideology from Webster (1996), who suggests the songwriter acquires *aesthetic sensitivity*, from which West states that the songwriter requires the 'ability to shape sound structures to capture personal feeling in the form of *idiolect*' (2016, p. 156) [my italics]. Both the aesthetic sensitivity and idiolect refer to the artist's ability to apply knowledge of socio-sentimental infralinguistics, and in applying these to materials they generate *style.*

The ability to channel one's knowledge and understanding of the culture and field into a creative output is not a talent in the romantic sense (Boden, 2003). Where previously it has been commented that creative products are not spontaneous (Foucault, 1979) it is equally applicable to state that the ability to become creative is also not spontaneous. As Becker states

> Artists usually develop their own innovative materials over a period of time, creating a body of convention peculiar to their own work... Those who collaborate with them, especially audiences, learn these more particular, peculiar, and idiosyncratic conventions in the course of experience with individual works and bodies of work. The artist may be learning them in the same way, in the course of production of a work or a body of work, or have developed them in experiments never made public. (2008, p. 64)

Often analysis will concern itself with the final presented artefact such as the published book, score or released recording. Further still, an analysis of a body of work will provide a quantifiable validity to the analysis to reveal and confirm those "peculiar conventions". In terms of judging intentionalism, the use of the published artefact appears to be a reasonable certainty that the work presented is what the artist intended. I have explored the "experiments" of a learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) that would usually remain unpublished, similar to sketch studies (Donin, 2012; Goldman, 2016), verbal protocol analysis (Smagorinsky, 1994; Collins, 2007; Bennett, 2014a) and hybrids of these approaches (Zembylas and

Niederauer, 2018). I have observed that through these experiments the artistic voice germinates and that the best examples of the voice or style are selected to be progressed into finished and released recordings.

It has become a common parlance in the music industry to refer to an artist or band as being a brand (Marshall, 2013; Behr, 2015), especially if they have marketed themselves beyond their art. A case in point would be Justin Bieber, whose name and image are applied to a range of products beyond his music. In McIntyre's survey of audience perceptions of 'song', 64% of respondents included the 'projected media image, found in the press and on the video screen' as part of the song. While it may be argued that what these respondents are referring to should be referred to as brand and not song, it is important to note the significance of brand in the user experience of song. The term brand is an ambiguous term similar to style, when it is used as a lived gesture it flexes to suit the context to which it is applied. Murphy (1987) identifies three characteristics of brand: that legal systems recognise the intellectual property, such as trademarks and design, as to be protected; that brand is that which distinguishes one product or service from another similar product or service; and that what constitutes the brand includes both the tangible and the non-tangible factors. Thus far, it could be said that the artist's style is certainly what distinguishes them from other artists in the same field, and that it is derived from both tangible and intangible qualities. The 2013-15 lawsuit between the Marvin Gaye estate and Robin Thicke, Pharrell Williams, and Ti Harris, implies that the law does recognise the intangible qualities of sound without the tangible qualities (Bennett, 2014b; Angles, 2015). In this is case, the Marvin Gaye estate were able to successfully make claims for a breach of copyright regarding the 'DNA' of the two songs similar constructions – sound, feel and groove - despite a lack of breach in musicological terms – melody, rhythm, or harmony. The concept of brand is also similar to the concept of authorship insofar as it is a constructed position that attains its final meaning with the receiver's perception. 'What people think of a brand is what counts' (Landa, 2005, p. 8) and this is contingent on the experience the user has with the brand, leading to the significance, of what Landa calls, brand experience. Further still, Martin Kornberger (2010) highlights the significance of branding, as an experience, through Edward Bernay's application of psychoanalysis in propaganda and, what he later rebranded as, public relations. Bernay's method to win public support, either for US President Woodrow Wilson or for women to smoke, was not to change the 'product' but to change the public's relation to that product. Kornberger (2010) defines a difference between product and brand as 'products are designed to match needs, brands are created to produce desire' (p. 8) and that desire reproduces itself endlessly as desire. The differences between "style" and "brand" may seem to be vague or arbitrary but I propose that it involves a shift in perspective from

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the artist. Whereas style is associated with art, brand is associated with commodification and capitalism, and this results in a paradigm shift from making music for oneself to making music for the unknown other; a distinction that defines the ideology of a commercially-orientated songwriter from a therapeutic or hobbying songwriter. As such, with definition of brand helps further define the position of my practice as a commercially-orientated practice.

2.5   A Thematic Review of The Imagined Audience

Having established the paradigm shift in a songwriter's mind-set as moving from an introspective-artistic practitioner towards a service/product-providing professional, the following discussion is regarding how the songwriter constructs and applies their knowledge of the potential audience within the creative moment and prior to its being shared beyond the creator(s). Csikszentmihalyi (2013) expands on this processual relationship in what he terms internalising the system in which one must not only 'work within a creative system but must also reproduce the system within his or her mind. In other words, the person [individual] must learn the rules and the content of the domain, as well as the criteria of selection, the preferences of the field.' (p. 47) A great deal of emphasis is placed on the domain acquisition by a number of theorists (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013; Bennett, 2014a; McIntyre *et al.*, 2016) but less emphasis is given to 'how important it is to reproduce in one's mind the criteria of judgement that the *field* uses' (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013, p. 49). Thompson and McIntyre (2013) emphasise the importance of field knowledge in the pedagogy of studio recording education in terms of its form and access. Thompson (2019) offers an in-depth account of the interactions of the field in the popular music industry. I suggest that further work could and should be undertaken in understanding how these systems of internalised and, for pedagogy, how we support this internalising. Similar to the previous discussion on style, many writers have loosely discussed this idea but often using differing terminology or viewing through differing lenses. For instance, West (2016) writes that

> Recognizing the critical listener to be the ideal sounding board, numerous theorists emphasize the notion of creativity as a multidimensional interactive process between the creative individual and his or her environment (Rhodes, 1961; Chamber, 1973; Treffinger, Sorore and Cross, 1993) (p. 44)

and that

> One potential problem with trying to come across as the kind of character we think people will want to hear from is that it requires us to project a character we don't know to an audience we have never met. (p. 148)

Yet, West appears to find some resolve to this issue through Swales (1999) when he states that

In keeping with the likely expectations of the receiver, structure and content should be shaped according to the genre of the discourse community in question; members of the discourse community should share a set of communicative purposes, and a rationale for the genre recognizable by the community should shape and influence the content and style of the communicative interaction (Swales, 1990: 58). (West, 2016, p. 179)

Considering West's "critical listener" and Swales "discourse community" as the equivalent of Trivedi's (2015) "competent or appropriately backgrounded though fallible audience" we can conclude that in each of these scenarios that there is a trajectory of the work in question. This trajectory is towards an Other, beyond the writer, and whether they are known or not, it is assumed that they have a similar domain knowledge to that of the artist or writer. West's (2016) "problem" of the unknown character and unknown audience, is resolved in the domain acquisition and internalisation of the system which McIntyre highlights as being crucial components of knowledge prior to creativity. Returning to Csikszentmihalyi's (2013) four main conditions for creativity, he emphasises the importance of listening to colleagues in the field as part of the problem solving aspects of creativity. These dialogues between individual and field appear to operate as per Hennion's (1989) example where the musical product is presented to various audiences for critique. It is through domain knowledge and the internalising of the system that my autoethnographic method has observed the creation of the imagined audience, as a hypothetical audience, which guides the creative process.

Following the examples described by Hennion (1989), it is observed that the field is constructed of various proximities and stratifications. Hennion breaks down this concept of the field in his analytical description of the music making process when he states that

…there is a series of iterations, the construction of models and experiments, progressive attempts to extend what has first been localized in the studio. There is a continual process of simultaneous production/consumption in operation – by means of interposed representatives – until the final success. There is at no point a frontier, a moment when production and its techniques are abandoned for the great unknown: the public and its tastes. (pp. 401-402)

These iterations are performed through widening degrees of the field which Becker (2008) referred to as the art world. In Hennion's (1989) observations these "representatives" included songwriters, musicians, and engineers within the studio environments. Beyond these representatives are the real listeners, listening committees, friends, and some accountant's secretary, as the public. Each step moves through another filter away from the "aficionados" and their specialist knowledge of the domains conventions, towards a 'potential audience… of whom no special knowledge can be expected.' (Becker, 2008, p. 46) West (2016) alludes to a similar process when he states that there are

A number of obstacles to the successful realization of the paradigm, including the difficulty in translating creative processes outside of the original sphere of expertise… To bridge the divide, songwriters are obliged to engage with degrees of creativity. (p. 44)

These degrees of creativity refer to what Bennett calls the thresholds of creativity, where the artist works between plagiarism and incomprehensibility. In terms of the art world audience of Becker, the aficionados occupy the incomprehensible end of this spectrum, rejecting those works that lack such specialist knowledge in their application, and the well-socialised members of society occupy the plagiaristic end, rejecting those works which lack sufficient novelty.

The field is the social component of the systems model of creativity, consisting of those socially active participants (Becker, 2008) with the ability to 'affect the structure of the domain' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, p. 330). These participants have specific tasks to perform and although these roles may be allocated arbitrarily, the role is considered "quasi-sacred" (Becker, 2008) by those participants. It has been highlighted previously, that the artist is afforded a considerable degree of privilege through which they may violate the rules of society and common sense without fear of reprisal (ibid). With this comes, and could even be expected, the ability to flex or break the rules of convention within a domain, as is the nature of creativity. This agency may appear to be centred on the individual but as has been discussed, this agency comes with many constraints from the domain conventions and the systems of the field (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999) and as such results in a form of distributed agency (Zembylas and Niederauer, 2018). Hennion (1990) describes music producers as 'the representatives of a kind of imaginary democracy established by pop music [that] do not manipulate the public so much as take its pulse' (p. 205). In his observations (1989) it is the producer who guides the song towards its appropriate domain location by identifying the field(s) that it must pass through to be accepted. Key participants of the field of popular music include journalist and promoters, which Sean Devine (in West, 2016) labels 'the tastemakers' (p. 204) whose job it is to either reject substandard works, or to accept and guide those works into the domain. McIntyre (2016b) highlights how music management deploy degrees of social, cultural, symbolic and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1993) through their 'networks, contacts, skills, awards, sales figures and contracts with financial imperatives attached' (p. 52). In all roles occupied by such participants, from the individual and throughout the field, there is agency afforded through such capitals, but this agency is contingent on all those other participants and is therefore also a distributed agency. Further to this, the process is not linear but in fact behaves as a knot of relations which may be impossible to untangle. In terms of the success of the song, no single person has absolute agency to ensure success and as demonstrated by Becker (2008), all art works are subject

to art worlds as contributors and influencers. While it is not my focus to include these interactions, instead focusing on the creative moment and its pedagogical values, it is observed how the degrees of agency on the song lessen through the wider field. The songwriter's agency diminishes to a point where the song becomes established as the final product. At such a point, the agency of music industry personnel to market, promote and distribute these songs often exceeds that of the artist's agency in these areas.

Focusing on the knowledge being learned and developed of the field and its systems, by the individual artist, some of the literature in creativity alludes to this knowledge but has so far given more attention to uncovering the domain knowledge which is required. Webb *et al.* (2002), in discussing Bourdieu, refers to 'an understanding of the rules, regulations and values of the field' (p. xi), and although Bourdieu's use of field refers to what Csikszentmihalyi would call domain, I wish to emphasise that such qualities are constructed and applied by people in the field, which are then demonstrated in products of the domain. Paton (2016) refers to the 'expectations of the field' (p. 30) and the '(often internalised) set of criteria of judging' (p. 36). In elaborating on this criteria of judgement, Csikszentmihalyi (2013) quotes Jacob Rabinow who states that 'you must be able to throw out the junk immediately without even saying it.' (p. 49) and in explaining how to recognise the various forms of junk, Rabinow states that

> [t]o say what is beautiful you have to take a sophisticated group of people, people who know that particular art and have seen a lot of it, and say this is good art… And that doesn't mean everybody can vote on it; they don't know enough… They know because they've been trained in it. (p. 50)

Before moving from a creative mode of thinking into the editorial mode, West (2016), in discussing his own songwriting practice, describes how he steps back from the work so as to consider the outside perspective. Somewhat counter to Rabinow, West states that

> From the perspective of the songwriter, to be conscious of such communicative detail during the creative process would evoke the risk of becoming stifled by critical awareness of how the work will be received… if the songwriter is imagining the reaction of the listener, the focus of the intended expression is likely to be compromised. Consequently, any manipulation of tense is likely to take place in the editorial phase that exists post initial draft and prior to recording. (p. 49)

This may suggest that he finds the two modes of thinking to be in conflict with one another, or this may also be a trope of West's more traditional linear approach to songwriting. However, West also quotes Iain Archer, who states that 'With the amount of writing I do, I find myself working intuitively and cerebrally' (p. 170) and that 'a songwriter is able to discern good or bad ideas as they emerge, shaping the material that survives into successful art.' (p. 177), which resonates more closely with Rabinow's statement. Regardless of whether the

creative individual edits intuitively whilst creating or demarcates the task, it is evident that they apply an editorial process for which they will be using a similar criterion for judgement as those within the field. The success of their creative outputs will be partially dependent on their ability to construct a criterion of judgement as close to that of their intended field's and her execution of this criterion on their creative work. I have it is observed how this body of knowledge, of the field and its systems, is utilised within the creative moment in what I refer to as the imagined audience.

What I have termed 'the Imaginary Audience' (similar to Born's (2010) use) has been alluded to by other writers using terms such as 'implied audience' (Frith, 1996) 'imaginary democracy' (Hennion, 1989; 1990), 'an unknown entity', 'critical listener', 'mysterious populace' (West, 2016), 'the field' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; 1999; 2009; 2013) 'well-socialised member of society', 'active participant' (Becker, 2008) or most often, referring to the abstracted concept of the listener, audience, or public. Csikszentmihalyi's (1999; 2009; 2013) systems model demonstrates how the song has a trajectory from the songwriter to the domain via the field, although it is not a linear process as may be misread. Bennett has identified how the rules, conventions, and values of a specific domain, such as a genre, impose a number of constraints on the song that must be acknowledged for the song to be accepted into the domain. And Hennion (1989) has observed how a widening field of listeners is used to test and refine the song as a process of trial and error. From the systems model, the songwriter must learn the rules, regulations and values that are present in the domain and the field as two separate bodies of knowledge. From the domain they must acquire the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1993) of the symbols that are pregnant with meaning (Hennion, 1989) in what will be referred to as domain acquisition (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013). And from the field they must learn the values of the people from which her criterion of judgement should align with, and how the song should be presented so as to be accepted into the domain. I have observed how the song is given a domain trajectory from which knowledge of the domain and its respective field is learned and used to construct an Imaginary Audience. This is tested and refined as learning cycle of the creative process. As indicated by Archer (West, 2016) and Rabinow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013), the ultimate aim of the observed songwriter is to develop a fluidity in the application of these two bodies of knowledge and modes of thinking, and it is my aim to observe how this knowledge is learnt and the modes of thinking developed.

2.6   A Thematic Review of Valuing in Songwriting

In nearly all theories of the creative process there is, to generalise, a moment of openness (Collins, 2007; 2016), play (Boden, 2003) and exploration (Zembylas and Niederauer, 2018)

(more formally referred to as preparation by Wallas (2014) and Csikszentmihalyi (2013)). Such actions in music making require a *doing*, be that playing an instrument or writing. Following this comes a moment of incubation (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013; Wallas, 2014), or understanding (Zembylas and Niederauer, 2018), then illumination (Wallas, 2014), insight and evaluation (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013), or valuing (Zembylas and Niederauer, 2018), which are the internal processes. These are then concluded with a final action of verification (Bastick, 1982; Wallas, 2014), elaboration (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013), and making (Zembylas and Niederauer, 2018). Such theories, taken out of their full context, are abstractions of the larger, complex and fluid process, and so other theories attempt to reconcile these processes such as "problem-generating and problem-solving" (Collins, 2007) "intuition and verification" (Bastick, 1982), "divergent and convergent thinking" (Cropley, 2001) or "IF>THEN" algorithms (Buss, 2012). West's (2016) description of his writing process may neatly map over to a number of these theories but Archer's (ibid) "intuitive and cerebral" flow represents the interconnectedness and complexity of these moments which cannot always be observed. I recognise the non-linear and complex nature of the creative practice but also that the various processual moments described are all contingent in the overall creative process. It is in the problem-solving, divergent thinking, and valuing that my autoethnographic method draws new insight into how the criterion for judgement is constructed. I adopt Zembylas' (2018) term, valuing, to refer to this sub-process of creativity.

As previously observed, there is a healthy body of literature with regard to the domain knowledge, through domain acquisition and internalised knowledge (Bennett, 2012a; Csikszentmihalyi, 2013; McIntyre *et al.*, 2016; Velikovsky, 2016), which are of course in play whilst valuing a potential creative idea. Such knowledge and its application in popular music has been explicitly drawn out as hierarchical codes of langue, norms, sub-norms, dialects, styles, genres, sub-codes, and idiolects (Middleton, 1990, p. 174), the upper levels of which are part of the "well-civilised society" (Becker, 2008) and the lower form the "genre rules" (Frith, 1996). A song's trajectory will pass through these levels and be required to conform to an option at each level as various forms of constraint (Bennett, 2012a). In my observations, evidence of domain knowledge was prevalent but not always as internalised knowledge. Here it is theorised how knowledge *of* the domain and its systems and structures, can overcome issues in domain knowledge. It is highlighted that there is a gap in the influence of the field on the valuing of ideas, with its rules, regulations, and values, as populated by gatekeepers and audiences. The autoethnographic theories draw new insights on how a habitus ('a feel for the game' Bourdieu, p. 5 editor's intro) is learned, developed, and deployed within the creative process through a criterion of judgement which is drawn from the imagined audience.

Chapter 3. Methodology

The methodology for observing and theorising the learning that occurs in a songwriting utilises phenomenology to access the lived experience of the songwriter and a structuralist approach to theorising these observations. Phenomenology was suggested as an appropriate method by Scott (2016) and also satisfies my intention to develop new knowledge of the lived experience of learning in songwriting. The structuralist approach to theorising encourages a generalised perspective that utilises, conforms with, and supports many of the current theories in creativity (cf. Csikszentmihalyi, 2014a) and songwriting (cf. Bennett, 2014a; McIntyre, 2016b). The ontology that underpins my method of observing is developed from a Merleau-Pontian phenomenology which informs the belief that observation is afforded by our being-in the-world through our corporeal form, subverting the mind/body duality. As lived experiences, the phenomena we observe are subjected to a plethora of influences that shape our perceptions. As such my autoethnographic method does not attempt to control the phenomenon – developing and learning songwriting – but instead observe it in its most natural state and accounting for as much of my perception in observation as possible. The findings of these observations are considered through a structuralist lens using key theories from Bourdieu and Csikszentmihalyi, along with a lesser extent of others.

The nature of my autoethnographic method is detailed and justified in how I have drawn from evocative and analytical autoethnographic methods, and how this supports the pedagogical intentions of this thesis and my involvement as practitioner-researcher. As such, the emergent nature of autoethnography allows the research questions to evolve and be refined during the research process. The evocative story-telling approach was deemed inappropriate for this thesis, and a more straight-forward writing style was applied as it felt more aligned with the phenomenological reduction (Ihde, 1986).

The use of video footage and the subsequent turn to reflective practice as the primary source for my autoethnographic method is justified by the appropriateness of the data presented through these two modes. While video footage is rich in observable micro-decision making, such as that observed by Collins (2007), this data did not contribute to answering the research question of how style is learned in songwriting, which has been theorised as a larger decision making process aligned within the systems model of creativity. Reflective practice accounted for the personal experience and background behind the decision making processes as well as being a natural act of the creative practitioner, whereas video documentation was found to be intrusive. The processing of this data through a Grounded Theory Approach of data saturation aligns with Steven Pace's (2012) proposed autoethnographic method.

The selection and interactions with interview participants for triangulation of the autoethnographic theories are discussed and validated addressing issues of the participants' typicality and relationship to myself. Issues of the small number of participants in identifying behaviours and selection bias are dealt with by the range of approaches to and status of their practices and the range of dynamics in these relationships that counteract one another.

The range of data collected and analysed is broken down and linked to the appropriate appendices for further information.

A condensed account of my background and the context of my songwriting experience is given with support from appropriate literature to anchor and validate the typicality of my practice without the need to conform to a uniform or template approach to songwriting. The evolving mode of my songwriting and entry into a less familiar style-domain are detailed and justified by the opportunity they present to observe my practice while in a state of learning new knowledge and skills.

This is followed by a brief account of songwriting in higher education as the specific pedagogy in which this research is concerned. The first part provides a brief survey of songwriting in British Higher Education Institutes, identifying explicit inclusion as or within programmes of study. This geographical context is supplemented with a timeline trajectory inferred from previous surveyors compared to the current context (circa. 2020). This is then contextualised with the accounts of songwriting educators to provide the reader with a firmer understanding of the educational landscape which the songwriting pedagogy sits and to corroborate some the forthcoming approaches, attitudes, findings, and theories.

The overall structure of this methodology is to navigate from the wider concerns of ontology and follow this through to my autoethnographic method deployed to ensure robust and transparent description of my approach to researching how songwriting is learnt.

3.1   Phenomenological Observations and Structuralist Theorising

3.1.1   *An Existential Phenomenological Ontology for Observing Songwriting*

The approach to observing the songwriting practice is based on an existential phenomenological ontology which, for the most part, is derived from Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception (1945), starting with the challenging of philosophy's ontological dualism; empiricism and intellectualism. In his extensive study of perception, Merleau-Ponty highlights that neither empiricism nor intellectualism can achieve a primordial perception as

> Empiricism cannot see that we need to know what we are looking for, otherwise we would not be looking for it, and intellectualism fails to see that we need to be ignorant of what we are looking for, or equally again we should not be searching. (1945, p. 28)

For Merleau-Ponty, our existence is as an object or as a consciousness is a false one and an ontology that starts from such a position will inevitably fall for either 'the experience error' – where things are taken as being within our consciousness of them – or in assuming a transcendental ego – where the researcher is outside and above the experience of perceiving. In the terms of observing songwriting, I started with an idea that I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the decision-making process in songwriting – as gut reactions – and how these decision-making skills were learned. The processes in question were not palpable and although other research has been undertaken with regard to decision making, in fields such as business management (Proctor, 2014), neuroscience (Rilling and Sanfey, 2011) and cognitive psychology (Schwab, 2008), these studies are concerned with decisions where outcomes could be assessed with a degree of probability leading to a logical decision. These did not reflect the process as I understood it as a songwriting practitioner where factors of novelty and surprise are essential parts of the decision-making equation.

According to Don Ihde (1986), we have three degrees of perception: the core, which is the thing that holds our attention; the field, which is all that is available to use to perceive but that we are not currently focused towards; and the horizon, which are the outer most limits of what we may perceive as a rolling horizon. In observing the learning of songwriting, what is being perceived is the internal processes of conscious and unconscious thought, of embodied intelligence and a developing habitus. In a fully naturalised songwriting practice, where creative decisions are made with the minimal about conscious thought, these actions are 'routine' and 'banal' (Long and Barber, 2017, p. 569) to the songwriter, who trusts her gut reactions, typified in the creative practices of Iain Archer (in West, 2016) and Jacob Rabinow (in Csikszentmihalyi, 2013). Through teaching and studying songwriting, my gut reactions of songwriting were within the *field* of my perception but my aim was to bring these processes towards the *core* of my perceptions. In observing the practice, as I have perceived it, I have remained conscious that I am not detached from my observations or the objects of my observation, and that all are subject to a 'knot of relations' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. 456) where the phenomenon beyond its own concrete qualities is attached to a plethora of semiotic, emotional, cultural and worldly ties as lived experiences in actions, interactions and perceptions. This concept will now be further unpacked, explored, and applied into my research of a songwriting pedagogy.

A core in question I am pursuing is 'how style is learned in songwriting'. A Kantian approach that we can only perceive and understand what is given to use through experience – *a posteriori* – would be a fine place to start in analysing songwriting through the song.

However, as previously indicated, I am seeking to draw from the actual act of songwriting and not its resultant song – the process, not the product. A Kantian philosophy would allow that we may observe the qualities of the song and that our innate conception of the song would apply the meaning of these qualities. Yet, in such an approach the act of songwriting remains as an unknowable object; the *Ding an sich*. Scott (2016) has suggested the appropriateness of exploring songwriting as a lived experience through phenomenology, an approach that claims the unknowable is approachable through our experience. While Husserl's phenomenology aimed to get to the 'truth of an object by considering our direct experience of that object rather than our expected experience of that object.' (Fleet, 2009, p. 41) his application of a transcendental ego alienated a significant number of his followers (Ihde, 1986, p. 46). The transcendental ego presupposes the ability to be outside of the experience, to reflect on the experience looking down. For Merleau-Ponty, in trying to understand the thing-itself – the core phenomenon – he could not escape his own body as a facilitator of his being and his being-in-the-world. His corporeal being is what allowed him to sense and perceive objects in the world and therefore the mind could never access a primordial perception of the object, to which he states 'knowledge never has any hold of its objects' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. 15). However, he does not follow the reductions of Descartes in dismissing the world, he believed that questioning the existence of the world was the wrong question, 'we must not, therefore, wonder whether we really perceive a world, we must instead say: the world is what we perceive.' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. xvi). By centring his position away from consciousness as thinking about the world – either as Cartesian or Transcendental Phenomenology – and towards his body as being *in* and interacting *with* the world, Merleau-Ponty moves from an ontology of 'I think' into 'I can'. I start from such a position that I can write songs and from there, I observe on how these actions are learned.

As per the previously discussed position, I accept that I – as the autoethnographer –cannot claim an objective position – such as the transcendental ego – but am throughout both researcher and practitioner, the observer and the observed. Merleau-Ponty discusses this dual position at some length but best demonstrates it with the example of touching his left hand with his right, where both hands are touching and touched. These two modes do not, for Merleau-Ponty, oscillate from one to the other but exist in a state of alterity - which 'is basically synonymous with otherness and radical difference, but it also emphasizes change and transformation in a way these terms might not' (Reynolds, ND).

> When I press my two hands together, it is not a matter of two sensations felt together as one perceives two objects placed side by side, but an ambiguous set-up in which both hands can alternate the role of 'touching' and being 'touched. (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. 93)

However, both experiences remain unique and never resolve. The reversibility of this position became the cornerstone to Merleau-Ponty's later ontology (1969) and ultimately leads to the necessity of a hyper reflection – a reflection that accounts for all reflections including itself. 'The reflection recuperates everything except itself as an effort of recuperation, it clarifies everything except its own role' (p. 33). The ideal of this hyper-reflection may appear to fall into Bertrand Russell's Paradox (Frege *et al.*, 1980) whereby the reflection becomes trapped in an iterative loop trying to look at the back of its own head. However, as previously discussed, phenomenology seeks to avoid the attempt to observe a phenomenon from a transcendental position, and is, instead, taken up in the lived experience of the *Dasein*.

> I am the absolute source, my existence does not stem from my antecedents, from my physical and social environment; instead it moves out towards them and sustains them, for I alone bring into being for myself. (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. ix)

Heidegger characterizes being-in-the-world as '*concern*' (Heidegger, 1924, p. 7), that which we do and are focused on as the natural attitude through to 'ek-stase/ecstasy… as intentionality outside of the self' (Landes, 2013, p. 68). And so the limitations of reflection are overcome by the belief that time, like space, is nothing and that only the present at hand is available to us (Heidegger, 1924). Therefore, *what* happened does not concern us as this is passed, but our reflections are part of our present, and as our present is "running ahead to the past" whilst "cultivating a future present of indeterminacies" (Heidegger, 1924) we can, and should, *be* reflective and reflexive; like Merleau-Ponty's hands that are both touched and touching. I have chosen to apply this in terms of reflexivity. In Gestalt terms (Merleau-Ponty and Fisher, 1963),[9] I have observed the foreground (*figure*) of my practice, then through critical reflection have traced these back to decisions operating in the *background* of my practice, then I have, reflexively, appropriated these theories into my creative practice as an embodied intelligence enacted in songwriting. This process was reiterated countless times throughout the project as it was both a conscious and unconscious exercise, and forever progressively moving forward and never resolving itself. These reiterative and reflexive actions are enabled by my autoethnographic method which allows for the freedom to discover what we do not yet know.

3.1.2   *Theorising Songwriting through Structuralism*

The application of structuralism to the study of songwriting is a common theme in the literature review. For example, McIntyre *et al.* (2016) and Bennett (2014a) both make extensive use of Csikszentmihalyi's (2014b) Systems Model of Creativity to explain the songwriting process. McIntyre *et al.* (2016) also use Bourdieu's habitus to describe the

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[9] Merleau-Ponty's use of Gestalt is derived from Gurwitsch and supports his pursuit that there is the known (figure) and unknown (background), and that the whole is not simply a sum of its parts.

decision-making actions of the songwriter. Both Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu moved from phenomenology to structuralism to develop sedimentation and habitus (respectively), but where Bourdieu broke away from phenomenology Merleau-Ponty carried forward his focus on the lived experience to inform his structuralist theories. As such, Merleau-Ponty's work both supports the transition from phenomenological observation to structuralist theorisation. This also demonstrates the link between the two and how the lived experience can be accounted for within structuralist theories through embodied intelligence to habituality.

Merleau-Ponty uses a variety of situations to illustrate how our bodies, not our minds, guide our actions, and how the mind can in fact interfere with these actions. His example of the golfer, who ponders on his stance or swing, can lose form *because* he attempts to think his way through the actions (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. 153)resonates with West's (2016) demarcating the creative and editorial roles in his songwriting. In Merleau-Ponty's example, we assume this to be an experienced golfer who would be said to have developed his habitual ability to successfully swing his club. This ability is formed by his embodiment of the club, extending his own bodily reach and experience, so as to interact with the ball. This is what Merleau-Ponty refers to as *the intentional arch.* Paraphrasing Ihde (1986), we could say the 'golfer-is-club-directed-towards-the-ball'. The golfer is not *thinking* about his interaction with the club, the club is embodied and would no further be considered in action then a hand would be while it is writing. Another example of Merleau-Ponty's, expanded on by Reynolds (ND), is of the embodied intelligence of driving a car.

> We are intimately aware of how a particular car's gearshift needs to be treated, its ability to turn, accelerate, brake etc, and importantly, also of the dimensions of the vehicle. When we reflect on our own parking, it is remarkable that there are so few little bumps considering how many times we are actually forced to come very close. Indeed, even when reversing many drivers need not really monitor the progress of their car, because they 'know' (in the sense of a harmony between aim and intention) what result the various movements of the steering wheel are likely to induce. The car is *absorbed* into our body schema with almost the same precision that we have regarding our own spatiality. ([my italics])

Jack Perricone, former chair of Songwriting at Berklee College of Music, also adopts the driving analogy but in describing songwriting

> The one question my students most often ask is, "When you compose a song, do you really think of [the technique under discussion]?" I say, "Yes, I do, especially when I get stuck." But then I explain that another more important phenomenon usually occurs while in the throes of writing: because I have *absorbed knowledge*, it is available to me at a pace that is faster than thought. I liken the way this happens to learning to drive a car. In learning to drive, there are so many things to think about at once, it seems nearly impossible to put them all together. Yet driving, after a short time, becomes second nature. We absorb the bit-by-bit information and somehow do what was once thought impossible… Just as in driving, if you only use your rational mind in composing a song, you will most likely have an undesirable result - a dry, unmoving group of notes, logically organized, but emotionally barren. (2000 preface to Melody in Songwriting [my italics]).

It is a small step but the pivoting point through these two examples is not the driving itself but the notion that knowledge is absorbed into the body, not the mind, to become *embodied intelligence,* which Merleau-Ponty refers to as *habituality*: the 'system of motor or perceptual powers…[as] lived-through meanings which moves towards its equilibrium' (1945, p. 153). As previously noted, it is the body that anchors us *within* the world not as a vehicle for our consciousness but as that consciousness itself. The way in which we recognise, interact and process through our senses is precisely that: our senses are a priory to our consciousness. 'I am not in front of my body, I am in it, or rather I am it.' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. 150). The notion of habituality is somewhat troublesome, as Merleau-Ponty notes, as the concept of habit he is referring to is not simply being able to repeat a movement, for example, but is in fact the 'reworking and renewal of the body schema' (1945, p. 144) so that those movements can be executed without thought, intuitively or as second nature in equilibrium with the world. At this point, this discussion has moved from Merleau-Ponty's habituality to Bourdieu's habitus which is 'acquired and is also a possession which may function as a form of capital' (2005, p. 179) that McIntyre (2016b) has described as intuitive and second nature. The term habitus is used within this research based on McIntyre *et al.* (2016) use of the term within the Systems Model of Creativity, but with an awareness to its links to Merleau-Ponty's body schema, and in reference to the actions, processes and procedures that are applied in practice. If habitus can be construed as "*the things we do*", this is accompanied by sedimentation as "*the knowledge that guides our habitus*".

Where habituality and habitus, in these examples, refers clearly to the motor intentionality and intentional arches made through the body, sedimentation refers to knowledge that is not only acquired – and possibly inert – but is 'taken up in a fresh moment of thought' and taking up its own space (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. 130). Similarly, I would suggest that while one may be exposed to a vast amount of the domain, as an extant body of works, it is not this entire domain which is accessed or available to the individual, but a sample of the structuring (cf Simonton, 2010) components of knowledge from the domain and field (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014b)*.* Merleau-Ponty's exploration of sedimented knowledge led him to language, through structuralism, as 'the necessary friction or adversity against which expression is possible.' (Landes, 2013, p. 203). In my theorisation of songwriting practice, this concept of sedimentation is used to inform the knowledge that is structuring knowledge from Csikszentmihalyi's (1999) Domain and Field, which has been sedimented into the habitus of the songwriter, such as constraints, conventions, rules, values, policies and agenda. Such structuring knowledge is then to be either followed or *creatively* adapted or transformed as part of the songwriter's agency. This agency leads to, what I call, style as "*the way we do things*", and is at the core of the autoethnographic observations that are perceived in the songwriting practice and the theories that follow.

3.2   An Ontology of Practice and Research

The significant element of my methodology that is drawn from the above ontology (3.1) concerns the nature of how creative decisions are made as intuitive gut-reactions. As indicated by Perricone, it is a goal of the songwriter to not *think* about songwriting – unless stuck – but to absorb such knowledge so that it is available without thought so that one is only *songwriting*; what Csikszentmihalyi has referred to as the flow. It is no great leap to draw a parallel from this to the 'purposive action without a purpose' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. 153) such as the golfer and his swing. The intentional arches made by the songwriter should be focused towards the song and not be subsumed by the mediating technologies – such as instruments and computers (Draper, 2013) – so that the songwriter finds themselves "outside themself in the world of their project" (paraphrasing Merleau-Ponty) or, what is more colloquially known as, being in the zone. Archer refers to his songwriting practice as working 'intuitively or cerebrally' (in West, 2016, p. 170) but each description can be surmised as having a feel for the game which refers back to a sense of habitus. This fluid mode of practice is achieved by the habitually embodied interactions of the mediating technologies and the sedimented knowledge of the domain and field applied in the mundane and natural attitude. At such point, these skills and knowledge drift from the core and field as the reflective attitude of the songwriter's perception, towards the natural attitude where such knowledge is intuitive or second nature to the point of ecstasy. This is often described as "being in the flow" where the unconscious takes over. The Gestalt of what may be observed are at the fore the actions (*figure*), such as selecting words and notes, strumming strings, and pressing buttons. These occur over a *background* of reflecting and assessing of sedimented knowledge that accounts for deeply and solidly packed experiences and beliefs that influence the style, or gestural sense, we import and export in these actions.

Regarding my position as the autoethnographer, I do not hold the elevated position of a transcendental *I* and can only observe my practice from within; within myself, as practitioner and researcher. As well as from within the practice as theorised within the systems model but experienced in reality. I cannot feign a false objectivity in demarcating my position as observer and observed, and so it is that I have embraced the alterity of these roles by drawing from a significant pool of data of reflexivity. Further still, in recognising that such skills and knowledge are so deeply embodied and on the edge of one's horizon of perception, it was necessary for me to draw such skills and knowledge into the core and field of perception. This drawing into the core and field of perception is achieved by the revisiting or relearning knowledge and skills. To achieve this the practice was encouraged into modes of music making and in style-domains that were less familiar to myself as a songwriter. These new modes and contexts (style-domains) meant my previously embodied and intuitive approaches were no longer adequate, creating a situation similar to Perricone's in thinking

about songwriting. The process of habitualising and sedimenting new skills and knowledge were then more readily observable within the focus of my perception and will be discussed in more depth below (3.3).

This ontology can be considered in three aspects: The-thing-itself, the embodied intelligence, and the present at hand. The-thing-itself is the 'creative moment' where decisions are made by the balance of agency and structure. These decisions are weighed up against the individual's embodied intelligence, as habitus and sedimentation, of the domain and field possibles. The present at hand is the temporal aspect where the past perceptions as habitus and sedimentation converge in the creative moment to cultivate a song that calls out to its intended audience.

3.3   The Object and Position of Study

It has been discussed, in the introduction, that the study of *songwriting* – as opposed to the study of song – has been overlooked in the short history of popular musicology (de Laat, 2015; Long and Barber, 2015; Gooderson and Henley, 2016; Bennett, 2018), but this research is contributing to the growing field of study in songwriting via its pedagogical values. Bennett (2014a) highlights how

> Popular music studies has, for some thirty years, effectively analysed and dissected song 'product' from a variety of perspectives, including sociological, harmonic/melodic, structural, technical, semiotic and biographic. I contend that many of these approaches (excepting harmonic/melodic) deal less with the song than with its manifestation as an audio recording or live performance… Similarly, the cognitive psychologist, the popular musicologist, the sociologist or the semiotic scholar may reasonably wish to deal with the recording's effects, not its creative evolution, so any separation of the song from its performance would be counterproductive. (pp. 4-5)

A great deal has been learned of songwriting from these studies, but it is more often that a great deal is learned about songs – or a particular song. While songwriting practitioners can learn and appropriate the knowledge of these studies, they are often written with a distance from the songwriting process as critic, fan, or musicologist. The current research is motivated by the creative decision-making skills that are deployed in such creative pursuits, and how such skills are learned. The decision to use an autoethnographic method was guided by the above ontology (3.1) and supported by statements in the literature reviewed above (2.1 Creativity), such as Becker who states 'you can only learn current conventions by participating in what is going on.' (2008, p. 59) and 'Csikszentmihalyi [who] contends that a person's background, personal traits and motivation to produce enables that person to generate creativity' (Fulton and Paton, 2016, pp. 29-30). The object of study, specifically, is the 'creative moment' in which the actions of songwriting facilitate the emergence of the song – the moment when divergent thinking converges into a creative action, as micro and macro

decisions informed by habitus and sedimented style. Significantly, the position of the study is from that of the practitioner as the closest point of observation.

The specific style-domain(s) and mode(s) of songwriting are not the concern of this thesis insofar as I will not be claiming the sedimented/sampled perspective of the style-domain as a generalisable perspective or my mode of practice as a generalisable truth of the practice of music-making. What is significant is that the style-domain and mode of practice undertaken were authentic to the trajectory of the practice– further details of the background and nature of my practice are discussed in Background and Context of the Observed Practice (section 3.10). However, as previously indicated, it was necessary for me to approach a less familiar style-domain and mode of songwriting so as to draw the practice into the core and field of my perspective as an autoethnographer. The specific style-domain is commercially-orientated popular music which, for this study, was defined by songs suggested, mostly, from algorithmic playlists on Spotify and Apple Music.[10] The mode of songwriting was transposed from guitar to Digital Audio Workstation (DAW). This approach relieved me from writing on auto-pilot –where, as a guitarist, I could pre-emptively select the next chord or note through absorbed knowledge (cf. Perricone, 2000; Bennett, 2012b) – and of the ergonomically prescriptive guitar rhythms (Bennett, 2011). Such changes reduced the fluidity of my decision making forcing me to be aware of the processes, and incorporating new knowledge of the style-domain and instrument (DAW) in the 'creative moment'. The intention of focusing on the development of the stylistic application was to observe the practice in its whole and natural state, not to deconstruct the elements of song and songwriting into inert components. Ihde (1986) suggests that familiar praxical knowledge, perceived as the natural attitude and therefore mundane to the practitioner, is densely packed and therefore hard to break from to observe and theorise the possible variants. However, he suggests, as an analogy, that once a second language is learnt a third becomes easier and that in this analogy, 'languages are profound ways of seeing the world' (p. 131). In learning a new style-domain and mode of songwriting the core of my perception gravitates to the *new* knowledge and skills being explored and deployed, while the familiar and general music knowledge remains on the horizon, reiterating the 'conscious-incompetent' state of the learner (Benner, 2001).

The nature and mode of the practice observed may not be generalisable. However, there is a reasonable level of typicality – based on the descriptions of other songwriters' processes (Toynbee, 2000; Seabrook, 2012; Bennett, 2014a; Seabrook, 2015; Williams and Williams, 2016; Williams and Williams, 2017) – so that the autoethnographic theories generated from these observations are generalisable to those working in a similar mode and domain.[11] This generalisability is discussed further with regard to triangulation of my theories, below 3.6). It

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[10] such as New Music Friday and New Music Mix (respectively).
[11] This typicality in demonstrated in the description of my practice below.

is the generalisability and replicability of my autoethnographic method, which forms this thesis' contribution to the field of songwriting pedagogy.

Much of this methodology is drawn from that of Bennett's PhD research (2014a) as both studies were concerned with how decisions were made regarding popular music songwriting. However, Bennett's research questions are based on the decision-making process between collaborators, as he reasoned this would be the most naturally observable state in which these discussions would occur, whereas this research is drawing its data from the decision making of the individual – whether in collaboration or solo writing. Although Bennett's approach is certainly less susceptible to subjectivity, this does not conclude that the approach used here is self-indulgent introspection. Uncovering the sedimented and habitual processes behind the creative decision has, to a great extent, been beyond the grasp of positivistic methods. The process of controlling the practice – such as the application of constraints on time or materials, or even the interruption of explaining an intuitive action – changes the nature of the practice and is therefore not reflective of the intended object of study. Such research may also be biased through the parameters imposed by the researcher – such as the value of focus given to notable parameters over sonic characteristics (Tagg, 1982) –, and the overly abstracted theories that remove the essence of the phenomenon (Zembylas and Niederauer, 2018). Such a case, by Bamberger, to reduce the variables of the creative process were critiqued by Bennett as 'in attempting to isolate one musical element Bamberger's methods were so reductive as to divert the compositional process unrecognisably from compositional creativity' (2014a, p. 23). Expanding on the work of Bennett, I will focus on the reflections accumulated through my observations so as to discover what may be observed at such close quarters of the creative moment, without resorting to atomic dissection of the lived practice.

3.4   My Autoethnographic Method

My methodology was deployed as an autoethnographic method guided by an existential phenomenological ontology, and questioned how a stylistic practice was learned through the creative decisions in a commercially-orientated songwriting practice (cf. Bennett, 2012a). The decision to approach this research as autoethnographic was facilitated by methodological values of autoethnography that correlate with my ontology. Where ethnography observes another culture or practice, at varying distances, autoethnography insists that the researcher must be a part of that ethnic group, to be within the personal and cultural experience (Ellis *et al.*, 2010): not merely an observer or outsider-participant. 'Autoethnography is one of the approaches that acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don't exist' (Ellis *et al.*, 2010, p. 3). That autoethnography is emergent, with data collection

and its analysis emerging concurrently and reflexively of one another (ibid) allows the refinement of the research question and methods.

The growing interest in autoethnographic methods has led to the usual schisms, most notably that of 'evocative or emotional autoethnography' (Ellis and Brochner, 2000; Ellis, 2004; Bartleet, 2009) and 'analytical autoethnography' (Anderson, 2006; Pace, 2012). Pace (2012) defines these two approaches by the following characteristics. Carolyn Ellis' evocative autoethnography characteristics are that

> The author usually writes in the first-person style, making himself or herself the object of research; the focus of any generalisation is usually within a single case over time rather than across multiple cases; the writing resembles a novel or biography in the sense that it is presented as a story with a narrator, characters and plot; the narrative text is evocative, often disclosing hidden details of private life and highlighting emotional experience; relationships are dramatized as connected episodes unfolding over time rather than as snapshots; the researcher's life is studied along with the lives of other participants in a reflexive connection; and, the accessibility of the writing positions the reader as an involved participant in the dialogue, rather than as a passive receiver. (p. 5)

While Leon Anderson's analytic autoethnography is characterised by the following features:

> The researcher is a complete member of the social world under study; the researcher engages in analytic reflexivity, demonstrating an awareness of the reciprocal influence between themselves, their setting and their informants; the researcher's self is visible within the narrative; the researcher engages in dialogue with informants beyond the self; and, the researcher demonstrates a commitment to theoretical analysis, not just capturing what is going on in an individual life or socio-cultural environment. (pp. 5-6)

This thesis is written in the first person as there is no intention to hide that the data presented is of my own experience and reflection. However, it is not intended that *I* should be the object of study. The object of study is the learning in my practice, which, as has been expressed, is an intentional arch through which I interact, engage, live, and express. This is not as a transcendental *I* but as a being-in-the-world and as such, the most prominent position that I can be in to understand the nature of the practice is in engaging with the practice. Anderson's complete member researcher (2006) appears to be axiomatic and problematic, as to be an *auto*ethnography means being involved in the practice or culture from which to draw out such personal experiences. As a 'complete' member can enter the practice either prior to research as an 'opportunist', or through research as a 'convert' with no criteria of 'completeness' makes this idea redundant. Bennett (2014a) accounts for such a membership by the qualifier that he and all his participants are either associate or full members of a royalty collection society, such as the Performing Rights Society (PRS) in the United Kingdom. As the focus of the research is on the developing of the songwriting practice, my only qualifier is that I, and those I collaborate with, are working towards the mutual aim of creating songs that generate opportunities for reflective learning. The songwriters interviewed were selected based on their successful engagement in the same – further

details of these participants are detailed below (section 3.8). The experiences I reflected on were across multiple sessions as part of an on-going practice and over-arching aim. The writing of this thesis is not presented as a novel or non-fictional creative writing but is a critical and reflexive account of the personal experience and reflections were written in the first person to make my *self* visible. I did not feel that there was a narrative to my experience that could be grasped and harnessed in such an evocative form of writing. I decided to write my account in a matter of fact as my aim was to produce theories that would account for perceptions of learning as it was observed. These theories could be developed into further pedagogical theories, and that the method of observation and theorisation could be replicated by other songwriting researchers. The dialogues with collaborators, influencers and colleagues are not dramatised but described and recounted as they were to be analysed against the personal experiences I had when incorporating these into my practice as a reflexive connection. I do not expect any reader to be a passive receiver but one who is interested or active in songwriting as a practice and who will critically reflect and assess the autoethnographic theories against their own personal experiences and beliefs.

Further to this, Pace (2012) describes how incorporating analytical strategies from a grounded theory can benefit artist-researchers wishing to 'use analytical reflexivity to improve theoretical understandings of their creative practice' (p. 4). Although it is true that this research 'build[s] a theory rather than tests it' (p. 7), the ontology (section 3.1.1) would contest that such research is not deductive – starting 'with a preconceived theory that needs to be proven' (p. 7) - or purely inductive. Such positions refer back to the empirical and intellectual dualism as discussed above. I started with a hunch that there was something to be observed but this was not clear until the observations had happened, and a significant aspect has been in establishing *how* to observe this. However, the analytical strategy of the grounded theory approach, by coding and theorising as concurrent tasks to the point of saturation of the data, has been deployed as a means of analysing the autoethnographic data from personal experience and reflections.

3.5   The Reflective Songwriter

Gooderson and Henley (2016) highlight the significance of critical reflection in the professional songwriting practice via its absence in higher education teaching and learning of songwriting, so the focus on reflective learning undertaken in this methodology feeds the songwriting practice, the autoethnography and the pedagogical value. I started my observations replicating Bennett (2014a) and Collins (2007) in using video recordings as stimulated recall (DiPardo, 1994). However, these recordings were felt to be intrusive on the practice and so written reflections became the primary source.[12] As the reflective documents

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[12] The development of the mode of observation is discussed in more detail in Discovering the Modes and Methods of Observation, below.

have taken a greater degree of significance, a thorough accounting of their rigour is required to quell concerns of 'self-indulgent navel gazing introspection' (Finlay, 2008). The following account of reflective practice is drawn from works that have themselves drawn from the phenomenological tradition and whose application is seen as relevant by its links to autoethnography and professional development/learning. While Donald Schön (1995) appears as ubiquitous throughout the literature on reflective practice, it is the responding applications and critiques that are more often used here.

As Schön (1995) has stated 'When a practitioner becomes a researcher into his [sic] own practice, he engages in a continuing process of self-education.' (p. 299) Reflection, including critical reflection and reflexivity, is considered to be the focusing of 'attention to the complex relationship between processes of knowledge production and the various contexts of such processes as well as the involvement of the knowledge producer.' (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000, p. 5). Such knowledge 'opens up rather closes, and furnishes opportunities for understanding rather than establishes truths' (ibid). Although the initial results of such reflections may predominantly benefit the practitioner in allowing them to grow, I have also theorised these reflections into new knowledge. In particular new modes of observing and theorising the creative practice of songwriting, which are then presented in the pedagogical context to demonstrate the value of my autoethnographic method.

Reflective practice is a form of learning through and from experiences that develop new insights of the self and/or the practice (Mezirow, 1981; Boyd and Fales, 1983; Boud *et al.*, 1985; Jarvis, 1992; Finlay, 2008). Similar to the phenomenological reduction, the observer/theorist must suspend their prior knowledge and assumptions to observe the phenomenon as it really is. 'The practitioner allows himself [sic] to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique.' (Schön, 1995, p. 68), but they must also allow themselves to be surprised in certain and mundane experiences if they are to be critically observed.

> The point is to recapture practice experiences and mull them over critically in order to gain new understandings and so improve future practice. This is understood as part of the process of life-long learning. (Finlay, 2008, p. 1)

However, the term reflective practice can be somewhat contentious as there are various discourses which question its scope, methodology, ethics, and effectiveness. Reflective practice can refer to solitary introspection, critical dialogue, structured and crafted approaches of thinking on experience and/or practice, or self-indulgent navel gazing (Finlay, 2008). It is debated as to whether reflective practice could, and/or should, be the focus of the individual and their practice, or if they should reflect on the impact they makes in a wider society (Finlay and Gough, 2003; Fook, 2006; Fook and Askeland, 2007). As such, Finlay (2008) concludes that reflective practice is 'both complex and situated' (p. 3) and that models

for reflective practice should be 'applied selectively, purposefully, flexibly and judiciously' (p. 10).

Schön's (1995) *The Reflective Practitioner*, establishes a need and method for reflective practice to be applied as part of professional practice, and that, in many cases, it is a naturally occurring aspect of professional development. Schön describes two types of reflection: reflecting-on and reflecting-in.

> In the case of reflection-on-action, professionals are understood consciously to review, describe, analyse and evaluate their past practice with a view to gaining insight to improve future practice. With reflection-in-action, professional are seen as examining their experiences and responses as they occur. (Finlay, 2008, p. 3)

As part of his proposed application of reflective practice, Schön (1995) identifies 4 types of reflective research: frame analysis, repertoire-building, researchers and practitioners, and research on the process of reflection-in-action. Frame analysis requires the reflective practitioner to focus their attention on the frames through which experiences, situations, values, and such are processed, through which they become aware of wider issues and alternative frames. Repertoire-building is a common mode of collecting exemplars which, although seen as familiar, are not easily aligned with 'theories of action, models of phenomena, or techniques of control.' (p. 315) However, repertoire-building does not tend to critically reflect on issues of framing, instead focusing of actions and results. Researchers and practitioners is a collaborative mode of reflective research, which is mutually beneficial whereby neither party holds a superior position, each developing new insights from the other. In researching the process of reflection-in-action, the researcher 'adopts a strategy of combined observation and intervention' (p. 323) similar to verbal protocol analysis.

The type of reflective research that I applied –according to Schön's (1995) terminology – was primarily the collaborative researcher and practitioner as both positions were equally gaining insight from the other. As I have been concerned with the developing of an autoethnographic method, I am also researching the process of research-in-action and subsequently draw conclusions and evaluations of the impact and appropriateness of this method for such an investigation.

Assessing the approaches of a number of key reflective practice theorists, I found many useful perspectives and commonly applied processes. Sue Atkins and Katherine Murphy (1993) offers a three stage process of reflection whereby (1) the professional becomes aware of uncomfortable feelings or thoughts, (2) applies acritical analysis of these, and (3) develops a new perspective in light of the critical analysis. Atkins and Murphy's process is similar to Joelle Jay and Kerri Johnson (2002) three stage model that they identify as; descriptive, comparative, and critical reflection. Maureen Eby's (2000) model locates

reflective practice in the overlap of reflection, self-awareness, and critical thinking. This model is developed from phenomenology and critical theory, accounting for a sense of the lived self and its impact on the wider community. The concept of critical reflection 'involves attending to discourse and social and political analysis; it seeks to enable transformative social action and change (Finlay, 2008). Finlay and Gough (2003, p. ix) include reflexivity as part of a larger continuum of the reflective practice.

> At one end stands reflection, defined simply as 'thinking about' something after the event. At the other end stands reflexivity: a more immediate and dynamic process which involves continuing self-awareness. Critical reflection lies somewhere in between. (Finlay, 2008, p. 6)

Finlay (2002; 2003; 2008) proposes five variants of reflexivity as introspection, intersubjective reflection, mutual collaboration, social critique, and ironic deconstruction. Introspection refers to the solitary self-dialogue of personal meanings and emotions, while intersubjective reflection focuses on the relational context in which experiences occur. Mutual collaboration involves a dialogue with the Other within a relationally based experience. Social critique reflects on the wider discursive, social, and political context. And ironic deconstruction takes its imperatives from postmodernism and poststructuralism as 'to deconstruct discursive practices and represent something of the ambiguity and multiplicity of meanings in particular organisational and social contexts.' (Finlay, 2008, p. 7) Based on David Kolb's experiential learning cycle, Graham Gibbs (1988) developed his reflective cycle which demonstrates the reiterative nature of reflection. Such models can be complicated when accounting for the professional and disciplinary backgrounds of the reflective practitioner (Morley, 2007) or the unpalpable mindfulness of self (Johns, 2006). All these approaches move from a descriptive account of an experience through to some form of critical thinking and resolve with a reflexive outcome. They differ in what they consider to be and what should be included in critical reflection, but the general three stages appear to be ubiquitous. As such I have based my overall approach to reflective practice on Finlay and Gough's (2003) continuum but use Atkins and Murphy (1993) and Jay and Johnson (2002) when describing the detailed application of my reflective practice. I also favour Gibbs' (Gibbs, 1988) reflective cycle as the links to Kolb's (1984) experiential learning make the connections between my reflections and learning clearer.

My autoethnographic method contributes to what Schön (1995) calls 'demystification of professional knowledge'. The mystification Schön refers to 'consists in making knowledge-in-practice appear to be more complex, private, ineffable, and above all more once-and-for-all, more closed to inquiry, than it needs to be.' (p. 289) These ideas resonate with the myths and romanticisms previously discussed (Boden, 2003) and much of the literature on creativity that has been discussed works towards 'demystifying' this process (Bourdieu, 1993; Boden, 2003; Csikszentmihalyi, 2013; Bennett, 2014a; McIntyre *et al.*, 2016; Zembylas and

Niederauer, 2018). Instead of analysing the social systems and conventions, or in observing the practice of others, Schön's (1995) approach to demystifying allows for the researcher-practitioner to account for a lived experience of the practice. This approach supports my phenomenologist ontology and research methods (as discussed above). Schön (1995) claims that

> Those who would demystify professional knowledge, in the sense of showing it up, would explode the professional's claim to extraordinary knowledge, including its basis in scientific research, and would deny his [sic] claims to mandate for social control, autonomy in practice, and license to keep the gates of the professions. (pp. 289-290)

I do not make such a bold and revolutionary claim regarding the impact of this work but I do claim that such methods of observing and theorising one's creative practice are necessary aspects of learning and professional development. As Schön (1995) highlights, this aspect of development and of the social perspective of professionalism is often overlooked in favour of 'technical rationality' as scientifically derived techniques (p. 288). My autoethnographic method supports such a focus on reflective practice as a means of marshalling one's subjective values against one's technical knowledge.

Reflective practice does come with issues and criticisms which should rightly be addressed. Introspection is the most common form of reflective practice and also widely criticised for being too personal, reflecting only on the self, lacking 'mutual, reciprocal, shared processes' (Finlay, 2008, p. 7). In such instances, reflective practice will only serve to rationalise existing practice (Loughran, 2000) as without a critical account of relations, context, political agenda, and professional and social backgrounds, the reflections lead the practitioners to 'collude with dominant cultural assumptions' (Finlay, 2008, p. 12) . Whether criticisms are of 'self-absorbed navel gazing' or 'mechanistic, routinized, instrumental' applications of reflective practice, these issues are derived from a lack of understanding and ineffective application of reflective practice. Even when limited to personal reflection, such practice should be used as 'a springboard for more general insight, personal growth and professional development' (Finlay, 2008, p. 13). Schön's (1995) work is also not without its critics, who fault it for lack of precision and clarity (Eraut, 2004), ignoring context (Boud and Walker, 1998) including its theoretical and political context (Smyth, 1989), or a general lack of reflexivity (Bryant *et al.*, 1996). Many of the previously discussed adaptations and expansions on Schön's holistic views of reflective practice explore methods of accounting for these issues in the specific intention and context of their application. However, as Finlay (2008) highlights, precision can reduce reflective practice to a mechanistic protocol with no effective reflection. Finlay also demonstrates how issues of context and scope are best addressed by ascertaining the intended outputs of the reflection. Each of the various models and methods discussed can be deployed either effectively or ineffectively depending on the scope of the model or method and its alignment to the desired outputs. More relevant to my reflective practice is

Margaretha Ekebergh's (2007) application of phenomenology in critiquing Schön's (1995) concept of reflection-in-action. Ekebergh (2007) suggests that when one is in-action the consciousness is in the natural attitude (Husserl, 1970; 1973) and therefore given over to intentions towards other objects (either concrete or abstract). To enter into the reflective attitude, one must distance oneself from the lived experience and would, therefore, no longer be in-action. Ekebergh (2007) does contend that 'it is possible that a changing attitude in the flow of lived experiences, in the situation, might sharpen the person's attention and facilitate a questioning attitude.' (p. 334) I do not recognise Schön's (1995) reflection-in-action as being a synchronous state of natural and reflective attitudes. My autoethnographic method, instead, considers in-action to be the overall and various experiences within a given situation. Specifically, in-action is during the creative process of songwriting where one is 'immersed and completely absorbed by the activity' (Ekebergh, 2007, p. 334), in which the reflective practitioner alternates between doing and reflecting. This is applied as a form of 'radical reflection' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945) so as to be mindfully aware of one's own actions (Johns, 2006) as part of a process of naturalisation (Bloom and Krathwohl, 1956) towards a state of unconscious competence (Benner, 2001).

The stages of reflection undertaken within this study ran similarly to the descriptions of reflective practice by both Atkins and Murphy (1993) and, Jay and Johnson (2002). The manoeuvring of the style-domain and mode of songwriting facilitated the discomfort (Atkins and Murphy, 1993) which was then described in reflections and stimulated recall (Jay and Johnson, 2002). These accounts were critically analysed (Atkins and Murphy, 1993) which formed the process of the triangulating interviews which were then compared (Jay and Johnson, 2002) to the previous reflections and my autoethnographic experiences and the reviewed literature. From these outputs, the critical analysis (Atkins and Murphy, 1993) produced new theories concerning the creative process of songwriting, and critical reflections (Jay and Johnson, 2002) developed new perspectives for myself as the practitioner and as the autoethnographer. These two positions then diverge in how this new knowledge is applied: the practitioner applying the theories into the practice, and the autoethnographer developing these theories into a pedagogical context of the learning experience, which are the conclusions of this research.

As per Finlay and Gough's (2003) description of reflection, I have approached my reflective practice as a continuum, with 'thinking about' something at the thin end and reflexivity at the thicker end, with critical thinking in between. The significance of the continuum is that the reflective practitioner should pass through each of the three stages to successfully engage in reflective practice, and not to focus solely on a singular stage of the continuum. Many reflections may fail to generate valued insights simply because they are not followed through with critical analysis – asking questions and probing the reflections – or applying such

findings so as to make a meaningful change, whether to oneself or the wider society. In response to this potential issue, I have chosen to consider Finlay and Gough's reflective continuum as a cycle alongside the Graham Gibbs reflective cycle (1988) and David Kolb's learning cycle (1984) represented in figure 5 in progressive concentric circles. This illustrates the progress and reiterative nature of reflective learning, and the development of experiential learning to reflective learning in logarithmic spirals.
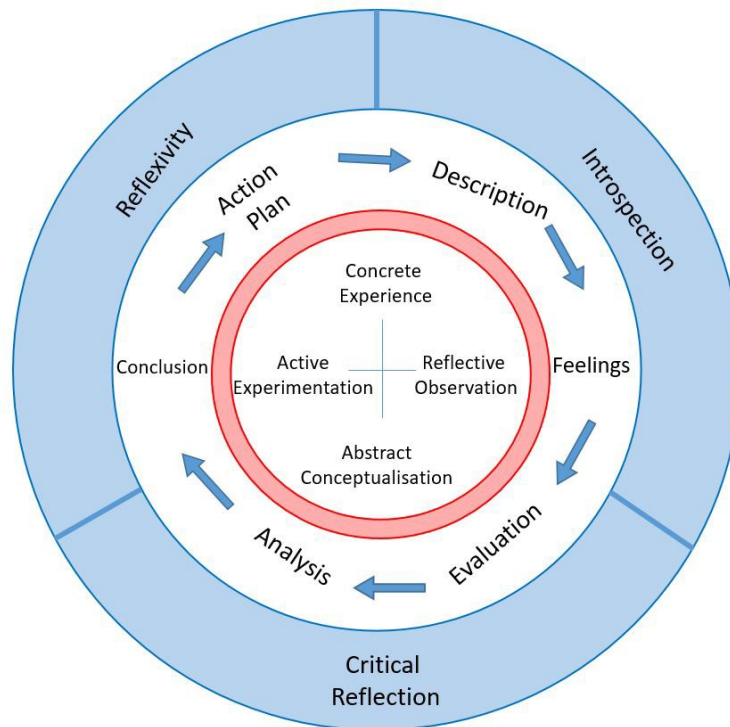
Figure 5 Experiential to Reflective Learning

Regarding Finlay's five variants of reflexivity, I have engaged in introspection, intersubjectivity, and some mutual collaboration. The introspective reflexivity is when I think about my projects and practice, critically analyse my thoughts and actions, and adjust my beliefs and practice based on the outcome of this process. Similarly, and often concurrently, my reflexivity has been intersubjective as I think about, critically analyse, and react to how my projects and practice are perceived by others, such as my collaborators, my audience – as will be identified below (section 3.10) – and most significantly how these experiences and perspectives can be shared with students to support their development of songwriting skills. While introspective reflexivity may improve my practice in ways that I find satisfying – to a given point – it is the intersubjective reflexivity that allows my practice to develop a commercially-orientated viability, and is an essential aspect of developing a successful

practice, which is the goal of the practitioner.[13] In my research, mutual collaboration occurred when I discussed my thoughts and reflections with other students of songwriting, whether beginners, early-career or professional practitioners such as the interviews with other songwriters. Sometimes these are merely casual conversations, occasionally documented in my reflections, but they are significant as part of the triangulation of my theories when interviewing other songwriters on their own practice. Although I am conscious not to insert my own theories and beliefs into these interviews, both the interviewee and I are reflecting and analysing our practices during these interviews.

As an example of how a textual reflection of the songwriting process can be critically reflected on, I have applied the process to West's (2016) description of his songwriting process. West's description provides the introspective account of the practice, while I will develop the critical reflection by probing these reflections for comparisons and objections from the literature previously discussed (Chapter 2).

From a title generated as textual stimuli, he poses myriad questions to provoke his divergent thinking. This corresponds with Zembylas and Niederauer (2018) exploration and Cropley (2001) divergent thinking strategies. In this description, West (2016) frequently refers to unconscious thought processes; 'felt', 'instinctive', 'embedded taste', and 'in the back of my mind'. He does not explicitly describe or explain how convergent decisions are made such as selecting a plot, character, or musical text, just that he kept 'the ones that felt closest to the initial feel' (p. 167). He does elaborate on his 'embedded taste' (ibid) as 'the evocation of critical preference generated through prior listening and songwriting.' (ibid) which McIntyre may have described as his habitus. This habitus is the personal knowledge base of understanding, which will inform his valuing (Zembylas and Niederauer, 2018) from which he will make the necessary convergent decisions. As previously mentioned, Archer (West, 2016) describes valuing and creating as happening synchronously although West expands on this as not being a general statement. Instead, West proposes that a threefold process is common among songwriters:

> first a moment of impetus or feeling that a concept worthy of expression and reception might exist; secondly, an uncritical flow of ideas, virtually a stream of consciousness that exemplifies and expands on the original concept; and finally, an editorial phase in which ideas are sifted and selected for inclusion. (p. 177).

Although there may be similarities to other models of the creative process here, such as Henri Poincare (1914, pp. 50-63) and Graham Wallas (2014, p. 39), Zembylas and Niederauer (2018) suggest that where so many variations and counter-practices are present,

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[13] These measures of 'success' are different from the pedagogical success that this research is seeking. The commercially-orientated successes are those described by Bennett as works that are accepted into the domain within the systems model of creativity, discussed at length in the literature review.

reducing the practice to a three or four stage model 'risks imposing a developmental structure on the different composition processes that conceals their contingency and diversity.' (p. 57). Zembylas and Niederauer (2018) instead suggest that a more general idea of composition would be that it is 'goal-directed but not goal driven' (p. 58) as the final piece is not known during its composition. This is similar to Boden's (2003) idea that the goal is a general one of exploration in a manner of fun (p. 59). Returning to Collins' (2007) description of composing as being a process of manoeuvring from an ill-defined problem to a well-structured problem, a comparison can be drawn as it is these well-structured problems which supply the necessary direction for the goal. When the songwriter has exhausted their goals, they then present their work to a widening field of Others for critique as per Hennion's (1989) description of systematic approval. From this, it could be concluded that songwriting/composition is directed by many goals as set by many small-scale well-defined problems. The initial problems are generated by divergent-orientated questioning such as 'how could I…?' or 'What would happen if…?'. The latter problems are generated by issues of the communicative quality (adapting from West's thoughts on the communicative effect of songwriting (2016, pp. 45-54)) which is a direct consequence of writing for an audience, in this case, the imagined audience.

The reflexive aspect of this reflection would be to generate a hypothesis on how these theories can be tested or applied in either the songwriting or pedagogical practice. Questions regarding either practice could be 'What would happen if I tried to create and edit simultaneously?' or 'How would my songs be affected if I only listened to a particular artist, or if I listened to a much broader range of artists?' These could then be tested in the practice and the reflective cycle is then reiterated.

In applying reflection as indicated, as a form of practice and not a tool, where reflection and reflexivity are incorporated aspects of thinking, there arises new challenges and issues to be considered. It becomes a lived-in practice; it does not stop when the session is over or when I have stopped writing my reflections. I continuously think about, critically analyse, and adapt my songwriting practice and my reflective practice. I think about the selection of notes for a melody, the reference tracks I am listening to, the audience I hope to engage, the tone of voice or brand, the changing landscape of the music industry and how these compare to the experiences and perceptions of other songwriters. I reflect in and on these topics during and in between sessions. When using one's own experiences and reflections there is an overwhelming abundance of potential information that can be accessed and so it is incumbent on the researcher to sieve through these for the most relevant reflections to the current research and to do so without bias.

3.6 Discovering the Modes and Methods of Observation

The initial approach to capturing the creative process was to video myself writing in the studio while 'thinking-out-loud' (Smagorinsky, 1994; Collins, 2007) as it was hoped this would record 'physical/ergonomic, social, verbal and sonic interactions indiscriminately' (Bennett, 2014a). As I was mostly working alone or demarcated[14], the issue of collaborators who are reluctant to being filmed – as highlighted by Bennett (2014a) and John Sloboda (1985; 2005) – was mitigated. Synchronous collaborations were rare and therefore only captured in reflections. Early experiments in what to film highlighted that filming myself – often looking at the computer screen or a note pad – offered very little information to reflect on. Instead, a screen recording[15] of the DAW was used to capture the creative practice, which proved much richer, allowing each selection, adjustment, experimentation and edit to be reflectively reviewed and analysed, as well as an invocative stimulated recall (DiPardo, 1994). Bennett (2014a) and Collins (2007), used a 'Save As…' time-based approach where the work in a DAW was regularly saved a unique instance to stimulate recall later. I choose not to apply the 'Save as…' approach in such a regular and primary source manner as this data was more readily available in the screen recordings. However, I did 'Save As…' for each unique session that a project was worked on along with an mp3 bounce[16] of the resultant work of that session, these were used for stimulated recall on which to reflect throughout the research.

After some time, becoming accustomed to my autoethnographic method, I found that the 'think-out-loud' protocol was interruptive and counter to the natural practice, causing me to over-think or analyse within the practice, such as Merleau-Ponty's golfer who loses form through thinking. Reviewing the video footage alongside my written reflections, I found no significant value from the 'think-out-loud' protocols that exceeded my written reflections. I decided to make no further efforts to think-out-loud and instead focus on being-in-the-project, writing regular and critical reflections, and drawing thick descriptive accounts from the video footage as a stimulated recall (DiPardo, 1994).

Approximately halfway through the fieldwork – as it can be viewed in hindsight – I found that the video footage was not capturing significant data with regard to the development of style and was generating more data regarding the micro-decisions of composition – selecting, editing, adjusting and so forth. These micro-decisions are mostly concerned with the familiar praxical knowledge of music making and less so with the larger stylistic trajectory of the work in progress. The use of these videos, therefore, encouraged my observations towards these actions as the core of my perceptions, eschewing the intended stylistic decision-making

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[14] Working in collaboration but undertaking the specific roles or tasks separately
[15] Using QuickTime Player, screen recording function.
[16] A mp3 is a digitally coded format of audio and a bounce is a consolidated audio file of the project.

processes as core. Around the same time, as the practitioner, I found that an emerging style to my songwriting was becoming apparent – as noted through the *habitual* application of tropes and techniques as are discussed in detail in Style and Voice. I concluded to allow the methods of data collection to change in accordance with the emergent nature of the research methodology, and to place further significance on to my reflective documents – as detailed below. This portion of the fieldwork, marked by its use of video recording and the explorative nature of the practice observed, has been labelled as Phase One – namely the projects titled, Sessions 1 to 42 (appendix 1 – Project Database). The remaining projects are labelled as Phase Two and relied on reflective journals and stimulated recalls immediately after the project session and/or listening to the mp3 bounce from which to draw the necessary data.

My reflective documents and thick descriptions were coded in nVivo (a qualitative data analysis computer software package) to construct themes as per a grounded theory analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), although specifically using the constant comparison inquiry (Butler-Kisber, 2010). In coding the reflective documents and the thick descriptions of stimulated recall from screen recordings, 101 themes were identified many of which fall beyond the scope of this research, such as the micro-decisions previously mentioned as well as 'abilities', 'semiotics' and 'song meanings'.[17] The vast number of micro data led me towards a '(hyper)empiricist stance' (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000, p. 48), which would have been in conflict with ontology of this methodology This prompted the change from using screen recording for stimulated recall, and focusing on the written reflections immediately after a songwriting session or using bounced audio files as stimulated recall. This change removed the focus on micro-decision making that was so prevalent in the screen recordings. Further coding focused on 'decision-making' themes that were related to the style-domain and mode of songwriting such as 'voice', 'style', 'agency' and 'structure'.

When a creative decision was observed the aim of the reflection was to distil this action down to a theoretically generalisable criteria of concern to the songwriting practice. For instance, in observing myself applying a dance style drum beat I reflect on: why I have chosen such a drumbeat; what is its function; and how did I come to this decision? An immediate answer would be that I wish for my listener to dance and this drumbeat facilitates this action as proven by other dance tracks which I have referenced. However, such conclusions are not generalisable to all songwriting practices. Further critical reflection draws out that the song needs to signpost its function to a listener, and it does so through the shared knowledge of the domain. That this shared knowledge is an essential quality of the song that must be determined to be successfully received by the field could be an axiomatic truth of the songwriting practice. It is not my intent to describe how such knowledge should, or even

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[17] Allowing many future opportunities to extend this research.

could, be applied but to highlight how such knowledge exists in the creative practice. Making explicit such criterion of concerns within the songwriting practice will guide learners in developing their praxical knowledge and researchers in exploring the nature of creative practice.

3.7 Interview Participants

The generalisability of these theories were triangulated through interviews with a small but select group of songwriters who operate as commercially-orientated practitioners ranging from early-career to professional, with comparable musical practices to my own.[18] As an inductive investigation into how songwriting is learned, beginner songwriters were excluded as there would be less sedimented knowledge, refined habitus and personal beliefs of their songwriting practices from which to draw upon for analysis. A further deductive investigation, to test the resulting theories of this research could and should include beginner songwriters as part of a longitudinal study of pedagogical development. Early career songwriters were recognised as those having had commercial releases that had generated royalties, while professional practitioners had worked on nationally recognised releases evidenced by top 10 chart positions and prestigious award nominations, such as The Mercury Music Prize. The interviews were semi-structured, using a list of topics as an agenda but the interviewees were free to follow their own train of thought. Likewise, I also took the opportunity to expand and explore a topic with the interviewee. The topics of these interviews align directly with the preceding chapters, namely: Models of Authorship in Songwriting, Identifying the Imagined Audience, Style and Voice, Valuing in Song, and Reflecting In- and On-Songwriting.[19]

The participants were selected as they are all active songwriters, who have and are releasing commercial material, and all have had or are signed to a publishing deal. They also represent varying years of experience and a range of approaches with regard to writing for themselves, as the audience facing artist, or in collaborating in writing for another artist, behind the scenes in what Bennett (2014a) refers to as Svengali co-writing. Other participants were requested to demonstrate a more diverse gender demographic of the songwriting community – only 17% of the Performing Rights Society UK (PRS for Music UK) identified as female (Music, 2019) – but not all were willing or available to contribute to this study. Although the range of practice approaches interviewed are limited, and by no means an extensive representation of the possible approaches to songwriting, it would be both impractical and unnecessary to attempt such an extensive study. The participants available

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[18] This helped scope the participants to allow focus and fair comparative analysis of practices. While this excludes many otherwise valid practitioners and practices, my autoethnographic method could successfully be applied to those practices by an appropriate autoethnographer as a member of those practitioner groups (cf. Anderson, 2006).
[19] Reflecting In- and On-Songwriting was not included as a chapter in this thesis but many of the questions and responses from this line of questioning were incorporated into this thesis.

were from my songwriting networks as per the autoethnographic approach, detailed above (3.4). This has resulted in a bias of white respondents, having excluded beginner-practitioners and practitioners of different practices. This is only reflective of my limited practitioner networks, and in no way reflects the vast diversity of practitioners and practices that are available in further investigations. Each participant was able to articulate a position regarding the theories presented as a processual concern of their songwriting practice as such the theories of these positions as relevant to the songwriting practice was saturated (Butler-Kisber, 2010) and triangulated the theory of my observations.

It has been noted that it is often difficult to gain access to creative practitioners for research purposes (Sloboda, 2005; Csikszentmihalyi, 2013; Bennett, 2014a; de Laat, 2015) and so I recruited my participants from my own social and professional network. This is made up of ex-students, ex-teachers, collaborators, and colleagues. The various power dynamics – and personal relations – between myself and these participants are addressed in the pen profiles below (3.8), either in how an individual relationship is perceived or how comparatively the range of dynamics cancel one another out.

The interviews were all transcribed from audio recordings. These transcripts were then processed through nVivo as per my own reflective documents.

3.8   Interviewee Pen Profiles

3.8.1   Alex Soper (early career songwriter – Coquin Migale)

Alex Soper is frontman and songwriter for Coquin Miguel, a Newcastle based indie rock band. Their debut album, Munro (2016), was released through Fierce Panda, published by WipeOut Music, in 2016. The band have performed at the BBC6 Music, Leeds, Reading, and Glastonbury festivals and even in Sol, South Korea. Alex's songs have been broadcast on numerous national radio stations and reviewed by national press. Alex was a student on the short-lived FdA Songwriting programme that I designed and taught on at Newcastle College (circa 2013-2015). Working with Alex as a student, I was able to observe his stylistic development as a songwriter over the two years of the course. Alex was selected as an interviewee as he represents a typical indie-rock songwriter as a white male in his 20's. As an indie songwriter his approach to creating a musical culture for his music/brand is by operating just outside of the mainstream of popular music, serving to a smaller niche audience. As a younger songwriter, it is hoped that Alex's songwriting praxis is not so natural and mundane an attitude that significant insights into how his practice has developed may be more forthcoming – within the field of his perspective. My previous relationship with Alex as his lecturer could be a cause of unbalanced power dynamics but I believe Alex to be confident enough to share his honest views and opinions without wishing to please me.

Further to this, I was careful to ensure open and non-leading questions with adequate space and time for Alex to cogitate his own and genuine responses. This issue of the power dynamic is balanced by my previous relations with both Ian Sillett and Jez Ashurst, whose modules I was a student of at BIMM (circa. 2005-2007), and my current role (circa. 2014-2019) as external examiner.

3.8.2   Ian Sillett (songwriter, collaborator, and educator in songwriting)

Ian Sillett is the course leader for the BA (Hons) Songwriting programme at BIMM London. Ian is also an award-winning songwriter previously signed to East West Records, receiving 22 Palme d'Or nominations and winning 4, and most recently collaborating with Nick Cave and Ian Dench. He has worked as a professional musician performing with Sir Paul McCartney, Mark Knopfler, Joan Armatrading and Beverley Knight. He currently works as an educator, as a course leader of songwriting at BIMM Brighton (former) and London (current), with ex-students including award winning songwriters James Bay and Tom Odell (both have won Brit Awards and an Ivor Novello for their songwriting). Ian was selected as an interviewee as being an educator he has had to cogitate and communicate his experiences and beliefs on songwriting. As a practitioner, he represents an experienced collaborator whose work has been behind the scenes of the artist. At the other end of this spectrum would be the audience facing artist, such as Alex Soper who writes for himself in the capacity of Coquin Miguel. Jez Ashurst operates in both capacities, although predominantly as collaborator. My relationship with Ian dates back to when I attended his Teaching Music module at BIMM, we have remained friends through social media, and I was the external examiner for his course (2015-2019). The power dynamic of our relationship has progressed from student-teacher to colleagues and Ian is a strong character who has definite views on how he approaches songwriting and how he teaches songwriting. His teaching methods are proven by the success of his alumni who have released countless musical works and won multiple awards.

3.8.3   Jez Ashurst (professional songwriter and collaborator)

Jez Ashurst is frontman and songwriter for Farrah on the Lojinx record label, and signed songwriter at Sony BMG working out of Tileyard Studios, London. He is a multi-platinum songwriter/programmer/producer who has written hit songs for Little Mix 'Secret Love Song' (2016), Boyzone 'Love Will Save the Day' (2013), Leona Lewis 'One More Sleep' (2013), Gabriel Aplin 'Panic Cord' (2013), and Mel C and Matt Cardle 'Loving you' (2013). Jez has also taught songwriting modules, workshops and delivered guest lectures at a number of higher education institutes in the UK, including Westminster University, Bath Spa University, Leeds College of Music, Academy of Contemporary Music, and the British Institute of

Modern Music. Jez was selected as an interviewee as a typical professional songwriter being a white male employed by a major publishing company (Sony BMG), whose daily tasks are, most often, in writing for and with commercial artists in writing songs for the largest possible audience. His role as an educator gives an additional level of insight as he has been required to cogitate and communicate his experiences and beliefs of songwriting to others, similar to Ian. Jez was the module leader for the two songwriting modules I undertook at BIMM, a guest speaker for the MMus Songwriting programme I undertook at Bath Spa University (2012-2014), and my group leader at The UK Songwriting Festival (2012). The interviews with Jez were originally conducted as part of my MMus studies and while a follow up interview was attempted, we were unsuccessful in finding a convenient time to accomplish this.

3.8.4 Hattie Murdoch (early career songwriter and collaborator)

Hattie Murdoch is a professional singer-songwriter as both audience facing artist - performing as HATi - and as a behind the scenes collaborator for other artists. She is published through Agenda Rights Management and has collaborated on releases internationally and specialises in topline collaborations for UK, European and South East Asian markets. It is proposed that women only make up 17% of the Performing Rights Society UK's membership - a troubling statistic - and while further female contributions were requested, only Hattie and MaryAnn were able to contribute. Hattie was not selected as to represent the female minority, Hattie also represents a similar practice as Jez, predominantly collaborating but with some audience facing interactions, although on a lesser degree of success than Jez which could be accounted for in Jez's more advanced years of experience. Due to Hattie's busy schedule, I sent her three questions which she responded to with voice memos. Although this reduced my ability to ask immediate follow up questions or follow interesting avenues, her answers were thoughtful and thorough, requiring no follow up to develop this study.

3.8.5 Peter Brewis (professional songwriter and collaborator – Field Music)

Peter Brewis is one half of Field Music along with his brother David Brewis. Field Music are a North East based rock band formed in 2004 and nominated for the Mercury Music Prize in 2012. Field Music have released seven albums through Memphis's Industries, and Peter has also composed music for short films and unique events. The majority of his songwriting and production have been for his own projects and has only recently ventured into writing for another artist (as disclosed in the most recent interview). Peter represents a similar practice as Alex, operating as the audience facing artist, but with significantly more experience, and also has some experience as an educator delivering evening classes in songwriting at

Newcastle College and workshops through Generator UK. Peter was also interviewed as part of my MMus studies into the songwriting practice, and a follow up interview was conducted as part of this research. Although there were some changes to Peter's beliefs on songwriting there were no radical changes to undermine the previous interview.

3.8.6   MaryAnn Tedstone (professional songwriter, composer, and collaborator – Manike Music)

MaryAnn Tedstone is one half the Manike Music with her brother, Michael Tedstone. They are songwriters, composers, and producers, specialising in music for film, TV, and corporate work, as well as working with popular music artists. As Manike Music they have been signed to Big Life Management and Universal, and currently work through Audio Network and Felt Music. Their work has been used by Nissan, Warner Bros, Pepsi, Morrisons, BBC, Nike and many more. MaryAnn operates as a behind the scenes collaborator with no audience facing aspects. I have known MaryAnn since 2012 when we were both students on the MMus Songwriting programme at Bath Spa University. MaryAnn's role at Manike Music is predominantly in topline writing and organising the business aspects of Manike Music, and so in her interview offers some more business-related concerns of her songwriting practice. MaryAnn's interview was originally conducted as part of my MMus studies, but she has also contributed to the current research, along with her brother, who provided influencer feedback on the tracks I was writing.

3.9   Data Collection

The primary data is made up of 76 projects (Appendix 1) which are divided into Phase 1 and Phase 2 – as previously discussed above. Thirteen of these projects were completed through to being released under my project pseudonym, #... [pronounced Hashtag Ellipsis],[20] eleven to online stores and streaming services, six as YouTube videos , and one as part of a film collaboration . Two tracks were pitched to labels for other artists and two for sync . Seven projects are ongoing, seeking topliners to collaborate on completing the tracks. Two projects were completed but not released as I have not felt that they fit the #... brand and no suitable opportunity has arisen to pitch these tracks. 50 tracks re either abandoned or dormant, but all these projects, are considered significant as they demonstrate the contribution to the construction and perceptions of my learning in songwriting.

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[20] The background and context of this are elaborated on below.

There are 131 mp3 files of works in progress and completed tracks, and 242 video files from Phase 1. Nineteen audio tracks are cited and subsequently included in Appendix 2[21] and video files are cited and subsequently included in Appendix 3.

Field notes are made up of: 55 reflective documents (of which the cited extracts are presented in Appendix 4 for fuller context, with dates indicating subsections of this document): Seven interview transcripts (Appendices 5-11) with the six interview participants described above (section 3.8) :

3.10 Background and Context of the Observed Practice

I will condense the background of my songwriting into two milestones: writing and performing as The Unreliable Narrator (circa 2008-10) and enrolling on the MMus course at Bath Spa University (2012-14). Although this excludes a lot of my overall background, which includes writing in bands, with and for other artists, an attempt at sync writing, and my music education, these two milestones immediately precede my current practice with significant influence and perspective.

The Unreliable Narrator was an indie-folk act that centred on me as a singer-songwriter, sometimes performing solo (voice and guitar) but more often as a band, including accordion, double bass, and backing vocalist. Musically, the songs were similar to acts such as Mumford and Sons but with a stronger leaning towards traditional British folk song written in a 3rd person narrative with lyrical themes of murder, medieval tropes of kings, queens and jesters. The act was intended to operate as an 'authentic' display of songwriting as described by Roy Shuker (in Appel, 2017) as 'unmediated' and 'intimate' through our use of acoustic instruments[22] and unamplified performances in small, dimly lit, unconventional venues.[23] Typically, the songs were written in the 'traditional linear' and 'melodic mode', as described by Bonnie Hayes (in Bennett, 2018). I would compose chord progressions on guitar which I would improvise vocal melodies over, simultaneously improvising lyrical ideas, until a satisfactory melody and lyrical idea emerged. With a melody in place, I would then complete the lyrics on this melody dedicating a lot of my effort towards the story and word play.

The audience for The Unreliable Narrator was mostly made up of the band's social networks, who came to support us at live events and would often bring a few friends to the shows. Playing small venues with capacities of 30-100, which were often at capacity and we may have appeared to be more popular than we may have actually felt as a band. We recorded one 4-track EP which we ran a limited press of 500 copies which sold out at live shows and made a substantial profit. Reflecting on the commercial aspects of this project, while it was

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[21] https://soundcloud.com/hashtagellipsis/sets/appendix-2-audio-examples/s-7qlfi
[22] Deemed as an acceptable technological mediation in indie-folk music.
[23] Typically, basements of cafes and restaurants after hours.

financially successful, this was only due to the CD sales and we did not actually have a targeted audience that we were presenting the music to regarding the songwriting, performance or branding of the band.

In 2012, I enrolled on to the MMus Songwriting course, which significantly facilitated the development of my songwriting in four ways. Firstly, while not part of the curriculum, I used the opportunity to develop my studio/DAW-based songwriting in a desire to free myself of my guitar-based dependency when songwriting (Bennett, 2011) and to give myself more autonomy in the creative process (Marrington, 2017; Toulson and Burgess, 2017). Secondly, consequently of my change of songwriting mode, I repositioned myself from being a public-facing, performing, singer-songwriter to be a co-writing[24], songwriter-producer. While this role is similar to de Laat's (2015) 'producer/writer hybrid', I have not come to this position from being a producer but have instead approached this from being a songwriter wishing to upskill and develop my autonomy. Thirdly, the course emphasised the importance and benefits of collaboration in songwriting practice (Bennett, 2010), which I have continued to apply to my own work. And lastly, working with collaborators and to the deadlines of the course required that I apply systems and routines to effectively use my time to meet these deadlines (Long and Barber, 2017).

In the final project of my MMus, I wrote and produced a track called She's Gold (Whiting, 2015) (Appendix 2) and completed the track (excluding mixing and mastering) in two days. The song was a significant turning point being a first-person love song in a contemporary electro-pop style thereby demonstrating my move away from the previously described practice as The Unreliable Narrator. It was written in my home studio through which I composed and recorded (often a simultaneous act) through Logic Pro X (my preferred DAW). This song represents the style and mode of songwriting that I have continued to work within. I released She's Gold in May 2015 in online stores and streaming platforms through a digital aggregator under the new pseudonym #... along with a new online presence such as website and social media accounts.

In September 2015, I enrolled on the PhD programme at Newcastle University and in wishing to develop a critical method of awareness in songwriting, I seized on the opportunity to explore this method writing as #... with the DAW as the primary instrument (Marrington, 2017), along with peripheral keyboards, guitars, MIDI sequencers and voices as the physically mediating instruments feeding into the DAW with its multitude of plugins for sound

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[24] Although co-writing is recognised as the standard practice for commercially-orientated songwriting, I focused heavily on solo songwriting during this research to give focus to my own reflections and less dependency on collaborators. Although this was not the exclusive practice as I still engaged in some collaborations and during the project found these collaborations to be a more effective mode of practice.

generation and manipulation. Draper (2013) suggests that such tools can 'subsume the original musical intentions for the inexperienced' (2013, p. NA) while the more experienced can enter into a state of 'flow'. In the first instance, the creative act would be foreshadowed by the learning of the technology, while in the latter it would be lost in the intuitive 'flow' of creation. My knowledge and abilities as a music-maker and with the technology are proficient enough so as not to be 'subsumed' but in terms of the style-domain and mode of songwriting, I certainly had not mastered these, and so considered myself as a 'conscious-incompetent' (Benner, 2001).

As the band leader and songwriter for The Unreliable Narrator, my role shared some core responsibilities as a producer, but a significant difference became apparent in changing my mode of songwriting. In writing with a DAW, I was creating a mechanically reproducible artefact which conjured a sense of tangibility in the songs, and with the access this creates in being able to distribute these online, it also opens up the desire to perfect the quality of the recordings. Songs written for The Unreliable Narrator were rehearsed and the end goal of these rehearsals was the live performance, while #... tracks had several additional layers of quality – including the song and performance (Moore, 2012), and the "unnotable" sonic parameters (Tagg, 1982). There is a desire or pressure to perfect these recordings at the various levels because of their fixedness,[25] which demonstrates how my role, from songwriter band leader, was broadened as a songwriter-producer.

Following Bennett's (2014a) recommendation that solo songwriting would be an area of further research, I had intended to limit my practice to solo songwriting so as to control and observe all the significant actions and processes involved in the songwriting. However, as also highlighted by Bennett (2010; 2012a; 2013; 2014a) collaboration is a standard practice in commercial popular music songwriting:

> [M]any songwriters have taken the decision that the benefits of collaboration outweigh the loss of income – partly because they believe that they will write a better song in this environment… the practice of distributed and shared creativity in songwriting continues to thrive as one of its defining forces. (Bennett, 2010)

Bennett goes on to specify six benefits of collaborative songwriting:

- *Economically motivated*: the Other's expertise is so valuable that it would enable the team to create an object that is more than twice as successful, comfortably compensating for the split.

- *Artistically motivated*: the Other's contribution adds artistic depth or breadth to the song that would be unavailable from working alone.

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[25] While the poststructuralist position argues that such artefacts are not fixed and are in fact re-performed each time they are heard, there are undeniable fixed qualities in a recording, which makes the artefact more tangible, although not rigid.

- *Emotionally motivated*: the Other's presence increases the songwriter's confidence, productivity or motivation to write.

- *Discursively motivated:* the Other's validation/veto of the songwriter's own ideas is itself sufficiently valuable to justify collaboration.

- *Vocationally motivated*: the Other may be more likely to ensure the song's success after it is written, or provide networking opportunities for the songwriter.

- *Pragmatically motivated*: the Other provides necessary skills and expertise – for example, in the case of a lyricist who does not compose music. (Bennett, 2014a, p. 245)

The loss of these benefits and counter natural aspect of solo songwriting – in commercially-orientated practice – led me to include collaborative songwriting in my observed practice. It is my preferred role, being a 'tracker' (Auvinen, 2017) composing and producing the music on to which a topline of lyrics and melody are composed by a demarcated topliner. This also allowed me to work in a naturally and easily observable manner without causing my research to be an intrusive factor on my collaborators.

During my MMus studies the application of routine and systems was a necessity to ensure my timely submission but routine and systems are shown to be a part of a professional songwriting practice. Long and Barbour use interviews with professional songwriters to 'demonstrate that routine is exactly how they offset risk to generate results' (2017, p. 565). Many professional songwriters – such as Carol King, Gerry Goffin, Lamont Dozier, Burt Bacharach & Hal David (Zollo, 2003) – describe the day to day, business-like approach to their songwriting, where time and space are dedicated to songwriting with the objective of completing a song in that time. Long and Barber (2017) highlight the demand of productivity in Miranda Cooper's slow climb to success 'learning how to be creative and nurturing this quality through persistent application and hard work' (p.564) over many years before a hit song emerged. And John Seabrook describes the most demanding scenario at a songwriting camp, which is

> Like a pop up hit factory. Labels and superstar artists convene them, and they generally last three or four days. The usual format is to invite dozens or more track makers and topliners, who are mixed and matched in different combinations through the course of the camp, until every possible combination has been tried. Typically, a producer-topliner pair spends the morning working on a song, which they are supposed to finish by the lunch break. In the afternoon new pairs are formed by the camp counsellors, and another song is written by dinner… At the end of each morning and afternoon session, the campers come together and listen to one another's songs. The peer pressure is such that virtually every session produces a song, which means twelve or more songs a day, or sixty a week, depending on the size of the camp. (Seabrook, 2015, pp. 225-226)

My own practice has not been as quantitatively productive as Seabrook's songwriting camps but as a form of imposed routine and system I have worked in a dedicated space, my home studio, and allocated time to songwriting and related tasks such as mixing. To facilitate my

productivity, I used timed writing exercises and Logic Pro X templates which aided the generation of ideas to be developed.[26] The peer pressure or 'emotional motivation' (Bennett, 2014a) of collaborating helped carry ideas forward as I was responsible for completing my task within the collaboration in a timely manner to allow my collaborators to action their inputs.

The agenda behind this high output is the belief that quantity leads to quality, and that within the quantity is practice and learning. Pat Pattison states 'Don't be afraid to write crap – it makes the best fertiliser' (Pattison, 2009), meaning in these 'crap' songs we learn to grow as a songwriter. This focus on the quantity instead of quality supports the songwriter in generating such high outputs such as Cooper's 'persistent application and hard work' (Long and Barber, 2017, p. 564). This is not unique to students of songwriting, as Tom Robinson suggests 'If only one song in every ten is any good, unless you write the first nine, you never get to that tenth' (in Long and Barber, 2017, p. 567). Guy Chambers also supports this position when he states 'I don't know about everyone, but you're going to have some elements of wastage, you know. If you write 20 songs, maybe only one has value and that's just how it goes' (in Long and Barber, 2017, p. 567). I observed a similar trajectory, with seventeen tracks completed out of the 76 projects I have undertaken here. These 'crap' and waste songs are an essential part of the practise and therefore of learning. Therefore, these waste songs are of value to be observed by my autoethnographic method to develop a songwriting pedagogy.

3.11 Pedagogy

The desire of pedagogy to be student-centric[27] (Plato and Livingstone, 1938; Navia, 2007) was first held by Socrates (cf. Plato and Livingstone, 1938; Navia, 2007) and has been at the heart of many pedagogical theories since. The methodology purposed in this research is no different. That I wish to develop my abilities as a teacher requires me to develop my understanding of the student experience. This comes with the paradox that I can never truly experience what each student experiences and that my experiences are also unique to me. But, in applying the ontology discussed previously, it is clear that my experience is the only experience available to me as an embodied experience. The search for a songwriting experience that may be the truth from which to base a pedagogy needs to draw from my experience which is obtained through autoethnography. However, in recognising the limits of autoethnography in a reflective practice, I have engaged with honest and critical reflection of

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[26] Which are discussed in further detail in Chapter 4- Observations.
[27] UK institutes primarily use a constructivist approach which believe that learning is constructed based on past knowledge and experience, and is, therefore, a unique experience to each learner. This then suggests that teaching and learning should be student-centric, designing learning that does not presume prior knowledge or how it will be constructed in the context of the student's experience (cf. Piaget, 1957; 1970; Vygotsky, 1962;1978).

these experiences through interviews with colleagues and comparative reading of the literature on songwriting (cf. Brookfield, 2017).

Plato's allegory of the cave (1970) is a precedent to Meyers and Land's Threshold Concepts (Meyer and Land, 2003; Land *et al.*, 2010) and Mezirow's Transformational learning (Mezirow, 1981; 1991; 1997). In all of these concepts, leaps in knowledge and understanding are preceded by challenging the current knowledge or belief with new concepts or knowledge that are alien or even disruptive to the current schema. However, once the new knowledge has been assimilated into the learner's schema it both opens up new possibilities of understanding, as well as altering all previous concepts and knowledge. In terms of a songwriting pedagogy, the theories of creativity (cf. Boden, 2003; Csikszentmihalyi, 2014a; McIntyre *et al.*, 2016) are key examples in which a student must challenge their previous beliefs, often the romantic mythology. Once learned previous concepts of songwriting, and creativity in general, are transformed. When searching to develop an understanding of learning in songwriting, both Socrates' and Plato's positions become important in the pedagogical approach, and so the pedagogy of songwriting is a dialogue between the student and teacher; unique to each student-teacher combination. Both individuals should be recognised by each other as such individuals, with agendum, bias, and limitations. Both teacher and student must also acknowledge that learning is neither transmissive nor linear, but is constructed, reciprocal and complex. The outcomes of my autoethnographic method (demonstrated in Chapters 4-9) are unique to the practitioner and contextualised by the autoethnographer to establish the position that can be applied within the pedagogy by the researcher. This methodology (discussed here, demonstrated in Chapter 4-9, and evaluated in Pedagogical Evaluation) is transferable and adaptable to both teachers and students in developing their own positions in a songwriting pedagogy.

My autoethnographic method is not concerned with the quality of the songs, but focuses on the value and quality of learning. When learning is regarded as the value of the practice, the expectations and achievements of learners are both realistic and motivational, corresponding with Aristotle's approach of the Self-fulfilling Prophecy (described by Merton, 1968). My autoethnographic method also continues Nietzsche's Perspectivism by valuing the learners' past, current and developing knowledge, the uniqueness of the learner and their experience, and that the role of the teacher is a facilitator of discovery (Deleuze, 2006). The incorporation and prominence of reflective practice, either alone or as the primary source for the autoethnography, in a songwriting pedagogy is supported by Dewey's (1963; 1966) pragmatist approach which emphasises the importance of reflection in learning – an aspect that is still prominent in many current pedagogies derived from Kolb (1984); Gibbs (1988); Moon (2000); and Brookfield (2017).

3.11.1 Songwriting in Higher Education

There is a growing provision of courses or programmes in Higher Education (HE) dedicated to songwriting (as indicated by its inclusion in the programme title). In the UK these are typically delivered by specialist HE institutes (HEI) such the Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM), The Institute of Contemporary Music Performance (ICMP), the British Institute of Modern Music (BIMM), the Liverpool Performance Academy (LIPA), Leeds College of Music (LCoM), and most recently Nexus Institute of Creative Arts (commencing September 2020), all of which offer taught degrees in songwriting. These alternative providers are all validated by other universities with Taught Degree Awarding Powers, which requires these providers to design their programmes so as to meet the policies and values of those awarding institutes. The University of Hertfordshire (BSc),[28] Buckinghamshire New University, the University of Hull, and Coventry University are the only institutes who offer songwriting degrees validated by their own Taught Degree Awarding Powers. Bath Spa University, ICMP (validated by University of West London), Tileyard Education (validated by Nottingham Trent University), University of South Wales, and the University of West Scotland are the only institutes to offer MAs (Master of Arts) that specify Songwriting in their titles. Other alternative educational providers offer songwriting courses that are not validated for higher education awards, such as Point Blank, The Brit School and The Songwriting Academy. It is common for universities with popular music degree programmes to have modules on or relating to songwriting but as part of a more discursive syllabus. In Martin Isherwood's Sounding Out Songwriting report (2014), he listed only two master's level songwriting programmes, one bachelor's level programme and one Foundation Degree (which was the programme I wrote for Newcastle College in 2013) which contain songwriting in the title, with 77% of those programmes having been introduced since 2000. That there are currently 22 programmes (eighteen undergraduate and four postgraduate) from twelve institutes which specify songwriting in the titles (digital.ucas.com, 2020) indicates a dramatic increase in the demand and provision of songwriting in higher education. Delving deeper still, a search for 'popular music' in the UCAS database provided 263 programmes from 60 institutes. Excluding those with 'songwriting' in the title (as these have already been addressed) and combining FdA/HNC/HND[29] with top-up years, resulted in 105 programmes which contained 49 incidences of modules containing 'songwriting' within the title (including one called 'Words and Music'). This does not account for modules that feature songwriting within their syllabus but not their title, such as 'Composing in the Studio' at Newcastle

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[28] All other undergraduate programmes are Bachelor of Arts (BA)
[29] Foundation Degree of Arts (FdA), Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Higher National Diploma (HND) are higher education awards that are limited at FHEQ levels 4 (HNC) and 5 (FdA and HND), and require a top-up year (FHEQ level 6) to award an undergraduate degree.

University which has a songwriting option within its syllabus. Coupled with the emerging body of research into songwriting, this research is timely.

As part of formal music education in the UK that would realistically precede enrolling on to a songwriting degree, students would either study A-level Music (AQA and Edexcel) or Btec Music/ Music Technology (Edexcel and Rock School Limited). Entry requirements for a UK bachelor's degree are centred around accredited prior learning (although exceptions are made for appropriate experiential learning), A-levels and Extended Diplomas make up the majority of the credit-bearing programmes in the UK. A-level Music is made up of three components: Music Appraisal, Performance and Composition. None of these components specifically deal with songwriting, and while Composition is the nearest to songwriting it does not focus on popular music songwriting. Composition only accounts for '25% of the A-level marks' with only four and half minutes of composition required for the assessment (AQA, 2016, and Pearson, 2019). In the Edexcel level 3 extended diploma, songwriting (referred to as song writing) is only featured within Developing Music Creation Skills, and in the Rock School syllabus there are no specific units for songwriting in its Composition pathway, although it does feature a Composing Lyrics unit. The majority of the teaching and learning in these qualifications are around musicology, performance, composition, and technology as well as transferable skills (such as research skills and project management). As such, songwriting is a limited aspect of level 3 music, being only a single unit within composition pathways at best, whereas musicology, performance, composition, and technology each have a range of units and assessments. This range of teaching and learning activities all support students in progressing from level 3 into the first year of degrees in music where the focus is on musicology, performance, composition, or technology, but by comparison songwriting does not receive the same amount of knowledge development prior to Higher Education. This indicates a necessity to identify and propose a method for steepening the learning curve for songwriting students engaged in songwriting on a bachelor's degree.

3.11.2 Contextual Experience of Songwriting Educators

To provide some context, I interviewed a sample of educators who incorporate songwriting as a central facet of their teaching programmes. These interviewees volunteered their experiences through a Songwriting Studies Research Network[30] email request for interview participants. The network is not exclusive to songwriting educators or UK based educators and researchers. This generated six respondents, three from the UK, two from the US, and one from Australia. Four were from specialist HEIs- two from ICMP, one from BIMM, and one

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[30] The network was established and maintained by Simon Barber, at Birmingham City University.

from Berklee College of Music (US). One from the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) (Australia) . One was a professional songwriter and unaffiliated freelance educator (US) .[31]

Five of the participants expressed a strong emphasis in their teaching philosophy towards students exploring the creative space, particularly in the early stages of study. Scarlett Keys, at Berklee, said that their first-year students needed a broader range of songwriting experiences, such as writing in collaborations, writing to a brief, timed exercises or using different writing approaches. Daniel Green (ICMP) stated that, in general, exploring divergency is more important than personal depth. His colleague, Shane Beales (ICMP) also said that their first-year degree students lacked a range of songwriting experiences and so their curriculum encouraged students to write two draft songs per a week, emphasising a sense of quantity over quality. Beth Nielsen Chapman (freelance) explicitly stated her quantity over quality approach in her freelance teaching practice, insisting that her students developed a perseverance in writing to *practise* every day, without expectations of quality in these exercises, which she refers to as exercising their 'showing-up muscles'. This corresponds with the expressions in the literature review such as '9 out of 10 songs are crap' (Pattison, 2009).

Scarlett Keys (Berklee) described the sense of how the Berklee curriculum developed from component and construct teaching of songwriting – Lyric Writing 1 and Lyric Writing 2 modules – through to a more emotional finessed songwriting practice in the Advanced Songwriting module. Shane Beales identified the scheme of their songwriting degree as building a portfolio and developing an artistic voice in the first-year, honing their craft in the second-year, and producing finished material with industry expectation and standards in the third-year. Lisbee Stainton (BIMM) described their previous curriculum[32] as being performance-based with some introductions to the music industry in the first-year, academically focussed in the second-year, and industry facing in the third-year by commercialising students' songwriting practices. In general, these all appear to reflect Bloom's (1956) taxonomies and Benner's (2001) stages of consciousness and competencies, in their developmental structures. These curricular all describe the students moving from incompetency of skills and knowledge in songwriting by exploring the atomised components (which Lisbee Stainton refers to as the toolbox), towards unconscious-competency or internalisation, and refocusing the students' contexts to music industry expectations and requirements.

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[31] This interview discussed experiences, perceptions and beliefs as a professional songwriter and freelance educator, and therefore, is featured in this autoethnography.
[32] BIMM has just validated a new degree programme which emphasises the rhizomatic journey of learning, and fluid state of music industry terms and roles.

From these interviews and the literature on songwriting, there appears to be a divide of the songwriting approaches and outcomes as art, craft and commercialisation. Isherwood (2014) reports that 57% of his songwriting educator respondents considered songwriting to be a creative art, while 21.5% considered it to be a commercial product. The absolute definitions of these terms are not clear in the report, and their application by the respondents would require further investigation. However, my respondents from the US (Scarlett Keys and Beth Nielsen Chapman) favoured the terms of art and craft, as often used in the 'How to' literature such as Jimmy Webb's 'Tunesmith' (1998) and publications by Pattison (1991a; 1991b; 2009). The UK based respondents were less inclined to use the term 'art' but did discuss how they developed 'craft' and 'commercialised' practice within their curricular. Scarlett Keys stated that she took an art focused approach to her teaching, and that craft was applied to refine the artistic work.[33] The overall output of Berklee graduates was towards commercialising the songwriting practice, but without impeding the students' artistic intentions. Similar to Scarlett Keys, Beth Nielsen Chapman focused mostly on an embodied learning of the art before applying the craft, in particular overcoming forms of writer's block associated with too much critical thinking, which she likened to being too 'crafty'. I offered the analogy of sculpting a clay bust, where the first step is to form a general shape of the head (art) before applying the details of the face (craft), as this illustrated the sequential necessity of art *then* craft. This sequencing of practice and learning corresponds with the earlier descriptions of the curricular scheme stages of exploration, honing and commercialisation.

Assessing songs was not an explicit aspect of the interviews, although three respondents did share their perceptions on what makes a successful song and songwriter. Shane Beales suggests that the skill of the songwriter is in 'presenting the idea', knowing what is being communicated and to whom. Beth Nielsen Chapman stated that the song needs to be 'clear and digestible' but that the writer should not be writing what the listener wants to hear, they should write 'selfishly, but [the song] needs to be clear'. Scarlett Keys summarised that for a song to be successful the 'listeners need to understand, be interested and to empathise'. Scarlett Keys appears to offer the most listener-centric position of value, but Shane Beales does include an acknowledgement of knowing whom this listener is, and Beth Nielsen Chapman agrees that the song's message must be clear to the listener.

In discussing what challenges educators faced in teaching songwriting, Andy Ward (USC) highlighted how he perceived the songwriting pedagogy to be at odds with the established modes of music pedagogy. Drawing from his experiences as a student in an Australian conservatoire, he surmised the traditional music pedagogy as one based on 'error

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[33] Although she did not state it explicitly, I have considered this to be a statement in regards to her modular teaching that is then balanced with the craft based teaching approach of her colleagues such as Pat Pattison.

correction'. That there is a 'platonic ideal of the performance' and that assessment was based on identifying the 'errors' that distanced the student's demonstration from that ideal 'which is a methodology that's not going to encourage any level of creativity'. He also felt that this pedagogy contributed to an environment of social exclusion and symbolic violence resulting in him feeling that 'the social environment tied up with classical music and the performance maintenance of Western homogeneity were not part of anything I was interested in.' In his teaching practice, he emphasises a challenging of students' platonic beliefs, similar to the exploration of the creative space, but he also emphasises the development of social, cultural, and psychological awareness in the students' practices. Such an approach corresponds with the idea of music-making as a social act, extending its practice beyond the musicological skills and knowledge. He discussed the advancement of artificial intelligent songwriting tools – in particular HookPad – and how these tools can allow students to circumnavigate the need to learn and apply music theory in a songwriting practice or assessment. His response to this issue was to incorporate AI – specifically HookPad – into his teaching as a tool that students used to compose, arrange, and generate assessable products, either audio or notation. This allows him to dedicate more of his teaching time to developing the social, cultural, and psychological aspects of the students' songwriting practice.

Daniel Green emphasised a frustration regarding the definition of scholarship, which he feels needs to be broader than the perceived definitions of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). While not explicitly stated I take this to mean that he would like a more creative practice inclusive set of definitions and ways of interrupting what is scholarship to be included in such quality measurements of HE. Perhaps linked to this issue – by my own judgement – is how Daniel Green describes students' use of reflective assignments as a means of 'excusing' their creative practice, which I would claim is linked to Andy Ward's criticism of the 'error correction' pedagogy. Daniel Green agreed with my suggestion that these reflections suffered from limiting themselves to introspection, and not pursuing the process through with critical reflection and reflexive outcomes. Lisbee Stainton expressed the range of abilities students had at engaging with reflective practice was one of the challenges she faced with applying reflective practice-based teaching and assessment. She speculated this ability to engage with reflection was connected with their ability to be vulnerable. I would further speculate that what is required is a clearer framework and deeper understanding of the mechanisms of reflective practice to support its implementation in teaching and learning. Daniel Green and Shane Beales emphasised how the ICMP framework for assessment of creative works, requiring students to detail and explain their creative decisions, aids them in removing subjective-based judgements. I agree but feel this is a low-level instrumental application of reflective practice and could be

developed much further to support the assessment-of students learning and as an assessment-for learning.

A final outcome of these interviews comes from Beth, not explicitly concerning teaching and learning but an observation from her professional practice. Beth stated that none of her commercially successful songs – specifically her seven number one selling singles – were instantaneous successes. 'Everyone of them was at least a year – a year and a half – before anything happened with it. Some of them 5 years, some of them 10 years.' The pedagogical implication of this is that these timescales fall far beyond the academic timeframe and so are not reasonable expectations to apply in academia. Speculations regarding the potential success of a commercial endeavour are notoriously speculative and subject to such a range of influences that they can hold no objective value in academic assessment. I suggest that the emphasis in teaching and learning of songwriting should be focused on the success of the students learning and ability to demonstrate the observable knowledge, skills, and behaviours of successful songwriting. My autoethnographic method demonstrated here is a means of developing such skills and evidencing students' learning without homogenising practices or corrupting assessment with subjective bias.

3.12 Conclusion

In seeking to devise an autoethnographic method that can uncover how style is learned in songwriting, I have designed this methodology to be as close as possible to the phenomenon and to be open to observing the subjective and intangible. As such, this methodology has been developed from the ontology up, where songwriting has been identified by the act (the-thing-itself), as the creative moment, the embodied intelligence of domain possibles, and the future facing present-at-hand constructed from knowledge of field possibles. This application of Merleau-Pontian and Heidggerian phenomenologies establishes the position and field of what is intended to be observed. The creative moment, domain possibles and field possibles are observed and considered as the lived experience of the practitioner-researcher as part of my perceptions, constructions, and 'knot of networks' to the lived experience. An autoethnographic method, drawing from reflective practice, is deployed to observe with as little hindrance or intrusion on the creative act as possible, supporting the natural lived experience of the practitioner in observation. The theories drawn from the data are triangulated with the reviewed literature and songwriting interviewees, whose various approaches to songwriting represent comparable modes of practice from similar and greater ranges of practitioner experience. The practice observed and contributions of the interviewees are certainly not exhaustive of the entire field of popular music songwriting but are broad enough and typical of a standard approach of songwriting to validate my autoethnographic method for observing and theorising this and other songwriting practices. The observations and theories from my autoethnographic method are then subject to an

evaluation of their pedagogical value. The context of the pedagogy has been established as a student-centred constructivist approach to teaching and learning, and the field and experiences of current songwriting educators has been incorporated to provide further context and steering to these evaluations.

Chapter 4. Autoethnographic Observations

Trying to observe a style being developed is a troublesome goal, as style is an intangible quality and could therefore be akin to searching for a black hole, but like the black hole we can observe evidence of its existence. In applying the term 'observed' in its proper function as to notice or perceive, I was not simply 'looking' at the visual and physical interactions of songwriting, I observed my thoughts and feelings as the practitioner to gather the data that could be used to develop my theories. Applying Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological approach (1945), I have observed my songwriting practice from within the experience as I have perceived it reflecting-on the actions through stimulated recall – from the video footage and mp3 files – or captured in written reflections – including session reflections, journal reflections, and hyper-reflections. Holistically the trajectory of development was towards competency but within this there was much revision, revisiting and relearning through successes and failures. To elucidate on the holistic development the results presented here are thematised into a chronological order of developmental stages.

There were four distinct stages of development in these observations. Stage one addresses Developing the Voice of #... as a creative brand including the processes and techniques that were deployed in this theme as an exploration of agency. Stage two, Amalgamating the Voices, addresses that in developing the #... brand-voice there were multiple other voices – language, tone, and gesture – that were amalgamated into the singular voice that was being presented. Stage three, The Audience, represents the phase shift from writing from a purely expressive or artistic mindset to a commercial mindset. Here it was observed how the emerging song or track is written with consideration of its most appropriate audience and environment, and the sources of knowledge which were used to achieve this. In stage four, Putting it All Together, the implications of structures on a commercial practice were observed in what I have termed 'field songwriting habitus' – developed from the mode of habitus described by McIntyre (2016b) but specific to songwriting that utilise field derived knowledge – along with the emergence of the brand-voice in its context.

4.1   Developing the Voice

4.1.1   Goal Orientation

The journey taken during this research project predates the start of the project, as well as continuing beyond the scope of this research. As a living practice, it works toward many milestones of various magnitudes and significance, and generates new ones as the old are accomplished. However, to designate a starting point I have observed a paradigm shift,

which was when my goals changed. Previously, I had written under the pseudonym The Unreliable Narrator, which, in reflective hindsight, was an exercise in constructing audience focused songs through detached narratives. I was attempting to remove my personal attachment within these songs, so they would be more accessible to listeners, but this was only made clear in hindsight and after informal feedback that my songs might be more emotive if I wrote from my own perspective more.

> Previously I have written for my own development as a songwriter; the Unreliable Narrator folk songs were written, mostly, around fictional stories to explore the components of songs/songwriting. 30.12.2015[34]

> At the start of the PhD I knew I was changing direction. Moving away from The Unreliable Narrator phase of my writing. I thought I was going to be following through on my MMus material but I also knew I wanted to be writing for/with other artists. 07.07.2018

During my master's studies, I started to write songs that drew from a wider domain of references beyond the indie-folk sound of The Unreliable Narrator and started to view myself as more of a songwriter than a performing singer-songwriter. I took a vested interest in producing my own music through technology as this was shown to be the way that contemporary songwriters work (Seabrook, 2012; Appel, 2017; Marrington, 2017; Toulson and Burgess, 2017; Bennett, 2018). Feedback from my Major Project indicated that while my songwriting was good, my role as a producer needed considerable development.

> This is a lush and appealing song which deserves a better arrangement and production than this current version… [this is] a track which aspires to a large-media commerciality would need a lot more balanced and finessed mix (and master) than this recording presents at this time… [In conclusion] it is probably best to admit this is a time-sliced point within a longer journey of development and finessing; particularly in the arrangement and production aspects of popular song which are the chief areas in which this collection is weakest. (Extracts from MMus Songwriting- Final Project, feedback. Moore. 2014)

I applied this critique to my work by refining the arrangements and production of some of these tracks and submitted them to SongLink International for approval to their lead sheet submission service. Feedback from David Stark – the editor of Song Link International – indicated that my production skills were still in need of development and that he felt I was not listening to enough current chart material. 'Not bad but you need to really keep up with what's happening on [sic] the charts. It's a very competitive business writing songs for others and nothing like making your stuff.' (David Stark, email correspondence. 27.10.2014) It is at this point that I consider this project to have started, as it is here that I made it my aim to write commercially viable songs that I would produce with the intention of writing and producing for, and with, other artists.

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[34] dd.mm.yyyy refers to reflective journal entries

This new aim sired new and smaller goals within it, namely to learn and apply contemporary popular music songwriting tropes and techniques to my songwriting and to develop my music production skills to such a level as to be comparable to those in the domain. Both these goals required me to immerse myself within the contemporary music domain and to cultivate new networks for collaboration and support in entering the field of contemporary popular music. I altered my listening habits to be more focused on the most current and mainstream music markets, utilising curated playlists from Spotify and Apple Music, and spending less time listening to nostalgically valued music as its influence had previously dated my work. Although it is difficult to objectively and empirically observe the impact of immersive listening on the songwriting practice, its significance is undeniable. I cultivated new networks of songwriters, musicians, producers, and engineers, through Facebook groups, which opened up new collaborations and sources of feedback and support. These networks have proven invaluable as a source of knowledge, guidance, and moral support in a shared goal of making a viable career from music making but these interactions were not expected to be included within the scope of this research and so their application here is very limited.

The aim of developing my songwriting and production skills became fused as an inseparable core of my practice. In my reflective notes, I account for my boredom and frustration of writing on guitar, as my primary instrument, as it was predictable and restrictive, often falling prey to the ergonomically convenient rhythms of my hands. 'I just knew I wanted something more contemporary (not a strummy acoustic song) with some sense of rhythm. Starting with a beat certainly makes it more interesting for me' (15.10.2016). The obvious solution was to transfer my songwriting environment to a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) in my case I used Logic Pro. Writing through the DAW, with its vast array of virtual instruments and processing applications is, in many respects, akin to learning an instrument. Although I was already well versed in Logic pro, having used it for recording since 2006, learning to write full-scale productions *within* the DAW was a process of mastering the program to a significantly higher standard in terms of both songwriting and production. There is a lot that could and should be discussed on the affordance offered through technology in this situation, but this falls beyond the scope of this research.

Being goal orientated (as discussed above) was also a common mode of practice in successful songwriting sessions as they provided the values, directions, and limitations of the session. This was demonstrated in a collaboration with Bernii Carr, where she provided the initial idea for the song from which we agreed to the on-going trajectory of our intended work

> Bernii had come to the session with an idea for a song. This helped kick things off quickly discussing what the song is about and Bernii's ambitions for the song. As per a usual writing session we listened to Bernii's idea then some reference tracks and identified some ideas and

concepts that we wanted to use in our song (we literally stole ideas and laughed about it). 02.11.2016

With *Profanity*, Lionel Lodge at Vienna Calling Music Network (VCMN) stipulated the intentions of the production through reference tracks and the intended marketplace

> I am looking for a top-line producer/arranger to take finished songs and produce them for the commercial market including hit radio and sync placements for TV/Film/Advertising. We are looking for authentic production artists who are able to be inventive and create a sound scape that sounds fresh and new but at the same time fitting with today's market. We have the songs and the singers. We are thinking for references but not to be copied are Lorde as well as Sigrid "Don't Kill My Vibe". (Extract from VCMN advert on MusicGateway.com)

With *Yes We Can*, Karen Ross described how she wanted the piece to be rhythmical and percussively arranged, and Paul Attinello recommended a video by GetUp! Australia as a reference track. Session 16- *The Becoming*, was developed from a brief set on MusicGateway.com

> Looking for Alternative Indie-Pop for US TV show.
>
> We are currently looking for Alternative/folk for a long-standing US TV show with a strong following the show is of the sci-fi/fantasy genre regarding the supernatural.
>
> The average viewing figures are 5 – 6 million weekly in the US. The show has an averaged audience aged 14-19.
>
> Think melancholic teen angst. Please listen to the reference tracks to get an idea of what we are looking for.
>
> Please pitch full production, mixed, mastered, and broadcast ready.
>
> Reference tracks.
>
> For You – Serena Ryder
>
> T.O.L.D – Lucifer's eyes

Session 18 started with the intention of emulating the HAIM sound of choppy, percussive drums, big bass guitar grooves and 1980's styled processing on guitars (demonstrated in the video extracts Appendix 3- Session 18).[35] However, over the writing process this intention was less rigidly followed and *A Partner in Crime* developed its own unique voice (25.07.2017: Session 18: A Partner in Crime.mp3).[36]

These examples demonstrate a range of values, directions and limitations that guided the creative processes as to be goal orientated. Counter to these successes, I have noted a common occurrence in my reflections to criticise myself for not knowing 'who I was writing for'

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[35] https://youtu.be/yeHEsyg69Ak
[36] https://soundcloud.com/hashtagellipsis/4-phd-session-18-a-partner-in/s-exEmi?in=hashtagellipsis/sets/appendix-2-audio-examples/s-7qIfi

(28.12.2015) or for generally messing around (04.01.2017). These sessions, therefore, became unfocused and unproductive in terms of viable output. It is also prudent to add, that many early sessions also had goals, but these were less frequently achieved, which I conclude is due to a lack of mastery of songwriting and production in this domain and through the DAW.

In retrospective reflection, I feel every session started with an intention, many of which were to explore and learn through play. These lowly ambitious sessions were not productive in terms of a commercially viable output but essential in the learning process that I was undertaking. In reference to a Pattison quote, 'Don't be afraid to write crap – it makes the best fertiliser' (2009, p. 291), I have jovially referred to these sessions as 'fertilizer sessions'. In reflecting on these fertilizer sessions, I state, 'Another fertilizer track but I am getting better and more creative with my sound design (I put a lot of time into experimenting with Monark here)' (referring to Session 26 in 20.07.2017) and 'This is another fertilizer track where I am still experimenting with Komplete and a new keyboard (Panorama P4)' (Session 38 in 25.07.2017). Although these do not explicitly state that my intentions were to 'experiment', I feel every session that is not explicitly goal orientated is implicitly playful exploration and experimentation.

Through these examples it is shown how the work has been aim/goal/intention orientated - surmised as goal orientated in accordance with Zembylas' notion that the work itself remains emergent and in spite of such a goal is 'neither linear nor rational' (2018, p. 58). However, in these instances, the goal orientation is at various levels with differing degrees of scope such as an overarching value or a conventionalised process of note selection.

4.1.2   Exploration of the Conceptual Space

Starting with the goal orientated notion that I am creating a new brand for my music, I knew I was moving away from the traditional singer-songwriter mode – as derived from the Singer-Songwriter genre of the 1970s, to include those 'unmediated', 'poetic, personal and confessional' (Appel, 2017, p. 7) songwriters – but what I was moving towards was not, at the start, explicit. I was inspired by more contemporary pop artists who did not fit into my previous mode of songwriting, such as MØ, John Grant, Chet Faker, and the songwriting teams behind chart-topping singles such as Max Martin and Shellback, or Stargate (Seabrook, 2012). The difficulty in envisioning this trajectory is in defining the differences of the modes of practice, which Appel (2017) highlights have a shared agenda of expressivity over virtuosity. One significance would be the mediation of technology, wherein the traditional singer-songwriter – and especially the Singer-Songwriter genre – uses socially accepted technology such as guitars, but contemporary singer-songwriters, such as those

mentioned, use more contemporary technologies such as DAWs, MIDI controllers and sample pads, which are considered to be less intimate or 'authentic' – as indicated by Shukar (in Appel, 2017). The broad selection of styles that are presented in my listening material could only be grouped together as being predominantly studio-based or computer-mediated songwriting, but such a grouping would allow the inclusion of even more material. The goal of creating a brand-voice for #... required that there be constraints, conventions, and values that would define the creative space of #... as well as its location within the domain.

In Phase One of my fieldwork, where the sessions were documented with video footage, there was significantly less commercially viable work and less consistency in the brand-voice – constraints, conventions, and values. In some sessions, I was attempting to apply either previous tropes and techniques from the performing singer-songwriter mode, or tropes and techniques from new style-domains that I did not successfully integrate into the #... brand-voice. An example of replacing the performing singer-songwriter mode would be strummed guitar patterns being replaced by either muted guitar riffs, single chord strums with additional effects – which would create a sense of space – or synthesised instruments with either tremolo or stereo delay effects to create rhythmic patterns. However, I did not immediately, or even consciously, make this change, instead, I was applying tropes and techniques from my active listening into my songwriting sessions in a pragmatic manner. The application of these changes can be heard in the verses of Session 16 – *The Becoming* and Session 18 *-A Partner in Crime.*[37] During the developmental stage of my practice, I was either applying tropes and techniques that I had previously used or new tropes and techniques that I was starting to master.

Quite early on in this project, I observed how I was simultaneously attempting to create and edit within the sessions, which resulted in prematurely rejecting the work in utero.

> I criticise myself for spending too much time on production/editing tasks which on the one hand get the feel right and therefore keep me motivated, they also distract me from creative thinking… I was certainly pleased with myself for getting a verse and chorus track down in 6 ½ hours but given that on 3/11/16 I did a track (verse and chorus) and lyrics with Bernii Carr in 4 hours, and previously would have a full track (verses, chorus and middle 8's at about 3-4minute track) in 3 hours with Jonathan Bennett, maybe this is not so impressive. I am pleased that I got something down and I think it has potential but I still need to work faster.
>
> Reflecting on Session 1 Reflection.

I addressed this by demarcating these roles, creating, and editing, using timed exercises with prescribed DAW templates These approaches stopped me trying to edit or refine my emergent work and instead focused my efforts towards accomplishing a core idea, such as a

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[37] https://soundcloud.com/hashtagellipsis/sets/appendix-2-audio-examples/s-7qlfi

verse or chorus section. The benefit of this practice was that it allowed me to enter into a creative mode such as exploring, discovering, and learning, or what in other disciplines, might be described as an intuitive mode of thinking. In Boden's (2003) terms, I was exploring the conceptual space which I had prescribed on to myself through my aim of writing contemporary commercially-orientated songs through a studio-based practice, becoming familiar with the structures and testing the agency between myself and the materials and immaterials available to me.

4.1.3 Developing Domain Acquired Knowledge

Admittedly, in my earliest reflections, I highlight that I believe reference tracks will play an essential role in the forthcoming process of development and as a standard of commercial practice (01.10.2015) (a concept and practice encouraged during my master's studies). Having addressed this bias hunch in my reflections, I recognise that my explicit focus on reference tracks may appear to be included earlier than would be expected. During Session 1, I discussed the tracks that I feel have influenced my earliest decisions in the session and those reference tracks that I believed will be applied to its on-going development. Although I would agree that the explicit inclusion of reference tracks in my reflections may be earlier than average, I believe it is an inevitable inclusion in a professionally commercial practice, as evidenced below (3.10), by the inclusion of such reference tracks in other songwriters' practices.

In the previously listed examples of goal orientated sessions, all of these, at some point in their creation, utilised reference tracks as a means of objectifying the constraints, conventions, and values that would make up the trajectory of the session towards the intended location of the song/track. In Reflection 02.11.2016, when reflecting on a collaborative session with Bernii Carr, I state

> As per a usual writing session we listened to Bernii's idea then some reference tracks and identified some ideas and concepts that we wanted to use in our song… She stated she wanted the infamous four-chord loop, I used a 6-4-5-1 [vi-IV-V-I] and programmed some keys over a drum loop and a bass guitar backed by a Moog sub. 02.11.2016

In this example, it is demonstrated how we were goal orientated and the chord loop and instrumentation were responding to the constraints of our reference tracks. In Reflection 15.10.2016, I state that

> Although I still think those references were right (Chet Faker, James Blake, and Bon Iver) I decided that the lyrical content [style] was too ungrounded [abstract] for my tastes. I want some stronger [physical] imagery alá Dylan, Waits, Mitchell or Costello, which I believe would make the song more accessible on another level as well as allowing it to stand apart from my reference tracks. 15.10.2016

This is in reference and critique of the conventions of references tracks from both my past influences and current influences regarding my emerging brand-voice.

In Reflection 03.01.2017, I state that

> I feel I've been listening to a lot of artists with voices very different to my own [although recently I feel very unsure as to what my voice is!], such as MØ, John Grant, HAIM etc... I'm particularly drawn to female artists who have a position and angle that I couldn't voice myself as an artist [or could I? Could this be a unique angle? Or is it unachievable?] 03.01.2017

This is concerned with the values that are upheld in the lyrics of my reference tracks, as a lens of evaluating the potential values for my emerging brand-voice.

Although in Phase Two of my fieldwork, explicit documenting of reference tracks lessened, this is not an indication that my use of them had decreased. Instead, they were intuitively integrated into my practice, transcending their application from conscious to unconscious as per Benner's model of development (2001). It was intended that such skills, as were being developed during this research project, would become the core of my perceptions during the process and that they would become embodied into the practice. Once mastered as a naturalised skill they would be unconscious and intuitive as a 'purposive action without purpose' (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. 153). This use of the domain, as the source of creative knowledge, is thoroughly acknowledged by the Systems Model of Creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013) – as discussed in the above literature review (2.1)– but here it has been observed in a more explicit manner, and through to its naturalised state as part of a songwriting habitus (McIntyre, 2016b).

4.1.4   Detachment of the Brand-Voice

Similar to reference tracks, thoughts, and ideas on how the *artistic voice* of the songwriter operate were prevalent in my early reflections.

> Following the post-structuralist ideas of transmission-article-receiver the song maybe defined similarly through the whole process. This would then dismiss the idea of song as an object to be assessed and studied, instead it should be as and through its practice. 01.10.2015

However, the nature of my own artistic voice has been an on-going experiment as revealed earlier by my use of an unreliable narrator in my songwriting, which is directly referenced in my previous stage name, The Unreliable Narrator.[38] These early experiments, in hindsight, allowed me to write with a sense of distance from my subject, or to present the songs with a

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[38] The unreliable narrator is a term coined by Wayne C. Booth is 1961to describe a narrator whose credibility has been compromised. I would use it to write songs from perspectives that were adjacent to my own or to write narrators who would deceive the listener so as to deliver a plot twist.

perceived sense of distance by my audience. During Phase One of my fieldwork, I often mention the struggle of finding my artistic voice or not knowing what my artistic voice is:

> I do enjoy the fact that these tracks do not sound alike and they do not sound like the tracks that I have been listening to recently, so I have not simply stolen ideas. However, I do worry that I need to develop a style (a brand) in both my music and my voice (actual voice and lyrics). 05.01.2017

and

> I think I'm still blocking myself lyrically with the issue of not knowing my artist-voice. As The Unreliable Narrator I knew I was a storyteller feeding off the folk revival sound and other acoustic genres. But as #... I need to reinvent myself but I'm not entirely sure what that sound is. 13.01.2017)

The term voice is significant, over style and brand, as it connotes the human quality that is perceived in the artistic work in such a way as to draw links to the person who created it, author, songwriter, or artist.

It appears to be a running theme in my practice to try and distance myself as the authority of my work, not wishing to be an auteur, confessional songwriter. 'I think if I commit to writing for another singer (especially female) it may relieve me some of my burdens and pressures when topline writing.' (15.10.2016) and ' I need an alter-ego to write through such as Ziggy [Stardust] or Elvis Costello.' (13.01.2017). The issues of being honest and unique while captivating and relatable are a common topic in my reflections and are well surmised in 14.01.2017

> Continuing my train of thought regarding the artist-voice, I need to be more ballsy with my voice. Playing a character would accommodate this but I don't want to 'create' this character as I don't believe it would be convincing. There needs to be an aspect of truth to my artist-voice. I do have aspects of my personality to be emotional, passionate, critical, angry etc. which I would usually suppress to be an acceptable normal person in society. 14.01.2017

As my fieldwork progressed, I utilised collaborators as topline writers more often, giving me a sense of distance (along with additional creative input, quality filters and shared authority that will be discussed below (section 4.2)). Whilst distancing myself, I was also working towards an emerging brand-voice for #..., one that could be recognised as separate from the reference tracks of the domain, and prevalent through my collaborations. This aspect of developing the #... brand-voice was concerned with the locating the *authorial voice* in the work, within a spectrum between a biographical author and a fictional narrator, with personas, pseudonyms and alter-egos scattered non-linearly within. Clearly, in my own work, I do not favour the biographical, but I am seeking a persona through which to voice the #... work with sincerity and trustworthiness.

4.1.5 Brand-voice Precedes Commercialisation

Reflecting on the fieldwork of this research, I noted a paradigm shift between Phase One and Two. The explorative nature of Phase One was concerned with discovering/creating the brand-voice of #..., while Phase Two is concerned with commercialising the brand-voice. Within Phase One, there are far more instances of exploring a vast conceptual space as evidenced by the variety of genres being deployed as learning experiments, for examples Sessions 26-29 (Appendix 2).[39] This is further corroborated within the corresponding reflections in which issues of not knowing my brand-voice or my audience are common. In Phase Two, these sessions are generally more refined and focused explorations of conceptual space, and in the corresponding reflections, there are fewer concerns voiced with regard to brand-voice and audience. This does not conclude that the brand-voice and audience of #... are now established, only that they have been refined and, as previously indicated, incorporated into the intuitive practice. In this project, it was necessary to establish the brand-voice prior to its commercialisation. The brand-voice is made up of its style and USP as dictated by its constraints, conventions, and values, while commercialisation of the brand-voice involved its crafting to meet the expectations of a specific audience with shared values, conventions, rules, and agenda.

It may be theoretically possible to invert this process, starting with a target market for whom to create an artistically derived product, but this would raise issues of the works sincerity and trustworthiness, commonly referred to as authenticity. Such issues, if raised by the industry or the audience, could undo the commercial viability of the product, and if raised by the artist could lead to a lack of satisfaction and commitment to the on-going project. In terms of working in a commercially-orientated practice the output in question needs to be creative, which includes being valuable (Boden, 2003). Unlike the value of technological creativity, which is often to solve a problem, artistic creativity's value is more existential insofar as addressing our sense of being; how we live, communicate, socialise and so forth. As such, we place incredibly high personal value in such works and so the trustworthiness and sincerity are of great importance. Therefore, it is logical that the brand-voice, whether discovered or created, should precede the commercialisation of the creative output.

4.1.6 The Emergent Brand-Voice

The brand-voice is not observable outside of the context of the oeuvre and style-domain in which it resides, similar to the constraints and conventions of a style-domain only being observable in mass, and in contrast to other style-domains. The brand-voice adopts the constraints, conventions, rules, values, policies, and agendum of the domain and field in

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[39] https://soundcloud.com/hashtagellipsis/sets/appendix-2-audio-examples/s-7qlfi

which it is located, whilst simultaneously being unique within the domain by either its combinations or transformations of the constraints, conventions, rules, values, policies, or agendum. There is undoubtedly a voice within a single track or song, which speaks to the listener of the constraints, conventions, rules, values, policies, and agendum, which locate the track or song within the appropriate domain and field. However, the *brand-voice* requires a sense of mass and consistency to verify as a brand and therefore cannot be recognised through a small collection of songs and/or extra-musical materials.

4.1.7   Domain Songwriting Habitus

The goal of this project was to develop a brand-voice for #... but as previously indicated the nature of songwriting is in the practice, not the product. As such it is through my songwriting habitus that the brand-voice resides as a living practice. While evidence of the constraints, conventions, and values, which make up this habitus may be observable in the tracks, the primordial nature of the brand-voice is within the habitus of the songwriting. There are typically observable constraints within the tracks such as the prominent bass lines in the choruses (*Pull You Away*, *Don't Say His Name*, *Slumber Party*, *I Love Summer*, and *Life is a Dance* (Appendix 2)).[40] As well as the conventions that I have developed and the manner in which I use them, such as the way I 'throw away the last notes' (20.01.2018) of phrases, using pitch bends and filters (for example, the synth in *Don't Say His Name* (0:00-0:11) (Appendix 2)). Further constraints and conventions that contribute to my songwriting habitus include my timed exercises and use of DAW templates (reflected on in 21.01.2017), which constrained my choices in terms of my affordance to explore or experiment with complexities and limiting my range of choices such as instruments and therefore the sonic arrangement.

There are values demonstrated in my tracks, even without my lyrical input, such as optimism, vibrancy, and joyfulness with an accessibility to a wider audience by the up-tempo, bouncy rhythms, which remain accessible by being of a comfortable tempo- typically 90-100bpm - and diatonic composition. A number of tracks were rejected from the #... brand as they were too pessimistic and dark (*Sinner* and *Gutzilla*) and therefore did not align with the brand-voice. They still had value and were subsequently used to pitch for sync licensing where they could capitalize on their value without disrupting the #... brand.

Issues regarding the value of my authority, in its trustworthiness and sincerity, were most prevalent in terms of lyric writing, failing to find a comfortable position on the axis of autobiographical to fictional narrative. However, my songwriting habitus was to use collaborators for toplining which resolved such issues.

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[40] https://soundcloud.com/hashtagellipsis/sets/appendix-2-audio-examples/s-7qlfi

4.2 Amalgamating the Voices

4.2.1 Collaboration, Influences, References, and Heteroglossia

As discussed in the literature review, songwriting can be considered an art world (Becker, 2008) as it, at the very least, involves an audience, but more often relies on a team of co-writers, performers, engineers, producers and various music industry people. Within my sessions and reflections, I have observed the varying degrees of such impact from a range of these sources, and the impact of their absence. In reflection 27.02.2017, I reflect on a conversation with a friend on the 'frustration of working alone, having no sound board to bounce ideas off, another stakeholder to be beholden to, forcing you to contribute ideas'. Not long after this, I reflect:

> I was working on Session 6 (working title 'When You're Alone") and was helplessly stuck on the 2nd verse so I decided that I really needed someone else's insight into the song. I have been thinking and discussing how I am missing working with a collaborator as I get stuck with my own thoughts, and need either new ideas or a sound board to progress an idea. 03.03.2017

Two months later, after reaching out to some collaborators, I reflect on some of the issues these collaborations can bring to a project

> The tracks that I sent to co-writers (BM and AG) are still not near completion which is becoming increasingly frustrating. I had great hopes for how the co-writing would help increase my productivity but it appears I need to be working with collaborators who are of a similar work ethic as me. 04.05.2017.

Regardless of the effectiveness of these collaborations, their impact is felt whether present or not, and so their voices have significance to this project's brand-voice.

In their roles as topline writers, their own voices, including its language, tone, and gesture, are most resonant to the listener of the track. However, all but one of these collaborations have been track-led, therefore it was my brand-voice applied within the music and production that has influenced and guided their creative decisions within their topline (except for *Rise Up* with Ann Kenney for which I was presented with the lyrics to compose to). Collaborations with Bernii Carr and Cortney Dixon (28.06.2017) operated similar to those collaborations described by Bennett (2010; 2014a), where the ideas were either agreed, adapted or vetoed within a language of positivity. In collaborating with Cortney Dixon my reflections indicate moments where a shared feeling was had, which resulted in vetoing ideas we were not happy with.

> Just as it was nearly sorted I looked over at CD [Cortney Dixon] and picked up that she was not feeling this groove. I don't recall who suggested shelving this idea, quite possibly me… [later in a new project] CD declared that she was not feeling this track, I agreed and we

shelved this track too. I was both pleased and impressed that CD would shelve a track. 28.06.2017

There was also an impact from people who were not party to the songwriting process, and therefore not credited as such, but whose suggestions and criticisms had a significant impact on the song. Examples of this include the briefs for Session 16 *The Becoming* and *Profanity*, where the music supervisor and label (respectively) detailed their requirements for the track prior to its undertaking – as previously indicated in section 4.1.1. Lionel Lodge (VCMN) also gave feedback on the early productions of *Profanity*, guiding the finished production to meet their commercial intentions. Similar feedback came from Michael Tedstone, while the tracks were still being produced: regarding Session 16 Michael said, 'Don't know what genre this is, think it needs some key elements to nail it into a particular genre.' Michael also said, regarding Session 27, that 'The vocal is mental. I like it but some of the notes are toooo [sic] mental' (email correspondence). Some input was also gathered through social media in specialist groups as a form of crowd-sourced feedback (Figure 6 Facebook Feedback). Quite often, I found this feedback was focused on the mixing aspects of the track (balance, sound quality and similar) such as 'the vocals seem just slightly dark in tone' (anonymised Facebook user 1) and 'the fuzzy synths seem a little in front mucking up the vox' (anonymised Facebook user 2). This was an inevitable reaction due to the nature in which I have presented those tracks as a DAW screen shot video (in the example below, I have specifically asked for feedback on my mix). Had these tracks been performed in an acoustic arrangement the feedback may have been guided towards the *song* aspects as there would be no emphasis on *production* aspects to critique.

Figure 6 Facebook Feedback

The previously described use of reference tracks in the songwriting process also contributes another voice to the track. As the brand-voice of #... is comprised of the constraints, conventions, and values as applied within my practice, so too are the brand-voices within the reference tracks which I draw influence from, as described in the Systems Model of Creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013; McIntyre *et al.*, 2016). When writing from these reference tracks, I am appropriating these voices, or aspects thereof, into the brand-voice I am creating. Across these three examples, collaborator, influencer feedback and reference tracks, there is a spectrum of voices that are contributing to the #... brand-voice. These operate in the heteroglossic manner described by Bakhtin as 'another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way' (Bakhtin and Holquist, 1981, p. 324). Considered as heteroglossic discourses, a number of tracks I have written in

collaboration present conflicting speeches. *Pull You Away* and *Don't Say His Name* serve as two examples where the lyrics are presenting a pleading protagonist, while the music, particularly of the choruses, presents an upbeat and joyous call to dance. This may appear as lacking a sense of prosody, as valued in traditional songwriting, but this conflict is a common trope in many genres since disco combined soul and dance music for example, any version of 'Don't Leave Me This Way' through to Avicii's 'Waiting For Love'. The resultant track is made up of many unique voices, not always in agreement, that are presented to the listener as a singular authorial voice and these conflicts add a quality of humanity and depth through their imperfection.

4.2.2   Unburdening the Romantic Mythology

Early on in my fieldwork, issues of authenticity and sincerity resulted in, what is commonly referred to as writer's block, where I was being overly critical of myself and my writing without allowing myself to playfully explore and experiment with my creativity:

> The previous questions regarding the authenticity/sincerity and for whom am I writing for have really brought to surface issues of writer's block. Contemplating on this issue the obvious answer would be to co-write. Similar to Adele and Winehouse, co-writing allows them to start with an authentic/sincere germ which can then be developed into a commercial product. Such a process would resolve my issue and is reflective of the common practice in commercial writing in the industry… Another simpler resolution would be to just write. 31.12.2015

Forcing myself through the block was facilitated by my use of timed exercises and templates, as observed above. Collaborating was not intended to be a significant aspect of this project as it was previously the focus of Bennett (2014a), from which a lot of this research is built on. However, due to the naturally collaborative nature of songwriting, as described by Becker (2008) and Bennett (2014a), and so not to dwell on my writer's block, I resolved to use collaboration as a conventional aspect of my songwriting process. As demonstrated by Bennett (2010; 2012a; 2013; 2014a), collaborative songwriting is a conventional practice within popular music songwriting, and that notions of the lone auteur songwriter are romantic mythologies. Lone songwriters only account for a small fraction of the successful commercial songwriter demographic and the songwriting credits more often exclude the input of influencers' feedback. In accepting collaboration as part of my conventional practice, I unburdened myself of the romantic mythology and therefore the disruptive issues of sincerity and authenticity that were predominate in the lyric writing aspects of my songwriting practice.

So far, these observations have concerned themselves with collaborations with actual people, but previously it was noted that in attempting to distance myself from being the authority of the work, I contemplated writing through a pseudonym or alter-ego as a character, such as Bowie did through Ziggy Stardust (13.01.2017) or for another singer

(15.10.2016). Although actual collaborations became my conventional practice, some attempts were made at these modes of writing. The lyrics for Session 13- 'Fear of My Own Shame', were written based on a newspaper story on a Japanese phenomenon where people were absconding from their lives due to shame, usually financial (16.01.2017). The lyrics were written from the perspective of such a person as a fictional character. The topline of Session 1 was written with Annie Griffith's in mind as the performing vocalist (15.10.2016) and so I was attempting to capture what I perceived to be her brand-voice in the constraints, conventions, and values, which I applied in this topline. Both these examples may not have been successful in creating a viable commercial product, but the processes suggest other modes of collaboration which can be applied where the actual writer creates a distance from the authorial voice by appropriating another voice. Considering the impact of the authorial voice to dictate the sense of authority over the work, these modes of collaboration can be seen to disperse or displace the authority among the collaborators, performers, and the fictional narrators.

4.3 The Audience

4.3.1 Judgements of Authenticity

I have, so far, only briefly touched on authenticity in my songwriting practice but, probing into this deeper, I consider authenticity to be derived of the sincerity and trustworthiness of the brand-voice. Previously, this was discussed in reference to the resultant writer's block due to my feelings of inauthenticity when my intentions were not aligned with my work and its intended domain.

> I worry about my songs becoming self-indulgent or writing purely for commercial gain. I need to resolve this conflict and allow myself to write from whatever is at hand. I suppose I also worry that genuine subjects of my songs may upset or offend people I care about. Does this potentially make my songs less 'authentic' or sincere? 30.12.2015

This classic trope of the mythologically romantic artist (Boden, 2003) presents an unsatisfying dichotomy – either writing from my own autobiographical experience or with fictional narratives aimed to please an audience. This is resolved by locating the artistic practice within the *spectrum* of art and commodity, instead of the polarising options of art or commodity. In Phase One of my fieldwork, where I am establishing the brand-voice of #..., my issues of authenticity were derived from my own value judgements, which, as indicated, had been trapped in a false dichotomy. However, through reflection, I was able to identify this issue and rationally come to terms with my innermost intentions. An intuitive indicator of my authenticity is signposted when I stated, 'I want to get excited about the song' (13.10.2016). An acceptance of the necessity of commercialising my art as a personal ideology is established in my blog post where I state

> We require access to resources such as equipment and tuition (although you can learn a lot online but this lone scholarship will only get you so far), and we need a community of support to help guide our learning and provide moral support for when we fail (and we will fail many times before we succeed). We need to protect our access to music, both at a personal level by giving ourselves the time and finances to pursue it, and at the social level to allow access to music making for all. Earning money from your talents protects your access to making music. (Whiting, 2018) #... blog post. 19.07.2018[41]

With my intentions to make music that I deem exciting and that I expect to commercialise, I now consider my work and its commercialisation as being sincere and trustworthy because it is as I intended it to be.

Having achieved a sense of authenticity within the brand-voice that would satisfy myself – using what I later refer to as a *criterion of appropriateness* (section 8.3). I then observed how these lenses of judgement were manoeuvred so as to be considered from the perspective of a listener. In critiquing my draft lyrics, a year after my initial concerns about 'getting excited', it is evident that my evaluation is very much focused from such a perspective.

> They're not that bad. There is a lot of imagery in them with very little internal dimensions but this is good as I don't want the singer to sound pleading. The song should win them over into sympathy for the singer, or the story in the song should. I find myself reading in a very familiar rhythm which is irritating, it's a similar rhythm that I use for a lot of poetry or lyrics (which haven't already been set to melody) and it starts to lead the lyrics into a cliché. I need to be mindful of not letting this happen. 04.01.2017

This example does come from a Phase One observation but is a strong example of the mindset due to its explicit perspective. These two modes of perception overlapped, often oscillating from one to the other throughout Phase One, the listener perspective became the dominant evaluative mode by the end of Phase One.

4.3.2 The Imagined Audience and Environment

At the UK Songwriting Festival, 2012, Iain Archer challenged my songwriting when he asked, 'Why should I listen?' and that I needed to 'take the story to the listener' (29.10.2018). His challenge has stuck with me since, and although I confess to being rather slow at developing these skills, it has encouraged me to challenge myself to ask how I am connecting with my audience through my songs. Early on in my reflections, I posit the idea that 'commercial songwriters use post-structuralist philosophies to create listener centric material as opposed to therapeutic songwriting which serves as an introspective communication with the self' (01.10.2015) This was in reference to the Death of the Author (Barthes, 1977) and the opening of texts as reader centric interpretations – Birth of the Reader. This idea guided a lot

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[41] https://www.hashtagellipsis.com/blog/2018/6/15/why-you-should-be-earning-from-your-songwriting

of my thoughts and queries of my practice throughout the fieldwork when I would ask 'who am I writing for?' (28.12.2015).

In my reflections, I explore how the Author Construct (Foucault, 1979) could be inverted:

> I believe the concept authorship is a relationship between the writer and the reader, and is in fact a two way relationship. Foucault's Author-Construct accounts for the readers' perception of the writer/author but I believe there is a counter perception wherein the writer is constructing the reader of the text. I believe this is a prominent aspect of the practice of songwriting which is quite often discussed whilst writing (Iain Archer's "take the story to the listener", "why should they listen?") Further still, I believe that the modes (models) of writing are in fact tools for addressing and engaging the listener. (13.02.2016)

This could be validated by the practice of writing to a brief, such as Session 16 *The Becoming* where the reference tracks provided information regarding the intended domain of the track being produced. This is inextricably linked to the field who will be engaging with the final output, in this case, the advert which the music would be synced to. Or, in terms of an intended environment of a track, such as a dance music track, which would be in its right and natural environment in a club. This club environment would indicate that it would be an audience of 18-30-year-olds, probably drinking and with the intention of dancing. This would then indicate to the songwriter that there will be expected techniques and tropes to be utilised in the song – filter sweeps, side-chaining, and lyrics with a call to action such as a 'clap your hands' or 'shake your ass', which invite participation to dance. This notion of the song's environment was observed in my fieldwork, where I commented that certain tracks would sound 'very advert-esque' (21.02.2017), that they 'could be used for sync' (reference to Session 33 in 25.05.2017), or negatively, that ' I don't know if I could place this anywhere (pitch or sync)' (reference to Session 36 in 25.05.2017). As previously discussed in the literature review, the reader constructs an image or concept of the author based on the work as read. In the above examples, I have demonstrated how the writer – or composer in this instance – constructs an image of the ideal listener and environment for the music being composed.

4.3.3   Addressing the Audience through Shared Knowledge

Tracks signpost key information to listeners that indicate who the track is for and what it is for. Songwriters use and deliver this information in and through the constrains, conventions, rules, values, policies, and agendum of the track. Recognising these signposts often requires a degree of familiarity or specialist knowledge, such as that acquired through 'immersion in the domain and absorption of the criteria of the field' (Fulton and Paton, 2016, p. 36). During the fieldwork of this project, I was actively engaging in developing such knowledge and applying it within my practice. From my reflections of Session 18, *A Partner in Crime*, the following observation highlights some subtle applications of the knowledge being used as a

quality filter 'The 2nd demo (Session 18.1) starts to incorporate topline ideas, but these were unconfident and lacked any interesting features, particularly rhythmically.' (25.07.2017). The 'lack of confidence' refers to the need of a sincere and trustworthy brand-voice: 'interesting features' refers to the contemporary practice of employing a lot of musical memes or sonic variations - often referred to as 'ear candy' - to maintain a listener's attention: and 'rhythmically' refers to the contemporary practice being primarily focused on rhythmic devices over harmonic or melodic devices. When such a signpost is not recognised, or an expected signpost is not presented, the listener is often repelled, but this is an expected consequence of refining an intended audience.

The previous example, from Session 18 *A Partner in Crime*, demonstrated where an audience's expectations were not being met. Other examples demonstrate where an audience's expectations are being consciously met with pre-emptive techniques.

> Writing on a blank sheet of paper, almost from nothing, puts a lot of pressure on the writer to *create* and implications that what is created comes from a personal place. Given that I am writing for a commercial market, possibly for other artists, there is little need for the songs to be coming from *deep within me*. I consider myself a fairly boring kind of guy and I lack the drama that usually gets used for songwriting. However, by using the scaffolding method I am able to distance myself from these lyrics and service the song with whatever drama is required. 08.05.2017

Session 27- 'Don't Walk Away', was written using a scaffolding technique where I re-wrote the lyrical sentiment and story of MØ and Snakehips' 'Don't Leave' (2016) into a new song without plagiarising the original song (08.05.2017). The theme of the original song is a relationship-themed song, which is recognised as a tautological trope of popular music accounting for 80% of lyrical themes (Bennett, 2012a). As such, relationship themed lyrics are a standardised convention of popular music which those audiences expect and more readily accept.

4.4   Putting it all together

4.4.1   Structuring Filters of the Domain and Field

In developing the brand-voice of #..., a great deal of emphasis was towards exploring the agency available to my songwriting, so as to develop a brand-voice that would be novel. Although this was located within the boundaries of the practice, as an aural art form and being studio-based composition, and within the style-domain, it was a vast conceptual space. As the brand-voice was developed and refined so too were the boundaries of the conceptual space, as the practice utilised a smaller range of techniques and tropes as constraints and conventions. This is demonstrated by the decreased exploration of 1980's pop, orchestral arrangements, and 1980-1990's video game sounds from Phase One (18.06.2017), while in

Phase Two only certain characteristics of these style-domains were utilised as part of the songwriting habitus for the #... brand-voice and the darker brand-voice (Sinner, *Midnight Stirring*, and *Gutzilla*). The emerging brand-voices also incorporated the imagined audience and environment into the practice as filtering structures to the final product. The dance music qualities of *Don't Say His Name* situate this track in a club environment for listeners wishing to dance, while *Gutzilla's* moody, intense, and slow narrative imply that sync to a dark moving image would be an appropriate environment for the track. In the demo of *Don't Say His Name* (Session 43.mp3), there are stylistic tropes and techniques from dance music although at this stage I could have chosen to take the track in another direction, this gut decision was guided by my concurrent infatuation with Calvin Harris' album, *Funky Wav Bounces Vol 1* (2017). While writing Session 41 and in the corresponding reflections (20.01.2018), I directly reference my infatuation with this album but in Session 41 I was unsuccessful in reproducing this sound. Although *Don't Say His Name* was started using a popular Jam & Lewis progression (09.08.2017), the actual structuring influence came from Calvin Harris (2017) due to my immersive listening of this album. This process is similar to the immersively acquired knowledge described by McIntyre (2016b) as the source of a practitioner's habitus. From this reference album, I acquired domain knowledge with regard to the constraints (e.g. instruments), conventions (e.g. audio processing and featured collaborators) and rules (e.g. universally appealing lyrics) which were applied into *Don't Say His Name*. There was also second order information in Harris' album, regarding *who* and *where* these tracks were for, such as the tracks being radio friendly (with a few censors) but with club appeal, and an optimistic summertime vibe. These signposted the intended field of the album by its values (optimistic summertime vibes), policies (operating with radio expectations) and agendum (universal lyrics which do not explicitly reference politics or religion).[42] This information is selected to be the structuring filters of my emerging track (*Don't Say His Name*), ensuring the trajectory of the track meets the requirements and expectations of the field and the domain.

4.4.2   Sources of Structural Knowledge

The knowledge of these structures can be grouped into three sources, as observed in these sessions: domain acquired knowledge, domain awareness, and influencer feedback. Domain acquired knowledge, in this instance, is taken to be that knowledge that is intuitively known by the practitioner and applied in a naturalised practice such as when I apply a standardised chord progression or the way in which I play in drum parts by 'feel' (observed in every available instance in video footage, cf. Appendix 3). This is the most difficult application of knowledge to observe as it is not explicitly acknowledged but is evident if the observer

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[42] There is mention of illegal drug use, specifically pills, which locates the album as being for a younger, club-going audience with liberal politics but this political stance is informally presented.

accepts that the practitioner is not making decisions arbitrarily. That the intentions of many of the project sessions were declared prior to the emergence of the resultant tracks, should sufficiently indicate that whilst the tracks were *emergent,* they were not arbitrary, directionless, or composed by chance.

Domain awareness refers to the explicit accessing and application of knowledge from the domain, which was not available intuitively. This is most observable with the use of reference tracks. In Session 27- 'Don't Walk Away', I was attempting to write a 'big' sounding outro but when my intuitive abilities failed me, I turned to reference tracks to supplement my knowledge:

> I have been going to reference tracks to find a suitable sound/arrangement to get my BIG ending chorus. The Chainsmokers tracks were all too slow and surprisingly sparse (which is something I may emulate in a future track) so I tried Marshmellow who uses faster tempos. 17.06.09

Knowing my artistic and commercial intentions for the emerging track and an awareness of works in the domain, which had achieved similar intentions, allowed me to locate and access these reference tracks. Using these reference tracks as sources of knowledge, I was acquiring and applying domain knowledge prior to incorporating it as part of my habitus. The nature, application and limits of Domain Awareness are discussed further in section 8.1

Influencer feedback is a straightforward and explicit source of knowledge where a person, not involved in the songwriting process, offers feedback or critique on the song. If accepted by the songwriter(s), it is then applied to the track or future tracks if the feedback comes after release. The range of whom these influencers could be is wide, so as to include anyone who offers such feedback, whether requested or not. The majority of the influencer feedback observed in this project was requested from industry peers or social media as crowd-sourced opinions. Such feedback could also come from sources not requested such as passive listeners or live audiences however these were not included in this project as their significance was emergent late into the autoethnographic theorising. The concept and influence of the influencer in the songwriting practice would be a valuable avenue of future research to be explored within its own scope and depth.

4.4.3   Field Songwriting Habitus

The previous topics of songwriting habitus demonstrated how knowledge from and of the domain was applied into my songwriting practice so as to locate my songs, track, and brand-voice within the domain. And, as has been indicated, commercialisation follows this developing of the brand-voice and its locating within the domain. The nature of commercialisation observed in this project is that of creating a sense of value to an unknown

Other, which has been described as the imagined audience. The knowledge in the application of this is from and of the field – its values, policies, and agenda – and how these are aligned with those of the brand. Much of this occurs as part of the presentation and communication of the brand and therefore, unfortunately, falls beyond the scope of this autoethnographic method. However, what is observable and worthy of note, is how the values, policies and agenda are recognised. Presented within this project are values of non-oppression (although not explicit equality), accessibility to enjoyment, optimism, and positivity; policies of non-offensive content, radio-friendly, comparable audio quality, and no 'active' political content (excluding Session 28 *(If I Can't Dance) It's Not My Revolution*); and an agenda of entertaining, existential being and monetisation. Although the knowledge of and from the field would be more significant in the communication of the brand, the values, policies, and agenda are clearly present within the songwriting to be carried forward into marketing and communication.

4.5 Conclusion

In developing a brand-voice for commercial endeavours, a process of exploring of the artist's agency in a conceptual space, defined by the artist's intentions as a goal orientated task, precedes the commercialisation of the practice. The brand-voice is constructed of the constraints, conventions, values, rules, policies, and agenda, which locate the artist and the work within the domain and field. The brand-voice also concerns the positioning of the voice on a spectrum of authority and authenticity, between auto-biographical and narrative. However, even as an auto-biographical voice the voice is made up of many other voices – language, tone, and gesture – taken from the artist's sedimented experience of the expressive meanings of the gestures and utterances as styles. The truly auto-biographical author is a romantic mythology, which is counter to the observed practice of this project, and part of developing the brand-voice requires this mindset to be unburdened.

In the latter half of the developing the brand-voice as a commercial entity, when the brand-voice is emerging – having established its constraints, conventions, and values – the focus turns towards the audience and their reception of the brand-voice. While songwriting, an ideal audience and environment are imagined based on the songwriter's knowledge of the field, which is used to assess the appropriateness of the creative decisions. These become the structuring factors in songwriting that filter out creative decisions counter to the constraints, conventions, rules, values, policies, and agenda of the brand-voice. Such knowledge I have termed as field songwriting habitus and the sources of this knowledge comes from domain acquisition, domain awareness, and influencer feedback.

My autoethnographic method facilitated me in observing the actions, results and feelings involved in my songwriting practice. Reflecting-on the practice gives me, as

autoethnographer, the ability to recognise the qualities (productive and unproductive) of my practice, draw a comparative analysis to the established body of knowledge, from which I was able to apply reflexive actions to my practice. The resulting themes of these observations have been generalised to have relevance to other practitioners, and aid learners to develop praxical approaches that would operate within and beyond an academic setting. As per the intentions of reflective practice, in demystifying professional knowledge and developing lifelong learning, the observations have pedagogical value and progress a learning songwriter through Kolb's experiential learning cycle. However, these only engage with comparative analysis, similar to the limitations described by Daniel Green (section 3.11.2) and would be furthered by the inclusion of critical analysis. This critical analysis is presented in the following themed chapters, exploring the emergent theories, and critically analysing these against the literature and experiences of songwriting peers.

Chapter 5. Models of Authorship in Songwriting

While all creativity is drawn from a domain of extant works, literature is perhaps a closer comparison to songwriting. Other creative forms may provide new and valuable insight, such as choreography or film, but they are currently beyond the scope of this research. In this chapter and the concluding framework, I will demonstrate where the songwriter considers the imagined audience, style and voice, and valuing within the songwriting practice. These topics are then discussed as to how the songwriter addresses these in the respective chapters below (Chapter 6, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 respectively). This chapter critically analyses the autoethnographic observations against the experiences and perspectives of interviewed songwriters and the reviewed literature on authorship, finding similarities such as the detachment of writer from author, and differences, such as the importance of collaboration and the inclusion of intentions within the practice and the work. It is discussed how collaboration can operate in different modes beyond those previously explored (Bennett, 2010; 2013; 2014a) to include *hypothetical-* and *pseudo-collaborations* and how these, as modes of professional practice, contribute to a shared authority, which detaches the songwriter from the *authorial voice*. The heteroglossic nature is explored revealing how texts and voices are appropriated into songwriting. The term brand is found to have a wider application to the overall listener experience of song and the extramusical materials. Furthering the notion that composers, and in this instance songwriters, are goal orientated (Zembylas and Niederauer, 2018), this chapter explores how these goals inform the songwriter's intentions, which are further used to value the work as it is created. The theories of how songwriters apply value is picked up again in Valuing in Songwriting (Chapter 8).

I will first need to clarify my terminology regarding style, *artistic voice*, authorial voice, and brand. Style is the sedimented mode of an expressive gesture, the way in which an act is executed by a person. The artistic voice is the voice – language, tone, and gesture – of the artist as constructed by the songwriter(s) and perceived by the listener as built on the stylistic gestures of the songwriter(s). The authorial voice is the voice that is constructed and perceived within the song. Brand is the collective stylistic-voice over a body of work such as an album or an artist's career including extramusical, which is everything associated with the artist. The knowledge that is acquired to develop these styles, voices and brands is derived from constraints, conventions and values as learned through the domain. The applications of these terms will be expanded on below.

In my observations, I have noted how my artistic voices – as The Unreliable Narrator, my master's compositions, and as #... – have demonstrated their uniqueness through their constraints, conventions, and values. My methodological intention of creating the #... brand so as to cause discomfort in my songwriting practice – drawing my decision-making

processes into the core of my perceptions (Ihde, 1986) and provoke critical reflection (Atkins and Murphy, 1993) – was facilitated by engaging in a less familiar style-domain and mode of songwriting – as discussed in Methodology. This positioned me as a 'conscious-incompetent' (Benner, 2001) as I was conscious of my incompetency within this style-domain and mode of songwriting, so as to be critically aware of what skills and knowledge I was attempting to develop. Although I am the same writer in name and being throughout these artistic voices, the post-structuralist philosophy (cf. Barthes, 1977; Foucault, 1979) might claim that it was a unique writer for each instance of writing. More eloquently worded by Gene Wolfe as 'You never learn how to write a novel. You just learn to write the novel you are writing' (Gaiman, 2012).[43] What defines these artistic voices and brands as unique from one another are the significant changes in constraints, conventions and values.

The constraints that differ from The Unreliable Narrator to #... are derived from the style-domains from which domain knowledge is acquired and to which the resultant songs are intended for. The Unreliable Narrator drew its influence from folk ballads, and the Singer-Songwriter and indie-folk style-domains, such as Bellowhead, Don McLean and Mumford and Sons, while #...'s constraints are influenced by mainstream Pop, EDM and alt-Pop such as Charlie Puth, Daft Punk and Jon Bellion.[44] Constraint variations between these two style-domains that prevent the two overlapping would include: The Unreliable Narrator could write in strophic form with third-person narratives, and would favour acoustic instruments such as the double bass, acoustic guitar and accordion, as being more *authentic* to the style-domain. whereas #... was expected to use ternary or extended song forms with first-person narratives, but could use technology including DAW's and electronic instruments - such as synthesizers, or simulacra instruments – with less regard to the *authenticity* of intimate technologies such as guitars and accordions. The latter point on the constraints of instrumentation overlaps into the conventions of the two artistic voices.

An example of a convention of The Unreliable Narrator was to write with an acoustic guitar, often conjuring lyrics and melodies simultaneously over a strummed or finger-picked chord progression. As described in Autoethnographic Observations, this resulted in melodies that often followed the strumming or picking pattern of the guitar part –whether driven by ergonomics or aural syncopation – therefore limiting the vocal rhythms which was a passive convention of The Unreliable Narrator's artistic voice. Another difference of convention was that The Unreliable Narrator songs were all written as solo endeavours while #... sought out

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[43] Although the comparison of writing a song to that of a novel may be unfair, and perhaps a novel would be better compared to a collection of songs, either an album or even significant collection of albums.

[44] I choose to use the term EDM to incorporate a range of electronic dance genres which have been tamed into the mainstream such as electronica, house and dubstep; Air, Daft Punk, and Marshmellow respectively.

collaborations as a means of unburdening writer's block – due to issues of authority and authenticity as will be discussed below – and in keeping with the style-domain conventions.

Regarding the values of these brands, The Unreliable Narrator was foremost a live experience, playing at least once a month as a purely acoustic performance. #... has been a studio-based project releasing material through streaming platforms with no live aspect to the project – at this point, although should #... go live it will undoubtedly require significant electronic tools and instruments to be executed.

These voices and brands are identifiable by their constraints, conventions, and values, and I could choose to write a song now using either of these voices by following such constraints and conventions. Therefore, the artistic voice and brand are not locked to a time and place of my life, they can be re-performed by the songwriter and are hence further removed from the God author (Barthes, 1977) which is re-performed by the reader. That I can freely change from one voice to another indicates a detachment of myself, as the writer, from the artistic and authorial voices, that are perceived by the listener through the artist persona and song (respectively).

This detachment of the artistic and authorial voices from the writer are shared in various ways by songwriters interviewed for this research. Alex Soper indicates that while the artistic voice of his Coquin Migale songs are an expression of himself, they are limited by the expression he makes at that time. Songwriting 'gives you a lot of different ways to express [yourself], so I can't just express one side of my personality through one band' (Alex) so that expressions made within the song are trapped, and unless rewritten, cannot express Alex's changing attitudes. Alex is therefore detached from his expression and free to change is attitude. In terms of writing for or with an artist Hattie Murdoch and Ian Sillett both expressed the importance of researching that artist before a songwriting session, in particular the artist's style and brand. 'They'll be having their style that they are already working in. It's not up to me to change much of that, really just to enhance it.' (Hattie). Therefore, Hattie is adapting her writing to work within the constraints, conventions and values of the artist whist contributing her own style as required to 'enhance' the artists commercial viability. When writing songs based on ideas collected from his teenage years, Peter Brewis explains how the teenage sentiment captured a unique moment that he 'just couldn't capture now because I've gone through that moment', but those lyrics were 'shockingly bad' as 'I didn't have the vocabulary to really express how I was feeling' (Peter). In a sense, Peter is collaborating with his teenage self, taking those sentiments and applying his experienced craftsmanship to refine them into commercially viable songs.

Each of these examples demonstrates how the authorial voice of the song is unique to the song and, to a greater or lesser extent, distanced from the writer(s). Co-writers, such as

Hattie, Ian, and Jez Ashurst, utilise the artistic voice, or style, of the artist through which to write. Peter, in enhancing the sentiment of his younger self, is using what I will term as pseudo collaboration, where the collaborator does not exist in the present at hand – I will expand on this below. Alex's approach may appear to contrast the others by appealing to a romantic sense of expression, but I feel it is important to highlight that Alex and his band operate in a genre of music that places a high value on authenticity.[45] Yet, still he has a sense of distance, as he recognises the multifaceted nature of his personality and how he represents only parts of this in each song. Therefore, each song cannot represent him in his entirety and cannot represent him as he himself changes.

This distancing of the songwriter from the song's authorial voice, by detaching the writer (person) from the author (construct) is facilitated by the inclusion of other voices. An obvious example of this are collaborations such as Ian and Hattie have discussed, which I refer to as actual collaboration. Jez also elaborates on this when he discusses the example of working with Gabrielle Aplin and Nick Atkinson on 'Panic Cord' (Aplin *et al.*, 2013)

> In the Gabrielle Aplin song we had 2 days, we wrote 2 songs in 2 days. There were 3 of us, me, Nick Atkinson – who wrote a lot of the record – and her. They had already worked together quite a lot. With that, that was a lot more organic because she was at the very beginning of her career, she wasn't signed, she was a brand new artist, and she was only 17 I think. So we weren't really thinking so much about anything except having some fun in the studio and seeing what happens. So on the Panic Chord we just asked her what was happening in her life basically and she told us that story and she had some ideas on the piano, and we strummed along, and the song kind of came that way really, but she has quite commercial bones anyway as a song writer, so it wasn't as if we were leading her down a path and she was fighting and screaming to do something completely left field. It all seemed like we were aiming for the same idea which was to have an original idea but framed in the context of quite a traditional pop song. (Jez Ashurst)

Although Gabrielle brought to the session the autobiographical story that would be the germ of the song, it was a combination of all three's creative inputs that resulted in the finished song. My observed collaborations operated in an inverted fashion, where the music was composed then sent to the topliner to write over – excluding Rise, where the lyrics were sent to me to compose the music to. Often it was up to the topliner to decide on what images, ideas, or stories the music conjured in their mind, although Alex Soper did receive *Don't Say His Name* with the title already in place, which inspired him to write the subsequent lyrics. In these actual collaborations, other people's styles and artistic voices are combined to the net benefit of the song's authorial voice.

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[45] As part of the as present counterculture, certain genres rely on a sense of authenticity that is counter to the craft and business-like approaches of their counterparts, even when the practices are in truth the same. This has been highlighted by Becker in the Literature Review (2.1).

The previous example of Peter using his teenage writings as the germ of his current songs is theoretically very similar to the example Jez described with Gabrielle. Teenage Peter provides a sincere, although unrefined, story – possibly autobiographical – from which current Peter applies his refined songwriting craft to develop these ideas into a commercially viable song for his band, Field Music. The significant difference is that teenage Peter is not able to actively contribute beyond that which he has already written, hence I refer to this mode of collaboration as pseudo collaboration. Another example of this practice would be when Nitin Sawhney took the William Shakespeare sonnet 'O Mistress Mine' and transformed it into a song, 'Waiting (O Mistress Mine)' (2003), whereby Shakespeare contributed the germ of the song but was inactive to contribute further.

Another form of collaboration, that was briefly discussed in my observations, was what I will now be referring to as hypothetical collaboration. I discuss the practice of writing through an alter-ego such as David Bowie did with Ziggy Stardust and Declan McManus did with Elvis Costello (13.01.2017). I discuss writing through such a process – although with less commitment – for 'Fear of My Own Shame' based on the hypothetical character and his situation, which was constructed through reading a newspaper article about the Japanese phenomenon of people disappearing. In these instances, the authorial voices are used by the songwriter as a conduit through which to express extreme or unfamiliar thoughts, feelings, or situations. The example of the alter-ego, such as Ziggy Stardust, would be at the far end of a spectrum of hypothetical collaboration while at the subtler end would be emphasising or enhancing of the songwriter's natural persona. The result is an artistic or authorial voice that is derived through the constructed character, which once again facilitates the detachment of the songwriter from the song and its authorial voice.

A less radical mode of detachment is the inclusion of other voices within the songwriting process that are the influences that are drawn from domain acquired knowledge (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; 1999; McIntyre *et al.*, 2016), which operate as intuitive skills or sedimented modes of expression (Merleau-Ponty, 1945), but what I simply refer to as style. Alex speaks of how his musical style is in response, or in reference to, other musical acts such as palm muted techniques of Everything Everything, or the drum production of Rationale. In this example, Alex's style has been derived from the conventions of practice that make up the artistic voices and gestural styles of Everything Everything and Rationale. This referencing of the domain was demonstrated in my observations numerous times, often when writing to a brief or in co-writing, but also in developing the artistic voice. Likewise, as Alex's references his style to established artists' styles from the domain, I described my intentions of developing a style similar to Chet Faker, James Blake, and Bon Iver (15.10.2016). In appropriating their constraints, conventions and values, my intention was that I would construct an artistic voice. Bennett (2014a) has previously discussed the quasi-

evolutionary nature of popular music but in this application the focus has been towards the development of style, and the artistic and authorial voices.

These examples of actual, pseudo and hypothetical collaboration, and domain acquired modes of expression, all demonstrate the detachment of the songwriter through the heteroglossic voices that are amalgamated into the singular authorial voice of the song. That authorial voice may be constructed by the listener as attached to the songwriter-artist, such as Gabriel Aplin, or to the character alter-ego, such as Ziggy Stardust. That the authorial voice may be attached to an artistic voice is the correct perception, as it is the intention of the songwriter(s) that any such Svengali co-writers (Bennett, 2014a) voices should not be heard. The aim is to construct an authorial voice of the song which is detached from the romantically expressive voice of the lone songwriter through the amalgamations of other voices as heteroglossic text, into the artistic voice (unique to the artist but common in their works).

Chartier (1994) identifies the link from the author to authority and authenticity, and this was observed as the root issue that led to writer's block. It was observed how the burden of being the authority of the song and doubts as to the authenticity of my practice and intentions resulted in this writer's block. A similar feeling was echoed when Alex askes 'Why am I in a position to say that? I'm not really in a position— no one's in the position to say this is good or this is bad.' (Alex) The burden created by the questions of authority and authenticity may well prevent a potential creative practitioner in pursuing a creative act due to a self-imposed impotence. However, through my observations and interviews with songwriting colleagues, I have identified three common attributes of practice that allowed myself and those interviewed to overcome issues of authority and authenticity. The first is in rejecting romantic ideals of pure originality (*ex nihilo*) and the lone genius, such as those discussed by Boden (2003). As previously discussed, songwriters accept that their work is derived from their knowledge of the domain, in what Bennett referred to as the quasi-Darwinian evolution (2014a), particularly by their use of reference tracks. Alex expresses his view on this as 'Nothing's ever 100% your own, is it really? Because everything has been something else.' (Alex) All songwriters observed and interviewed utilised collaboration as part of their songwriting practice. Even Alex, who is officially credited as the only songwriter for Coquin Migale, collaborates with his band in selecting material and refining arrangements. Secondly, while appropriating the voices and styles through their domain acquired knowledge it is through their application of this knowledge that their own sedimented style of expression is discovered and created. Peter states

> I started thinking all these ideas can be recycled into something and if I put it through the lens of who I am, my experiences; a little kid from Sunderland, then I can create my own voice, not in terms of a singing voice but my own style of writing. (Peter Brewis)

Alex says, 'I've found in the past that [too much listening to other music] can sometimes have an effect on my writing' and so he is aware how this balance needs to be controlled and therefore 'starves' himself of music around periods of writing. The third aspect of this practice is by using shared authorship through: the various forms of collaboration as previously discussed; operating within a group brand such as Coquin Migale; or the passing on of authorship to a branded artist. MaryAnn Tedstone described the difficulty for amateur songwriters in relinquishing their authority over their songs to another singer

> I used to find it very difficult when we used to have a singer in, and they'd sing it different or not the way I wanted it done… You just learn, you're either going to do it or you don't. If they're going to sing your song, they're going to have to make it their own. (MaryAnn Tedstone)

In previous projects, where I have performed with and without a band, I have noted how much easier it is to perform with a band due to this sharing of such a burden, which I now recognise as authority and authenticity. Within in my observations, I commented on both missing a collaborative partner (03.03.2017) and that I was writing with another singer in mind (15.10.2016), which were desires to again share the burden of authority and authenticity. As per Hennion's (1989) systematic testing and refining process, once the song is written and recorded as a demo it is then exposed to listeners outside of the songwriting team whose feedback is used to refine the song. These listeners I refer to as *influencers*. These influencers can be in direct contact or indirect, and active or passive. In my observations, I have noted a number of instances of influencer feedback. Working with Lionel Lodge (VCMN) as a commissioning employer and seeking peer critique from Michael and MaryAnn (Manike Music), were examples of direct and active Influencer. An anecdote not included in my observations demonstrates an example of indirect-passive influence. While working in the studio at home, my wife came through from the other room and said, 'I thought you were listening to the radio'. Her comments were not intended as a critique or feedback, but I received them as a form of data to inform me that the song and the production were – to some degree – comparable to tracks heard on the radio. Alex gets direct and active influence from his band when they vet his presented songs, assessing their appropriateness to the Coquin Migale brand, in particular the brand values. Alex and his band also get quasi-passive direct feedback from live audiences whose attention and reactions, such as dancing, and cheering indicate the successful impact of a song, while talking over the song or going to the bar would indicate an audience's lack of approval. Jez also highlights the importance of playing live:

> Probably the biggest thing I've learnt though is by being in a band and being on stage and getting that feeling for how a song connects with an audience…I think there's a big difference between someone buying music and someone pressing 'Like' on Facebook or YouTube, it takes a second to say, 'I like that'. I think often people are just saying 'I like the fact that you've done that, well done' rather than 'this song has changed my life'. So, if you see

someone sing live and it connects with you and you're in the audience and they can feel that and there's something in the air, I think that's the magic of it all really, that's what we shouldn't lose sight of in songwriting. That's the only thing that matters, connecting with an audience, that's what your job is at the end of the day. (Jez Ashurst)

Hattie utilises the Internet when researching the audience of her songwriting clients. 'When I've pitched for teenage artists, I'm looking at their YouTube videos, looking at the comments, seeing the age of the kids responding. And I try to tailor the lyrics accordingly. Nothing too deep, nothing too sexual, nothing that isn't suitable for that audience.' (Hattie) These comments are passive and indirect as they are not intended to be read by Hattie as data, from which to create new songs for that audience. Ian also acknowledges that a successful track owes its success to influencers in the wider team such as managers, Artist & Repertoire (A&R) managers, publishers, and distributors who select and place a track in the market for a targeted audience

> Somebody sees something, and they believe they've got the target market. You create a product, it's the most important part, songwriting, but then it's the selling, distribution, and getting it right, the timing. There's a lot to it. So, if someone is going "I know how I can fix that" or "I know I can place that"; that is not my job. (Ian Sillett)

These examples from industry, audiences and passing listeners, sit within what Csikszentmihalyi refers to as the field, but in this instance, I am qualifying their status to influencer as their qualitative input is utilised in the refining of the song. Their input can be active such as industry feedback or passive such as social media comments, direct such as the band rejecting a song that doesn't conform to the agreed brand, or indirect such as a passing listener's judgement.

It has been discussed in the literature review of authorship (2.3) that the concept of the author is separate from the person that is the writer. This notion is heightened in songwriting where there can be several writers, adopting various roles and operating in differing systems. Following the approaches reviewed previously, the author is that voice within the song that is perceived by the listener to be the voice of authority and, if successfully crafted, authenticity. The roles and degrees of authority held by the writers are inconsequential to the listener and therefore it becomes clear that it is the author that is perceived as the voice of authority and authenticity, not the writer(s). Hattie, Jez, and MaryAnn have all expressed how they view their role as being to enhance the authorial voice of the artist within the song, thereby relinquishing their own authority from the listener's perception over to the song. Peter and Alex retain more of their authority as authors, but still exercise a shared authority by operating under their band brands, Field Music and Coquin Migale. As with the concept of the author, the brand is not a fixed form but is reperformed and transformed with each listening of a track, as new tracks are added to the body of work and as new information about the brand is learnt. At the start of this project, I perceived #... as being a new artist

name but it has become clear that I was, in fact, creating a new brand. I was developing a new product through the adaptation of my writing style, for new audiences, and with new brand alliances with other artist voices and brands.

This concept of brand in songwriting, as with other theories of branding, extends to all aspects that are perceived by the audience as being a part of that brand experience (Murphy, 1987; Landa, 2005; Kornberger, 2010). In the case of songwriting, we can trace a proximal territory of the musical artistic brand starting with the content and structure of the song as musical and literary notable components. Following these notable components of song is the performance, which combined with song and recording production become the track. These correspond with Moore's (2012) definitions of song, performance, and track. However, a listener does not experience any or all of these in isolation, but under the influence of the song's context: within the body of work, the artist's persona, the listening environment, and so forth. Beyond the track is the body of work in which this track sits, known as the oeuvre. From here the listener will draw judgements of individual songs, such as 'this one is the radio single' or 'this is the album filler', and judgements on the entirety of the oeuvre, such as the quality of the work and the perceived domain in which the work should belong. Moving further away from the original song is the extramusical materials such as biographies, interviews, images, and communications from the brand. At such point, these materials should be enforcing the perceived brand image that the listener has conceived through the track and oeuvre. Given that the previous materials all align with the brand image, these are captured under the artist's persona as their artistic voice. This proximal territory of the musical artistic brand would sit with Richard Middleton's (1990, p. 174) concept of idiolect as a deeper analysis of the process. Further still, this should not be perceived as the linear process as I have laid out. In many cases, the artistic voice will dictate the nature of the brand and therefore the songs. As previously discussed, Alex's band will veto songs that do not adhere to the Coquin Migale brand image that they have established. In my own experience during this project, I started with my brand visuals and an idea of the brand experience, as formulated with a consulting graphic designer. Throughout the writing process of this project, I have worked towards this brand experience as a goal orientated process (Zembylas and Niederauer, 2018).

Previous notions of the author, discussed in the literature review above (2.3), as derived from the works of Barthes (1977) and Foucault (1979), are generally orientated towards how the idea of the author is perceived within the text, most notably from the view of the reader. The following Model of Authorship in Songwriting (figure 7) is not counter to the previous concepts but reoriented as a model of practice from the perspective of the creators of such works that would be said to be authored. The significant difference of this model is that it moves from the songwriter towards the listener, as opposed to the theories in the literature

review, which are of the perceptions of the listener. As with the previous concepts, this model starts from a linear framework: transmitter – work – receiver. The artistic voice is now presented to be a conceived voice of transmission, detached from the actual transmitter. As previously discussed, the songwriter must successfully negotiate the expectations of the field for their song to be successfully included in the domain, and that in this model of authorship the songwriter must consider how the song will be addressing these expectations. The audience that the songwriter is addressing (1) are hypothetical appropriately competent but fallible members of the field appropriate to judge the success of the work and is termed the *imagined audience*. The songwriter's goal is to apply their knowledge of the domain and field in imagining an audience who will align with their intentions to create a song with an authorial voice (2) that will both address and challenge the expectations of the actual audience, in this case the listener. The addressing of the audience is recognised as when the songwriter adheres to the constraints, conventions and values of the intended domain (Bennett, 2012a) while challenging the audience with something that is 'new, surprising and valuable' (Boden, 2003). The expectations of the imagined audience and the style of the authorial voice are brought together in the song (3) and the entirety of this is transmitted to the listener (4). At which point the 'conceived' components become perceived by the listener and if all the components (inside the central red box) align with the listener's expectations and limits of challenge, should result in a well-received song.
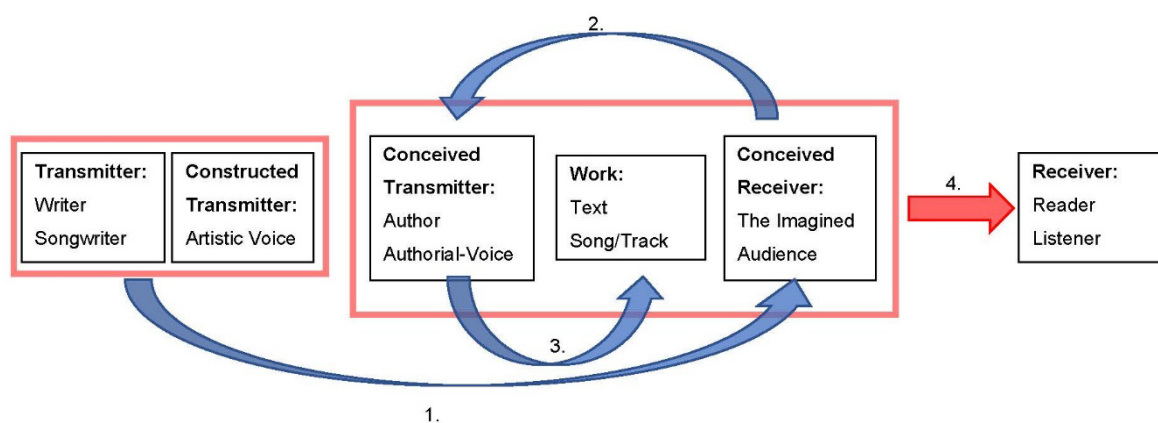
Figure 7. Model of Authorship in Songwriting

In the transition from written text to a potentially auditory artefact, the artistic and authorial voices should not be confused with the physical voice of the singer. The artistic and authorial voices are the constraints, conventions and values used by the artist and for the song, this is explored in more depth in Style and Voice (Chapter 7). This detachment in songwriting is achieved through several professional practices. Firstly, the acceptance that all works are built upon the works of the past, what has been referred to as domain acquisition. Secondly, that various forms of collaboration, here identified as actual, hypothetical, and pseudo

collaboration. Thirdly, similar to collaboration is the shared authority of a brand identity which disperses the authorial power across a group such as a band. Lastly, songs are a collage of appropriated voices and texts from collaboration, the input of influencers from the field and domain acquired knowledge, making them heteroglossic by nature. As such across a body of work, and in accordance with industry parlance, the term brand exceeds the term author in commercial songwriting, as this captures the artistic voice and style that is prevalent throughout the works. The term brand also includes extramusical materials (images, texts, interviews, and associated videography) which may not be considered to be authored, such as an interview, but which still corresponds with the brand identity.

Reflexive actions fed back into my songwriting practice, allowing me to make informed adjustments to my practice with a theoretical underpinning that supports professional development and lifelong learning. Pedagogically relevant reflexive actions from these theories provide theoretical underpinning to songwriting practices, which support the abstract conceptualisation (Kolb, 1984) necessary for students to engage with active experimentation in their learning. Without such theoretical underpinning, students could be reliant on others to construct reflexive actions to develop their practice – most often provided as feedback in formative assessments from the educator – whereas such theories, as demonstrated here, enable the student to develop as an autonomous learner.

Chapter 6. Identifying the Imagined Audience

The *imagined audience* is a corresponding theory to the postulated author. It is a conceived idea that is constructed in the mind of the songwriter similar to the way in which the author is perceived in the mind of reader. However, the imagined audience's construction is derived from the songwriter's knowledge of the domain and field, and informs the creation of the song. I will conclude that the developing of the artistic voice occurs prior to the identifying the of an imagined audience because the imagined audience is constructed from knowledge of the domain and field, and that knowledge is signposted within the song as an indicator who the intended audience is. Style and voice differ from the imagined audience by not only signposting but also challenging the audience's expectations. The qualities of style and voice can therefore be more intangible as these creative qualities are previously recognised qualities that are combined, transformed, or even omitted, and their reception is biased by the domain knowledge of the listener. In keeping with my intended structure of this autoethnography, I have organised the chapters as developing from the established knowledge towards these less tangible concepts.

Having identified the audience as a theme in my observations, this chapter critically analyses and reflects on the observations to draw theorises of the process through which the knowledge is used to construct the imagined audience in songwriting. This process is most clearly demonstrated when a songwriter is given a brief to write to, such as the examples given by Hattie, but it is also relevant when a writing artist is creating songs that will meet the requirements of their own brand, such as the examples given by Alex. In this chapter, it will be discussed how songwriters utilise their knowledge of the domain and field to construct this imagined audience, which provides the necessary structure and trajectory of a song for it to make a successful emotional connection with intended actual audience.

It has been indicated that identifying the imagined audience is an essential part of a commercially-orientated mindset, as without this the songwriter is only satisfying themselves. In MaryAnn's own words

> You always have to be thinking 'who's buying this song? Who's my demographic?' It's always commercial and I think it should be, otherwise it's just people pleasuring themselves with their own music and it becomes rather incestuous. I think you've got to have commercial interest and I think that's healthy. (MaryAnn Tedstone)

Other writers interviewed also focused on the commercial success of their songwriting, such as radio play, and the inclusion of their songs into the domain is an axiomatic by-product of that success. To achieve their primary intention of commercial success, they need the approval of the field. In my practice, I was aware of the style-domain that I was aiming my work toward via the reference tracks I worked from or followed up on as they emerged

through the creative process. Similarly, acceptance by the field is an axiomatic intention –as previously indicated, it is through their acceptance that works are included into the domain (2.1) – which is achieved by successfully signposting the intended style-domain, ideal listener and environment of the song. It is not so straightforward to say that songwriters without a commercial mindset will not have, or be capable of achieving, commercial success, but that those with commercial mindsets are actively applying the structures of commercially-orientated music. Furthermore, they may not be consciously applying these mindsets, as those songwriters interviewed, but can intuitively be adhering to the constraints, conventions and rules of the domain (Bennett, 2012a; 2014a), which contribute to the potential success of a song. Ian's view represents an active and conscious application of the imagined audience in his commercial songwriting 'if you don't think about the listener, your target audience, it's really difficult for them to feel like they can take something from that song.'

The commercially-orientated mindset, in its broadest terms, could be described as the intention to have the song heard and valued by another person. However, the proficient songwriters interviewed demonstrated a more focused and refined goal for their songwriting. As previously discussed, Alex focuses a great deal of attention on writing songs that will get radio play, specifically on national radio. He also discusses how he imagines the songs will be performed and received live by the band's gig attending fan base. Hattie's goals, when working with clients, were derived from the goals of those clients, which are often similar goals to Alex's such as radio play and live performances, but for Hattie, a more focused brief from management will often include a description of this intended audience. She also writes to briefs which would stipulate the goal of the song, such as a sync brief for a television advert, which would also state who the imagined audience would be based on market research. Jez described how when starting a collaborative writing session

> There's a discussion for a while about what songs we love, and then we'll probably listen to some songs we love on YouTube or on Spotify and we'll take elements, it might be rhythm from one song, or the emotional ideal from another and we'll start somewhere there as a starting point. It sounds terrible cheap, but it is kind of a good way in. (Jez Ashurst)

These are known as reference tracks, which are used to set an agreed agenda for what the trajectory of the songwriting should be but Ian highlights how this is not viewed as a final destination.

> If we agree "yep, this is where we're going" then we can branch from there and there might be other songs that are even closer to where we are going. Or other ideas that fit. Then you are on an upward spiral instead of a downward. (Ian Sillett)

Ian's approach further supports Zembylas' (2018) statement that the work is goal orientated, not goal driven. In most cases, it appears that collaboration comes with a prerequisite that the work being undertaken is in the commercially-orientated mindset. Jez highlights that

> I have a very expensive studio to pay for and I've also got people being sent to me by A&R and the record companies to try and write something that's trying to get on the radio, so it's a given before the door is even opened and I say hello, that they know why they are here, and I know why they are here. (Jez Ashurst)

As previously discussed, there is a shared agenda that the goal of the session is to write a commercially-orientated song. Ian points out, how in situations of writing for an artist, there is an assumed compromise in that the co-writer is expected to bring something to the project that is not currently there and that this requires a relationship based on trust:

> She needs to be willing to put herself out there, change direction and believe in the newness of it all. And put some trust in somebody who has been picked, as they've been proven in that style. It's relationship building. Some work beautifully, some just don't. (Ian Sillett)

There is no space in this working relationship for 'pleasuring themselves' (MaryAnn), as the goal is to write a song with commercial intention. Hattie identifies two modes of active collaboration as 'facilitator' and 'contributor'. When facilitating a collaboration, she is asking questions of the other writers to draw out ideas and suggestions from the contributors. These collaborators contribute to making a commercially viable song as operating to an agreed agenda of creating a mutually beneficial product. The collaborators are each active stakeholders in this product contributing ideas and assessing the value of others, based on their professional knowledge, and motivating their collaborators in terms of artistic and pragmatic inputs (Bennett, 2014a). In academia, the skills and benefits of collaboration are too often abandoned in exchange for a sense of objectivity through solo songwriting/composition assessments. These issues are signposted in this chapter and resolutions will be discussed further below and in Evaluating Pedagogy (Chapter 10).

The concept of the *influencer* was previously demonstrated in Models of Authorship in Songwriting (Chapter 5), and the direct/indirect and active/passive modes were discussed (pp. 137-138). It would be flippant to describe these influencers as uncredited songwriters as their role is part of the wider art world (Becker, 2008). Influencers also operate within the proximities and stratifications of the field described by Hennion and observed in this autoethnography. As such, these influencers' roles are a natural and essential part of the holistic process of songwriting. In collaboration, the songwriters have the options to accept, adapt, negotiate or veto an idea (Bennett, 2010; 2014a) but the Influencer's agency is often limited to accept or veto. Stakeholders, such as managers, publishers, and record label personnel, may have some agency to adapt or negotiate depending upon their investment, their relationship, or the capital that they are contributing to the project, such as networks (social capital) or a prestigious platform such as a renowned label (symbolic capital). Ian places a lot of emphasis on the importance of the relationship when he states that

> You've got to really know that manager. If a manager says it's missing something, that manager needs to be my best mate. Because there is an element of trust that's been built up. (Ian Sillett)

Alex's influencers include his band mates, his friends, and live audiences, each with a lessening degree of agency on the song. Hattie's example of reading through YouTube comments from an artist's fanbase demonstrates the most indirect of influencers that can be reached by a painstaking songwriter. In this example, the influencers are being used to construct the imagined audience, while examples of industry feedback and audience reactions are filters and experiments to judge and assess the effectiveness of the imagined audience in aligning with the actual intended audience. An essential part of this process, as previously discussed by Csikszentmihalyi (2013), Becker (2008) and Hennion (1989), is the access to people in the field from which to develop knowledge and understanding of the field as a social group, both prior to and during the songwriting process. As described by Hennion (1989), the songwriting process is not a linear process of writing a song and presenting it to an audience. It is a reiterative process where the work is presented to various influencers as filters and testing grounds for the song, to then be rewritten and crafted to refine the song to the actual intended audience. I further this position by theorising that part of this refining process is in refining the concept constructed of the imagined audience to inform the creative decision-making in songwriting.

The role of these influencers on songwriting is not considered in current modes of songwriting assessment. Currently, assessment can only acknowledge the contributions of those credited as contributors, but even this leaves vast gaps in quantifying and allocating marks appropriately. The teacher is a strong and, possibly, invisible influencers on the whole cohort's songwriting. Many students will attempt to write songs that will please the teacher, resulting in a homogenisation of the cohort's artistic voices (Chapter 7).

Domain acquired knowledge is a vast plain of knowledge from the components of music, such as chords, melodies, lyrics, and similar, to the cultural significance that is the meme of a musical idea, such as the 4 to the floor kick drum as a cultural indication of music to dance to (Zeiner-Henriksen, 2010). During the interviews, songwriters did not place much emphasis on the knowledge and skill required as a musician, such as knowing musical theory or the ability to play, as it was felt to be an axiomatic requirement:

> It's a given, that's why you're in the room, you know, you should be able to do that, it's a language you should know already, and it's the least important part of the equation in pop music. (Jez Ashurst)

However, despite its lack of emphasis in songwriting, Jez did highlight its value in the process of learning to write songs:

> I worked in a karaoke studio, that was my first job as dismantling and re-assembling 30 songs a month, therefore I know a lot of great songs and how they're put together and also doing the X Factor a couple of years ago, it was exactly the same job, so it's like taking apart a fine watch, you get to know how it ticks by taking it apart and putting it back together again. It's a great skill to have because you see, you can never get to the core of something emotionally that connects lyrically but its certain in terms of musical and structural tricks and ideas that tend to work, baselines, grooves, that's all very useful skills to have when you're an artist or songwriting. (Jez Ashurst)

And as he described earlier (p.143), this knowledge is used in his songwriting practice.

Within my observations, the work that was most effective – based on my own criterion of appropriateness through to the commercially-orientated success of the song – drew its structure from reference tracks where I would, as Jez suggests, take elements such as chords, song structure, and lyrical themes. My the less effective sessions tended to start with no particular aim in mind and therefore lacked a goal from which to orientate the process. Sometimes such projects were rescued by a collaborator who would be brought into a project and see the significance of the memes and symbols presented – pregnant with meaning – and thereby *enhance* them – to borrow Hattie's term.

As such, knowledge of these components needs to be understood with their significance as meaning, as certain memes and symbols reference a certain domain and are therefore intended for a certain section of the field. For example, Jez states that

> In terms of chord structure and chord patterns, there are definitely chords that go together well in pop music and there are definitely jarring, interesting, odd chords that fit better in other genres of music and perhaps, unless you use sparingly, can really switch a listener off a song. (Jez Ashurst)

Peter provides an example where the instrumentation signified a meaning to him that guided his creative decision making.

> The ensemble just says Motown basically. Kind of drums that did that... Piano, strings, and bass and clean guitar. And that was it... The ensemble dictated the direction of and intentions. (Peter Brewis)

Alex uses 'really intricate little palm muted [guitar techniques], kind of [like] Everything Everything' demonstrating how such components, instrumentation, and techniques signal to listeners, "*if you like 'that', you will recognise that style in what I write*". MaryAnn highlights how, in her writing partnership with her brother, Michael, an awareness of cultural trends in the domain plays a key role. 'Michael's very good at listening to current music and trying to get that into the track.' Knowledge of the significance and meaning of the memes and symbols presented in the music, to whom and how these appeal, is an important ability for the songwriter to create songs and tracks that speak, not only, in the language of the audience but with the same idiolect, conventions, values, agenda and policies.

The ability to understand a listener's perceptions of meaning and significance links into the internalised systems of the field (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; 2002; 2013; McIntyre *et al.*, 2016), as this knowledge is drawn from knowing the domain and the field as intersubjective and interdependent. Such significations are of the cultural awareness that is held by the intended audience in response to the constraints, conventions, and rules of a style-domain. Another aspect of the songwriter's knowledge is in recognising the values, policies, and agenda of the field, which transcend through the songwriting to the delivery of the track. For instance, Alex and Jez both emphasised the importance of radio play and the expectations of the song by the radio programmers, such as length and arrangement. When asked how he approaches writing for radio Alex states 'Like the length of a song, when the chorus should come in, all of that… Interesting short intro, as snappy as possible.' Jez points out that 'it's common knowledge that it's harder to get a slow song on the radio than a fast one' and such questions as 'Would Ken Bruce play this on Radio 2? Or would Capital play this?' are employed during the songwriting process. In considering the length of the song, the songwriter is responding to the radio station's policies of song length, and although radio edits can be done this often a compromise of reducing what the songwriter considers to be the full song. When Jez highlights the radio's preference for faster songs, and Alex highlights the expectations of structure, this is responding to the station's agenda to appeal to their listeners. And in questioning will a certain station or presenter play the song, the songwriter is responding to the values of that station or presenter as part of their brand. These examples demonstrate the *field acquired knowledge* combining Csikszentmihalyi's latter two conditions of the creative moment (p. 23). That the creative practitioner should 'keep in touch with the domain' and 'listen to the field' but in this instance, the knowledge of what the field requires and expects is pre-empted into the creative practice.

A theme in the interviews was the importance of the emotional connections that ran throughout the songwriting process. Ian describes a 'kindredness' with his collaborators and a mutual respect and trust with, what I refer to as, influencers. Hattie identifies the need to have 'no barriers' when contributing to a song, as when collaborating there is a sense of vulnerability which needs to be nurtured. Jez and MaryAnn discuss the need for believability in the artist's performance of the song, which is established by knowing 'what pulls on her [the performing artist] strings and we know how she feels about things. So, it's best to write something that she can identify with' (MaryAnn). As previously quoted, Ian asserts the importance of the imagined audience when he states that 'if you don't think about the listener, your target audience, it's really difficult for them to feel like they can take something from that song.' Alex demonstrates his consideration of the listener's reaction when he says, 'I'm already aware, or I can really imagine our fans are listening to this, and possibly thinking, "Oh, right, this is really good."' Jez emphasises the need for this emotional connection when he talks about recognising that

feeling for how a song connects with an audience... you try and think of why these songs connect, you try and capture that feeling of how they make you feel inside and try and bring that to the songwriting session. (Jez Ashurst)

MaryAnn describes this as getting 'a well-crafted song that means something to people, that people can identify with.'

Jez best typifies the intuitive nature of this whole process when he states that

I think you basically ask yourself more questions while you're writing. You may not externalise them, but everyone is on that page of thinking, ok, would Ken Bruce play this on Radio 2, or would Capital play this, or the man driving the white van to work in the morning – is there something for him in this song, or something for the person driving to work who's had a crappy day. So, you think a little bit more about who's listening to the song, as well as why you are writing the song. (Jez Ashurst)

Alex describes this as 'It's just the feeling, it's just an instinctive feeling that you know that you've done something good' and Peter states that for him and his Field Music collaborator, David, 'There just needs to be some kind of conviction between the two of us that this is what we're going to do.' Although much of the concept of working to an imagined audience may resonate with the ideas of marketing in gathering data and targeting such groups, the process here is an intuitive one. The songwriter develops a habitus for making an emotional connection to the listener as 'a feel for the game' (Bourdieu, p.5 editor's intro).

The imagined audience is a form of hypothetical audience, derived from the 'appropriately competent yet fallible audience' described by Trivedi (2015), as a working substitute for the actual intended audience within my Model of Authorship in Songwriting (Chapter 5) and as a songwriter's response to the postulated author within the creative moment. The songwriter's ability to construct an imagined audience that best aligns with the actual intended audience is a significant aspect to the success of a song connecting with said actual audience. The imagined audience must share the same domain knowledge and field requirements/expectations as the actual intended audience, and it is the songwriter's application of such knowledge, as acquired from the domain and field, into the song that constructs unique structural signposting. It is the constraints, conventions, rules, values, policies, and agendum that are derived from the specific domain knowledge and field requirements and expectations that are shared by the imagined audience and the intended actual audience. Such structures predefine what the song should be to appeal to the intended audience in all aspects of its construction. The songwriter must use such memes and symbols of the domain to signal to the listener, who the intended audience of the song is. This ability is not always, or even often, a conscious part of the songwriting process but is intuitively ingrained as a form of songwriting habitus. This process may infer songwriting to be a deterministic practice with no artistic free will to be creative, but the need to communicate and connect with an audience is an essential part of being an accessible song,

and therefore of the commercially-orientated mindset. Style and Voice addresses the balancing force of the agency in developing an artistic voice prior to the structuring impact of the imagined audience, and the authorial voice after this structuring.

It has been indicated in the literature review, that previous discussions on the nature of acquired knowledge in the systems model of creativity, has been predominantly towards the domain acquired knowledge and how this is applied in creative practices. The autoethnographically produced theory of the imagined audience, as part of field acquired knowledge, indicates a corresponding source of knowledge that is prevalent in the observed and expressed songwriting practices. The ability to recognise these conceptions and perceptions within and beyond the creative moment further contributes to a learner-songwriter to operate and develop autonomously in their own learning. The reduced dependence on the educator, to guide and motivate, allows the learner to surpass and/or differentiate their knowledge from that of the educator, avoiding the homogenisation of the students' artistic voices (to be discussed further below). The goal in creative disciplines, that students should develop their own unique habitus, styles, and practices, should be axiomatic, along with the ubiquitous aim of enabling lifelong learning in a student. The knowledge and skills that support the development of students as autonomous learners, contributes to this aim.

While the imagined audience, as structuring knowledge, can be applied similarly to music theory – as either an intuitive feel or as a tool to solve a problem, such as Perricone describes (section 2.2) – it does not currently have similar presence in songwriting curricular. A significant difference between these two bodies of knowledge could be that music theory satisfies the expectations of musicological problems, while commercially-orientated creativity can forgive musicological 'concerns' in favour of creative satisfaction. This issue also corresponds with Andy Ward's concerns of a 'error correction' pedagogy – discussed above (section 3.11.2), and its impacts on students' creativity, in learning and demonstrating. Where and how these two bodies of knowledge are applied and assessed in a songwriting pedagogy requires further deductive research.

Chapter 7. Style and Voice

Style and Voice are here conceived from the songwriter's perspective. It is in this chapter, that the intrinsically motivating question of how style is learned is addressed, while the previous chapters have supplied the foundational steppingstones to reach this point.

In this chapter, it will be demonstrated how style and voice, as described in Models of Authorship in Songwriting (Chapter 5), are elements of an emergent habitus that is achieved through divergent exploration of the creative space. Techniques I identify as *hypothetical* and *pseudo collaboration* are applied to unburden the songwriter of issues of authenticity, originality, and sincerity to create a disembodied voice of authority and sincerity, through which domain acquired knowledge and internalised systems of the field are funnelled into a unified song with an *authorial-voice*. Style is the sincerity of practice and perceived trustworthiness of the *artistic* and *authorial voices* through the songwriter's creative agency within the structured space.

Developing a style and voice – both artistic and authorial – responds to the intention to make art and not just a commodified musical material. It has been discussed in the literature review that songwriting is both problem-solving and problem-generating, and the problem that the songwriter is responding to is the need to create something that is 'new, surprising and valuable' (Boden, 2003). In the creation of a style and voice, the songwriter is aiming to find or create that unique way of expression that will allow them to stand out from other similar artists, which resonates with the intentions of creating a brand that distinguishes the product or service from that of its competitors or rivals (Murphy, 1987). As previously indicated, the semantic expression is often given less consideration by commercial songwriters, as it is axiomatic that this should be part of the song such as characters and plot. However, the way in which this is presented is of high importance with regard to the commercial voice of the song and artist, and the 'believability' of that brand experience. Although the identifying of the imagined audience precedes the application of the authorial voice in the model of authorship presented, in my observations of this project and the responses of the songwriters interviewed, the creation of the artistic voice is more often established prior to writing for an imagined audience (the observations of this are discussed above (section 4.1.5)). This is expressed by Hattie, who states 'In the very first instance of creation I don't think about the audience at all. I think that's the benefit of having the artistic licence when you write for yourself.' The following creative process described starts with the creation of the artistic voice as an application of the songwriter's agency to be creative and explore the boundaries of possibilities. The application of the imagined audience uses the structures of the domain and field to converge the possibles of the artistic voice. These structures from the domain and

field signal the commercial intentions to the listener which are being addressed and challenged in the song.

In stating that this agency for creating an artistic voice is counter to the structures imposed by the imagined audience, may imply an absolute agency However, returning to the adapted concept of intentionalism, taken from Trivedi (2015), the songwriter has imposed certain structures already when deciding to make an auditory artwork for commercially-orientated purposes. It is constrained to be an auditory product, with creative aspects that will signal the intentions and appropriate contexts to an audience. Similar to the structuring process applied in response to the imagined audience, the songwriter applies their knowledge of music as acquired from the domain, but as a much broader field of possibilities. They may combine previous memes or styles that already exist in the domain, they may explore the possibilities of a style-domain, or they may transform an style-domain in a way previously not conceived (Boden, 2003). Alex highlights how

> Now and again, someone pushes the boundary though. Like the chorus will come in in a really strange way. There's a Lorde song at the moment and the chorus is odd. Like you just don't expect it to come in. (Alex Soper)

Although Alex expresses this as something unexpected, bringing a chorus in early is within the realm of possibility and is, therefore, an exploration of the space that has been accepted into the conventions of the domain. In my own project as #..., I was exploring the space of popular music as created through a DAW, and in doing so I had applied 'popular music' and the 'DAW' as structuring my agency. Alex also highlighted how he had to 'starve' himself of domain access, in his case the radio, has it often imposed too much structure, limiting his agency:

> I've found in the past that it can sometimes have an effect on my writing... Sometimes things just will come out too similar or too close to something I've listened to... where now I just starve myself for a while of music, and I just have my guitars in my room. (Alex Soper)

In such a situation, Alex is addressing the balance between structure and agency as influences and possibilities to his songwriting.

An artist's voice or style is either created or discovered, depending on the perception of the artist themselves – although I would caution that the notion of discovery has too many links to romantic myths of creativity (Boden, 2003). Further to this, the notion that the voice is discovered would imply that it is the only voice available to the artist, whereas many examples can be found of a changing voice of the artist, such as David Bowie's various alter egos. Peter indicates an avoidance of such an ideology, of a discoverable voice, when asked if he had got any closer to finding his voice, he states:

> No, I don't think I ever will... I think I find voices on the road all the way, and once they become slightly too familiar, I get bored of them... you want yourself to kind of change a bit. (Peter Brewis)

In the case of my own work in this project, I set out to create a new voice through the brand of #..., thereby supporting the notion that the artistic voice is not a discovered idea, but one that is created and adapted. I began creating my artistic voice when I objectively moved my songwriting focus to commercially-orientated popular music, in response to feedback from the industry regarding the songs I was submitting in 2014. 'Nice tracks but not what our clients want, which is mostly fully-produced demos in current chart styles' and 'you need to really keep up with what's happening on the charts. It's a very competitive business writing songs for others and nothing like making your [own] stuff' (David Stark of Song Link International). I immersed myself in top 10 charting popular music, and over time found myself dismissing the hip-hop and indie rock influences in favour of electronic and dance music influences. From here I established my trajectory as aiming for a mainstream popular music sound through the influence of electronic and dance music as styles and techniques.[46] As previously mentioned, this meant changing my mode of songwriting, from starting with guitar or lyrics, to starting with drums or synthesiser progressions through a DAW, which applied new structuring possibilities and limitations on my songwriting. Many of the limitations that were imposed came through my limited abilities to write through a DAW – as a conscious incompetent – in comparison to my abilities when writing on guitar or constructing lyric first songs (as intended based on my phenomenological approach to bring my learning into the core of my focus). However, this approach opened up many more possibilities than limitations, especially as my abilities improved within DAW based songwriting. This led to a divergence of ideas and concepts to my songwriting style, which were explored and experimented on through the first phase of the project. I approached this divergence of ideas by exploring the space (Boden, 2003) of the popular, electronic and dance music domains in understanding, applying and experimenting with their constraints, conventions, and rules. This appears to be the most common mode of creativity applied by the songwriters interviewed as demonstrated by Alex who states that

> We [Coquin Migale] always like to do bits that do give it that kick; a little bit more thought has gone into this. We haven't just pushed out four chords. There's something else to it. (Alex Soper)

and when Peter describes a field of possibles (Bourdieu, 1993) as

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[46] A criticism of the practice would be that these domain influences were not fully immersed and, therefore, acquired. A speculation as to why this is, is that in an unchecked bias to avoid the autoethnographic observations being drawn into musicology the practice did not engage in these in-depth studies of the style-domain's musicological tropes and techniques. This shall be discussed further in the Pedagogical Evaluation.

You can do kind of what you want with the harmony, you can do what you want to a certain extent. As long as there's some type of structure to it. (Peter Brewis)

This also indicates the previously mentioned structural constraint that the song be recognised as a song, a part of which is derived from its recognised form or musical structure.

After 20 sessions, within phase one of my project, I became aware that I was developing a style and artistic voice to my songwriting. It was germinated by the repeated use of certain instruments, structures, rhythmic motifs, and production techniques, which I would describe as the tropes of my artistic voice as it was emerging. Two of these 20 tracks were completed through to being released, and a third was completed but not released: Session 8 was released as *When You're Alone*, Session 16 was released as *The Becoming* (featuring Carys Calling), and Session 18 was completed as *Partner in Crime*. Of the remaining seventeen sessions, many did not align with my trajectory – the constraints, conventions, and values of the style-domain which #... was intended for – or failed to provoke a sense of emotional connection, but all contributed to developing my knowledge of the domain that I was exploring through trial and error. In the preceding sessions of phase one (sessions 21-43), I completed five tracks of which four were released (session 27 as *Don't Walk Away* (featuring Kate Wild), session 28 as *If I can't Dance* (subsequently removed from online stores as not aligning with the #... brand), session 29 as *Turn Down the Heat*, session 42 as *To Hear You Sing* (unreleased at the time of writing), and session 43 as *Don't Say His Name* (featuring Alex Soper)). In phase two of the project, the unrecorded sessions, there were 20 sessions of which 5 are in the progress of being completed for release – at the time of writing – and a further 5, which were not in keeping with the #... brand, are being submitted for synchronisation opportunities. It is evident from my experience described above (section 4.1), that during the two phases of this project, the sound of #... emerged and refined to become part of my songwriting habitus: my artistic voice.

The heteroglossic nature of songwriting was briefly discussed in Models of Authorship in Songwriting (Chapter 5), but only to the extent of revealing that songwriting draws on many other voices and texts beyond the songwriter. In this process of exploration, those voices and texts are what is converged into a song as a unified voice and text. In my own work for this project, I can identify a number of features that I have adopted from reference tracks such as: big funk bass guitar lines as used by the French duo, Justice; extreme side-chain compression[47] from French house music acts such as Justice and Daft Punk; hand percussion loops as used in Tropical House; classic synthesiser sounds such as the

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[47] Side chain compression is when a compressor is activated on one channel but triggered by another channel. Most often it is harmonic instruments such as synths and guitars being compressed when the kick drum triggers the compressor.

Sequential Circuits Prophet 5, the Oberheim OB-Xa, Yamaha DX-7, and the Moog Minimoog; and the use of noise based wavetable synthesis sounds as used in Dubstep. These features, and others that remain unobserved, coalesce into each track that I approve of as in keeping with the #... brand. These features then become further apparent across the oeuvre of my work. This is similar to the process described earlier by Jez, when he explains how his songwriting sessions start with listening to such reference tracks. However, in this instance, the process I am referring to was conducted by me alone, and as previously stated by Ian the process was left open to explore its own possibilities until the song, as a targeted but negotiable destination, emerges. This correlates with Csikszentmihalyi's conditions of 'keeping the mind open and flexible' and paying 'attention to one's goals and feelings' (2013, p. 104).

It has been previously commented on by Alex, that there are more ways of expressing than are possible in a single song, and that a song can only ever convey a certain aspect of the songwriter in a given moment. And that a shared authority in songwriting promotes a stronger sense of authenticity, commonly achieved through collaboration or a collective brand such as a band. However, when creating an individual's artistic voice through solo songwriting, there is often no person with whom to share such authority raising concerns of capturing an authentic self which can lead to, what is commonly referred to as, writer's block. When access to actual collaboration is not available or sought, a songwriter can work in a similar mindset through *hypothetical* or *pseudo collaboration* which relieves the burned of authenticity. In my previous songwriting practice, I have used hypothetical collaboration by impersonating the artistic voice of the person whom I intend to be the singer. A similar concept is applied by Hattie when she is writing to a brief for an artist who is not present, and so she researches the artist and their audience to accurately impersonate their artistic voice through her songwriting. In this mode of practice, Hattie and I can dismiss worries of being inauthentic or insincere regarding ourselves, so long as the song's authorial voice is believable as being the voice of the singer, and therefore sincere and trustworthy.

Pseudo collaboration is writing through the artistic voice of a character that does not exist. A previous example of this was Peter using the lyrics written by his younger self to capture the emotion and sincerity of threshold moments. In creating the artistic voice of #..., I was creating a character that did not previously exist. That character and its voice emerged through the sessions of experimentation in this project, where I applied constraints, conventions, and rules of those style-domains, discussed above (section 4.1), in my own *stylistic way*. The voice of #..., as a pseudo collaborator, is not my own, but it does reflect an aspect of myself in that moment. As suggested by Merleau-Ponty (Johnson and Smith, 1994), this style of writing was not laid out before me at the start of the project and as Ian has stated, despite the reference tracks, the project was open to following its own course as goal

orientated and not goal driven (Zembylas and Niederauer, 2018). Recognising the nature of creativity as quasi-evolutionary (Bennett, 2014a) – developed from the established memes and symbols of the domain – relieves the songwriter of the burden of unobtainable originality, as this would conflict with meeting the requirements and expectations of the imagined and actual intended audience. Similarly, writing through an artistic voice, disembodied from that of the songwriter, which I have termed a pseudo collaborator, relieves the songwriter of the need to apply a sincerity that represents the songwriter, and instead recognises themselves as a multifaceted and complex personalities far beyond the means of expression in a single song. Alex's earlier statement, regarding the limited number of ways one can express themselves through a song, is backed up by MaryAnn who states, 'If you don't have that one emotion in a song and keep referring back to it, then your song becomes too vague and not enough people can identify with it.' This singular emotion and position is converged through that which I have referred to as the pseudo collaborator. Where the commercial mindset has filtered out the conventions, rules, constraints, policies, and values that are not applicable to the song's style-domain and intended audience, the pseudo collaborator is a technique that funnels the song into a singular position of the authorial voice.

Style has so far been discussed as a priori to the artistic voice, and it should be clarified that style is in reference to the lived expression, utterances and gestures that are guided by the sedimented experience and habitus of the songwriter. voice is the result of these actions captured in a song. Style, in these terms, would constitute the less notable parameters of song, such as those highlighted by Tagg (1982), and will now be discussed in further detail.

I wish to reiterate the following statement from Hennion (1990):

> The meaning in question is to be found "down below," in those areas that carry the public's imagination, its secret desires and hidden passions—one could almost define such categories as *socio-sentimental*. They include key phrases, sounds, images, attitudes, gestures, and signs, infralinguistic categories which are all the more difficult to pin down insofar as they escape definition by the official language, and are not autonomous but inseparable from the social context within which a given group attributes a special significance to them. At the same time these infralinguistic categories are ephemeral; as soon as language intervenes, they give up that terrain and re-form elsewhere. Slang, a form of dress, a hairstyle, a motorcycle, and above all music, that music which "means" nothing, are all the expressions of that which cannot be put into rational discourse—which is always the discourse of other people. (p.185-6)

Songwriters and artists are not unique in their understanding of these infralinguistic categories as these are a communal tool of communication, an empathetic gestural form of communication. I would not hope to define this as a language, as it has already been stated that the nature of infralinguistics is to escape such attempts. It remains in the corner of the eye and is only truly present in the whole, and not the parts. This corresponds with the phenomenological intentions of observing the phenomenon as it is perceived, and to not atomise the phenomenon beyond recognition. Frith refers to the ephemeral 'way a person

has with words' (Frith, 1996) and music, through which tired and cliché tropes of unrequited love can become 'new, surprising and valuable' (Boden, 2003), and so establish the artistic voice as sincere and trustworthy to the listener. If style is considered in these terms of sincerity and trust, instead of an intangible subjective, it is possible to start to recognise the aspects that inform and develop style.

Alex's band, Coquin Migale, place a great deal of their style as being delivered through Alex as a singer.

> They always go on about my voice and how my voice is kind of like the identity of the band... I think they like to hear that I'm being genuine [and] they can tell when I'm trying something that isn't me. (Alex Soper)

In my own experience, during this project, I found myself in a different position as the majority of tracks that have been completed as #... were collaborations with topliners, and therefore the physical voice is not my own. However, it was still essential that I created music that established sincerity and trust, firstly with my collaborators and finally with the actual intended audience. All of my collaborators were previously known to me as part of my Community of Practice and so a degree of sincerity and trust is carried into the project through our past relationships, but this is not possible with the intended actual audience. For a relationship of sincerity and trust to be established, I had to present a style of music that the actual intended audience would have an emotional connection to. The previously stated memes and symbols that are derived from knowledge of the domain and field, operate as signposts that the song is intended for that audience, but this does not guarantee an emotional connection through sincerity and trust. It is not possible for me to make a track trustworthy, as trust is something applied by the listener, and so it is through the sincerity that I approach my work with, and the sincerity that I apply within the song, that facilitates the listener to trust in the authorial voice presented in the song. This aligns with Merleau-Ponty's (1945) statement on style, when he says 'The gesture does not *make me think* of anger, it is anger itself.' (p. 184) In my own practice, if I do not connect with the song as I intend the listener to connect, such as the urge to dance, then the music will most likely be insincere. It is through the balance of structure and agency that a sincere voice is created. The structure gives the song the boundaries and constraints that must be adhered to for the listener to recognise that what is presented is a song and that it is a song intended for them. The style is the agency, in which the songwriter explores or transforms the space with the intention that it should resonate with the listener as new, surprising, and valuable.

It has been demonstrated how style and the artistic voice, that will be applied across a body of work, must be established prior to the commercialisation of the songwriting practice. This process was the primary catalyst to the #... project where I forced myself to produce a new artistic voice for my songwriting, and that the commercialisation of that sound, through the

imagined audience, emerged as a growing concern only after the artistic voice was established. This voice emerged through divergent exploration of the conceptual space that is presented by the domain and field as the agency of the songwriter to create a song that is new, surprising, and valuable, within the structures of the domain and field. It was through the quantity of exploration that the artistic voice emerged as a product of my developing songwriting habitus. It has previously been demonstrated, how songwriters unburden themselves of romantic notions of originality and authority through shared authorship or branding, and I have proposed here that songwriters adopt techniques that I refer to as hypothetical and pseudo collaboration as a means to achieve this unburdening. In Identifying the Imagined Audience (Chapter 6), a number of filters were devised from the songwriter's knowledge of the domain and field. The authorial voice would then be the funnel that precedes this filtering, as shown in the Models of Authorship of Songwriting (Chapter 5), to unify the texts and voices of the domain, field and individual. I have further proposed that style is derived from the sincerity of the artistic voice, that is achieved when the songwriter's intentions and emotional connections are aligned with those of the actual intended audience.

This implication that the learner-songwriter should develop a style and artistic voice prior to applying commercial practices, such as the imagined audience, indicates a logical scheme that should be considered in a songwriting pedagogy. Beth Nielsen Chapman stresses how, in her teaching experience, that the lack of an artistic expression hinders the ability of students to successful apply craftmanship – which, in this thesis, has been discussed as commercialisation of the practice. This approach to curriculum design was emphasised by colleagues at ICMP, BIMM and Berkley, whereby each institute described a creative freedom in the first year of a degree programme, refinement of the students' artistic values in the second year, and outward facing values in the final year.

Supporting students to apply broad and divergent exploration of their creativity within an academic learning environment, is troubled by the nature and practice of assessment. Biggs and Tang (2011) identify how students are assessment driven, and so this becomes a tool for the educator to coerce students into engaging with learning. However, most compositional-based assessments have a quantifiable limit, reasonably so that the assessor does not become overwhelmed and that students present a thoughtful submission that demonstrates their learning. I would propose that if the intended learning outcome were that students explore a divergent range of songwriting styles, the submission of a portfolio of songs may not be the most appropriate evidence of this learning. My autoethnographic method presented here, focused on the observing and theorising, could be adapted and scaled to be a tool through which students reflect-on and evaluate their own learning. This could be a more appropriate means of evidencing a student's engagement and learning through creative practice. Such an approach would also relieve the issues and concerns with

regard to ownership of creative works submitted for assessment. The creative works themselves can be created using any desired form of collaboration (actual, hypothetical or pseudo), which can be formatively assessed by the teacher, the student peers, or any available and knowledgeable person. Lastly, the creative works produced by the learning songwriters are not burdened by the restriction of an assignment, which may either conflict with the student's sincerity in writing or offer no necessary structure to guide the writing. I propose that instead, the educator can offer a vast number of songwriting briefs and scenarios to guide and motivate the students' songwriting practise. As discussed in the previous Pedagogical Evaluation (section 6.1), this application currently falls beyond the scope of the present research but should form the basis of further deductive testing.

Chapter 8. Valuing in Songwriting

The previous two chapters, Identifying the Imagined Audience (Chapter 6) and Style and Voice (Chapter 7), have presented the abstracted theories of how such knowledge is acquired and processed in the songwriting practice, thereby begging the question what these theories look like in practice. Valuing in Songwriting draws these two theories back together to theorise how they occur as a tacit mode of practice, in which the previous modes operate reflexively and interdependently, as indicated in the Autoethnography Structure (figure 3).

This chapter identifies how quality filters are an essential sub-process of creativity directed towards a commercially-orientated agenda. Bennett's (2014a) Language of Positivity is developed to demonstrate how creative decisions are made by judgements of appropriateness and how a unique criterion for each song and track is derived from domain acquired knowledge (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; 2013; McIntyre *et al.*, 2016), domain awareness and influencer feedback, utilising both the domain and the field in the songwriting practice. And lastly, it will be discussed how the songwriter develops these quality filters in an intuitive practice of balancing commercial and artistic values in what I refer to as habitus.

8.1   The Individual Domain

The interactions of the *individual domain* reveal in more depth the nature of the information transmitted in the context of songwriting, developing from Csikszentmihalyi's domain acquired knowledge to include *objective knowledge*, *general knowledge*, and *domain awareness*. While Csikszentmihalyi's model operates as an abstracted macro system of the creative process, in the individual domain I have developed a model that responds to my earlier criticism of Sawyer when he proposed that the domain should include 'all of the creative products that have been accepted by the field in the past' (2012, p. 216). Following Simonton's (2010) proposition that we in fact 'sample' from this body of extant work, and Huib Schipper's concept of the 'aural library' as the body of music which we have listened to, learned and/or played, I propose that we access our own individual domain to construct our personal knowledge and values of the domain, and to select works and bodies of knowledge of that domain as appropriate to the task at hand. I use the term individual domain instead of aural library so as to include all the non-musical cultural knowledge that is also active in songwriting I have not used the term sampling so as to avoid confusion with the musical act of sampling from recorded materials The term individual domain also aligns more neatly within the System's Model of Creativity.

The creative act of songwriting represents the application of knowledge into a product (song) that is itself a body of knowledge as praxis. The knowledge drawn from the individual's sample of the domain consists of: the notable parameters of song (Tagg, 1982) such as

melody, rhythm, harmony, instrumentation, arrangement, and form and structure; lyrical aspects such as the theme, framing device, metaphors, language, and rhyming structure; sonic qualities such as production techniques, timbre, texture, grain of voice, and dynamic structure; and the cultural significance such as constructs of meaning, value and identity. These qualities operate as a personal taxonomy in which knowledge of the domain is structured, such as 'songs that use *x* metaphor', or 'authors with a certain grain of voice'. As more works and authors are added to the individual domain the more sophisticated this categorisation becomes, creating new taxonomies of qualities when they become too large to sustain their specificity as a unique quality.

To explore the applications of valuing in songwriting, I will use a hypothetical exercise where I have been asked to song in the style of 1980s Pop music but with some Classical music traits. For this hypothetical, let us assume that the exercise was commissioned by another person, and not me as the artist, and the parameters were given without negotiation. For illustrative and communicative purposes, I will simplify and exaggerate my knowledge but only so far as to remain focused on the theories being discussed.

In assessing my style-domain knowledge relevant to this project, I illustrate the weightings of the style-domains as the Individual Domain (figure 8), in which Pop music has been allocated new groupings based on periods, whereas Classical lacks the critical mass to be subdivided into such groupings: in this example the songwriter remains ignorant to the nuances of baroque, romantic, sonata, symphonic, and other groupings of Classical music. This represents the input of domain acquired knowledge that is then used to structure and value the individual domain.

As previously noted, this model is in the context of songwriting, and in this instance the hypothetical situation is in creating a song that draws on 1980s Pop music and Classic music, as combinational creativity (Boden, 2003). The example word clouds in the individual domain are an exaggerated example of my own personal knowledge of 1980s Pop music and Classical music, as two distinct fields of knowledge. While other taxonomies of song are available – EDM, Country Music, 1990s Dance Music, 1990s and 21st Century Pop Music – these are excluded in the hypothetical task at hand as unnecessary or inappropriate.

This model is limited by its simplicity, currently lacking a demonstration of the depth of knowledge or the complexities of overlapping, instead focusing on the notion of critical mass of style-domain knowledge, which encourages the construction of taxonomies for the style-domain knowledge. In those deeply immersed artists (as described by McIntyre *et al.*, 2016), these taxonomies will be vast and complex, but are an essential asset to the practitioner that requires substantial development through domain acquisition to support the practice.
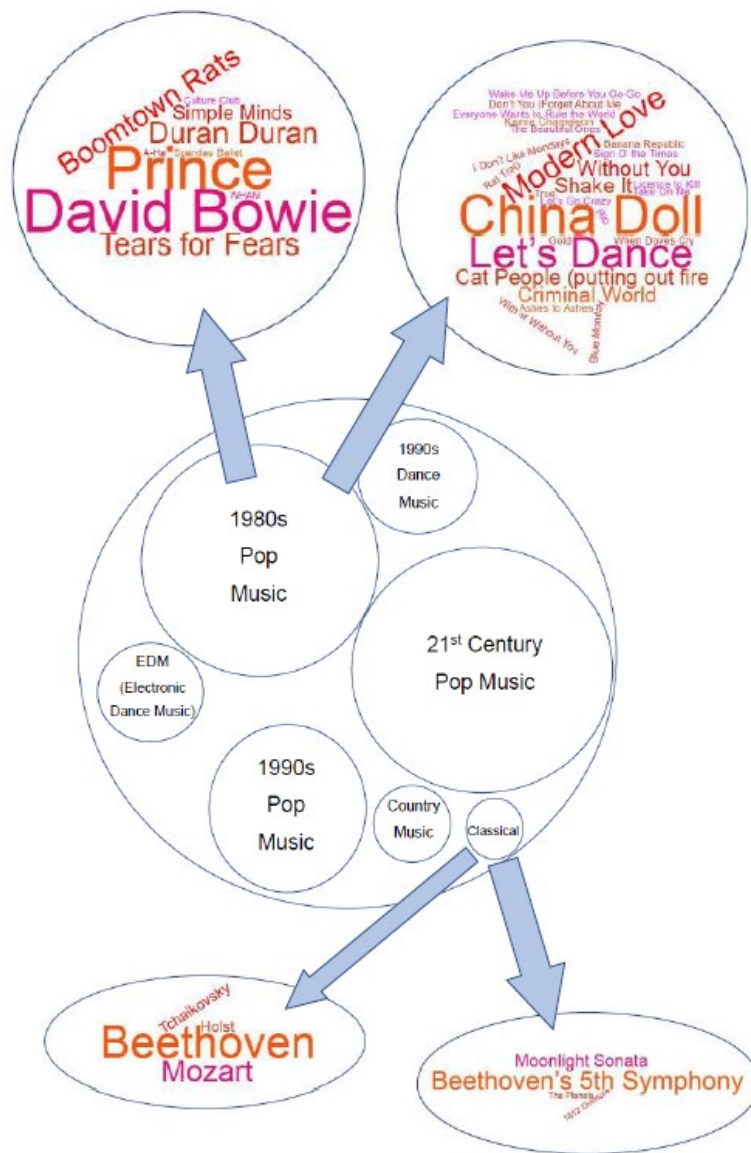
Figure 8 The Individual Domain

The importance of exploring a divergent range of songwriting experiences was valued by several songwriting educators interviewed in Contextual Experiences of Songwriting Pedagogy. The individual domain raises critical questions as to the depth and breadth of domain knowledge that we can expect and expose students to within a songwriting pedagogy. For example, what measures of critical mass, in terms of depth and breadth separately and together, do songwriting students need to demonstrate, and how should this be demonstrated and measured? Further study is required and, in the development of a songwriting pedagogy, it should include the musicological knowledge as a key aspect of individual domain depth.

8.2   A Knot of Relations

Songs sit at the centre of an extremely complex knot of relations. While a categorising system may function for a shallow ordering of a song's information, such as cataloguing a

discography of an artist, it soon fails to recognise the vast range of connections and signposts of cultural capital that are contributing to a song's full essence. For instance, there are 12 personnel listed on David Bowie's 'Let's Dance' recording (which excludes the technical personnel such as studio engineers and other stakeholders as discussed previously), each of whom bring a range of connections, which can be considered as three tiers of explicit to implicit connection. Firstly, there is the musician's connection to their Oeuvre within the domain -such as Nile Rodgers' link to Chic. Secondly, each contributors' individual domain knowledge - such as Stevie Ray Vaughn's domain knowledge of blues guitar music. And lastly, the unobservable time given to each musicians' practicing of their craft, which would include the failed and disregarded efforts.

The album's titular lead single, 'Let's Dance', is described as a 'funk' (Erlewine, 2016), 'funk-rock' (Power, 2013), 'post-disco' (Anderman, 2004), and 'dance pop' (Chapman, 2015) track. Such style connections are made explicit by the reviews of journalists, who use such connections to anchor their words to the music, but these connections are implicitly made by Bowie et al (1983) in their application of stylistic tropes. For instance, the dominant seven harmonies of the vocals (0:00-0:09) being linked back to the Isley Brother's 'Twist and Shout' (Rodgers, 2018) as well Rodger's guitar arrangement bringing in the funky rhythmic upstrokes, and Bob Clearmountain's ping-pong delay processing (both can be heard at 0:09-0:25) giving it a stylistic link to Giorgio Moroder's production of the disco classic 'I Feel Love' (1977) (performed by Donna Summer).

Focusing in on the use of the dominant 7th's, 'Let's Dance' could be said to be connected to every other song that uses a dominant 7th but the creativity that separates Let's Dance' from all these other songs - making such a connection weaker or stronger - would be the *combination, exploration* and *transformation* (Boden, 2003). The chord's context within the progression, the arrangement, the instrumentation and sonic mix, and its transformation to that particular vocal group - as opposed to being performed on another instrument - all alter it to become something 'new, surprising and valuable' (Boden). All the while, it retains its cultural signposting to other forms of music and culture - especially Rhythm and Blues, as noted by Rodgers (2018) - as well as its musicological signposting as a leading chord implying a forthcoming resolve.

I am not going to give a musicological history of the dominant 7th chord or a meta-analysis of the multitude of cultural meanings that have been indicated by the chord. And I will not list the tropes and techniques featured in 'Let's Dance' as such a list would be extensive yet unproductive in the pursuit of understanding how style is being learned in songwriting. Not least, as the post structuralists would point out, that only the cultural signposts known and

understood by the listener would carry any significance to the listener, thereby contributing to the song's successful acceptance within the domain.

What I am claiming here, is that, while every song would contain a vast array of tropes and techniques, successful songwriting is, in part, a proper application of the tropes and techniques as either structuring signpost or exercising agency. When structuring, they indicate to the listener these connections to works in the domain through which the affiliations of the song and the identity of the listener converge. For the songwriter, this should be a successful alignment of the imagined audience with the actual audience. Exercising agency refers to a clear acknowledgement of a given technique or trope, one that is known to the audience, that then becomes subjected to the songwriter's creative will - to be combined, explored, or transformed. Another perspective of this would be that the structuring components indicate where the song fits within the domain, while exercising agency indicates how it is different - novel, surprising and valuable - within the domain.

8.3 Criterion of Appropriateness

The following concept of valuing has been derived from Zembylas' (2018) application of valuing as a sub-process of creativity but I will highlight the necessity of this as part of the commercialisation of the creative act. Boden (2003) describes the modes of creativity as exploring or transforming the creative space, which can result in a creative product, but when valuing is applied the potential outcomes of the product are restricted, however the potential commercial value is increased by its recognisability to a broader audience. If a songwriter challenges the idea of what a song can be, by writing a song that sounds like no other extant song, the chances are it will have less commercial value as it will not be recognisable as a song; therefore, it will be new and surprising but low in commercial value. The songwriter may value the song, but it would be difficult to ascertain if they are valuing the song or their own creativity. So, an objective approach might be to use quantifiable metrics to judge the value of a song, such as sales and streams. This is not to state that such metrics are an entirely objective measurement of the a songs quality (Middleton, 1990) as too many variables are involved in the distribution and marketing of a song, which can be subject to access to various forms of capital such as economic, social and symbolic. Such as, how much money is invested in marketing, the size of the current and potential consumer base, and the reputation of the artist and affiliated stakeholders of the song. Bennett (2014a) suggests that it is still a stronger indicator of the songs quality as such metrics can only be manipulated so far. Therefore, to address the expectations of a consumer base in presenting a song that is recognisable as a song – and further still, a song of a specific genre – the song must pass through various quality filters. However, Middleton's position still holds, as Bennett may argue that a commercially successful song still has value, it does not mean that a commercially unsuccessful song does not have value. The lack of access to capital

(Bourdieu, 1993; McIntyre *et al.*, 2016) indicates that these songs will more often struggle to compete with the well-resourced commercial releases. So, for the learner-songwriter, these criteria of valuing need to be appropriately scaled to reflect the access to resources and capital, and the potential that this access can offer.

It is part of the songwriter's responsibility, along with other stakeholders of the song, to judge the value of the song prior to its release so that it may be refined and targeted to increase its chances of commercial success. This is the filtering process that has been discussed in previous chapters, whereby the song must be approved by collaborators, influencers and, eventually, the actual intended audience. As previously indicated, this process filters the song to meet the expectations and requirements of a specific audience – the actual intended audience. Hattie described two modes of participation in a songwriting collaboration, facilitator and contributor, and noted that there needs to be a safe environment for ideas to be aired and explored. This is supported by Bennett's (2014a) conclusion that productive songwriter's operate with three notable behavioural characteristics: open-mindedness, courtesy and humility. Likewise, Wendy Spitzer's (2017) asserts that collaborative music making requires a high degree of vulnerability. When a songwriter contributes an idea to the songwriting team it is automatically assumed that there is at least some value to the idea and should, therefore, never be dismissed without some thought or experimentation. The value of the idea is judged by the team based on a criterion derived from the reference tracks, imagined audience and, if relevant, the artist's brand. This criterion is not an explicitly discussed or agreed set of rules or parameters, it is similar to Jez's statement that 'you may not externalise' questions that filter the song towards its intended audience 'but everyone is on that page of thinking'. Following Bennett's conclusion that this leads to the language of positivity whereby an idea is not vetoed with an unconstructive 'no', but the value of the idea is recognised and judged according to its *appropriateness* to the criterion. Such an idea has three possible outcomes: (1) it could align with the intended domain's rules, constraints and conventions, or the field's values, policies, and agenda; (2) it may be a creative idea that explores or transforms the criterion in a manner that is felt to be appropriate; (3) it may breach the domain's rules, constraints, or conventions, and/or the field's values, policies or agenda in a manner that is felt to be inappropriate to the criterion.

These judgements of appropriateness may still appear to be a subjective opinion when presented as an abstracted example. However, in practice these judgements are based on three sources of information: (1) the songwriting team's knowledge of the domain and field; (2) their ability to access and make a comparative analysis of extant songs as reference tracks; and (3) the ability to access and apply critical feedback from influencers. Domain acquired knowledge has been demonstrated by Jez, Ian, and Hattie when they explain how reference tracks are discussed at the start of a collaboration, and by Alex when he

highlighted how what he listens to influences his songwriting. Hattie explicitly describes the way in which she researches the field through YouTube comments, which will inform her internalised criterion for the song she intends to write. In my own project activities, I observed how, during my experimentations and explorations of my artistic voice, I identified specific reference tracks that the emerging song could be likened to. In this instance, I claim that I did not have the necessary degree of knowledge of the reference track to apply in my emerging song – domain knowledge- but I had an awareness of the reference track which allowed me to locate the track and make a comparative analysis from which to progress my own song – *domain awareness*. This demonstrates that domain awareness and basic comparative analysis skills can be more essential in songwriting than domain acquired knowledge. This may be a result of the modern world's access to the entire domain as facilitated through the Internet, meaning that songwriters do not need to rely on rote learning of song rules, conventions, and constraints. As such, more emphasis is placed in knowledge of the domain as a system and the skill of analysing those extant works as unique reference tracks as opposed to the generalised rules, conventions, and constraints of the domain. In my project work, I accessed influencer feedback from industry professionals, Michael and MaryAnn Tedstone, and Marc Mozart, as well as through social media as a form of crowd sourced feedback from musicians, songwriters, producers, and engineers with various degrees of learning and professional experience. When approaching industry professionals, I was able to target specific people to address either specific issues, such as mixing issues, or those who operate within a specific domain and part of the field. When posting in social media, in this instance Facebook groups for pop music creators, I was not able to target specific people regarding their domain knowledge, skill set, level of learning or professional experience, and so it is necessary to filter the feedback for its appropriateness to the song in question. However, in hindsight, there are ways in which the manner and wording of such posts could filter the responses to be focused toward these specifics, but this does not guarantee that all responses will be appropriate still.

Returning to Jez's point, that such processes are not often externalised, domain awareness and domain acquired knowledge are internalised and enacted as intuitive knowledge. I will adopt Bourdieu's term *habitus* to refer to this 'feel for the game', where the songwriter is able to draw connections between intended or emerging songs to extant songs and intended audiences. Simultaneously, they balance the conflicting expectations of creating a song that is *new, surprising, and valuable* as well as recognisable as a song in accordance with the rules, constraints, and conventions of the domain. The songwriter does not identify how this balance is achieved in such explicit terms, but more often refers to feel, flow, energy or being in the zone. Alex describes making a good track as 'It's just the feeling, it's just an instinctive feeling that you know that you've done something good.' Ian describes it as 'You know, that momentum is a very exciting thing. When you think "we've got something here"'. When

attempting to verbalise my internalised processes I identified moments as being 'In the zone' or 'Getting in the flow', which indicated the moments where the trajectory of an emerging track was becoming apparent to me. This includes forthcoming aspects of the track such as the topline melody, the production style, the artistic voice, the intended audience and/or environment for the track. The skills of recognising these moments and being able to follow these trajectories through to a completed track, which aligns with the actual intended audience's expectations, is the habitus of the songwriter. A songwriter may incorporate their own artistic voice within their habitus, or it may be that they have the ability to incorporate other artistic voices into their habitus, such as the collaborators interviewed here, Hattie, Ian, and Jez.

The criterion of appropriateness could be an effective tool for assessment and implemented as assessment of-, as-, and for-learning (Black *et al.*, 2003; William and Black, 2006). While it is indicated that such a criterion-based approach is an intuitive aspect of the practice, a similar indication was made regarding most other aspects of the songwriting practice, such as domain knowledge and acquisition, music theory, and performance skills. So, an explicit tool for constructing and assessing the criterion of appropriateness would engage students in recognising this valuing subprocess of creativity and present a more objective demonstration of learning to be assessed. Such an approach to assessment in songwriting would also align itself with pedagogical approach of Students as Partners in Learning (formerly known as Students as Producers) (Healey *et al.*, 2014).

8.4   Conclusion

The previous autoethnographic themed chapters, Identifying the Imagined Audience and, Style and Voice, discussed the theories of how domain and field knowledge is constructed, and agency is applied in the creative moment of songwriting. It was recognised how structure and agency inform the scope of the creative field of possible through these two concepts of knowledge. And it was highlighted, these do not operate independent of each other, but are reflexive and interdependent. Valuing in Songwriting has theorised how these reflexive and interdependent interactions occur, and what new knowledge these theories present of the songwriting practice.

Hennion's description of the commercial songwriting and production process (1989) has been further explored and was demonstrated how, within the creative moment, quality filters manoeuvre a song from being of purely artistic or creative value towards a commercial and social value by means of addressing the expectations of an audience beyond the songwriting team. Further to Hennion's description and Bennett's identifying the language of positivity, I propose that judgements of these filters are shown to be based on a criterion of appropriateness that is constructed by the songwriters' domain acquired knowledge, domain

awareness, and influencer feedback. These processes are not explicit to the practice but are intuitively applied as a form of habitus in the unique manner each songwriter will balance the artistic and commercial values and expectations.

Chapter 9. Conclusion

Csikszentmihalyi's systems model of creativity is the contextual concept in which the creative moment – as the focus of my autoethnographic method – has been considered to reside within, although not *through*. Meaning the intention for the creative product should be to be presented to the field and accepted into the domain (figure 9). I have broadened this criterion to include observation of works that *intend* to be processed such as songs that were started but never finished, so as to capture all relevant acts of learning through creation in the creative moment. This is to avoid the previous approaches of valuing products over processes. Further to this, the experience and interactions with and of the product can occur beyond the autoethnographer's observations and the practitioner's agency, and that these experiences and interactions fall outside of the scope of the learning observed in this research – although further study of learning through the whole system would be welcome.
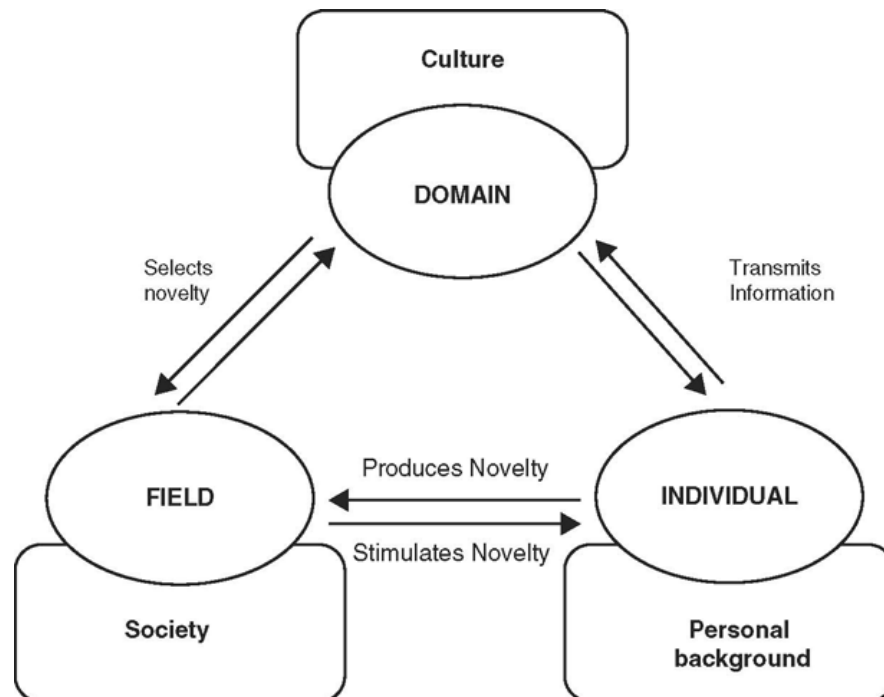
Figure 9 The Systems Model of Creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p. 315)

The observed practice operates within definitions of creativity which are product focused (cf Boden, 2003) or individual focused (cf Webster, 1996; Sternberg, 2003) but Csikszentmihalyi's system aligns with the commercially-orientated intentions of the market driven practice of popular music-making (Bennett, 2014a). Therefore, I suggest an Expanded Systems Model of Creativity (figure 9), which integrates and contextualises the findings of this research, elucidating how the creative process operates in songwriting, and demonstrating the depth and detail that has been contributed to the current body of knowledge. Each section of interaction – Domain and Individual, Domain and Field, and

Individual and Field – are addressed to present the theories in the context of the systems model.[48] The purpose is to bring focus to these interactions and identify the details of the agency and structure that are in operation between these components. However, it should be restated that these theories are from the autoethnographic position at the creative moment, as the ontology of this method has established that the observations are of the lived experience and cannot be viewed as transcendental. The theories of and between the field and domain presented are not empirical as they were not observable, and they were not intellectual as they are grounded within the lived experience. The perspectives and experiences of these theories were further typified through the additional ethnographic interviews.
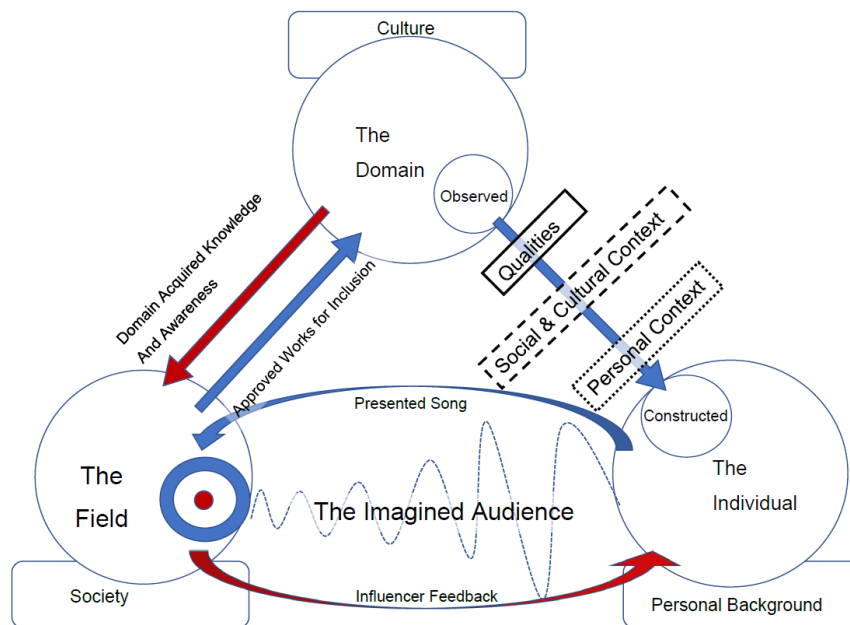
Figure 10 The Expanded Systems Model of Creativity

9.1 Domain and Individual

The interactions of the Domain and Individual (figure 10) reveals in more depth the nature of the information transmitted in the context of songwriting, developing from Csikszentmihalyi's domain acquired knowledge to include objective knowledge, general knowledge, and domain awareness. As further detailed in Valuing in Songwriting (Chapter 8), the information observed in reference tracks is broken down into qualities that are processed through filters of social and cultural context, and personal context to inform the individual of a constructed perspective of the imagined audience.

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[48] In the corresponding diagrams, I have greyed out the interactions which not relevant to that discussion.
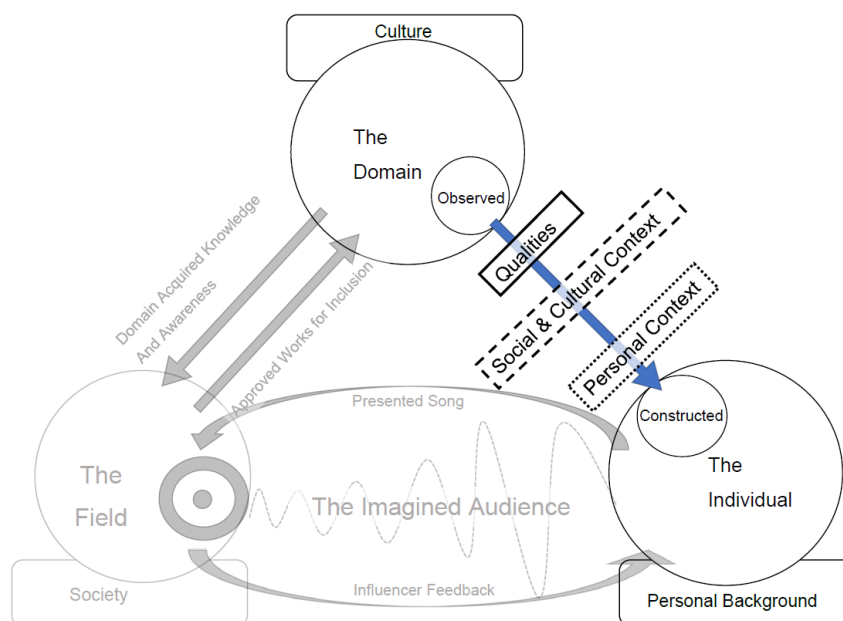
Figure 11 The Domain and Individual

9.1.1   Objective Knowledge

In this model, objective knowledge is the observed qualities of a song from the domain. Within the songwriter's lexicon these are described as reference tracks. The significance of the reference tracks when working in collaboration or towards a brief has been demonstrated as they operate as research (Hattie), a mutual starting point (Jez), and a trajectory (Ian). However, it has also been highlighted that these reference tracks can be included *during* the creative process to guide the creative direction towards a desired trajectory such as my songwriting reflection where I described the sound of the emerging song through reference tracks, which then informed the subsequent creative decisions.

Qualities are those that are empirically present – what Kant might refer to as the 'knowable object' – such as melodies, rhythm, harmony, arrangement, instrumentation, form & structure, and other notable parameters (Tagg, 1982). Such qualities can be abstracted from the object and still be recognised as the original, such as a cover version. The social and cultural contexts are the less tangible qualities and essence of the reference track. It includes the context which the track refers to within itself through its style; language, tone, gesture, cultural references, and expression. These qualities situate the track within the wider social and cultural landscape, which Middleton has previously referred to as the levels of code; langue, norms, sub-norms, styles, genres, sub-codes, and idiolects (Middleton, 1990, p. 174). This also refers to the context in which the track is performed or played as the

appropriateness of this context is significant to the perceived meaning and value of the track.[49]

The Individual Domain (figure 8) is made up of these tracks as the 'aural library' (Schippers, 2007, p. 37) or as a broader contextualised 'sample' (Simonton, 2010) of the domain. Critical listening results in breaking down these qualities and thematising into 'possibles' (Bourdieu, 1993), which for the songwriter are the options of musical materials from which to construct a song, as structure and agency. These possibles are accompanied by the contextual qualities that are used to filter and assess the appropriateness of these materials in the intended song – as discussed in The Criterion of Appropriateness (section 8.3).

9.1.2   General Knowledge

The mass of reference tracks as objective knowledge in the individual domain results in sophistication of the songwriter's knowledge in terms of the number of possibles and the significance of their context and contextual reference. A computer metaphor (Searle, 1990) could be applied to demonstrate the structuring of this knowledge as folders and files of songs/artists (files) within styles and/or genres (folders). Tentatively, this metaphor could be pursued to demonstrate the process through which 'rules' are generated based on the objective knowledge. For instance, songs in style-domain x all use an AABA song form; therefore, all x style songs should be AABA form. These 'rules' form the general knowledge of the domain as constructed from the individual's experience and as such are a unique perception for each individual, aligning with the post-structuralist ideas (Barthes, 1977; Foucault, 1979) applied in Models of Authorship in Songwriting (Chapter 5). However, I am tentative of using such a reductionist metaphor to describe the structure of song relations or systems, as it overlooks the complexity of songs and the Knot of Relations (section 8.2) through which these rules become so finessed as to be ungeneralisable based on any individual or small samples of songs.

Through the Individual Domain (section 8.1) it is demonstrated how the number of reference tracks can reach a critical mass, where there are too many possibles and as such the rule for that theme of knowledge (in this case, the style-domain of Pop music) becomes unstable. At such a point, new divisions are applied to the theme to create sub-categories of knowledge (1980s Pop, 1990s Pop, 21st Century Pop) presenting a new layer of sophistication to the songwriter's knowledge of Pop music. A lesser mass of reference tracks results in diverse works being themed together resulting in poorer rule formulas, which is discussed further below.

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[49] For further discussion, please refer back to Valuing in Songwriting (Chapter 8).

Boden (2003) states that all creative works should be 'new,' but in light of this form of general knowledge, her P-creative and H-creative concepts become difficult to assess, as all assessment is based on the assessor's individual domain. Boden's concept lacks a stable position from which to assess the level of creativity. However, Bennett's (2014a) thresholds of creativity are more applicable to define a position and scope of creativity. At the lower end, plagiarism/too generic, could occur due to lack of objective knowledge or mis-formulated general knowledge, where the songwriter is unaware of the similar song. At the higher end, ungrounded/too unique, the songwriter's objective knowledge may be so sophisticated that only a very small and specialist group of people ('aficionados' (Becker, 2008)) can understand and appreciate the work. However, to avoid students of songwriting producing homogenised songs to satisfy the assessor, the assessment should focus on the students' knowledge of and approach to satisfying their appropriate audiences. This will be discussed further in Pedagogical Evaluation (Chapter 10).

There is another body of knowledge operating similar to the general and objective knowledge of reference tracks, which is that of the detached author as described in Models of Authorship in Songwriting (Chapter 5). Returning to The Individual Domain (section 8.1), Bowie and Beethoven are both authors that are constructed by the listener's perceptions of their personas through their works and associated materials. Depending on the works and materials known, the depth to which they are studied, and the order and context in which these were received, will colour the individual's perception of the author. If a songwriter were asked to write a song in the style of David Bowie but was only familiar with the *Let's Dance* album, it is most likely that the resultant song will be a heavily structured on the constraints, conventions, and rules that are presented in that body of work. If the songwriter were familiar with a selection of Bowie's greatest hits, the resultant song might feature a selection of recognisable Bowie tropes. If the songwriter was fully versed in Bowie's oeuvre, including the details of the constraints, conventions, and rules of Bowie's songwriting *practice*, the songwriter would be capable of approaching any project and applying themselves through the question 'How would David Bowie have written this?' If the songwriter of figure 8 (section 8.1) was tasked with writing a song with Beethovenian influences, they would be limited to only the possibles given to them in Beethoven's 5th Symphony, excluding his chamber, solo, and operatic works. In this example, the songwriter has sufficient knowledge of Bowie's works to generalise rules as general knowledge of Bowie's songwriting style, whereas they lack sufficient objective knowledge of Beethoven's works to formulate such rules.

Through these descriptions it can be seen that there are in fact various stratifications of knowledge in terms of both depth – such as how much is known regarding a specific song, oeuvre, or artist – and in breadth – such as the style-domain of works that are connected through shared or similar constraints, conventions, and/or rules. While in-depth knowledge

may produce experts, it is the breadth of knowledge that facilitates an artist's agency to be creative through combination, exploration and/or transformation (Boden, 2003) of the conceptual space of that domain.

9.1.3   Domain Awareness

Being fully aware of a style-domain may be an impossible feat and could be limiting to the songwriter's creative agency, restricting the songwriter to the structures of their specialist style-domain. I propose that it is beneficial to the creative agency of the songwriter to develop a domain awareness and not just an in-depth objective knowledge or style-domain knowledge. While domain acquired knowledge is a necessity for an individual to engage with a domain effectively, domain awareness allows them to recognise how their style-domain is differentiated from neighbouring style-domains and is located in the wider context. Domain awareness can be a shallower form of knowledge to the extent that the songwriter may be aware of a style-domain, but has not embodied knowledge of the constraints, conventions, and rules of that style-domain as intuitive to their practice. Sufficient awareness of the style-domain's key practitioners and seminal works is enough for a songwriter to locate an appropriate reference track and analyse it to draw the necessary information to achieve the songwriting goals.

This operates as combinational creativity (Boden, 2003) where a constraint, convention or rule of a neighbouring style-domain is applied in this new style-domain (or conceptual space). The transformation may not meet the expectation and/or requirements of the listeners of the neighbouring style-domain as the majority of the resultant song's structure is still derived of the original style-domain, but in the original style-domain, this transformation will be seen as new, surprising, and valuable. A common occurrence in 21st Century Pop music is the inclusion of House music conventions into Pop songwriting – as illustrated in figure 12 below. This does not make the resultant song a House song, but a Pop song with House influences, which satisfies the Pop and Pop-House crossover audiences because the majority of the song's signposting signifies the song's Pop intentions. Pop music lives on innovation and demands to be remade and does so through its incorporation of the latest trends of the periphery style-domains. Therefore, it is incumbent on the Pop music songwriter, working within the market-driven economy (Bennett, 2014a), to have a domain awareness of such trends in neighbouring style-domains.
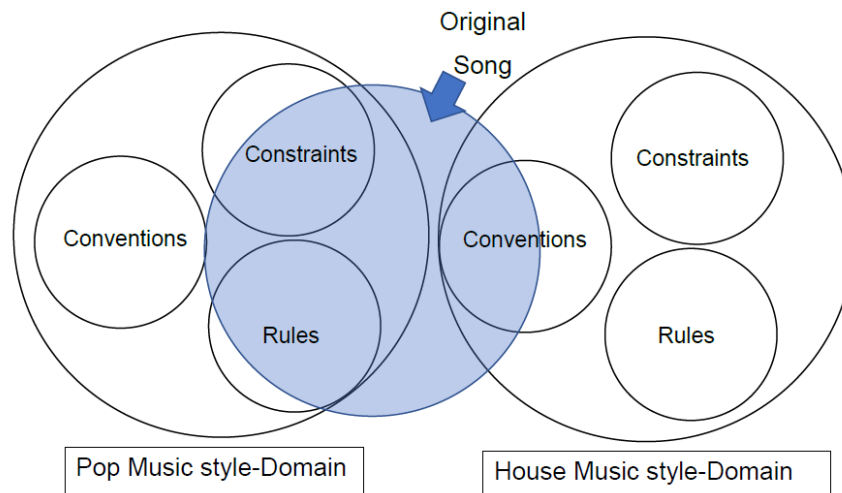
Figure 12 The Conceptual Space of Pop and House Music

9.1.4 Recognising Creative Opportunity

Domain awareness, or what Boden may call 'knowledge of the conceptual space,' is an essential component to allow the recognition of creative opportunities. In the above model (figure 12), it is necessary for the songwriter to have sufficient knowledge of the style-domains to assess the thresholds of creativity (Bennett, 2014a) as well as knowledge of what are the expectations and requirements of the field. Whether it is by exploring a singular style-domain, transforming an aspect of a style-domain – such as constraint, convention, or rule – or combining an aspect of another style-domain into a new style-domain, it is an action of the songwriter to recognise this opportunity for creativity within their available field or audience.

9.2 Domain and Field

There has been little observation within this autoethnographic method regarding this aspect of the systems model as it is beyond the creative moment, and therefore beyond the observable parameters of this phenomenological approach. What is presented here, is what has been perceivable by the autoethnographer through its influence on my practice. The most significant development would be the observations of how domain and field knowledge are applied by those in the field when interacting with the individual and the domain. These observed interactions correspond with the theories of Becker (2008) and Hennion (1989), demonstrating how members of the field also have domain acquired knowledge, which is

expanded in this research to include the aforementioned objective/general knowledge and domain awareness.
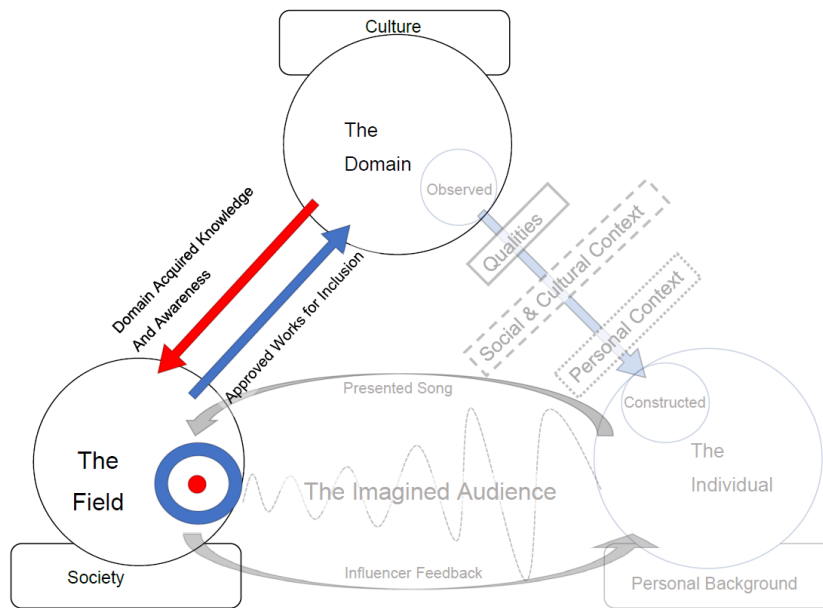
Figure 13 The Domain and Field

While this source of knowledge is the same as that described in the Individual Domain (section 8.1), such as reference tracks and style-domain, the manner in which this knowledge is deployed is significantly different. In general, the field uses this knowledge purely to evaluate the presented works for inclusion in the domain. I propose that the field bases its evaluations on the following a criterion of effectiveness:[50] authenticity, alignment with the style-domain and a specific field, and style. However, these criteria are contingent and interdependent as will be discussed.

In evaluating the authenticity, I am referring to the trustworthiness and sincerity, as previously discussed (Chapter 7) and based on Frith (1996). I have discussed how the songwriter works towards this sense of authenticity through the sincerity of the work, as aligned with the intentions and values of the songwriter. It has been discussed that trustworthiness is projected from the listener with regard to the sincerity of the authorial voice. To achieve trustworthiness through sincerity, the songwriter must adequately signpost to the listener, within the song, the song's values and intentions. If the listener agrees that the song has been aimed towards this intention with those values, then the authorial-voice is accepted as trustworthy and sincere.

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[50] In Valuing in Songwriting (8.3), this is discussed as 'appropriateness because it is from the perspective of the practitioner in the creative moment, but here it is 'effectiveness' as the field is assessing the effect of the song, while the songwriter was judging what she perceived as the appropriateness.

So far, these criteria have been structuring aspects of the song as used to communicate the intentions of the song to a listener but what is of equal importance is the style that these aspects are presented in, as a form of agency. If a song were to be constituted of only structuring components, it might be evaluated as being generic or plagiarised. Style is the songwriter's agency to present these components in a way that is new, surprising, and valuable through exploration, transformation, or combinational approaches, as discussed above. Returning to the previous example of the opening dominant 7th in David Bowie's 'Let's Dance', the idea clearly signposts its antecedents – The Isley Brothers, Twist and Shout – but is instead placed at the start of the song and while still performed by a small vocal group is done so in a more controlled and sophisticated manner in comparison to the Isley Brothers raucous on-the-edge performance.

The Framework of Failure (figure 14) illustrates the ways in which a song may fail to connect with the field. These are by: a) deviating too far from the possibles of the intended style-domain; or b) deviating too far from the possibles of the specific field; c) insufficient or inappropriate signposting as to the song's intentions; or d) by insufficient or inappropriate signposting of the intended field. While I have elucidated on the criteria that are deployed by the field in evaluating new songs, it is by no means exhaustive and requires extensive further research to be thoroughly understood.
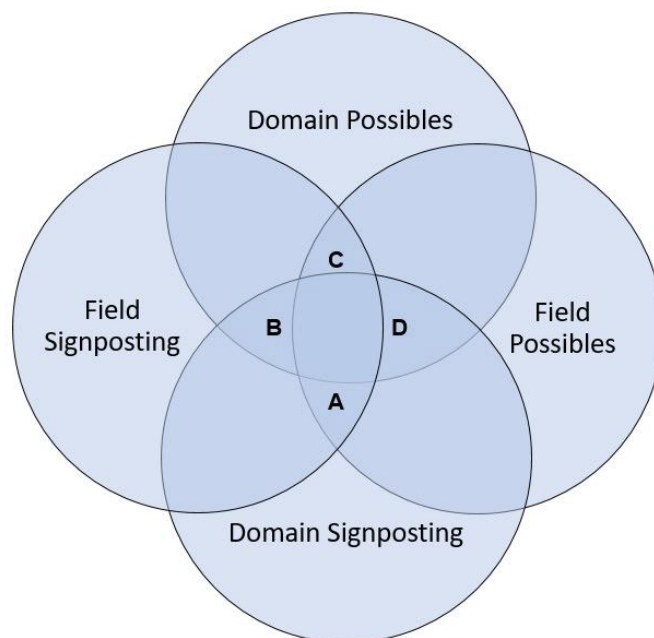
Figure 14 The Framework of Failure

9.3 The Individual and Field

The focus of the individual in the songwriting act has been the core concern of this autoethnographic method, and as operating within the context of the systems model of

creativity the songwriter is engaged with two interactions. The first is the Domain and Individual as discussed above (section 9.1), and the second is the Individual and Field, as is discussed here. While the Model of Authorship (figure 7) does operate between the same components of individual and field, it is regarding a concurrent sub-process as interdependent and contingent within this model.
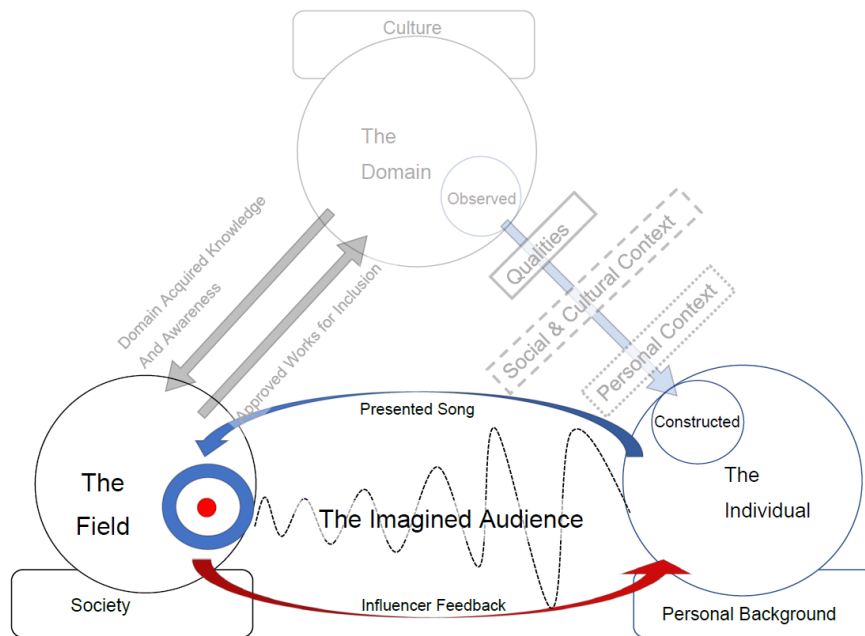
Figure 15 The Individual and The Field

As part of the systems model, this expanded model analyses the transmission of information between the individual and the field: the songs presented, and the feedback given. This integrates the work of Hennion (1989) and the observations and theories of this autoethnography. The song is presented to various points of the field, progressing from trusted, informed and known networks, to unknown markets. The smaller selections of networks, consisting of family and friends (trusted), and/or industry aficionados (informed), are first approached and given a degree of agency to influence the song – these people I have termed influencers. As the song progresses and meets the approval of these influencers it is introduced to widening networks with lessening degrees of individual agency on the song. Finally, it is released into the market whose individual agency is limited to engaging (usually buying or streaming) but who have a collective agency to judge if the song is to be approved for inclusion in the domain.

As previously indicated, the song will be for a specific style-domain and market audience within the field, and it is the role of all the stakeholders in the song to guide the song to that target. For example, the song will need to adhere to the constraints of the style-domain, the conventions of sound quality, the values of the audience, and the policies of the gatekeepers. It is the collective knowledge of those stakeholders, of the style-domain and specific field,

which is applied in the reiterative and progressive waving line in this model. A song is presented to an influencer whose feedback will alter the trajectory of the songwriting. The target – presented as such in the model – is a specific demographic of the field but during the songwriting process, this target is an imagined audience. The imagined audience is a construct of the songwriter's knowledge of this specific audience which is used to shape the message and/or delivery of the song towards the target audience. The seeking of influencer feedback and its application in songwriting (as well as marketing which is beyond the scope of the present research) is the refining of the imagined audience of the song. This is to meet the requirements and expectations of this specific audience through the criteria of appropriateness detailed above (section 8.3) – authenticity, signposting of style-domain and specific audience, and style. A song that aligns the imagined with the actual audience will be more effective in its communication and, therefore, is more likely to be successful in the commercial market.

9.4 Scaling and Collapsing the Systems Model

While Csikszentmihalyi's (2013) model has been a productive model through which to contextualise this investigation, and demonstrate the practice of songwriting, it remains an abstracted model with two issues that need to be accounted for.

In Csikszentmihalyi's model, each component – domain, field, and individual – are equal in size, presumably to make the abstracted concept manageable on the page. However, if we consider the individual is a single person while the field is made up of *all* potential engagers of the song, we should have a ratio of 1:7,700,000,000. This is approximately a basketball compared to Jupiter. This is not a realistic goal of the songwriter to gain approval from every living person, and so the applicable living-experience is that most commercial success operates within minorities of this figure. There is not a quantifiable number of approvals required for a song to be included in the domain, and each song will vary, sometimes significantly. So, it is reasonable that Csikszentmihalyi's model does not account for this scaling issue. However, when engaging with or investigating the actual practice of songwriting, the scale of the field that is being engaged should be accounted for, as well as its function, agency, and affordance through capital such as economic, social, cultural, and symbolic.

It has also been commented on, in the Literature Review (section 2.1), that while Sawyer claims that 'all of the creative products that have been accepted by the field in the past' (2012, p. 216) should be included, this does not transfer over into the actual practice. In my practice, only a small selection of the domain was ever accessed and used as part of the creative process similar to that described by Kerrigan (2013). Even while a background knowledge and awareness of the larger scale of the domain is always present, it still does

not include every creative product ever accepted into the domain. Therefore, in the practice of creativity, the domain and field are scaled, and only selected aspects are incorporated into the creative process.

Another issue in using the systems model in practice, is that the individual is also part of the field, as a consumer/validator of creative products and, potentially, as an industry gatekeeper. If an individual should have commercial success and their artistic/brand-voice is included in the domain, despite the detachment of writer and brand-voice, the individual still has agency, command, and authority of that brand-voice. Therefore, in the actual practice of creativity, the systems model is collapsed in on itself. In researching one's own creative practice, the practitioner-researcher must be aware of how they operate and impact these three aspects interdependently.

9.5   Authorship and Pseudo/Hypothetical Collaboration

Following the path of demystifying (Schön, 1995) the creative process and removing romantic mythology (Boden, 2003) from the beliefs of songwriting, I have proposed that songwriters working towards commercial releases use techniques to unburden these romantic myths from their practice. In Models of Authorship in Songwriting (Chapter 5), it was discussed how the songwriter distances the concept of the writer from the authorial and artistic voice, similar to the theories of authorship presented by Barthes (1977) and Foucault (1979), as constructed, presented and received within the song. This attitude, as part a commercial approach to songwriting, unburdens the songwriter of the romantic mythology of being an *authentic* voice. This concept of authorship is, on the one hand, limited by being the captured voice of the song (authorial) or the collection of songs (artistic), while on the other hand, is an amalgamation of voices as drawn from the songwriter's knowledge of the domain and field. These multiple voices also act as a practice of shared authority, such as can be found in any collaborative music making. This shared authority indicates to the songwriter that the song's message or emotion has a wider appeal to more than themselves as the team has not vetoed the song, and also indicates to an audience that the song is not self-indulgent as it is presented by a team in collaboration and shared ownership.

I have observed and theorised the inclusion of *pseudo* and *hypothetical collaboration* (Chapter 5: Models of Authorship in Songwriting) as a songwriting technique that is deployed before the song is presented to collaborators, such as a band or a marketing team. The pseudo collaborator is a collaborator who does not exist such as an alter ego or a deceased person, while a hypothetical collaborator is one who exists but is not present in the writing process, such as writing a song to pitch to an artist. In both cases, the voice of these collaborators is conceptualised by the songwriter and used to voice the song regarding the criteria of appropriateness, discussed above (section 8.3). This technique reduces the

burdensome *authenticity* in songwriting as the material presented is not a personal reflection of the songwriter, and the risk of failure falls to the criteria of appropriateness/effectiveness and not the personal attributes of the songwriter.

9.6 Structure and Agency

The theories I have presented (Chapters 5-8) have been conceived through structuralist lenes, and here I would like to discuss the implications of structure and agency. To operate as a functional form of creativity both structure and agency are required. Structure has been identified as the knowledge of the domain and field, and the aspects that constitute those bodies of knowledge and the creative possibles they offer: constraints, conventions, rules, values, policies, and agenda.[51] This knowledge is constructed by the individual into a conceptual space in which creativity occurs as exploration, combination, or transformation of the constituting aspects: this is the songwriter's agency.[52]

Structure is essential to communicate to the audience the intentions of the song in terms of its domain location and audience, which it does by signposting with established memes and tropes.[53] Becker (2008) has referred to these in the broad realm of the arts where 'well-socialised' members of society recognise tropes such as the gender roles demonstrated in art. As previously noted, Bennett (2014a) has compiled a list of constraints and conventions of pop music, such as 4/4 time signatures, romantic themed lyrics, and verse-chorus structure, which all operate as the structures of pop music. Such lists could be made for other style-domains, but it should be highlighted that these represent the typical constraints and conventions of the style-domain, and not the range of possibles within the domain. Where these lists can be considered the nucleus of the style-domain, agency reaches out from this nucleus structure towards other style-domains. Without the structure to define the nucleus of a style-domain, the agency would have no point to be reaching to or from. It is also essential for these interactions to occur that they are observed and recognised by the field. Returning to conceptual space of Pop and House music (figure 12), a listener unfamiliar with the domains of Pop and House music would not recognise the inclusion of the House music conventions in the Pop style-domain. Therefore, the innovation would pass the listener by, being considered as a standard convention of Pop music.

Ashurst described how writing in popular music imposes certain limitations – what I have referred to as structuring influences – stating 'The box is kind of a given really: it's what you do in the box that's really exciting.' (Ashurst in Bennett, 2014a, p. 63). This agency (the exciting part) requires structure (the box) to push against and subvert. Using Boden's (2003)

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[51] Chapter 6: Identifying the Imagined Audience
[52] Chapter 7: Style and Voice
[53] Chapter 8: Valuing in Songwriting

terms for the scale of creativity, there are two options, psychological creativity (P-Creativity) and historical creativity (H-Creativity). Reflecting on this notion in light of this autoethnography, to achieve P-creativity the criteria on which the novelty (or 'newness') is assessed are based on the domain knowledge of the creative individual, while H-creativity sits at the furthest point away from this, where the novelty must be new to all persons (the field). As previously discussed above, the nature of creative practice is scaled, drawing from a selection of points within a style-domain, and directed towards a specific audience. In this manner, the songwriter defines the appropriate boundaries of the song, in which they will scope the limitations of their agency that will be expected or tolerated by the specific audience. A free reigning P-creative practitioner will struggle to achieve work that is 'new, surprising, and valuable' without the structuring knowledge from the domain and field. H-creative aspirations will demand an extensive knowledge of the domain and field, which may, to the fullest extent, be implausible. Therefore, as with the systems model of creativity, it is necessary to apply the theory within a scaled system, ensuring each song is novel enough to be distinct from the last but familiar enough to be recognised within the brand and the style-domain. The success of the songwriter is not in how creative they *can be*, but in *how* they are creative.

9.7 Effectiveness and appropriateness

The effectiveness of the song is a direct consequence of the appropriateness of the song. It has been discussed how the song is judged on the criteria of appropriateness/effectiveness through authenticity (section 8.3), alignment to the style-domain and specific audience, and style. These criteria do not operate as a checklist but are the contingent and reactive aspects of a greater whole that operate in and of themselves: in essence, defining their own terms for success. In aligning with a style-domain and specific audience, the song is aiming to be appropriate to the expectations and requirements of the style-domain and the specific audience: specifically, towards the constraints, conventions, rules, values, policies, and agenda. A specific audience may hold H-creativity in higher value, which would need to be reflected in the style of the song to appease the expectations of that specific audience. Another style-domain may not accommodate the conventions of a songwriter's style, or mode, of writing, in which case one of these aspects would need to be addressed or compromised to contribute to the successful field acceptance and subsequent domain inclusion of the song. Meanwhile, the authenticity of the authorial-voice must draw a clear connection between all other aspects, and is, therefore, continuously assessed against such parameters. While the song must adhere to these criteria, for it to be effective, it also has its own agency to rewrite the criteria towards parameters of the song itself.

9.8 The Wider Implications

An overarching aim of this autoethnography was to contribute to the demystifying of the learning of songwriting. In the first instance, there are the first order conclusions, as described above in this chapter. Drawing observations from critical reflections towards and from reflexive practice. These were then theorised through current literature and models of creativity, songwriting, and authorship, to reveal the intangible processes of songwriting in a commercially-orientated practice. It is also intended that the methodology and autoethnographic method deployed here will support other songwriting practitioners to deconstruct, assess, and develop their practice, and that those engaged with academia will be enabled to discuss their own practice with rigour and critical thinking. While it may be true that the writing of each song is a unique process, requiring that the product must be creative – new, surprising, and valuable – I propose that there are in fact criteria which require addressing in each song undertaken: the model of authorship, the intended domain and field, and the style to be applied. A songwriter wishing to develop their practice will be empowered to progress by recognising these core aspects and how they operate.

However, it is also recognised that it is part of the essence of popular music culture to be mystified in the romantic mythology, often incorporated in the brand experience. For many consumers of popular music, the song is part of the greater artist experience which includes the live performance, music videos, interviews, and biographies. While the song may be the centre of this experience for some, it is all held together by a gossamer thread of *authenticity* which could come apart very easily. Therefore, it is accepted that the scope of such demystifying ventures will be limited to those with a vested interest, such as practitioners, students, educators, and researchers.

9.9 Further Research

No avenue of investigation has been wholly shut or laid to rest. I would propose that this research has opened avenues and introduced ways and means of pursuing these. As every song aims to be novel, there is potential to draw new knowledge from the writing and analysis of every such song, and the experiences of writing. However, there are still a number of specific areas of further research that have been signposted throughout this thesis and others that await investigation.

9.9.1 Other Facets and Lens of Songwriting through Autoethnography

The scope of the in-depth autoethnographic investigation has been limited by the very nature of autoethnography, and while participant interviews have triangulated my theories, much more could be discovered through case studies of multiple autoethnographies in songwriting. Previously, research into creative practice has been often stunted by the reluctance of

practitioners to engage with researchers (Sloboda, 1985; 2005; Csikszentmihalyi, 2013), but the growing interest in artistic research practices has allowed creative practitioners to engage with research on their own terms (Barrett and Bolt, 2007; Smith and Dean, 2009; Nelson, 2013). The current field of songwriting researchers is still narrow (excluding songwriting within music therapy), and there remains a great opportunity to develop this field. There is a breadth of possibilities to explore such as: style-domains; modes of songwriting; micro- and macro-decision making; materials of songwriting; immaterials of songwriting; and other aspects included below. With careful and thorough co-ordination, the methodologies for investigations could be further refined, drawing new and undiscovered seams of understanding by independent researcher-practitioners or those within an academic institute from any creative discipline.

This breadth of study may be taken further still into other creative practices or creative practice as a general field. As a comparative analysis with other disciplines – such as choreography, film-making or sculpture – the outcomes and methodology of this research could potentially benefit the understandings of both disciplines and theories of creativity.

9.9.2   The Imagined Audience

While a great deal has been discussed regarding the imagined audience, there is still much more that can be investigated. Much of these observations have been around the domain acquired knowledge and its application in the songwriting process. It was later in the project work that the imagined audience was recognised as a contributing aspect of my practice. As such, there is potentially more to be revealed with regard to the conceptualising and application of an imagined audience in the creative practice. A songwriting practice focused toward writing with and/or for public-facing artists – as synchronous collaboration or writing to a brief – could produce significantly more observable data and theories of how structuring knowledge of the imagined audience is acquired and how this knowledge is applied in the creative practice. Applying the methodology used in this research would support a continuation of this line of enquiry. However, one may wish to expand the research away from the *auto* of this methodology and utilise more interviews with the collaborators and influencers as a more traditional ethnography of commercial songwriting.

9.9.3   The Songwriting Field

There are various research opportunities to be explored in and from the songwriting field, i.e., the field of people which are engaged in the commercial songwriting practice such as collaborators, influencers, gatekeepers, and highly engaged consumers. A limitation to this research, beyond my autoethnographic method, was the autonomous nature of my practice but this was a necessity of ensuring that some of the songs were pursued through to public

release to observe the interactions of the song at the end of the creative moment. While this is a plausible form of songwriting practice for an independent artist, it is not necessarily the best approach as the theoretical research reviewed here and anecdotal advice from industry sources suggests that projects incorporating a team are more likely to be commercially successful. As such, it would be prudent to base any further research around a project or series of projects that operate in such a manner. As before, it could continue to be autoethnographic, focusing on the experience of a single individual within this team, a series of autoethnographies from the various participants, or an ethnographic study through interviews with those participants, with or without the researcher participation. Such research would also enrich the understanding of the interactions between the Domain and Field (figure 13)

9.9.4   Channels of Knowledge and Distribution

The significance of the channels through which knowledge is acquired and distributed – streaming, radio, live performances – was not included but would certainly present another area of further research. The nature of the channel could have a significant impact on the individual's understanding and application in ways similar to the listening environment as briefly touched on in this thesis. As such, broadening the scope of the song environment beyond its physical attributes, such as the live performance venue, to include platforms such as steaming and radio, would be a logical next step in developing the understanding of domain acquired knowledge in songwriting.

9.10 Vamp and Fade

To employ songwriting terminology, there are four key aspects that I would like to vamp on: how the role of the songwriter operates within a wider system; the development of the songwriting craft through authorship, style, and audience; essential considerations of commercial songwriting; and the developmental benefits of a reflective practice.

For the songwriting practitioner, an understanding of how we operate within the context of the wider system between the domain and the field has been discussed – drawing from our individual domains to inform our personal knowledge with possibles and rules, and presenting our original works to collaborators, influencers, and audiences in an iterative process of refinement. The songwriter develops their style through their knowledge of the domain and their ability to recognise the creative opportunities available to them. They must have an audience for their songs and, simultaneously, songs for their audience, which requires them to consider their audience throughout their songwriting. Authorship will be the mode in which they communicate to their audience through song, as well as their extramusical materials. Incorporating a reflective practice into their creative practice will give

them a greater degree of autonomy in steering their development and overcome creative difficulties, such as writer's block, quickly and effectively.

For the songwriter-researcher looking to contribute to the growing academic field of songwriting, it is vital that a contextual understanding of songwriting is applied. Here I have presented my songwriting within the systems model of creativity, which others may also apply, or they may wish to swap this for another appropriate framework in which to contextualise the practice. I have demonstrated a number of aspects and considerations, which are general to the songwriting practice through the themes of authorship, style, audience, and valuing, as such, they should be a consideration in future research into songwriting. The use of the reflective practice to develop an autoethnography of songwriting is, I believe, the most fruitful methodology available to practitioner-researchers to plunge into the deep and subjective nature of our practices.

For the songwriting and popular music educator, whether a practitioner or otherwise, in seeking to either teach songwriting or in teaching a study of our songwriting products, a thorough and well-rounded account of the practice *in situ* is essential. Whether as practice or analysis, the phenomenon is located in a wider context that has structuring pressures on the agency of the songwriter. The systems model presents an accessible mode of understanding this context and the roles of the components have been detailed here. In teaching songwriting, it would be beneficial to identify where and how students can develop through the themes of authorship, style, and audiences. And lastly, that a reflective practice is an effective and progressive mode of facilitating students' individual journeys and experiences of developing their songwriting and music-making practice. (Below I will expand on suggested considerations and applications of this research within a songwriting pedagogy.)

Chapter 10.   Pedagogical Evaluation

Throughout this thesis the pedagogy of concern was specifically of the practitioner's experience of learning outside of an academic setting. As indicated in the introduction and methodology, the reason for focusing on the learning experience was based on my belief that current modes and approaches to teaching songwriting were teaching focused. This concept of teaching focused is where songwriting pedagogies were guided by what could be assessed or on canons of the teacher's aural library. My concern for these pedagogies is that they could be contrary to student experiences and expectations. I propose that the use of autoethnography by teachers and students provides the essential context that songwriting is a lived experience and of subjective value. I have considered creative practice as a form of learning based on the requirement for creative works to be novel, thereby requiring the creator to learn how to create each new work. The language of this thesis has been in regard to such learning, development, and practice. In this chapter, I will address the outcomes of this thesis in the context of formal education.

The reflective practice used in this autoethnography can aid both teacher and student in identifying and being aware, in their own and in others' practices, of the various components of structure and agency, and how these are applied in the practice. My autoethnographic method, as demonstrated here, would also facilitate teacher and/or student in undertaking more rigorous investigations of their songwriting practice, both deductive and inductive, as part of a research-based education. The current autoethnographic method has focused its observations on the development of authorship – comprised of the various voices and the imagined audience – other autoethnographic studies of the songwriting practice may be focused on other aspects of interest, development, or necessity. The current autoethnography reduced its scope to exclude musicological aspects of the practice[54], which has been beneficial in focusing the observations of the autoethnographer but has limited the development and depth of study for the practitioner. In a songwriting pedagogy, the musicological aspect must be reintroduced and form a part of the reflection and analysis, although it should not become the sole focus of observations at the expense of other creative, social, and cultural aspects that should be present in the practice.

Whether as practice or analysis, the phenomenon is located in a wider context that has structuring pressures on the agency of the songwriter. The systems model presents an accessible model for understanding this context and the roles of the components. The Expanded Systems Model of Creativity (figure 10) presents a means of accessing the topics of discussion, investigation, and lenses for reflective practice, which can be explored by

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[54] Specifically, music analysis or the language of music theory so as to avoid becoming focused on the product and not the practice.

songwriting students within the context of their own practice. In the songwriting pedagogy, the interactions of the individual and the field could contribute to constructing, discussing, and applying formative assessment for learning, such as the A'n'R or song critique session that were described by songwriting educators in Contextual Experience of Songwriting Pedagogy (section 3.11.2), as well as self- and peer-assessment exercises.

What is the agenda of a songwriting curriculum? This should inform the response of what it is that students must know, and what they must be aware of in terms of the depth and breadth of the curriculum. The breadth of knowledge, such as domain awareness, is only useful to the songwriting practitioner if they have adequate musicological ability, either intuitively or explicitly, to extract the necessary qualities for those reference tracks. Lisbee's approach to teaching the tools not the material supports this notion, as she states 'you simply need the tools at your disposal. If you understand better what each tool does, you can use it more effectively.'

The conclusion of this autoethnography has highlighted how all people operate as part of the field in the systems model of creativity, and so in the use of the systems model in a songwriting pedagogy it should also be highlighted how students are both individual and field. From this position, students can have permission to value their intuitive judgements of their own and others' works and use these insights to develop their own criterion of appropriateness to their songwriting practice. With explicit knowledge of their criterion of appropriateness, students will be better able to signpost within their songs who the imagined audience is and apply their understanding of the style-domain's possibles. This can be applied in the songwriting pedagogy as the assessment criteria of the student's song, as a form of Students as Partners in Learning (Healey *et al.*, 2014), and reduce the subjectivity in assessment. I would compare this approach to assessment as similar to students solving a mathematics problem and showing their working-out, as the assessor is assessing both the process and the product. To further this approach into a process-based assessment would allow much more collaborative practices, which would reflect the nature of songwriting that has been established by Bennett (2014a) and Hennion (1989), and further demonstrated in this autoethnography.

Relying on a product-based assessment has a number of potential flaws. Returning to the quote from Gene Wolfe that 'we only ever learn to write the novel [song] that we are writing', to assess only as many songs as our time will allow restricts our ability to draw a substantial conclusion on that student's learning and abilities. We are presented with the bi-product – song – of these abilities – songwriting – which is only a snapshot of their actual learning. If the assignment were to write a pastiche, it could be argued that such specificity would allow for an objective assessment of the song – using a pedagogy of 'error correction'. If the

assignment requires students to demonstrate their creative abilities, then adequate scope in the assignment must be allowed for students to explore the creative space and create the rules that will define their song. The vast expanse of potential in this creative space will most likely include blind spots in the assessor objective knowledge, and possible even general knowledge. While Beth claims that she would be confident in assessing a dance track on its own rules, her feedback to a country singer-songwriter would be a lot more rigorous. As such, these product-based assessments are not only in danger of being subjective but that the feedback, as an essential aspect of learning, will be inconsistent to students of differing style-domains and modes of practice. The use of either reflective practice or autoethnography, would support students in both developing their understanding of their own learning and in demonstrating this in a process-based assessment.

Based on the findings of this autoethnography and design of songwriting programmes described by educators in Contextual Experience of Songwriting Pedagogy (section 3.11.2), I would suggest that a songwriting pedagogy incorporate into its curriculum a developmental scheme of assessment such as: (1) Exploration of the creative space where learning outcomes are assessed through the students' learning, demonstrated in reflective accounts of these explorations. Song products can be formatively assessed, either by the educator or through peer-assessment. (2) Refining of the *artistic voice*, where students have identified their chosen style-domain and mode of practice. The products can be part of the summative assessment along with an exegesis of the criterion of appropriateness, which becomes the assessment criterion of the song (a criteria of effectiveness), and a reflective practice piece with an emphasis on the development of critical reflection. Lastly, (3) the assessment should become outward facing, beyond the academic environment. Songs should be presented to external bodies for assessment, but not as part of the academic assessment. The academic assessment should address the professional practice of the students' engagement with the external environment and their processing of the external results and feedback (for instance, metrics and reviews) and a reflective practice piece that demonstrates strong reflexive development to support a career with lifelong learning skills.

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Glossary

Agency   Agency refers to the songwriters perceived freedom to break with conventions or defy constraints of songwriting practice. This notion of agency is correlated with structure.

Art and Craft   American educators describe the development of students learning from art to craft while British counterparts refer to a similar development as from craft to commercialisation.

Artistic-/Authorial-voice   Artistic-voice is the unique style of expression that is associated with an artist and the authorial-voice is the style of expression that is conceived and perceived in a specific artistic work.

Being-in-the-world   Heidegger's term, Being-in-the-world refers to the lived experience (cf. Heidegger, 1924).

Brand   Brand refers to the experience of the user (listener) and how the values and tropes distinguish that brand experience from other brands.

Capital   Capital refers to four types of assets: social, cultural, symbolic, and economic.

Commercial/ commercially-orientated   Commercial and commercially-orientated refers to practices that intend to engage an audience beyond the creator.

Creative moment   The creative moment is the time and space when convergent thinking of possible actions results in a creative act.

Culture and Domain   Culture and domain refer to the collective works and their symbolic meanings.

Dasein   Dasein refers to existence, but the more specific context of the lived experience of existence in accordance with phenomenology.

Demarcate   Demarcating is when roles and/or subtasks are performed separately.

Domain Awareness   Domain awareness refers to a person's awareness of works within the domain but without having assimilated the domain knowledge into their songwriting habitus.

Domain Knowledge   Domain knowledge refers to a person's knowledge of the domain, which is often broken into constraints, conventions, and rules of the domain.

Empiricism   Empiricism refers to the philosophy that bases its understanding of the world through what is observed and the causal relationships. It differs from intellectualism by privileging all that is outside of the mind or of the human experience.

Experiential Learning Cycle	David Kolb's (cite) (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle presents learning as a four-stage process based on experiences. Stage one is concrete experience, stage two is reflective observation, stage three is abstract conceptualisation, and stage four is active experimentation.
Field and Society	Field and society refer to people.
Grounded Theory Approach	Grounded Theory Approach (GTA) is a methodology that constructs its hypotheses from data while the data is being collected.
Habitus	Habitus refers to the habitual and intuitive dispositions we adopt. Habitus is learned both consciously and unconsciously through education and lived experience within social fields.
Historical (H-) Creativity	Boden's (2003)term, Historical Creativity (H-Creativity) refers to a creative idea that, as far as we can be aware, has never been had before.
Hypothetical Collaboration	A hypothetical collaboration is when a songwriter is adopting the artistic voice of a collaborator who is not present in the songwriting session.
Influencers	Influencers are those people who contribute to a song in ways that do not substantiate a writing credit.
Intellectualism	Intellectualism refers to the philosophy that seeks its understanding through reason and explanation of phenomena as experienced through consciousness. As a broad generalisation of intellectualism, this includes Cartesian and Kantian philosophies.
Memes	A meme is a replicated element of a cultural or societal system which is pregnant with meaning.
Musicology	The study of music.
Phenomenology/Phenomenological ontology	A 20th Century philosophical study that was founded by Edmund Husserl. It considers phenomena from the perspective of the lived experience, whether these phenomena are objects, experiences, or consciousness.
Possibles	Bourdieu's (1990) term to capture the range of potential actions that are available.
Present-at-hand	The future is a state that we constantly push towards, while the past is a memory of how events were perceived. The future is always ahead of us, and the past is never objectively accessible, and therefore our lived experience is always in the present-at-hand.
Pseudo Collaboration	Writing using the artistic voice of someone who does not exist such as an alter ego or unreliable narrator.

Psychological (P-) Creativity	Boden's (2003) term, Psychological Creativity (P-Creativity) refers to a creative idea that is new to the individual as creator.
Reference Tracks	Recordings that songwriters, producers, and their teams use to guide their decision making.
Song	Works that are made up of words and music that are sung.
Songwriter	Those who contribute to the song.
Songwriting	The practices and processes that contribute to creating a song.
Structural signposting	The intentional use of structure to indicate to a listener the intended audience and style-domain of the song.
Structure	The recurrent patterned arrangements which can influence or limit an individual's perception of choice or opportunity.
Style	The way a person executes habitus, which is constructed and informed by references to the social and cultural structures as well as exercising the agency of the individual.
Systems model of creativity	Csikszentmihalyi's (2013) term, is a framework for understanding how creativity works.
Topline/r	The words and melody of a song and the person who writes the words and melody.
Valuing	A sub-task of creativity where possibles are evaluated against an internalised criterion of appropriateness based on the songwriters feel for the game.

Appendix 1 Project Database

File name	Song name (here applied)	Completed components	Date started	Date Completed or Abandoned	Phase	Collaborators	No. Project Files	No. of video files
Session 1	Want, Need You	Early demo w/topline	14.10.2016	03.04.2017	1		3	11
Session 2		Lyrics only	19.10.2016	19.10.2016	1			3
Session 3		Lyrics only	21.10.2016	21.10.2016	1			2
Session 4		Lyrics only	24.10.2016	24.11.2016	1			2
Session 5		Lyrics only	04.01.2017	04.01.2017	1		1	1
Session 6		Instrumental demo	05.01.2017	05.01.2017	1		3	2
Session 7		Instrumental demo	05.01.2017	05.01.2017	1		1	1
Session 8	When You're Alone	Completed and Released	05.01.2017	27.03.2017	1	Zsofia Szucs	8	11
Session 9		2 instrumental sections	10.01.2017	10.01.2017	1		1	2
Session 10		Instrumental demo	10.01.2017	10.01.2017	1		1	1
Session 11		2 instrumental sections	10.01.2017	10.01.2017	1		1	1
Session 12		1 instrumental section	18.01.2017	18.01.2017	1		1	2
Session 13	Fear of my own shame	Chorus w/topline	19.01.2017	19.01.2017	1		1	1
Session 14	You are Everything	Verse and chorus demo w/topline	19.01.2017	19.01.2017	1		1	1
Session 15		1 instrumental section	20.01.2017	20.01.2017	1		1	1
Session 16	The Becoming	Completed and Released	24.01.2017	17.07.2018	1	Carys Ann John	7	7
Session 17		1 instrumental section	25.01.2017	25.01.2017	1		1	2
Session 18	Partner in Crime	Completed, unreleased	26.01.2017	10.08.2017	1	Bernice MacDonald	11	16
Session 19		1 instrumental section	03.02.2017	08.02.2017	1		2	5
Session 20		1 instrumental section	23.03.2017	23.03.2017	1		1	1

Session	Title	Description						
Session 21		1 topline verse, incomplete arrangement	23.03.2017	25.03.2017	1		2	2
Session 22		2 instrumental sections	25.03.2017	25.03.2017	1		1	1
Session 23		2 instrumental sections	04.04.2017	04.04.2017	1		1	2
Session 24		Verse and chorus demo w/topline	04.04.2017	13.04.2017	1		3	6
Session 25		2 instrumental sections	04.04.2017	04.04.2017	1		1	0
Session 26		1 instrumental section	05.05.2017	05.05.2017	1		1	1
Session 27	Don't Walk Away	Completed and Released	05.04.2017	08.08.2018	1	Zsofia Szucs	18	13
Session 28	(If I can't Dance) It's not my Revolution	Completed and Released	05.04.2017	30.05.2017	1		8	8
Session 29	Turn Down the Heat	Completed and Released	10.05.2017	15.08.2017	1	Zsofia Szucs	11	13
Session 30		2 instrumental sections	10.05.2017	10.05.2017	1		1	1
Session 31		2 instrumental sections	10.05.2017	10.05.2017	1		1	1
Session 32	Japanese Gamers Bubble Gum Pop	Completed and Released	25.05.2017	07.07.2018	1		3	3
Session 33		Instrumental demo	05.06.2017	05.06.2017	1		1	1
Session 34		Instrumental demo	06.06.2017	07.06.2017	1		1	1
Session 35		2 instrumental sections	06.06.2017	06.06.2017	1		1	1
Session 36		2 instrumental sections	24.06.2017	24.06.2017	1		1	1
Session 37		Verse, Pre and Chorus with melody	28.06.2017	28.06.2017	1	Cortney Dixon	1	1
Session 38		1 instrumental section	25.07.2017	25.07.2017	1		1	1
Session 39		Full Instrumental demo from F9 template	25.07.2017	25.07.2017	1		1	1
Session 40	Untitled instrumental	Full instrumental demo	26.07.2017	24.08.2017	1		3	4
Session 41		1 instrumental section	28.07.2017	28.07.2017	1		1	1
Session 42	To Hear You Sing	Complete demo	28.07.2017	24.08.2017	1		6	7
Session 43	Don't Say His name	Completed and Released	17.08.2017	14.12.2018	1	Alex Soper	7	0
	Profanity	Completed and Pitched	27.09.2017	15.10.2017	2	Sia Viaz	6	0

	Faster Mood	Full instrumental demo	07.10.2017	07.10.2017	2		1	0
	Slow Mood	Full instrumental demo	07.10.2017	20.01.2018	2		1	0
	Funky Kitchen Radio	Complete Bed Track	24.10.2017	Ongoing	2		1	0
	I Love Summer	Completed and Pitched	07.11.2017	Ongoing	2	Soňa Kilianová	6	0
	For Justin	2 instrumental sections	24.11.2017	19.01.2018	2		1	0
	Pull You Away	Completed and Released	25.11.2017	27.09.2018	2	Annie Griffiths	4	0
	Stupid Funky Thing	1 instrumental section	25.11.2017	25.11.2017	2		1	0
	Mus2015	Complete Bed Track	27.11.2017	Ongoing	2		1	0
	Funky Sinner	Completed and Pitched	21.12.2017	17.04.2018	2		1	0
	Misfiring	3 instrumental sections	01.01.2018	01.01.2018	2		1	0
	Spitfiring	1 instrumental section	01.01.2018	01.01.2018	2		1	0
	Sinner	Completed and Released	19.01.2018	19.01.2018	2		0-Lost	0
	Midnight Stirring	Completed and Released	19.01.2018	19.01.2018	2		0-Lost	0
	Gutzilla	Completed and Released	26.01.2018	25.04.2018	2		3	0
	Rabbie's Shuffle	Completed and Released	26.01.2018	31.05.2018	2		1	0
	Green and Pleasant	Complete instrumental	27.01.2018	27.01.2018	2		1	0
	Wet Circles	2 instrumental sections	10.02.2018	10.02.2018	2		1	0
	Yes We Can	Completed and Released	13.02.2018	20.02.2018	2	Karen Ross	2	0
	Split Lab 101	Complete instrumental	25.02.2018	25.02.2018	2		1	0
	1st 10.4	2 instrumental sections	29.03.2018	01.04.2018	2		1	0
	Pretty Hard Drums	instrumental loop	29.03.2018	31.03.2018	2		1	0
	Perter Gilson	2 instrumental sections	31.03.2018	31.03.2018	2		1	0
	Life is a Dance	Completed and Pitched	24.05.2018	Ongoing	2	Soňa Kilianová	3	0
	Jus Messin	1 instrumental section	24.05.2018	24.05.2018	2		1	0
	Meh Noises	instrumental loop	06.06.2018	06.06.2018	2		1	0
	Meh Pt. 2	instrumental loop	06.06.2018	06.06.2018	2		1	0
	NuDiscoteque	1 instrumental section	09.06.2018	09.06.2018	2		1	0
	Slumber Party	Complete Bed Track	16.06.2018	Ongoing	2		1	0
	X Club	2 instrumental sections	07.08.2018	07.08.2018	2		1	0

Daft Funk	2 instrumental sections	27.09.2018	28.09.2018	2		1	0
Rise Up	Complete and unreleased	27.09.2018	Ongoing	2	Ann Kenney	4	0
Shine	Complete Bed Track w/ Chorus Topline	28.09.2018	Ongoing	2		1	0

76 Projects **13 Released Projects** **13 Collaborators** **172** **143**

4 Pitched Projects [177]

7 Ongoing Projects

2 Complete Unreleased Projects

50 Dormant Projects

Appendix 2 Audio Examples

Soundcloud.com link - https://soundcloud.com/hashtagellipsis/sets/appendix-2-audio-examples/s-7qlfi

Track listing

1. She's Gold

2. Session 8 -When You're Alone.mp3

3. Session 16 - The Becoming.mp3

4. Session 18.1.mp3

5. Session 18 - A partner in Crime.mp3

6. Session 26.mp3

7. Session 27 - Don't Walk Away.mp3

8. Session 28 - If I Can't Dance (It's Not my Revolution).mp3

9. Session 29 - Turn Down the Heat.mp3

10. Session 33.mp3

11. Session 36.mp3

12. Session 38.mp3

13. Session 42 - To Hear You Sing.mp3

14. Session 43.mp3

15. Session 43 - Don't Say His Name.mp3

16. Profanity-Sia Viaz.mp3

17. I Love Summer.mp3

18. Pull You Away.mp3

19. Funky Sinner.mp3

20. Sinner.mp3

21. Midnight Stirring.mp3

22. Gutzilla.mp3

23. Life Is a Dance.mp3

24. Slumber Party.mp3

25. Rise Up.mp3

Appendix 3 Example of Video Footage

The footage of Session 18 has been edited to demonstrate key points of the development in the songwriting of A Partner in Crime. These include

- Starting Session 18 – A Partner in Crime

- Attenuating the guitar sound

- Editing the drums' MIDI data

- Adjusting the bass guitar groove in MIDI data

- End of Session 18.0 with concluding remarks

https://youtu.be/yeHEsyg69Ak

Appendix 4 Interview Transcript: Alex Soper 20 October 2017

Chris Whiting:	There we go, yeah. Go ahead.
Chris Whiting:	Cool. So, to kind of fill you in, the research I'm doing is kind of about the sort of the songwriting, but on a personal sort of level of how you kind of make the gut reactions or how you develop a sort of second instinct for writing. You know, when you think about it, if you're just gonna do it-
Alex Soper:	[crosstalk 00:00:24] Yeah, I know exactly what you mean, yeah.
Chris Whiting:	Trying to get down to a bit of that stuff. So predominantly based on my own practice, I've just been observing myself and developing ideas about it. Then, we're interviewing some other people, some other songwriters, 'cause different kind of areas of practice, to kind of see where the similarities are. So, we've had Imogen Heap, but she's...a way the fairies are kind of holding out. She was gonna do it. Peter Brewis is doing an interview real soon. Some of the guys, I can't-sort of like, job and songwriter and publishers and stuff. So, if we could get you and just sort of see, being, sort of that younger-I mean I lot the guys I'm speaking to are in their fifties and stuff. And also being in a band as opposed to being sort of, jobbing songwriter in a studio or, you know...
Alex Soper:	Which I do actually want. But I feel like that the thing that's gonna come with age.
Chris Whiting:	Cool.
Alex Soper:	But just, you know.
Chris Whiting:	Are you doing any co-writing stuff?
Alex Soper:	Co-writing with friends, and nothing kind of on that kind of level. Just friends in other bands. They want me to help here and there, and we just get up and do whatever.
Chris Whiting:	It's a little bit of an experience int that? But-
Alex Soper:	It's still a bit of an experience, but I think- [crosstalk 00:01:38] I always-

Chris Whiting:	You're with wipe out, aren't you? For publishing.
Alex Soper:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	So that's something that's really do from what I can tell, kind of off-
Alex Soper:	It isn't really, no, yeah.
Chris Whiting:	Yourselves, and Sleaford Mods].
Alex Soper:	Yeah, yeah.
Chris Whiting:	I can't see them sending Sleaford Mods to a co-write.
Alex Soper:	No, I was gonna say, no. I'd love to hear it, though.
Chris Whiting:	Well, cool. So yeah, that's why I wanted to get your perspective on it. So, certain things that have kind of cropped up in research which I kind of talk around, but really, it's just all about your experience of it, what your sort of view is on it.
Alex Soper:	Okay.
Chris Whiting:	Trying to sort of see if there were things that aren't the same, not exactly the same. "Oh, we both approach songwriting like this." But in sort of terms of being things that are considered, how they are considered. So, what is sort of a typical sort of way of writing for you? Like you kind of started off and what have you.
Alex Soper:	For me, when I can kind of drag myself out of bed, because I always know I wanna write. And then some mornings, it's just getting to the writing. So I'll have maybe like two or three cups of coffee, and then I'll take another coffee to the computer, and then-I don't know what it is, it just happens. I'll just open a project and... for me, most of the time, I pick my guitar up, and it's kind of already just plugged in, it's going through the interface and my pedals, and what have you. My instinct is to pick my guitar up, but as of late, everything really has been...focusing around me. Emitting, to start a song up. So whether that's using keys, or even starting with a drum beat, these days. Which is...very interesting. Is that what you meant? Like how would I-?

Chris Whiting: Yeah, yeah, we're gonna want some instincts to get you going on it and stuff. So, is there-for me-

Alex Soper: It's quite a good question actually, when you think about it because there's so many things that could trigger it. That's just kind of like a casual day, if I wanna try and write something for the day. But like I was saying earlier...a lot of the time, it's a melody that I think of in my head and I'll think of it, and just wherever I am, and I'll just kind of record it on my phone. Then the next time I have a day free to write, I'll try my best to figure out a progression or a guitar piece or riff or whatever to fit the melody. Does that make sense?

Chris Whiting: Yeah. Yeah, definitely. So, you're moving to using more kinda drum beats and synth parts recently as well.

Alex Soper: Subtle kind of sounds like that, yeah.

Chris Whiting: Is that a deliberate change?

Alex Soper: I guess it's to kind of open my mind up with a piano, and the idea of using all the notes on a piano as well. I guess it's because I wanna develop my knowledge on a piano, 'cause on a guitar, a couple of years ago, I wasn't really even-I just picked up a guitar without even knowing what notes I was playing. But now, I do know what I'm playing. And I know I pretty much, 95% I could...reel off any scale if you asked me to. I could tell you what it is exactly I'm playing. But on a piano, I'm not there yet.

Chris Whiting: So, it's kind of the exciting, not knowing exactly what you're doing.

Alex Soper: Yeah, and it's discovering new chords that I probably played on my guitar a thousand times. That, weird, might sound different on keys, which is strange because they're still the same chord. But-

Chris Whiting: [crosstalk 00:05:34] No, it definitely gives you-it sounds different.

Alex Soper: [crosstalk 00:05:35] You know what I mean? It gives you a totally different...feel. Which can sometimes change the emotion of how you might deliver a vocal, compared to what it would be on a guitar. Does that-

Chris Whiting: Yeah, that definitely makes sense, yeah. So, if you were working on, say you start something with a drum beat. How does that sort of change things?

Alex Soper: If I start on a drum beat, it's usually gonna be lot of pound muted kind of groovy. Because the drum beat, it'll always be something really stand out that would be used to start off a track. And if I start with a drum beat, a lot of the time it does have a sense of just thrashing guitars and bass. OR, really intricate little pound muted kind of Everything. Kind of-

Chris Whiting: [crosstalk 00:06:27] Solid.

Alex Soper: Where it's all over, and then little breaks here and there, yeah.

Chris Whiting: Oh, okay. So what you start with definitely, kind of derives what will happen thereafter.

Alex Soper: Yeah, you see what you're getting into now. But first I was just kind of just a bit blocked by it. So you mean how it kind of unfolds? Yeah, it does have an influence on the rest of the track. Which could possibly be the reason why sometimes I get to a certain point and I go, "I have really gone off the track here." I listen back and I'm, "No. I can't use that."

Chris Whiting: It just doesn't fit with the Coquin Migale-

Alex Soper: It just doesn't fit, no. But then, what I've been trying to do recently is, because you know, I would like to think that I could have some kind of future in songwriting as I get older and my skills are better. I feel my skill as a songwriter-I feel there's a lot more I could learn. A lot more. I'm talking, by the time I'm in my mid-I still don't think I look most of what, you know, mid-thirties. I wanna be, in my mid-thirties, I'd love to be absolute boy, and be able to write for anyone. But like I said, recently, if it doesn't fit with the band, I just dismiss that anywhere, that thought. Because I can always use it for myself, and I can use it for my own kind of use.

Chris Whiting: So the band has a certain sort of distinctive sound that is separate from you as a writer? You can write different things, but not everything you write fits in with the band?

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Alex Soper: Yeah, and I enjoy that as well, because...nothing, writing is just expression, isn't it? It gives you a lot of different ways to express that, so I can't just express one side of my personality through one band. Maybe I should be able to, I don't know. I just...the industries. A strange concept, isn't it?

Chris Whiting: So the band has a strict sort of market, these are the sorts of songs you do, the sort of style, these are the audience that you would play to.

Alex Soper: Yeah.

Chris Whiting: And if a song doesn't fit in there, then it will throw the band off?

Alex Soper: [crosstalk 00:08:39] Yeah, and if I-you know, I'll forward a bunch of songs to the rest of the members in an email. We will just listen to them and say, and it's weird how we all know that it's just, "No. That can't be a Coquin Migale song. This could be. Maybe it might need a few changes here and there. This definitely can't be." You know, most of the time, there is one in there, and it's, "Yeah, this..."

Chris Whiting: How many songs do you think you're writing, what's your output like?

Alex Soper: Nowhere near to what I want it, what I'd like it to be.

Chris Whiting: [crosstalk 00:09:14] It never is.

Alex Soper: It never is- I think it's...what day are we on today? Thursday. I've written twice this week. That's with a full day working week as well. So at the moment, in terms of what's going on around me, that's not bad. Although I'd love to do it a lot more often. But then I go through patches of months where I-two months ago, I didn't touch Logic or my music software in two months. I just did not write anything. And I don't know what that is, I don't know whether...it's not even something I do on purpose. I don't know what it is. Now and again, I just have this-it doesn't always last that long, and I might've exaggerated two months, it might've been a month. I just didn't do it, didn't do anything. But then again, that could be because my mind is concentrating on performing.

Chris Whiting: Oh, I see, you've got [crosstalk 00:10:21]

Alex Soper: [crosstalk 00:10:21] I found it difficult to write in between performing dates. I think that's probably just because I set my mind just on performing, and it's about getting the live shows right and making sure everyone's alright. It might fall into the fact that I'm kind of the manager of the band. I have to make sure everyone's alright, and I physically can't take on the task of trying to write something.

Chris Whiting: Is it a ratio, perhaps? If you're writing 10 songs, how many of them would end up being Coquin Migale songs?

Alex Soper: I'm just trying to think of some of the ones I've recently done... Maybe two out of 10.

Chris Whiting: Two out of 10?

Alex Soper: Two out of 10.

Chris Whiting: Okay.

Alex Soper: Which isn't bad, considering I used to think it was that one out of 15.

Chris Whiting: So you're getting your higher hit rate at the minute.

Alex Soper: Yeah.

Chris Whiting: So two out 10. Do the other eight, are they all songs you think, "Yeah, they could all go somewhere else" or are they a couple of duds?

Alex Soper: Yeah, some of the duds kind of just fly off into the trash. And the rest just kind of sit there and just chill out.

Chris Whiting: I had a few months earlier this year just writing, nearly every day, and have you ever ended up with 40 odd tracks out of it?

Alex Soper: Yeah.

Chris Whiting: Some days I was putting out three in a day, and the other times I was working on one track for a couple of days. High output, you come out with so much more and it gets really interesting, definitely.

Alex Soper:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	I was gonna say, the way you were describing it sounds like my friend Jez, and he writes for his band Farrah and he told a story about where he'd written a song and thought "Yes! This is a great song", took it to the band, and they were, "No way, we're not doing that. It's shit." In the end, he sold it to Westlife instead.
Alex Soper:	Happy days.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah, good for him. He's doing well.
Alex Soper:	Maybe I've got a couple of duds that are actually, potentially could be used for artists, but it's about-I'm not in a place where I can just say to someone, "Oh by the way, does Zara Larsson want this song?" Do you know what I mean?
Chris Whiting:	In a better position and a lot of others. But yeah, you kinda want to...
Alex Soper:	Nah, but-
Chris Whiting:	Yeah, focus on Coquin Migale for now, in the interim. If you move into a different publisher, if you're moving to Sony or Universal, somewhere where you've got that conduit to get to those artists, then yeah, you definitely could be in a good position for it. Save up all those songs.
Alex Soper:	Yeah, just keep them all.
Chris Whiting:	So, more lyrically thinking, do you approach a song with a sort of intention as to what these songs are gonna be about? Or?
Alex Soper:	Music always starts first for me. And I always just think it's important to get the sound right, then I've got...I like to hear it all, and hear what the mood's like and the what the instrumentation's doing. It then influences me to deliver vocals in a different way. Lyrics are important, but to me, I don't usually-I don't know. A set thing. ...Just trying to answer really honestly but it's quite difficult. No, I don't usually go into a song with a set theme of what I know what I'm gonna write about, no.

Chris Whiting:	Okay. You kind of make the music and then-
Alex Soper:	Not all the time, there are times when I have. When things have happened in life, and I'm, "Oh. I need to write something about this to kind of cut-"
Chris Whiting:	[crosstalk 00:14:31] Kind of a catharsis, really.
Alex Soper:	Yeah, to get through there. But I'd say the majority of the time, if I'm just in a good head space, get a really good tune out. Really good instrumentation. And then, concentrate on the vocals.
Chris Whiting:	So vocals, like the melodies and lyrics, will be reacting to the music?
Alex Soper:	Yeah. A lot of the time when I hit record, because I've probably been spending the majority of the writing session on the instrumentation and recording all the different bass, guitar, keys, brass bates. I'll hit record to lay some vocals out, and sometimes I'll feel I've probably been listening to it so many times, and I always keep playing it, all the parts in, that when it comes around to just-I'll just press record and keep it going and deliver stuff out my mouth. A lot of the time, some really natural melodies just come out that just fit the track. I don't know whether that, probably because it's been going on loop and I've been record-like I said, I've been using all these parts and sometimes the melody is just-
Chris Whiting:	[crosstalk 00:15:34] Just naturally...?
Alex Soper:	It flows, yeah. It just flows. I don't always use the first melody that comes out, but I feel that just works for me.
Chris Whiting:	Alright, yeah.
Alex Soper:	So, a lot of the tracks i listen back to are just demos, they'll just be me, saying, singing words, in a completely strange order. Just so I've got a melody there.
Chris Whiting:	[crosstalk 00:15:56] Just something to knock the melody onto, just some syllables where- [crosstalk 00:15:59]

Alex Soper:	[crosstalk 00:15:59] Sometimes I'll send it down to the lads and they're, "What are you saying?" And I say to them every time, "Don't listen to the words, it's just there for melody. Just ignore it." That's what they do, they do that now. They just listen to what I'm saying, and then they'll text me something I've said and I'll be, "I thought you didn't know." And they'll be, "Oh, skip to 3:10" and I'm, "I told you. It's just for a melody." So I do that, and then I'll rewrite the lyrics.
Chris Whiting:	So, thinking about stuff... This is kind of two stages to this, is where you are now and when you started, but when you are thinking of stuff... I'm trying to think how to word this. So if you'll go writing a track, and you think, "Alright." You're trying to work out if it's a good track or bad track, if it's gonna work or not. How do you make that decision? Do you know-?
Alex Soper:	That's a really good question, that there. So at what point and how do you know that it's a good one? ...Why is that such a difficult question? And it'd be a right cop out just for me to say, "Oh, because it just feels like it."
Chris Whiting:	Well, it tends-there's a thing, isn't there? [crosstalk 00:17:18]
Alex Soper:	[crosstalk 00:17:18] It is. You do. I don't even know what the feeling is, but you do get a-for me, it's like an instant excitement for people to hear this. To get excited over the fact that people could hear something, that you've created this. So it might be quite an ego, it could be. But I genuinely just get excite-if something just all fits, and it comes together, I just get this...excitement, really.
Chris Whiting:	[crosstalk 00:17:51] So you feel proud of it as well.
Alex Soper:	I'm already aware, or I can really imagine our fans are-or even not fans, listening to this, and possibly thinking, "Oh, right, this is really good."
Chris Whiting:	So it is thinking about the listener at the end of it when you release it or when you're playing it live. How they're gonna react.
Alex Soper:	Yeah. I do like to think about how things are gonna be played live an awful lot, when I'm-
Chris Whiting:	It has to do with the Coquin Migale thing.

Alex Soper: Yeah.

Chris Whiting: Does it translate live? Then it's unlimited.

Alex Soper: There's a lot of songs that have kind of just...lost their way, and they're in the rehearsal room bin. Where we take them and they great on the record, and then listen to it live, and we're, "It's just not working. That's not-" But back to that... It's just the feeling. It's like a good feeling. I'm trying to think of something more specific for you.

Chris Whiting: I suppose-

Alex Soper: It's just the feeling, it's just an instinctive feeling that you know that you've done something good. There's sometimes you write something, and you're a bit

PART 1 OF 3 ENDS [00:19:04]

Alex Soper: Sometimes you write something and you'll be like, oh, I quite like the way that this verse has come out, or I quite like the choruses all right on this. But then when you do something and everything just works, and the verses flow, and chorus comes in at the right point, and everything on point. And you're like "Wow, I've done really well here."

Chris Whiting: So that's the, ability to kind of say that this is good, my feelings tell me this is something that's good.

Alex Soper: Yeah.

Chris Whiting: Some people might not be able to say, I can't tell if this is good or bad, its sounds professional, or it sounds ropey, whatever, but they aren't gonna say if it's good enough. Whereas you're able to define, actually yeah, this is good, this had got potential.

Alex Soper: Yeah. Why am I in the position to say that, though? It's strange, isn't it? I'm not really in the position, no one's in the position to say this is good or this is bad. Everyone has just got their own opinion on that.

Chris Whiting: Yeah, okay.

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Alex Soper:	That was just a thought from me, you just carry on what you were saying. You just got me thinking, sorry.
Chris Whiting:	Okay, maybe if it was more, you and the guys. When you listen to a track and you decide this is a Coquin Migale track, or not a Coquin Migale track, as opposed to saying is it good or bad. Is it a song for us or is it not.
Alex Soper:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	What sort of forms that decision?
Alex Soper:	That's a good question as well. That's quite tough that. So what be, if they were listening back to something and they'd say, "Yeah, this is one that we can use."
Chris Whiting:	Yeah.
Alex Soper:	What are the reasons why they'd say kind of yes.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah.
Alex Soper:	I think that that's a really tough question. You've stumped me there. I guess it's the use of our instruments and, I didn't know this by whenever they're interviewed and in not there, or I am there but they can go do it, they always go on about my voice. And how my voice is kind of like the identity of the band. Because there are a lot of bands using their guitars and effects, but they say they rely quite a lot on my voice. Live, live performance and, like, for records, I think they like to hear that I'm being genuine as well. They can tell when I'm trying something that isn't me.
Alex Soper:	Because I do like to push boundaries now and again. Not put on a voice, not be someone else, but-
Chris Whiting:	Experiment?
Alex Soper:	A little bit like that. When we were recording Plans, in the first verse that I tried something and they were like, "That isn't you, mate." Do you know what I mean? They were kinda like that isn't you and I think people will be a bit like, they might even question whether that was me singing. But it was

me just experimenting and trying something new, which I like to do. Just trying to, I think the rest of them like, they all just know whether it's us. And they'll hear it in my voice, that sounds really nobby.

Chris Whiting: So would there also be something like, kind of a musicology sort of way? Like, there are certain rhythms, or chords, or progressions that Coquin Migale will use? Like you might not use a bunch of jazz chords.

Alex Soper: Yes.

Chris Whiting: Or you might not use lots of odd rhythms, like 7:8?

Alex Soper: Yes. I get yeah.

Alex Soper: But it's quite strange because we do use an array of different chords, and using our instruments. So I think-

Chris Whiting: But maybe a case of them not using just straightforward diatonic chords?

Alex Soper: Yes.

Chris Whiting: It's gotta have some experimentation.

Alex Soper: Yes, yes. Yeah, yeah.

Alex Soper: I think there's all, that's good. I think a lot of the time they like to hear, a lot of our songs are quite straightforward. But then we always like to do bits that do give it that kick of, a little bit more thought has gone into this. We haven't just pushed out four chords. There's something else to it. And whether that's even if the guitars are playing, straight diatonic chords, and then maybe the bass guitar's doing something quite interesting.

Alex Soper: I feel like there's always some way we want to be, something a little bit more interesting going on.

Chris Whiting: There's certain aspects of your sound that require that you sprinkling, you've just pushed it a step further with this bit.

Alex Soper:	Yeah, I think people that listen to us realize that it's not just, I mean I like songs when it's just four chords pushed out. I like that. But I think they expect just to kind of push the boundaries slightly.
Chris Whiting:	So although it's not a case of saying that a song with just four chords is a bad song?
Alex Soper:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	It's just not a Coquin Migale song?
Alex Soper:	Yeah. A couple of releases ago, Grindie, is probably made up of about four chords. And it is five chords off the top of my head. And what I then try to do is use my voice to make it that more interesting. And then use lead guitar to make it that more interesting.
Chris Whiting:	So there's always something-
Alex Soper:	There's something kind of substituting for something, yeah. Whether it's, even just the use of an effect over a voice] every listener is different, aren't they?
Alex Soper:	I've got friends back home who are always moaning about me and my band 'cause they just don't hear the end of it. They're like, "It'd be nice for you to just be able to talk about football with us." And I do like football, as well. They'll hear on one of our songs twang like, it's a vocal delay, and they're like, "Wow. How have you done that?" Like, that's really impressive and that's just the example of everyone's different. Whereas, if you were there, you'd be like, "Oh, a delay, very fancy. I've used 12 of them already today?"
Chris Whiting:	In one track, one vocal line.
Alex Soper:	But that can be a favourite part of the track for someone. My friends hear that delay on my vocals, they go nuts, they're like "hear it comes". As if it's the hook. But to me it's just another part.
Chris Whiting:	In a way it is a kind of hook.
Alex Soper:	Yeah.

Chris Whiting:	It's still ropes you into it].
Alex Soper:	Exactly.
Chris Whiting:	Even though it's not like a hook, traditionally the melody like, it's a sonic sort of hook.
Alex Soper:	Uh-huh (affirmative).
Chris Whiting:	I don't know if that the right term.
Alex Soper:	Throw me back on track if I go off because I'm really good at doing that. I'm really, really good at going off, like, really going off.
Chris Whiting:	So going back then, thinking about the Coquin Migale sound and that sort of way that you experiment with the sound or certain arrangement, like if you presented a string track to them, they'd be like "we don't play cello or violin".
Alex Soper:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	Those are things that, you'll judge could say this could be a Coquin Migale song. Would you say there's a similar thing when you think about if a songs 'good'? Yeah, when you're saying this sounds like a 'good' track, is it because it sounds like you could hear this on the radio because it does things that other songs-
Alex Soper:	Right, yeah. So a lot of my writing is thought just around getting it on to the radio. That is, it's just something that's happened since I left the college. I just, 'cause my aim is for as many people as possible to hear our music, and the best way to do that is to get national radio play. And the more people that hear it on the radio, the more people turn up to shows, Unfortunately gives you that pump of popularity once a DJ says, "You need this in your life," which is a strange one. And then that just helps in general, more people are gonna hear you, and it's just like a snowballing effect, isn't it?
Chris Whiting:	Yeah. So it's kind of a necessity?
Alex Soper:	I do write for it to be played on the radio.

Chris Whiting: Yeah.

Alex Soper: But then, yeah, a lot of time that is the case. I write so it could be on the radio.

Chris Whiting: I presume you have like an established sort of Coquin Migale sound. Do you still kind of listen to other people's track and think that's a good sound, or they're doing really well, can we emulate some of them, or can we take some this?

Alex Soper: Yeah, especially in the last year or two. The music scene up here has gone berserk. There are bands, like, we're no longer the, if anything we're like the oldies now. And it's like, all these bands are getting the recognition and they're achieving the things that we've done. I don't think a lot of those bands on the scene thought they would. All of a sudden there's just this influx of bands on the North East scene that are just literally taking over. It's kind of like the Birmingham thing a couple years ago. They was a Btown trend, where like six bands came out of Birmingham and all got major deals.

Chris Whiting: It was kind of, we were talking about that. In college, back when you guys were gonna first signed and stuff, and there was like you guys, Shade, Mouse, a few bands. You were all kind of fighting. Were you guys the first to be signed? I think you might've been, as the crowd that went on. And then all of a sudden all the labels were going, "Shit, there's something going on in the northeast. Lets pick it up."

Alex Soper: It's strange, isn't it?

Chris Whiting: The Pale White, Adam's band, are doing very well.

Alex Soper: Yeah. They are. Doing very well, they're with Ignition.

Chris Whiting: They're getting on all kind of the good live festivals and stuff.

Alex Soper: Yeah, and Jack's the drummer in the band as well. He was at Newcastle college.

Chris Whiting: He was a little bit a minor-

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Alex Soper:	He was quite a bit younger than us.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah.
Alex Soper:	But yeah, there's a lot of bands going for it now. I think there would be like, when a band who are not actually from Newcastle, move here, and then they would be recognized from Newcastle. We all need to like really dig our heels in here. Like we've got Yorkshire bands that are from The Toon. Yeah, it was like right. But, yeah, there's a lot going on in the scene at the moment.
Chris Whiting:	Do you still socialize quite a lot with those bands? Going to their gigs?
Alex Soper:	I'm going to meet them all tonight. It's Adam's birthday. I've got work tomorrow, so I'm just gonna go pop in for a drink and be polite. But it is very competitive.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah?
Alex Soper:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	In what way?
Alex Soper:	There's just a sense of competitiveness on the scene. Everyone wants to just do that one thing a bit better than the other bands. But in the long run, it pushes everyone even harder. So it's quite healthy, really.
Chris Whiting:	Writing a bigger hit.
Alex Soper:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	Or bigger shows.
Alex Soper:	Yeah exactly.
Chris Whiting:	Better performances.
Alex Soper:	I did this, well I can do that. And it's very-
Chris Whiting:	Getting on the playlists for certain things.
Alex Soper:	Exactly.

Chris Whiting:	Even though more obscure, do you know Callum Pitt?
Alex Soper:	Yeah, he's great.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah, he popped upon my Apple playlist this week, with Rabbit, like, fucking brilliant.
Alex Soper:	Yeah, he's really, really good. Callum, yeah.
Chris Whiting:	It was the student that gave a distinction to at level 3 for song writing.
Alex Soper:	Oh, was he, where was he at?
Chris Whiting:	Was it, it was the year before he started.
Alex Soper:	Oh, wow. Yeah, he's great.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah. 'Cause he didn't stay on at college, and I think he came here [Newcastle University] to study English.
Alex Soper:	Yeah, really good.
Chris Whiting:	Trying to figure out how to word the questions right leading in.
Alex Soper:	That's all right.
Chris Whiting:	So you talked about how when you're writing you get excited because you can envision how an audience is going to receive that song.
Alex Soper:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	Do you think about how the stuff you're writing, when you're not writing, after you've written a song. And say, it's neither a good or bad song, when you look at it, how do you react to that, if you do at all?
Alex Soper:	So if what? So if go back and listen to a song?
Chris Whiting:	Yeah, say you've got a song that just didn't work out, a dud, do you ever kind of ever reflect on that?

Alex Soper:	I sometimes try and revive them, give them CPR. And try to see if there's anything oi can do because there will be aspects of it that I really like, and I should probably take more bits from that and try and bring it back to life. But sometimes I just think if it's a dud idea, it's just a dud idea.
Chris Whiting:	All right.
Alex Soper:	And I kind of just put it down, maybe it just wasn't a good bit of work. Like writing a naff essay.
Chris Whiting:	You've got to write some and stuff occasionally.
Alex Soper:	Yeah, and I think I just want, if it's bad then I'm not feeling, like there's tons on my computer and now and a gain I still sometimes listen back to it. And still listen up to see of there's anything there, see if there's anything that can possibly be done to use it. And a lot of times just move and like forget about that.
Chris Whiting:	So you don't-
Alex Soper:	However, there are times, for example, the melody in Plans, and it's the guitar lead melody was actually a vocal melody in a dud song.
Chris Whiting:	All right.
Alex Soper:	However, I didn't actually realize that until it had already been released and I was listening to my own song, which I do a lot of the time anyway. And I was listening to it, and I went on to my computer 'cause I had kinda just gotten an inkling for something. I don't know what it was. And I went through my old projects, and the Plans vocal melody for the chorus that I'd recorded was a guitar lead in one of my dud songs. But it wasn't something at the time in the studio that actually gone, it just crept it's way though.
Alex Soper:	Sometimes as well I feel, it's so weird but I feel like you kind of just know. If you've got a good melody at some point it will creep up in places. It does it all the time, it's really, really weird.
Alex Soper:	So a melody from a dud song that had been written months ago and forgotten about had crept into our latest single.

Chris Whiting:	That's cool.
Alex Soper:	So I don't really know what that's about. I feel like, I don't know.
Chris Whiting:	This isn't about the idea of reflecting on what you do, but you kind of mentioned earlier that you write songs with the intention of wanting them to be on the radio.
Alex Soper:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	So you've made that subconscious decision for the band-
Alex Soper:	To progress.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah, sort of get back to the economics to get the fan base to earn enough to cover your costs and all that.
Alex Soper:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	You need the radio. So, do you know in what ways do you wrote to meet that, do you say like, how can this be on the radio?
Alex Soper:	Interesting short intro, as snappy as possible. I'm talking like, confidence in myself. Plans, I don't think the chorus came in until about 40 seconds, which is about 11 seconds, 10 seconds more than id like to-
Chris Whiting:	Yeah?
Alex Soper:	Yeah. But the thing is I made up for that by adding percussion claps in and then lead guitar over a verse. And there's a lot going on when you listen to it. There's like three layers of bass, there's claps, there's two vocal melodies. So it was longer, but from the off there was vocals straight away so people were, they have to listen. Can't stray away. But yeah, usually it's just a nice snappy intro that is interesting in some form. Possibly go into a chorus, not always the case. Verse, chorus, verse, possible middle 8, chorus, maybe a double chorus, maybe just an outro.
Chris Whiting:	So this is standard sort of things that you know that would work on radio.

Alex Soper: Yeah. Sometimes I'll go on and write stuff, and I'll write a really cool instrumental bit, and I'll be like, "God that sounds so good. But it's not gonna get played on the radio," which is guess I strange because at that moment in time I'm-

PART 2 OF 3 ENDS [00:38:04]

Alex Soper: It's strange, that, because in that moment in time I'm expressing myself, but then I'm being restricted because that isn't going to ... Do you know what I mean? But I feel like I've got it out of me when I do that and I hear it back it's like, alright so I've done that and there's nothing to say. A lot of our songs are different live to they are on the radio. I mean nothing changes in terms of the actual instrumentation, and the lyrics, and the melodies, but there will be sections in songs live that aren't on the radio. Because we do a lot of radio edits.

Chris Whiting: Yeah, that makes sense. Yeah. B-sides album tracks, all that?

Alex Soper: Yeah.

Chris Whiting: Loads of places.

Alex Soper: For like, writing to ensure it gets that, that's what you asked isn't it? It was that thing we learned in college. That you thought was in college about the ... like the 3:50. Like the length of a song, when the chorus should come in, all of that. It's kind of had an effect on the way I write. Sometimes I will sit down and write and the song will come out at 3:50, and I don't even check up on it. Because in fact, I don't know how to tell the time in the song, just looking at the Logic readings, you know the bars and the beat?

Chris Whiting: Alright, yeah.

Alex Soper: I only know when I bounced it. A lot of the time when I bounce the song, I'm not even joking, it comes out with like 3:50, 3:52, and it just happens.

Chris Whiting: You can set it up to tell you the time on that as well.

Alex Soper: I have no idea. I'm going to say I want you to tell me about that when I have the thingy. Or maybe I've done actually.

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Chris Whiting:	I diligently set mine up so I know when I've got one minute, I'm thinking okay, is that [crosstalk 00:39:54]
Alex Soper:	I have no idea.
Chris Whiting:	I mean, I ignore it for a long time. The other day I've written a track, and the chorus didn't come in until like one minute 40, I was like, "Shit, that's not going to go anywhere, is it?" Mostly deleting, delete, delete. Massive chunks of a track which I loved.
Alex Soper:	But I guess it's because I'm aiming to have my songs played on the biggest radio station, because there are certain ... There's more chance of BBC6 playing a song that maybe I've expressed myself a little bit more, like I've gone one off on one. They might be more partial to playing a full version of that. Do you know what I mean?
Alex Soper:	Whereas Radio One they want it. And in that kind of, like time of playlists and singles and ... Like my sister's skipping songs in Spotify like it's pure madness. Listen to that like, next one, next one, next one, and they just want everything like, so quickly.
Chris Whiting:	But you wait till like 29 seconds then you skip and then no one gets paid.
Alex Soper:	Yeah, and it's just crazy. Like they just ... so Radio One, it's just single, single, get an album. Push, push, push, push, push.
Chris Whiting:	Do you spend a lot of time listening to Radio One to kind of get a feel of what tracks they're playing?
Alex Soper:	I try not to get too caught up in the Radio One because there are a lot of songs on there to me that are just garbage. But then there are songs that probably years ago, I would've just not even given the time of day. But like Shawn Mendes, no Charlie Puth maybe. Charlie Puth, someone? One of them's put out this tune and it's amazing. It's really-
Chris Whiting:	Is it the one with the big, big bass? Charlie Puth? I've got a phone, it's so good.
Alex Soper:	I love it.

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Chris Whiting:	But like couple years ago, I would've been just like, "Are you actually trying to make me listen to that?" But that bass sounds good, bom dup dup dup bom dup dup.

Alex Soper:	Yeah. And it's, and like the vocals and everything. From songs that I like like that, I'll definitely take aspects of that. Like completely and use that. Whereas I haven't really got time for stuff like, CharlieXCX where it's like, "Thinking about boys" and it's just like a Game Boy sound going off in the background. That stuff doesn't, not everything on Radio One is good. But there are some really good songs on there. I think people forget because it's not just, "Oh this is a pop star." Behind those songs is someone who is a writer, that's his job. And it's obviously working.

Chris Whiting:	So it's kind of-

Alex Soper:	There are some great songs though.

Chris Whiting:	Yeah. Because I really like the sort of, the stylistic of those songs. Like you mentioned earlier, the chorus will come in at a certain point.

Alex Soper:	Yeah.

Chris Whiting:	There will be so many ideas in the first minute.

Alex Soper:	And now and again someone pushes the boundary though. Like the chorus will come in in a really strange way, like there's a Lorde some at the moment. And the chorus is odd. Like you just don't expect it to come in. And actually, I still don't really know what the chorus is. When I first heard it, I was kind of surprised that they were even playing it. But I quite like that they were playing it, because it wasn't like everything else that was on the radio. So now and again someone does come along and changes things up a bit, and then people catch on to that trend. Trends, they come around so often as well.

Chris Whiting:	Yeah.

Alex Soper:	Like, a real trend is the funky kind of guitar and the bass, and this really soft soothing vocals and other stuff.

Chris Whiting:	I keep getting distracted, I'm pretty sure that's the Commander of the Nights Watch.
Alex Soper:	Oh, yes that is. Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	I see it. Is it him? It is, isn't it?
Alex Soper:	Yeah, it is. He does quite a lot.
Chris Whiting:	It's the stand up comedy stuff isn't it?
Alex Soper:	Yes, that's it. Yeah, yeah, yeah.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah, I know. But when the first ... Usually I'll be like ...
Alex Soper:	But the first time that did happen to me, I was in Leazes Park, which is brilliant by the way. "I'm just trying to figure out if that's the Commander of the Night's Watch."
Chris Whiting:	I can't remember what his name is.
Alex Soper:	I was in Leaze's Park walking my friends dog, and he was just sat on a bench. I walked past him with the dog and I went ... Right, and I walked back, and he was probably thinking, "He's only just walked past once." And I was like, and I googled him and was like that. That's John Snow's friend. I didn't say anything, but I think he could tell because I smiled at when he ... He knew that I knew. But he was reading as well, and I thought he was probably just trying to chill out.
Alex Soper:	So yeah. What were we saying? I don't remember. Yeah, there are elements from songs on mainstream on radio that I do take and try and fit into a song. But when you're writing for the radio, when you think about it, it's quite difficult to fit everything into 3 minutes 50, or less than three minutes. Like trying to fit in expressing yourself, lyrically. Being able to express yourself as a band musically with your instrumentation. And being able to fit that all into a nice little package that mainstream radio will want to play.
Alex Soper:	And I find that quite a stretch itself. The fact that you have to fit it all into this like, if you have to put it all into this coffee cup to make the perfect kind

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of thing in these non-offensive lyrics. The chorus coming in before 30 seconds, around 30 seconds; there are to be two verses, possibly exactly the same as the first, like the first verse and the second; maybe a middle 8 there's some form of solo, a vocal solo; and then to finish nicely on a chorus and it rounds off at about three minutes, four, something like that. And you've got a tasty brew.

Alex Soper: And you've got to try and express everything in there without adding cream or sugar, or too much, I don't know, do you want cream with that and marshmallows? No, because you know, it won't get on the radio if I go for cream and marshmallows.

Chris Whiting: Yeah. Well I've heard things. Sometimes people say, "Oh, well I want to be creative, I don't want the rules and I don't want all these things stopping me from being creative."

Alex Soper: Yet sometimes it does that.

Chris Whiting: Yeah, if you've got nothing to focus it on-

Alex Soper: But I guess it's what your ambitions are as well. There are so many things to think about. Like maybe your band doesn't want to be the most popular band in the world. A band that always comes to mind is a band like The National.

Chris Whiting: Yeah all right, yeah.

Alex Soper: They've got a really loyal, really really loyal, strong fan-base. But I didn't know anything about them until two years ago. Whereas they've released about god knows how many albums that people are constantly going on about, I see them on social media. And I knew nothing about them. They've been around long enough, and they've made careers out of it. They tend to express themselves, they're very expressive band ... And they express themselves massively on instrumentation and their guitars. Everything has to be a bit quirky, a bit not done.

Chris Whiting:	They're obviously a well-established kind of band now. They've got, like you said, they've got a loyal following, so. Definitely, I hear them on BBC6 music I don't go to Radio One that much, but are they on Radio One?
Alex Soper:	Never heard them on Radio One. But like I said, that's come back round to the BBC6 thing. There are a lot of the people on there vary. The audience is really varied. And I also think BBC6, it is a lot of the ... "I only listen to this ..."
Chris Whiting:	I think this BBC6, I mean it's ... It's locking down a bit more. At least during the afternoon, it's not as much new music. Radcliife & Maconie and Lamac are playing stuff that they played in the 90s. I want to her new music. But you listen to some of the other shows and there's some great new stuff on there. And it's diverse stuff as well.
Alex Soper:	But I like that as well about BBC6 music, that they can play stuff that's off the Radio One radar. And if you do want to listen to that, you don't always want to listen to pop. I do a lot at the moment because there aren't many songs on Radio One that I enjoy listening to. I'm not joking. It really annoys my partner. I'll just the mute radio. If a song comes on that I know I don't like, I'll just mute it because it really just ... It gives me this awful headache.
Chris Whiting:	When you have to deal with [crosstalk 00:48:45]
Alex Soper:	Then when there's a nice melody and a nice like, yeah.
Chris Whiting:	And I find that occasionally, not all the time, but sometimes I'll just put on Metro and listen to it, a lot of like, loads of pop stuff just to get that in my head like okay, that's still the stuff I'm looking at.
Alex Soper:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	And working from. But yeah, if I listen to it for too long ... Because the way they're produced, that volume is there, all the dynamic ranges. And it is like being punched in the face.
Alex Soper:	Yeah, it is.
Chris Whiting:	And there's only so much of it I can take, even at low volume it's still intense.

Alex Soper: It's weird as well because my housemates picked up on this, right, a couple of weeks ago. One of them's a musician, he's a drummer. And the other's not, and they just kind of ... The drummer, he's constantly walking around the house listening to music, like ... He washes up, he washes his clothes, he makes his dinner, he gets ready for work with headphones in. He's constantly listening to music.

Alex Soper: My friend Jack, he's quite into his music. And he said to me, "I don't know why we never hear you listening to music." Which is very strange, because the majority of the time when I listen to music, it's either I'm driving or I'm traveling some way. It's very rare, which is really weird, that I just sit down and listen to music.

Chris Whiting: All right, yeah.

Alex Soper: And I don't know what that is. If something new stuff is released, I'm intrigued, I do. But I've noticed in the past that listening, for me frequently, I know you have to listen to music to ... And I'm not saying I don't listen to music, I do listen to music. But I've found in the past that it can sometimes have an effect on my writing.

Chris Whiting: Oh, okay. How does that affect it?

Alex Soper: Sometimes things just will come out too similar or too close to something I've listened to.

Chris Whiting: Oh, okay.

Alex Soper: And I think it's just something that's happened in the past before where now I just starve myself for a while of music, and I just have my guitars in my room.

Chris Whiting: Sort of speculating here, tell me if I'm wrong, but is it like you listen to so much of the stuff that when you go to write, all the other stuff is so jammed into the song that there's no room for you as, your voice to appear in it?

Alex Soper: Yeah. That's what I mean.

Chris Whiting: Yeah. No, I like-

Alex Soper: And I want to try and keep it ... The thing is that nothing's ever 100% your own, is it really? Because everything has been something else. But I like to not let anything too much bleed into my tracks and kind of just go off on my own. The stuff I have listened to, like I said, I do take certain aspects of it. So I'm not completely starved of music. What I mean is I don't constantly sit around the house, even though I'm a musician, I don't constantly sit around the house listening to music. I can't remember the last time I sat down and like ...

Alex Soper: The Rational, I went to go see them at the Cluny the other night. And already I want to get into my room and write tunes like that. Which is obviously exciting, because I obviously get that excited and I'm all, "Oh I want to go and do a bit of that." But I don't want to be that, because that's him. That's not me.

Chris Whiting: But there's something from that you will take?

Alex Soper: Oh definitely. Already yesterday I started adding elements that I heard from his set that involve electronics and adding it to our song. But in no way that you'd ever be able to ...

Chris Whiting: Like just the drum production, or-

Alex Soper: Yeah, just a simple well, a little percussion piece, just add it in to our a verse in some way.

Chris Whiting: Yeah, the spaces someone makes for synths

Alex Soper: Yeah, yeah.

Chris Whiting: You'll just take that and it just suddenly develop [crosstalk 00:52:31]

Alex Soper: Yeah, but I don't want to overload myself and go out and listen to music 24/7 and analyse stuff. Yeah. Although the most recent thing I listened to was the Wolf Alice album.

Chris Whiting: All right, yeah.

Alex Soper:	Yeah. I listened to that from start to finish, and I haven't listened to that again. I just gave it a listen all the way through. It sounds like I've just said I don't listen to music, which I do. I think it's because-
Chris Whiting:	[crosstalk 00:52:55] the rest of the time you're listening to different radio stations and ...
Alex Soper:	Yeah, that's a lot of it. But a lot of the time as well I spend a lot of time in my car driving around. So I guess I've kind of been brainwashed by radio in a lot of different ways from doing all of these gigs and traveling and ... The radio is just on.
Chris Whiting:	Now I know listen to audiobooks a lot of the time. When I don't want to hear music I'll listen to an audiobook instead.
Alex Soper:	Yes, I'd probably rather do that as well, yeah.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah, just get a break from it.
Alex Soper:	Yeah, sometimes you do you're like "no music like ..."
Chris Whiting:	You're in the studio all day making songs and listening to reference tracks to try and work out, "Oh how do we get that bass sound"
Alex Soper:	Yeah, so maybe. So maybe that's a reason as well, maybe it's because I'm writing a lot of it myself. I don't need to be spending the rest of the say listening to music. Yeah.
Alex Soper:	If anything, I listen to more of my own stuff, as in demos. Not going back and listening to all my records and sat there like I listened to this. I mean, the demos that I write, I put them onto my phone and I listen to them when I'm going around the house. Because I'm thinking of how I can ... My music be on the radio being listened to instead of, yeah.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah definitely, I say I do that. Definitely listen to the demos over and over and try to work out can I still use this? Where can I use this?
Alex Soper:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	Sometimes yeah, it's like that's no way to use that song-

Alex Soper: Yeah.

Chris Whiting: -but that's a nice piece of music. I wonder if I can get into a library music production company and get on a program, yeah. All right. I think we've kind of covered everything.

Alex Soper: Are you sure?

Chris Whiting: Yes.

Alex Soper: I haven't gone off too much?

Chris Whiting: No. It's fantastic.

Alex Soper: No, you're all right. Yeah.

Chris Whiting: I'll switch this off, unless it's already died. Nice one.

PART 3 OF 3 ENDS [00:54:46]

Appendix 5 Interview Transcript: Ian Sillett 13th July 2017

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IS: If you're writing songs about yourself, for example, if I sat down, you didn't know who I was and just went on about what I had to eat, you'd just be like "I don't give a shit". Or I told you about my friends at school "Oh yeah, and James did this back in 1986, it was so amusing" you'd be like "I don't know who James was! I wasn't alive in 1986. I don't care!" That's sort of thing, you switch off. And in songwriting if you sing – although you have to use personal experience – but if you don't think about the listener, your target audience, it's really difficult for them to *feel* like they can take something like they can take something from that song.

CW: How do you, when you're actually writing – how do you – if you're writing with a co-writer how you discuss the idea?

IS: the co-write is something – I've done something with Ian Dench with EMF, he wrote Unbelievable, which is a number hit in America, it's massive, and he's a great guy – and it's a point of finding something that each of us are interested in. It's not forcing something. That's the important thing of the co-write is to just find out, let's just see what happens, let's not take over, let's come up with something simple, if it works, if you gel. Always with something in mind to get something down but without having to force the issue. Is really important because if I'm at the piano and I just start hammering out some chords and singing a melody, and I'm doing a co-write, I'm taking over quite quickly! So I think it's a curtesy to find out a little bit more what the other person's interest is. If you're working with an artist where. Do your research. Find out what their USP is, find out what their target audience is, have a listen to some songs, look at interviews and find out the direction – you don't want to be going "I just heard this last Bieber album (can't believe I just said that, but Bieber), and you go to a co-write with him and you've missed the fact that he's going in a totally new direction. You've spent a wasted journey listening to his back catalogue of albums. So a bit of research is very important. But it's just to sit down and chat and go "I know what you're after. I've done that research. I've got a few reference tracks to listen. Just go through that before we get to it. Because it's literally getting to it, if it doesn't work it becomes very nerve wracking. You know, call it what you like but it's – if you feel something's not working it's very difficult to make it work again. So you've got to set your stall out, as it were, and give it every opportunity for the other person to have their say and get to know you and feel relaxed. Then go for the music because a lot rests on that work. And if you go in gun ho; if you try too hard, it's generally, going to terrify the other person. And it's just going to be, "Best to not even try. Let's get out of here quick". So there's a lot of things you need to do.

CW: Do you use a reference track at the start to set the mood, idea, direction? Or do you come back to them or find new ones as you go along.

IS: Yeah. I think you've always go to keep it open. If you feel that a reference track is like "this is where we are heading" I think it is also important to stick to your guns. I you feel that that it's really right, is to try and coerce your co-writer into seeing what you're seeing without using brute force. If you like, putting them in a headlock! Even if it's an arrangement, or a topline, or a harmonic structure. Those are the things that I think are important. If they can see what you are doing it will help. If they see what you are doing it will help. You know. But never say "this is the reference track, this is what we are going for." Because something can morph out of that that can be even better. So a reference track is to go "yeah, we're on a similar even keel here".

CW: A sort of agreed agenda?

IS: Agreed, where we are, that's it. We're not going down to the murky waters of we don't know what we're doing, let's just try again. Bosch. And then get lost in the silt of every other song. If we agree "yep, this is where we're going" then we can branch from there and there might be other songs that are even closer to where we are going. Or other ideas that fit. Then you are on an upward spiral instead of a downward. Which is always what we want to go for. And then, you know, it's when it's exciting, when it starts to go 'This is working'. You know, that momentum is a very exciting thing. When you think 'we've got something here'. When you get that feeling of 'I think we've got something' it's the best. It's like [puuuupphhhh] you know?

CW: Just from my side, it's like, it's not necessarily that you're going to go "we're sounding just like the reference track that we want". More often, I think for me, it's like, aiming at this reference track but we kind of missed it but there's something exciting here. We got some of the ideas but we're finding something that is motivating and possibly new.

IS: Yep. I agree. I agree with what you are saying. What I find interesting in co-writes is the one's that really work, so let's go through it: Lennon/McCartney; Williams/Spielberg – I think, if you gel with somebody and you do something success. It's like that tricky second album, you have your first and it's quite good and goes well and then suddenly you have it all to prove in the second album. You're more likely to make that work with someone who just gets who you are. It's horses for courses but if you pick the right horse and ride the right course. It's something you need to cling on to and stick with. I think being a co-write is team work. Look at Elton John and Bernie Taupin, totally different. Glen Tilbrook and Chris Difford, a lyricist and a musician, never ever worked in the same room. But somehow the partnership just worked brilliantly. Which is a totally different thing what I'm talking about, when you

actually don't need to get on particularly well. But through a shared love – they did at the beginning but they decided to go their separate ways but they trusted each other's instincts because they spent the first bit of time together in each other's pockets to know what the other was like. To get the other person. So it does stem from there and then afterwards they were sending songs from various parts of London. Elton was getting his music [lyrics] sent from America with Bernie Taupin living on a ranch somewhere. But he knew what he would be after, they knew what the other thought.

CW: Very established.

IS: Very established, almost kinaesthetic thinking sort of thinking. A knowledge of what the other is doing and what the other wants. But that only comes from spending time with somebody. You can't just have that like [snaps fingers]

CW: Like the first co-write you do with someone is developing a rapport.

IS: I think also, both people to be instinctive and intuitive to the other person. There has to be a real respect, a mutual respect. I think that needs to happen. If a co-writer writing for an artist, the reason that is happening is because the artist has asked for that writer. And the reason the writer is going over, I hope, is because they believe in the artist. If they're doing it for money they are taking a risk for it not to happen. But they'll be going "Well, I'm going because I'm getting paid to do it. I don't care if it works or doesn't". It's not the way I like to do business but I can see why other people would go "I've got money burn. I not really into the music. I don't really like the person."

CW: Like writing for Bieber because they know it'll sell lots but hating him and his music would be a bad way to go.

IS: Correct. But then music is an a nominally because – I've had successes with songs which took 10 minutes. That's unbelievable. How did they pick this one? That is one I'd never think to be successful, and it is. So, you thin, "well what do I know?" Somebody sees something, and they believe they've got the target market. Because it's more than one thing. You create a product, it's the most important part, songwriting, but then it's the selling, distribution, and getting it right, the timing. There's a lot to it. So, if someone is going I know how I can fix that or I know I can place that; that is not my job. Although, it's getting more and more, the DIY musician expected to do everything; jack of all trades, master of none. That statements says --

CW: Selling your own songs? Instead of going through a publisher, approaching artists yourself?

IS: Trying to keep hold of everything, earning a little bit more. I think it's a good thing when you're a student but I think you need to trust in other people's instincts. It's a team isn't it. Look at a film by Steven Spielberg, the first name come up "a film by Steven Spielberg", you watch the film, and then "directed by Steven Spielberg" then the credits roll and you can be sat in the cinema for 20minutes because there's like 3000 people involved putting that film together. That's what you've got to remember. It's the idea and the creative bit come from the songwriter and that's brilliant. How it's sold to the right artists at the right time, the right promotion. Everything about it is done by somebody else who understands that aspect of that job.

CW: So it's like the Motown thing, Holland-Dozier-Holland are great songwriters but then they had amazing musicians and amazing artists to sell it. And obviously Barry Gordy selling these songs --

IS: Barry Gordy but Barry Gordy was making all the money to himself, which we have talking about. He knew what he was doing. He picked his team, and he picked them well, and he took the lion's share. But the people he picked had raw talent from nothing; you going to do it aren't you? When you get a bit more successful and you go "well why aren't I getting any richer? These songs are getting played everywhere and I don't seemed to be…?" Then you find out that the guy who employed you is living a massive mansion somewhere in Beverly Hills. But I think team work is massively important and you can't do it without it and I think it's a skill.

CW: So that wider label aspect, say an A&R man or whatever, how much influence or credit would you give to their input if they're sending a track back and saying "it needs to be more X, Y and Z"? Obviously it's not an official written credit.

IS: To who exactly? The co-writer?

CW: In any kind of way, whether you're writing by yourself or in a co-write, but if you've got industry feedback going at you saying "it needs to have this bigger chorus, the intro is too long…" it obviously has an influence on the writing.

IS: That's a really good question. It's hard because when you're writing the songs you feel it. So if I'm writing a song on my own, you know that instinctively and intuitively that it's got something, and then somebody tells you, in a promotional sense or a managerial sense, that "it needs to do this or that" and they're telling you what they don't know, what music to do. It can be very frustrating. When you start fiddling, you generally end up over complicating it and ends up getting lost. So, unless it's like "everything is perfect, can you whack on a few more BVs in the chorus and make it bigger, and some strings and maybe some horns" and

you go "maybe that'll work" that's fine. But if it's nit-picking and going "it's missing something". It's like what? Tables and chairs? Wallpaper? It doesn't make any sense to just say it's missing something. It's not helpful to say that. And people tend to do that "yeah? Mmm" What's mmm mean? I think if you get constructed feedback—you've got to get it. I'd sooner they just said it was crap, it's just not going to work.

CW: On the positive side, there is the reason they can't articulate what missing is that they are not musicians. And if they were they'd be doing the songwriter's job. Particularly in film, when they give you a brief that usually ask for something very visual description of what they're after. The reason they're asking for a musician is because they're not composers.

IS: But what puts them in a higher position to say what's working and what's not. When I said at the beginning 'put yourself in the listener's chair; put yourself in their situation.' What makes them *more* in the that environment than a songwriter?

CW: That's true. I suppose if it was a record label they might argue the fact that they're paying for it.

IS: It's that intuition again. You've got to really know that manager. If a manager says it's missing something, that manager needs to be my best mate. He needs to know me inside out, gone out with me a load of time, and be able to say that to me. Because there is an element of trust that's been built up. If I went to some record label and met an A&R guy, and they told me – and I've never met him – it would be very difficult for me to go 'you know more than it when I'm *feeling* my song'.

CW: Yeah. If you can't tell me what's missing then –

IS: In the words of Jimmy Webb 'Your songs are like children. You want them all to go out into the world and do great things. Some of them will, some of them will fuck up. But at the beginning you give them every chance you can.' And you have that ownership because you create them. For somebody to come along, it's like someone telling how to bring your child up. I wouldn't do that. 'Fuck you if you wouldn't do that', sort of thing. You need to have the right team. And for them to tell you things you need to trust who they are.

CW: So, the same relationship is going to continue there?

IS: I agree. That's exactly right. – When I was younger, I'd go from Liverpool to London, you'd go to your first – I went from Barnes to Telstar, and somebody's telling you something and it's like wow! It's like the first time playing on Partway, up the – what's the pub called? The Irish, rock pub? It's famous. I played there and it was like 'Woah? God I'm playing here' but real, I just live up the road. It's a dark dingy shithole full of boozy old rockers getting

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pissed. But as a young person it's got so much history you think you've made it. But the actual fact in the cold light of day, it's just another run down old pub. So, to put all your eggs in one basket, because you played there while you were very green around the ears, you can't really make a judgement. It's all experience ain't it.

CW: I suppose in your case, with so many years of experience and so much success behind it, you've earned that credibility. And you've earned the right to ask 'you need to justify a negative opinion of my work very well. Either by your credentials or, if you don't have the credentials, by a well informed and versed –

IS: I think people with credentials that you don't very well, still you need to have some intuition. You need to get on with someone. So for example, when I met Ian Dench for the first time we just hit it off. And Karen Paul, who's another one who's a massive songwriter for Lily Allen, Annie Lennox, and she was in Alisha's Attic back in the day. She is an amazing woman and we just hit it off straight away. And the next time it was a big hug and we were like old mates. That is great because you know you've got something there. There is a kindredness, kindred spiritness.

CW: You've got an openness that you can communicate without tiptoeing.

IS: If she said 'it's not working' I would listen again. But I also know well enough that I also have my opinion and I case say I think it is [working and] what we're going to do. It's part and parcel of the fun of it. But if someone you don't know tells you, with credentials or not, just tells, you don't really know them. It's akin to telling your parenting style is wrong and needs a bit of a brush up. Tell that to any mother and you're likely to get a box[ing] around the ears. And that's why I feel quite protective about songs as well, in that same sense.

CW: I was doing a co-write with a girl the other day, a 19 year old, and I was thinking 'this isn't working. She's not getting into this'. I'm thinking 'how am I going to tell her?' because I don't know her that well, I've known for a while, but is she going to take it badly if I say 'you're not into this'. Then she turned around and said 'I don't think this is working. Shall we move on to another track?'. I was really impressed by this 19 year old to turn around and say this isn't working.

IS: That's good. I also think some people have been almost- what's the lead singer from- what the band? Big guitar band? Pop rock? But he was groomed for stardom from school. You can kind of tell those are have started from a very early age, with expectations of stardom. Their voice is the loudest. They're very forward in their approach. I find that quite difficult because they're opinionated with that substance. But they've been in there for a long time, they know what they want. But how they come across can be quite a pressure if you're

working with them because their expectation is what they want and they find it difficult to share. And they may have been put in that situation by their record label to expand their horizons, if they want a new direction. And any artist wanting to change direction- look at Kylie Minogue from Stock, Aitken and Waterman days to Cathy Dennis writing that massive hit for her, it was a massive change in direction. It was pop, it was credible, unlike Stock, Aitken, Waterman which was catchy nonsense- but also had a mass market for teen boppers. I think you're running a risk. There's got to be an element of trust for it to work. If your expectation is "I'm Kylie, I'm famous. I just got to believe in the product" It needs to be more than that. She needs to be willing to put herself out there, change direction and believe in the newness of it all. And put some trust in somebody who has been picked as they've been proven in that style. It's relationship building. Some work beautifully, some just don't. But Chris Difford firmly believed- he did some writing in America with Lou Reed and John Cale. John Cale just came in, I think he'd been up all night, he was wired and pretty much fell asleep, and he just wasn't interested. But they produced something and, just from being there, [John] got a co-write. Even though he had nothing to do with it. He's a believer that if you're in the room, even if you contribute nothing, you're still in the room so you're contributing something to that atmosphere, so you deserve a co-write. If you look at David Bowie and John Lennon, John Lennon's credited for writing Fame with David Bowie. But it was just that [sings] "Fame". It wasn't Fame, it was just the [sings] "AaAaaa". And Bowie went with it. At the time he hero worshipped John Lennon, so to give him a co-write on something successful gave the song massive kudos and it still does. A lot of people don't know it, it was just what Bowie was brilliant at, great strategist; intuitive strategist as well. He just seemed to know what to do at the right time. Even thinking into the future, by doing that giving it some iconic status. He didn't know John Lennon would soon after be killed, which changed the scape of the horizon.

CW: You know it's going to have some influence. Do you think there's a lot consideration for that sort of thing? Say like with Adele and she wrote the second album, and the way it was portrayed when it first came out it was these are songs about her relationships and her life. Then later it came out that there were all these co-writers and that takes away some of the credibility. Do you think there was in [the] writing a sense of this is how the song would be portrayed, or how we'll sell it?

IS: When you get into that sort of thing, Madonna and Beyoncé expect to get writing royalties, wherever they write on it or not, because they put their name to it. They've got such massive market appeal to a huge amount of fans, global fanbase, you go with it. It's a royalty of nothing compared to a royalty something despite-

CW: Like you're buying access to that audience?

IS: Yeah. I don't think there's anything with that. It's like a relationship, friends with benefits type thing. If you know what you are getting into, go in with your eyes open, you expect there to be certain privileges or perks or not. But you go in with your eyes open. You if it's not right, you know when to call it a day. It is very relationship drive. If you're very precious about whatever you create, I think that's a very difficult thing because you're going to be like "it's not ready for showing". Well, when is it ready for showing? "I believe in this so much what happens if they don't like?" That's the way of the world isn't it. You've got to be prepared to go "OK they didn't like it, so let's move on to the next one".

CW: How do feel about how precious you are about songs now, after so many years?

IS: I'm still precious about certain things. There's stuff I've written that haven't seen the light of day, that I'm waiting for the right place. But I've got a lot of contacts in order to go "this one is a killer song" with the right person, right timing, it'll go. I can feel it in my bones. You've got to have your own intuition, belief. But on the most of it, that's why I think you should be able to write, not come up with something you wrote earlier because it's an easier way around it, if it fits. But also I think it's a much better scenario in co-writing that you start on a level playing field, which is with nothing. Come with a reference track and an idea, and an agreement, and go with that.

CW: So you wouldn't come with a chord progression, or here's a beat…

IS: Only if there was something that, by luck "I've got something that fits this perfectly". But that again, it's meant to be. You've got to have all these beliefs, that's why we do it. Something in you. If it feels like you're asking for this and that and just recently I've got something that fits all these things. The you play it them and they go "that's the one", you're in. You're in like Flynn. It's a brilliant feeling and you just go with it. And that's again if you trust them. You might go "I'm not feeling this person. Everything they've said. I've got something but I'm not going to give it to them because I just don't think they're the right person to do it justice. So, again it's relationship built.

CW: Sort of thinking about the market, are you the right artist for this song? If not, it won't reach it's potential?

IS: Yeah. And it's the arrangement things, it's getting passed that, having intuition. Having that idea, going "I liked a little bit of it." And you go with someone else and they rip it off from you and change it. They've got a chorus that's better for them. And they've taken your hook or the verse, and changed it to the point that you wouldn't have had any of these ideas if you hadn't taken it from me, which is kind of like plagiarism—but it's not. That can happen as we know, it happens quite a bit. Is it right to happen that way? I don't know, it's very complex.

CW: I suppose on a positive stance, it can go the other way. Our mutual friend Jez [Ashurst] had done a song with someone and they only got part of a verse and that was the end of the session. A few months later, he had a meeting with his publisher who said, do you know you've got the single for Melanie C and whoever? It was that track, that they'd worked on, the guy had taken and worked with several other people and developed it.

IS: But kept him in the loop?

CW: Yeah, kept his name on it.

IS: That's a really good way. You can say "I only spent an hour working on that" [Crosstalk] That's a happy coincidence, that can happen.

CW: So when you're writing and thinking about the market, do you think about how someone's going to interpret the song?

IS: I used to but I don't anymore. I used to think the recording studio was some kind of magical place where it came out all singing and dancing, Soon realised, it's not what the studio can do, it's what's played into the thing. If it's played in brilliantly; if the chords and words, and the arrangement, harmonic structure, is done brilliantly, then it'll come out sounding great. Because all you can do in the studio is tweak it and record it. It sounds like it sounds. So, yep. Through experience I tend not to go too much along that line.

CW: You don't think too much about… I suppose it's more of a lyrical thing, that some lyrics beg to be interpreted. Such as the [19]70's- I can't remember the guy's name. He lives in Brighton. The guy who wrote with Cream, wrote White Room and stuff. Very abstract lyrics that beg they be interpreted in some ways…

IS: It's a good question. It's a tricky one. If you look at Oasis, I go "that's a drink isn't it?" until Oasis became famous. Any name of a songs just sounds naff until actually gathers momentum. And with it, it becomes credible. So Oasis is a perfect name for that band, even though I'd never want to call it Oasis, because you think of a fruity drink. And that's what I've always thought. And with lyrics, if it does seem a bit abstract but somebody latches on to it and becomes sung by many people, it's a stroke of genius. But it's a double edged sword, if it doesn't latch on it's abstract nonsense.

CW: So Bob Dylan's Isis—

IS: I was just thinking about him. His songs, like 'Times They Are a'Changin', it was a time in the [19]60's sexual revolution and it was the media that said "this is what you are writing about". He said "is it? OK". He never once admitted to whether it was about this or that "it belongs to you". Seal used to sing songs, "through a fractal on a breaking wall". People don't

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sing 'through a fractal on a breaking wall' they sing 'bought some chips, breaks me balls' whatever it is, sounding similar, and he loved that. You can have your lyrical creativity, so for other people to sing it would make their own [lyrics], and he used to think it was a cool thig because people were being creative on his songs. Which he liked.

CW: So, he deliberately put that in for them?

IS: Yeah. So that's something quite interesting. And bob Dylan was really intelligent by not saying "no it's not about that". Because if he'd said it's about my wallpaper when I moved from Lansdown Place to Brunswick Square. I'm just moving house, it's nothing about the whole American movement. But he didn't say that. So, it became that and it became hugely famous. It's what you do and what you don't do; what say and what you don't say is equally influential as what you write and what you don't write.

CW: S, it's kind of after the fact sort of thing. You've written a song and wherever you think there's a meaning or not, by not stating—

IS: That's what I'd do. If the media said something I'd written was a global, revolutionising piece of music. I'd say "if you say so", I wouldn't say "no it's not".

CW: You'd be shutting down the song.

IS: You'd be shooting yourself in foot. I think these things gather momentum without the writer being in charge of it. I think that's a clever thing to do. If you want global notoriety, for your songs to be as far reaching as possible, that's what you do. Then you get Lennon and McCartney who write hundreds of songs, and record a million of them a day because they were brilliant. They could do it, they had something special. Again, it was timing. They were writing songs that everyone wanted hear, it was the connectivity… the stars in the sky were just set and it just worked. Incredibly fortuitous. But it's not just that, it's brilliant too. You'll have at least one song by The Beatles for nearly everybody. I'm not saying *everybody*. They'll go "I love that song", you might not have heard it in years. You play it to your mum and day, my mum and dad and they go "I think that's a great song". It'll evoke something. To have that market place that'll go across 6-7 generations almost, it's pretty incredibly. Those sorts of things come around once in a lifetime. Over four generations you'll get that. I'm waiting for the next one really.

CW: I suppose with The Beatles, the first album they were told "You're in the studio next week, bring some songs" so they say "we better write some songs then". And in a week they write songs like 'Please Please Me' and all the other hit singles, in a week. But the songwriting is very different later on.

IS: Amazing. The White Album, Sergeant Pepper's [Lonely Hearts Club Band], it just transcended—

CW: When they had the time to develop it in the studio.

IS: McCartney learnt loads from George Martin. Even Ringo Starr get interested but Paul McCartney from the outset would stay behind, want to figure out how did this work, and want to be experimental. And George Martin did things back then that were just not heard of. Taking that recording from those people in white [lab] coats, which is what it was, a clinical scientific approach, to this crazy, anything-goes, let's see what happens approach. That revolutionised music, particularly recorded music. Everything we listen to today is because of George Martin. He put them together and he saw something in Lennon and McCartney. If he said something like, I met him a few times, if he said something like 'you're the next John Lennon', I'd be very happy to hear that (but not murdered at 42, which I am). He just knew. I just had this intuition. He was not only remembered for doing that, he's more remembered for being a wonderful human being. I think that's a very important thing. You get a lot of songwriters and musicians who are tortured artists and very difficult… That is, kind of part of the art, but the longevity is for people who are approachable and understand. I think everyone felt like they knew George Martin. Like a really great cool grandad, or uncle, or depending on how old you are, a brother, or dad. There was a trust element. If you say this and you've done that, then I believe you. There was never any hesitation or "what do you know". You have to be pretty revered to be able to do that. To be a national treasure, if you like.

CW: Like you said earlier, it's the relationship, isn't it? In a way, you automatically have it with someone like that. In a similar way, after David Bowie died, my Masters supervisor (Davey Ray Moore) had written the article describing David Bowie as everyone's big brother. Who brought home all the cool records that influence your music, that was David Bowie.

IS: He was very articulate David Bowie. He predicted the future in a lot of things. He was very cool, he wasn't judgemental, he cared about people. He cared about where he was from. He cared what the young people were up to. He didn't do anything drastic but he did a lot. He was a harbinger of change. He was brilliant. He was unique. Like Freddie Mercury, he was another one. Just so much talent, brilliant front man, entertainment, great songwriter, everybody loved him. The gay thing was, at that time, a difficult thing but he was loved because he through massive parties and always had time for people. The bigger the crowd the better he got going. He was someone you admired, a brave artist, someone you'd always want in your corner. I loved it when he did Rio, it was the biggest gig for years and years ever, in Rio de Jairo. And I was being interviewed, smoking a fag, and they said there was something like 300,000 people and he said "Yeah. Bigger the crowd the more I'm going to

get going. You watch. I'm going to show them all". And he just did. He just got larger than life. He was able to transcend in that moment. To everybody, everyone felt like he was singing to them. Which is all about charisma. Charisma is a big deal. I think everybody has to have some of it in a certain way to interact. Particular with listeners, if you're going to be playing your songs, like I said from the outset, connect with them. I think that needs a bit of charisma and a connectivity. A natural bit of an ability to do that.

CW: Thinking when they introduced the microphone certain artists just knew how to use the microphone so that they were singing to every individual in the room. People like Billie Holiday, Bing Crosby or Frank Sinatra—

IS: Frank Sinatra just amazing. Bing Crosby what a voice. Nat King Cole what a voice. But Frank Sinatra if you'd seen him live with his big band his audience, he had everybody in the palm of his hand. His gesticulations and movements on stage, and how he commanded the band, it's fantastic. It's precise. But oozed style and charisma, people couldn't get enough of it because he sounded great as well and the big band were phenomenal. You've got Nelson Riddle doing all the arrangements, which are phenomenal. A great combination of people.

CW: Franks the leader, we'll follow you.

IS: Exactly. It all works. It's put together Beautifully and I think that's a really important aspect of anything creative; having the right team. If you look at tennis players and the coaches. It's almost as much as the tennis player on the court. They get as much credit. They're not breaking a sweat, are they? They always say thanks to my coach and my team.

CW: I suppose in the music sense, it's like putting up for the right gigs. If you play the wrong gig, you can miss out on great opportunities. Having a manager that knows you want to align with this person, or you want to be in this place because this is where things are going to happen. Headlining Glastonbury on the right—

IS: Yeah. Prodigy. When they played it was massive. Radiohead, they played three times. Coldplay, three times. There are certain gigs that "I'll remember that one", really very famous. Like Bowie at Glastonbury in 2000. It was massive, I was there, and you could just tell it was going to be one to be remembered and it was; something special. And he knew it. A lot of luck. A lot of timing. A of teamwork. Lots of friendship building. A lot goes into it. And a lot of trust. Then there's product; you've got to be able to do it. You need to have the right team in place. You can be the best, most creative genius ever but without the right team, trust and friendships and relationships, to see you in the right place at the right time, and you got the right way to conduct yourself. Some people can come across terrible but they love it because that's what they're after. 'Bad boy', brilliant, that's just what we need. But those sorts of

things become iconic and word of legend or they fade out and disappear quickly. Longevity is about appeal. Not just bad boy appeal to youngsters who want to be rebellious. It's about feeling safe with it and just going, this is something great. Like a film, an amazing film you'll never forget. For a lot of people it's like Indiana Jones, or Star Wars, or Superman, or ET. There's something very special in there that takes you back. Horses for courses but you just go "that takes me back". It's an evergreen film. Like Thriller, an evergreen song, Let's Dance, an evergreen song. Nile Rodgers said that David Bowie came to him saying "I want an evergreen song like Thriller" and that's how they did Let's Dance. And it was massive. In 1983, when he did his Serious Moonlight tour, they booked a world tour for venues of about 10,000. Then Let's Dance dropped and they had to rebook the whole thing into stadiums of 80,000. That's how big an impact it had. And that was his biggest tour ever.

CW: That's my favourite album.

IS: Great song.

CW: The album is perfect.

IS: It's the first time her was himself. He had his white blonde hair and blue suit. Before that, he'd been the Thin White Duke, Aladdin Sane, Ziggy. He said, "This is massive. I'm going to be me". Again, timing and having the intuition to go with it. To go "Wow! wasn't expecting that" He just went "Right, let's do it."

CW: It's a great collection, to talk about the team, the musicians on it, every branch of musicians are going to look at that go "Wow!". You're a lead guitarists, it's Stevie Ray Vaughn. You're a rhythm guitarist, its Nile Rodgers.

IS: Bob Clearmountain did the production. Stevie Ray Vaughn walked in and it was like [sings] "ding, ding, dink, k-dink" coming off all the walls. And Stevie Ray Vaughn was like "this is proper serious shit". And Nile Rodgers is like "I told you." David Bowie came to him, he was still in bed, he was staying in his flat in New York. [Nile to Bowie] "You want that as an evergreen song, it sounds like a folk song!" Nile got hold of it and subtly made these beautiful changes, and then Clearmountain made these effects, and Stevie Ray Vaughn… and suddenly this evergreen track came. And it was just the right people knowing what to do. Getting the right people to do *their* job and Bowie having the where with all to let them do it.

CW: So Bowie did write the song and then present it to the musicians to embellish.

IS: And Nile Rodgers thought "This ain't no evergreen song"

CW: I've always wondered about that. The arrangements are incredible. Nearly all of his songs—

IS: They're brilliant.

CW: You listen to an Oasis song and I can hear you sat in your bedroom with the guitar writing this song. But listening to a Bowie song I'm like "how the hell did you do this?"

IS: He had producers who were musically brilliant. And just get him. How could you not love him? He's just cool as fuck. He exudes super cool. And if you're with him he'll make you feel the same. So you just want to work for him. That's called charisma. People that have global stakes have in anything massive amounts of charisma whether it's for good or something terrible.

Let's get something to eat. Do you want to stop that.

CW: Great. I've got loads there.

Appendix 6 Interview Transcript: Jez Ashurst 15th May 2013

Originally conducted and used as part of my master's research module submitted to Bath Spa, 2013.

The first minute is clipped due to the recording software 'playing up'! Prior to the recording starting, Jez explains how he started playing piano at 11 years old then guitar at 14 years old. He also wrote his first song when he was 11 when he started playing piano.

JA: So the same with guitar from the first moment I played and the first moment I played piano I was always trying to write my own things. I just thought that was normal. It was only later when I found out that a lot of people learnt pieces first, you know, I'd probable irritate the hell out of my parents my playing really bad songs. But by the time I was seventeen I'd been playing guitar pretty intensively for 3 years and wanted to be a professional guitar player. I played keyboard as well but probably not as well as I'd play guitar. So I was already in bands and the first band I was in we were playing I'd say about 80% original material which the music was written by me and the singer wrote the lyrics and the melody, and they were really, really terrible metal songs! So we'd do that and then play Guns and Roses and I don't know, Metallica or something as well. But I was basically just playing around with riffs and playing on guitar so I stayed in bands and was always writing for the bands I was in, until finally I joined the band that was signed and they already had two writers in the band who had published, so they wrote all the songs and I was just playing guitar for that band. So eventually I decided I wanted to form my own band so I could play the songs that I'd written. And by that point I was already 25, so had been playing professionally for 8 years. When I say professionally, getting paid £20 a gig kind of professionally, not successfully but professionally if you see what I mean. I was doing music as full time as I could make it. And then once I formed my own band and sang that stuff, very badly it must be said, I was a really terrible singer when I started out. Eventually the songs got better and I got better and the band was good so we got little deal and I got a publishing deal, which then put me in a room with other writers. It took I'd say probably 9 years from leaving sixth form and not going to university to pursue music and moving down to London before I actually got a publishing deal.

CW: So how old were you when you got published?

JA: I think I was 28 or 29, something like that…. Or perhaps I was a little bit younger, what would it have been, 1997, so that's 15 years ago, yes so 28. So 28, then I was published and started writing songs with other people, which I'd never done before really, except in the context of a band. I'd always written in a band with people but never for other artists. It's when I started writing for other people I probably started writing more commercially because it wasn't me singing the stuff, and the singers would have an idea of what sort of song they wanted to be writing.

CW: So how do you think that's helped, if you're writing for other artists and pop artist, like you say more commercially, writing with other people, is there a connection there for you, or just coincidence?

JA: Well it means that you don't go down the boulevard of 'this makes me happy but probable no one else in the world happy' as much as you would if you were writing on your own, because you've got other people there in the room going 'well I don't think my A&R is going to like that idea', or 'I don't think I would sing that lyric it sounds a bit strange', or 'what are those chords? They sound a bit odd'. So they tend to rein in your writing in a commercial sense so you're basically fitting inside some broader parameters that are in kind of part of pop music which is normally you are trying to write something with a chorus, so structurally there is that to think about. Secondly, just by the fact you are in a room with 2 other people you tend to write more universally because you have to find a subject that all 3 of you have something to add to, something to connect about. So yeah, like you say, on the basis of connecting with people it certainly refines your writing commercially and makes you kind of bare that in mind when you're writing a song.

CW: So what do you think for you makes the difference between say a more art based or less mainstream song to a mainstream song, are there any particular defined differences for you that you've noticed?

JA: Yeah I would say in terms of chord structure and chord patterns there are definitely chords that go together well in pop music and there are definitely jarring, interesting, odd chords that fit better in other genres of music and perhaps unless you sparingly can really switch a listener off a song, so I'd say chordly there's something to be born in mind there. There is, if your song has 15 chords and all of them are quite jazzy or extended, if there isn't a definite home key, I mean these are all rules that can be broken at any time, if the melody is amazing it doesn't really

matter, but I'd say I'm drawn towards a safer chord palette if I'm writing in pop music than I would be if I was writing in jazz or writing my own songs for me, where I take more risks, chordly. In terms of melody, you are trying to writing a melody people will remember, so you're probably in the same way reaching for something classic sounding, and you've got one ear on thinking how would this sound on the radio, would this work on the radio, is this boring, is this old fashioned sounding in a bad way, does it sound lame! You kind of ask yourself more questions during the process when you're writing pop, with a collaboration in terms of pop music, than you do for yourself. I think when you write for yourself you write the song you want to write and at the end you go right, what have I written, let's have a listen. Right, wow that's odd, or that actually works quite well. I think you basically ask yourself more questions while you're writing. You may not externalise them but everyone is on that page of thinking, ok, would Ken Bruce play this on Radio 2, or would Capital play this, or the man driving the white van to work in the morning – is there something for him in this song, or something for the person driving to work who's had a crappy day. So, you think a little bit more about who's listening to the song as well as why you are writing the song.

CW: Yeah, I've heard that with Motown, their ethos was 'for the long haul lorry driver'.

JA: Yeah that's good, so I always think, is the song too complicated, is it pleasing. I think of it perhaps a bit more holistically as a whole song, and if there's one bit that I really love but it's not making the song more relatable or connect better then I'll be brutal and get rid of it. Whereas if it was my own song I'd probably keep of those little gnarly bits in.

CW: Do you think being professional itself, like you kind of briefly touched on it earlier, the fact you've got put it through the filters of the industry also steps into your mind, not just will it get on radio, will it get through A&R, and pluggers, will they sell this.

JA: I have a very expensive studio to pay for and I've also got people being sent to me by A&R and the record companies to try and write something that's trying to get on the radio, so it's a given before the door is even opened and I say hello, that they know why they are here, and I know why they are here. That's not to say that I don't try and subvert the rules at every possibility and write something that's not only hopefully radio but also has some depth or takes a few risks or stands out from the

other songs that they've been doing, but that's the challenge, that's what's intriguing about it. There are all kinds of ways to subvert a radio format but its common knowledge that it's harder to get a slow song on the radio than a fast one. Nearly always these artists are looking for first singles and first singles are generally up-tempo to mid-tempo, and I'm always thinking is this believable, do they sound believable singing this. So ideally with an artist, I'm hoping they provide the vast majority of the work in the session and I try and streamline their ideas into making it as connectable and commercial as possible without sounding terribly cheesy.

CW: So like, if I can use an example, correct me if I'm kind of speculating here, but say like Gabrielle Aplin, obviously has a hand in her songs and brings something like that to you which obviously has her personality and experience on and then you just trim the edges and tidy it up to get it to the right audience?

JA: Well in the Gabrielle Aplin song we had 2 days, we wrote 2 songs in 2 days. There were 3 of us, me, Nick Atkinson who wrote a lot of the record, and her. They had already worked together quite a lot. With that, that was a lot more organic because she was at the very beginning of her career, she wasn't signed, she was a brand new artist, and she was only 17 I think. So we weren't really thinking so much about anything except having some fun in the studio and seeing what happens. So on the Panic Chord we just asked her what was happening in her life basically and she told us that story and she had some ideas on the piano and we strummed along, and the song kind of came that way really, but she has quite commercial bones anyway as a song writer, so it wasn't as if we were leading her down a path and she was fighting and screaming to do something completely left field. It all seemed like we were aiming for the same idea which was to have an original idea but framed in the context of quite a traditional pop song.

CW: So I don't know if you read, but I know you were used in his research, Joe Bennett's paper where he talks about the constraints of song writing?

JA: No I haven't read it actually. He sent it to me but I've no time to read it as yet.

CW: It basically comes up with a list of common constraints in songwriting, so the usual things so it's in 4/4, its 110 – 135bpm, I can't remember if that's right? It's usually verse chorus form, 80% of the songs are of a love relationship theme, all this kind of stuff, I

can't remember the whole list, but do you feel that's something you work with, knowing this in the back of your mind as in, this is what is kind of expected from the listener?

JA: No, I wouldn't say so. I think, for example today I've been getting ideas together, I was meant to be writing with Rebecca Ferguson tomorrow but I think that's been moved actually, I've just had an email about that, so I've been thinking what kind of thing to write for Rebecca Ferguson, so coming up with ideas for that, and actually a lot of that kind a lot of that kind of stuff I can hear in 12/8s, you know like Alicia Keys kind of vibe or something like 6/8 'you make me feel like a natural woman' kind of vibe. So no, I actually like writing ballads, they are easier to write and they are more fun to write those sad ballads, so if I can, I'll try and default to writing something moving and sad and interesting and emotional because I think if we do a really good job of that, that'll be the big ballad on the record. I think there are other writers who are better writing up-tempo than I am, and I think they'd actually lean towards that, that's part of what they do, they perhaps have sunnier, brighter dispositions when they're in a writing room. But there are some things, it is unusual to write a song that doesn't have chorus for example, but I have written 2 this year, or 3, with an artist that don't have a chorus but they've been really cool songs, and they do get in the charts occasionally, So yeah you'll be aware of that, you'll be aware that oh jeez we haven't written a chorus, but if everything else sounds cool and sounds memorable then it's not the be all and end all. It's the song as a whole that affects the listener, how it's dressed up is part of it, so you know, you might expect to write a song with a chorus, if I'm noodling around on a piano I'll be trying to think of a chorus probably rather than just thinking of the verse. Put it this way, the box is there, so you know what works and you know what people like to hear, but that's not to say that we blindly sit in that box and work within those confines because that would be really terribly boring and I think that most the interesting songs like 'video games' or 'Gotye – somebody that I used to know' can of subvert that to a certain extent, so you've got to have the freedom to be more experimental. And I think pop music is slightly more experimental than it was, in terms of smashing genres together and being slightly braver in structure. So yeah, I think there's scope for that.

CW: So, obviously, like you've already mentioned you've got your studio that you work in, so your sort of habits when you're writing, I presumed you're a 9-5 sort of writer in the same studio, would that be fair to say?

JA: No, I write in quite a few different studios actually, I was down in Brighton last week. I have my own studio but that's not to say I'm always in here, I actually quite like to get out the studio and write somewhere else. I don't have any habits, I try to avoid them, so I don't have any templates that are in ……. or in logic or in pro tools, like here's my song template. I always try and start from somewhere that I haven't started before if I can, and so it might be plugging an electric in and trying some new sounds, you know, or buying a new sample library or a new synth, or starting with a baseline or playing my piano that's in the room because I can't quantise that so I need to actually think about what I'm playing or transpose or writing in a different key, or de-tune a guitar, you know just try and think of somewhere new to start. But a lot of the time to be honest, and we had Eg White come in and talk to the students at LCCN this year and he was really interesting. I couldn't make the lecture but I heard what he'd said and it seemed very similar to how a lot of songwriters start which is that there's a discussion for a while about what songs we love, and then we'll probably listen to some songs we love on YouTube or on Spotify and we'll take elements, it might be rhythm from one song, or the emotional ideal from another and we'll start somewhere there as a starting point. It sounds terrible cheap, but it is kind of a good way in because say you get a drum beat off Jessie J's 'price tag' for example which is a loop and you basically then think of emotionally what Adele said in one of her songs or something that perhaps going really far back something that Sam Cooke said, and then you kind of take some of that instrumentation of something old and throw it on something modern and see where that leads you and often even though that's the starting point, half an hour into the session everything's changed, the tempo's changed, the beat may have changed, buts it's a good way to get started emotionally, to kind of think it would be nice to right something about this, this has happened to me, I love the beat from like that Bastille song or something, wow we could do something a bit like that perhaps. And it just gets you started basically, which is good if you've never met each other before.

CW: Yeah, it's such a weird thing to go into a room with someone you've not met and just write with an objective with that in mind.

JA: Yeah exactly, so you're basically trying to find some common ground and you're also getting inspired by some of the best songs ever written, you know, and scared.

CW: Yes setting yourself up with quite a standard there to meet up with.

JA: Yeah, you know, you try and think of why these songs connect, you try and capture that feeling of how they make you feel inside and try and bring that to the songwriting session.

CW: I remember you mentioning before you analyse songs quite a lot when you listen, you tend to kind of listen to them and pick them out as what puts them all together, except country music, I think you said you were fine with just listening to country music.

JA: Well it's because I worked in a karaoke studio, that was my first job as dismantling and re-assembling 30 songs a month, therefore I know a lot of great songs and how they're put together and also doing the X Factor a couple of years ago, it was exactly the same job, so it's like taking apart a fine watch, you get to know how it ticks by taking it apart and putting it back together again. It's a great skill to have because you see, you can never get to the core of something emotionally that connects lyrically but its certain in terms of musical and structural tricks and ideas that tend to work, baselines, grooves, that's all very useful skills to have when you're ==an artist== or songwriting.

CW: So I suppose that kind of makes up for, you mentioned earlier that you didn't learn songs you just started writing songs almost immediately, but I suppose then pulling part other peoples songs is your learning the back catalogue, like most people would learn the songs first on their instrument.

JA: Yeah, definitely. I mean I did that as well but I learned them by ear, I couldn't read music so I just listened to the radio and tried to play along basically, listened to the top 40 and played along on my little Casio keyboard and later basically slowed down a lot of rock songs and worked out what the chords were and all that kind of thing, which put me in good stead for doing the karaoke stuff, which was all developing your ear. So now I can hear a song on the radio and I'll know what the chords are just by hearing it and I can play along with it. It may not be in the right key, because I haven't got perfect pitch but I know relatively what the chords are doing unless it's super complicated.

CW: Yeah so I think, kind of the idea, especially with our pop music backgrounds, is music theory is moving away from can you read the dots, its do you understand harmony and chordal movements. Kind of like the Beatles didn't read music but they obviously knew music.

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JA: Well they knew music from being in a covers band for 6 years, playing 6 hours a day, playing all the songs that they were inspired by so, copying is how you learn, that's how artists learn, that's how musicians learn. Copying and then basically coming up with your own take on it all, that's all it is. I would say though that there are so many songwriters that know every chord and can play every instrument, it doesn't cause any 'wows' or 'oohs' in a songwriting situation, it's just a given that you can do that. I know a lot of people that are like 'wow I can play guitar really well and I can pick this up and play this', no one really cares, it's all about the melody and the concept and the lyric.

CW: So the musicianship isn't such a high priority?

JA: It's a given, that's why you're in the room, you know, you should be able to do that, it's a language you should know already, and it's the least important part of the equation in pop music. It's tested by how many amazing songs have been written by people with hardly any theory or hardly any keyboard skills that are written in C major and have 4 chords but have a great melody or a great emotion behind it.

CW: I definitely agree with that one. Do you find, because I know it was brought up as part of this research and no-one else has really gone along with this, I don't know if it affects you but I know you're quite a keen runner, do you find the two are in any way connected like you know, when you're running do you find ideas come to you, or is it a completely separate thing that you just like running?

JA: No I think it's good, I've read a lot about this, about mindfulness, it's basically having time to think, that's what it is. You've got to have space in your mind for ideas to come through. If you're constantly listening to music, being on your phone, watching tele, being on the internet, where are the ideas going to come from. That's why I suppose great thinkers got ideas in the bath. It's not to say I get great ideas when I'm running but I think it kind of allows my mind to drift a little and that's a good thing. So I don't think they are directly connected but I know that a lot of the poets went for long walks, a lot of writers go for walks. It's good to get out of your normal headspace and I think basically thrashing away at the piano for 12 hours a day probably becomes counterproductive after a while.

CW: I suppose and you kind of touched on it there, Pete Brewis from Field Music was saying the whole world is just so many ideas, so many books and other songs and films and stuff, you know, it's pretty poor to say you can't think of anything to write

about, but I suppose moving away from it, getting away from all of that information kind of lets the ideas bubble to the surface, the ones that kind of mean something to you or kind of have a spark to them.

JA: Yeah I think perhaps they need time to percolate, so it might be that you have a little idea like a title, or an idea of what you might like to write about and it bubbles to the surface, like you say, and then nothing really happens to it and it goes back down again, and then a couple of weeks later it might bubble up again and eventually it all kind of come up a little bit more fully formed or it will connect itself with a bit of melody or a lyric and you won't really think, oh it's that idea I had 2 weeks ago, it just sometimes take a while for it to manifest itself as something worthwhile proceeding with.

CW: I like that yeah, it's the basic idea that you are just connecting dots aren't you, all the time.

JA: Yeah I think there's a lot of little scraps of ideas going round in your mind all the time, it's basically, when are they going to show themselves and are you going to be in your right mind to receive them when they do show themselves. So I suppose from that point of view, going to the studio or being near an instrument or being able to record your ideas is good because if something does come out of the ether that's been percolating there then it's good that you can work fast and get that idea down before it disappears again.

CW: Yeah being able to get the idea out, funnily enough we were talking about this with the songwriters, and saying to students well if you can't play an instrument, you can't sing and you can't write, you might have the best ideas locked away in your head and they will never get out. So grounding skills are all necessary just to get the song out. Obviously you yourself mentioned, you are multi-instrumentalist and you also program a lot don't you, you put that down as a big part. Do you think that gives you the ability to write in all areas of songs?

JW: Well it doesn't help the creative process particularly, but I suppose being able to program a drum beat and imagine what's in your head is good, but I think you only need to be able to play adequately to write a song, if that really. You know, if you can fumble around the keyboard and know 5 chords you can probably write most pop songs that have mattered in the last 20 years. So I think it helps me get gigs besides songwriting, as in producing and programming and engineering, which is good

financially to have as an added skill, but no, it's not something that matters massively to be honest. Because you can always pay someone to do that stuff if you have a great song, whereas there is a lot of people that can do that stuff who don't have a great song so, it's a money saving thing and a time saving thing I suppose.

CW: The economics?

JA: Yeah it's more than end of the spectrum I'd say.

CW: What do you think has been the milestones of your development as a songwriter, like, I learnt this, then I learnt that, then I learnt this important lesson, and they were the ones that have really contributed to getting me where I am.

JA: Interesting question because I did a talk with John Lunn last week at ASCAP for Andy West actually. John Lunn did the music for Downton Abbey and he's a really successful TV composer, and someone asked him that question and we worked out there aren't any milestones at all. Most of the stuff you learn you don't think you're learning, and it's all subliminal stuff that comes from places you never imagined it would come from, so basically from doing everything wrong for a very long time you eventually get better at doing what's right.. I'd is probably the easiest thing to say, by failing to write songs that connect, by not coming up with good melodies, by having vague and crap lyrics, by basically not finishing songs, by being a programmer, by being a karaoke person, by doing Christmas music for singing mice, all this stuff probably taught me stuff subliminally, and actually me writing a good song doesn't teach me anything at all because I still don't really know how to do it. And I think it's just something that I've obviously got better at, as in writing commercially, judging by the amount of success I'm having now, but I'd also say it's just as much to do with being in the room with the right people and having a publisher to exploit my songs, so there's no milestones unfortunately, there's no eureka moment with me going 'oh now I can write a chorus'! You know, cause all the way along I thought I was doing it great, it's just other people that said it wasn't very good. So I've always thought this is good isn't it, and obviously now it's getting to the point where other people are saying they like what I do as well. Probably the biggest thing I've learnt though is by being in a band and being on stage, and getting that feeling for how a song connects with a n audience, I think that's a very useful skill to have in a writer, which is why I think a lot of writers are former artists or still artists, because there's an immediacy to playing a song in front of people. If they get it they get it, if they don't they don't, and you never

get that feedback if you're just righting in a cave or in your logic world, playing it live matters.

CW: That's a really good point actually, there's so many more people self-releasing stuff now as it gets easier, it's kind of negating the whole sort of filter of an audience.

JA: Yeah the live music is bigger than ever. I think there's a big difference between someone buying music and someone pressing 'Like' on Facebook or YouTube, it takes a second to say 'I like that'. I think often people are just saying 'I like the fact that you've done that, well done' rather than 'this song has changed my life'. So if you see someone sing live and it connects with you and you're in the audience and they can feel that and there's something in the air, I think that's the magic of it all really, that's what we shouldn't lose sight of in songwriting. That's the only thing that matters, connecting with an audience, that's what your job is at the end of the day.

CW: Yeah, that's a really good one, I like that. Well, I think that's pretty much covered all the bits we needed. Thanks very much for that.

Appendix 7 Interview Transcript: Hattie Murdoch 13th July 2018

Audio Response to interview questions sent to Hattie Murdoch via email

Question 1 response:

Hi Chris, hope you're alright? Just though I'd ramble out dome responses to these questions. I hope they're useful or they might be absolute shit. So, feel free to delete this if you need to.

The first question; when writing, either alone or in collaboration, for yourself or another artist, how do you address the audience expectations?

Quite a tricky question really. It changes on every situation I'm writing in. If I'm alone for me, as an artist, I don't address any audience expectation at that point in creation. I use it very much from the gut and see what comes out then become to craft it later on. So, in the very first instance of creation I don't think about the audience at all. I think that's the benefit of having the artistic licence when you write for yourself.

If I'm writing alone for someone else, or for a pitch, or a brief, I do my research. I try to do as much research as I can around who the artist is, what the audience is. If it's going to be something K-Pop or J-Pop, I'm looking at the age of the artists; what they've done before; have they got a big teen following; or is it more of an adult following? All that kind of side of things. Definitely when I've pitched for teenage artists, I'm looking at their YouTube videos, looking at he comments, seeing the age of the kids responding. And I try to tailor the lyrics accordingly. Nothing too deep, nothing too sexual, nothing that isn't suitable for that audience. So, those are quite easy with pitches. That covers writing for myself and writing for others, and that is in collaboration as well, that sort of third party writing where you're writing for pitch of brief.

If I'm writing *with* another artist *for* them, I very much speak to them, I do my research beforehand and see what the audience is, where it's going. It's the first few hours you spend together, you really try and get a grasp who they are. You do your research; try and see who's coming to the gig, where they are gigging. Again, the YouTube videos, see what the comments are. I really do let the artist lead, lyrically, in that sense. Obviously, they'll be having their style that they are already working in. It's not up to me to change much of that, really just to enhance it. I think that maybe, lyrically what they are putting across a clear message. What they are actually saying is really up to them because they have the connection to the audience, I don't, they have that connection with their fanbase. I do just try and clear it up and broaden it. This is all very lyric based, I think the music often speak for

itself. And this is writing in pop music, which I think you know. Hopefully, that answers that one.

Question 2 response:

Question 2, across your various writing partnerships do you have a particular sound, aspect, quality, that you bring to every project that makes you a desirable writing partner?

Obviously, different writing partnerships have different dynamics, so I do bring something different to each to each working relationship. With co-writing and collaboration it's obviously just trying to find here you sit in that particular writing session. Sometimes this is more a one off writing thing or a songwriting camp or something like that, where you're shoved in room with a few people and work out where you sit. I'm quite lucky because I'm an all-rounder so I do melody, lyrics, music, production, I can sing the demo, whatever. So, I'm quite lucky that I can sit in the session and assume whatever position needs to be assumed for that particular writing session, and that helps with the dynamic. And again, even personality wise, I like to think I bring in a relaxed atmosphere. I like having a laugh, I bring energy to those sessions. I'm not a shy retiring wall flower in those, I'll break the ice… keep chatting… keep the energy up. Certainly, from and personality point of view, that's what I do. Sometimes people request to work with me because they really the lyrical style that I have. Maybe we've worked together before, and they really liked the lyrical aspect that I brought to that session and they want to pull that into other projects. Sometimes they go, I really love the melody that you come up with, so I really want to work with you. Sometimes it's like the 2nd or 3rd session that people are saying 'I really like the way that you do that. So let's bring more of that into the session.' So, I try to adapt as much as possible, and I think I'm a Jack of all trades and master of absolutely fuck all. So, I definitely have to do a bit of everything.

So, maybe that is what makes me desirable, that I can sit in a session and produce it if I need. That I can adapt. I've worked with pure lyricists before, and that's sometimes quite tricky because it's hard to bring all aspects into those sessions. Lyrically they're obviously brilliant but melodically they're sort of not quite getting how we do this or that, or however it sits in the session.

I really rambled on that bit there but I think I answered the question.

Question 3 response:

When writing, particularly in collaboration, how do establish the value of ideas that are presented for the song?

So, just reading this question, I'm taking like, how do I work dynamically, in those session, to move the song forward, in a direction that we are all happy with but mostly *for* the song. I think this is very much a personality thing. It's much easier when you're in the room, with everyone writing on the same day. I write over Skype and remotely as well, which can be tricky when trying to work out your communication. It's all about communication. If it's a session that I feel I'm pulling along. So, something that maybe working with other writers who aren't as confident or are a bit shy, and I'm grabbing the session by the bollocks, so to speak. I ask lots and lots of questions, and ascertain that we are all on the same page and keep going round. If lyrically we don't understand what's going on, if someone comes out with lyrics and you're like 'errr! I don't really get it'. I'll always be the one to go 'I'm so thick' if I don't understand it first off maybe we need to work out a way to clarify it. I always start with lyrics, we make sure we are on the same page with the ideas of where we're going with the song, lyrically what we want to get out, the message of the song, the point of the song. Then I find the music comes after that. Always open to going left, right, whatever. If I'm more of a contributor I'm… I guess I'm more I'm more of a facilitator of a session. Trying to pull out the best things from everybody. If I'm more of a contributor and someone else is a facilitator, I'll just keep throwing things out. As long as you have no barrier. I try to certainly, every session I do, try to create a safe space where any idea is valued. In terms of actually communicating if it's a good idea or it's not a good idea, I never say 'no, no definitely not that idea.' Always put it in the mix and it could be something that we come back to. Sometimes it's like 'Yeah, ok, in that case, why don't we try this direction.' You never throwing people down in session. I've been thrown down in session and it's the worst thing in the world. You sit there and go 'it's pointless me contributing anymore because none of my ideas are being listened to.' But also need to be weary, if two people are vibing together, if it's a three or a four, if they're vibing let them go and see what they come out with after they've finished with that vibe or got stuck kind of thing. It's all communication again. I think I'm rambling again [rereads question to herself]. I think I've answered it. Sort of setting out at the beginning of the session what you want out of the session. Making sure you're on the same page and being really diplomatic if you think some of the ideas maybe aren't as good or going in a different direction. I think I've answered that one. Anyway, rambling on. Let me know if you need me to do this again or need to clarifications you need me to make. Alright, cheers Chris taraa.

Appendix 8 Interview Transcript: Peter Brewis 13th May 2013

Originally conducted and used as part of my master's research module submitted to Bath Spa, 2013.

CW: Could you give us some background to your starting out in music?

PB: I got interested in music through late [19]80's pop when I was 11 or 12. I really like[d] the Bangles and Bros and whatever was around at the time. I used to tape radio 1's top 40 and things like that. I think I was drawn to the surface sheen of it, the glamour of it and think I should get myself in a band and all the girls would fancy me. I'll be famous and people will have posters of me on the wall (*you've got to have a certain type of face Peter*). Throughout that I went on to being interested in rock music, my mum and dad had a big record collection, they grew up with pop music. They were 10 or 11 when the Beatles came out, Bros were my Beatles but they were a teeny pop band. They grew up with the Beatles, then the [Rolling] Stone, then Led Zeppelin and Fleetwood Mac, then Roxy Music, Kate Bush, Peter Gabrielle and then they slumped off after that. Around 1986 they stopped buying good music I think. So I got interested in that sort of music. My first instrument was the drums and I learned a little bit of piano when I was younger but really drums were my first instrument.

CW: You play a plethora of instruments now…

PB: Yeah but not very well. I don't really play any instruments very well but just enough to… but the best musical instrument I ever got was a four-track recorder. That when I was getting into the idea of creating and making music, my own music. I didn't necessarily think of them as songs but I guess they were. When I got the four-track recorder I could paly a bit of drums and guitar, so thought I better learn a bit of piano and bass, and that's when started getting into the idea of studio based song writing and I think that's, if I'm in any sort of bracket of all, I think that's what I do. [I] treat songwriting like a collage of ideas, a collage of different part of music. Put them together as a recording. Initially that was my idea, it was only afterward that I started performing. I was in pub rock bands before but we always played other people's stuff.

CW: How old were you when you started putting things together on the four-track?

PB: I think I must have been 14/15.

CW: So a couple years just learning to play an instrument?

PB: Yeah. Obviously from that I went from the [four-track] to an eight-track, to a hard disk recorder to Digital Audio Workstations that is essentially it. It was always me and my brother

[Steven Brewis, the other half of Field Music] and some other sort of people always dodging around, peripherally… getting into music, influencing each other with different sorts of music that we like[d]. We were quite veracious from the age of 16 to 26, I was veracious with music, which coincided with reissues of CD's (of records on CD). So all the Nick Drake stuff became available and the Led Zeppelin stuff was on CD then and the Beatles stuff became available on CD and lots and lots of other things around like the Beach Boys, Van Dyke Parks, Big Star. The list is just absolutely endless. Loads of Jazz reissues as well, I never thought I liked Jazz but then someone said "this is a good resource to steal from, to take ideas from. You like the Beatles, the Beatles are fine but the Beatles kind of music. They took ideas from everywhere; Jazz, music hall, folk, country, whatever. They were like magpies, they had that magpie mentality where nothing was sacred, everything was material to put in their records and songs. That's my kind of thought on it still.

CW: Would you say you found that at a young age? The idea that "Aye up, this is all just stuff for me to steal and put together".

PB: Probably about 19 or 20. That's when started thinking all this ideas can be recycled into something and if I put it through the lens of who I am, my experiences; a little kid from Sunderland, then I can create my own voice, not in terms of a singing voice but my own style of writing, which never solidifies it's like a ladder that you just keep climbing, going to other places with. I never get bored with making music because there are always new ideas to take from or ideas to see around [in] people, society, it's never ending. That's what's great about it.

CW: Did it hit you at 19 that this idea that nothing's original in the way that you think of it [when] you're younger or is something that you've had in your mind that…

PB: Yeah, maybe you're right. Maybe I mind the assumption before that Paul McCartney just plucked something out of thin air and that's where he got it from. Some gift given to him from some deity from up high like there's Yesterday in your mind. You don't really think "he's probably heard something like that before, chucked it around a bit, messed around with it and created something that is his own via the influences". It always puzzled me, I did some classical music at university level, and people would go on about how great Beethoven was [but] where did Beethoven get his ideas from? There's this ide of a linear progression from Haydn to Mozart to Beethoven, and it's not really like that. They must have got their ideas from lots of other places. Like the idea of a learning cycle, Kolb's Learning Cycle, it doesn't really work like that it's a lot more complicated. Ideas and learning is a little bit more chaotic than that.

CW: The way ideas clash and seep through in equal amounts. It's a huge subject to get into. So, you're involved in all aspect of the song, starting off and as a drummer and introducing yourself to new instruments to make a song, as opposed to a guitarist who writes the guitar part and goes in heavy just into the guitar. Obviously with your band line up you alternate with instruments and roles.

PB: In terms of the records we make with Field Music, it's me and my brother who play everything other than the string arrangements. E have to get some one else in to play that, although I do write for strings because I was forced to at A level, although I didn't really see the point at the time "I don't want to do stuff like that". I think 'I'm not going to hire George Martin in to do that' if I'm going to do it I'm going to have to do it myself out of economic necessity. The way we do it now, we have our own studio, our own instruments, our own skills, it's not the greatest studio in the world, they're not the greatest instruments in the world, we don't have the greatest instrumental skills in the world or songwriting skills for that matter but we have ownership over it. We're in control of our means of production. It has a big influence on how the songs end up because we write for ourselves.

CW: Is that one of the big things for you guys, a high priority, that you have control instead of giving it over to another producer or getting session players in.

PB: yeah, kind of. I think that is something we'd like o change a little bit. In terms of producer it's pointless getting a producer in. What is the producers role? What does a producer do? Decides on how the records going to sound. Well, this is my record and I'll decide how I want it to sound. I could ask a producer to tell them how I want it to sound but really, I've done that before, but the best thing to do, for me, is to learn the skills myself to the point where I'm satisfied with the results I come up with myself. Mistakes and all, warts and all.

CW: What would you get in? What do you struggle with or not interested in? What would you get in to change or improve?

PB: In terms of other people?

CW: Yeah, who would you work with?

PB: We always worked with other people when we were younger because we were in other bands and I think that's healthy to get other peoples views and ideas. Field Music initially had a keyboard player, he was a much more skilled piano player, an organist I think he was officially. He could do things we couldn't do, I learnt a lot about piano playing and chords from him.

CW: At what point would you have considered yourself to have turned professional in your career? If at all, you may still consider yourself an amateur?

PB: Sometimes I feel like an amateur. I suppose the idea of professionalism is getting paid to write.

CW: So you would accept that as a definition?

PB: Probably. When I felt I could earn a living from making music, at least start earning a living from my music then that's when I thought I'm professional. I don't think professionalism is necessarily a measure of someone's ability. I think it's just if you get paid for it or not. Plenty of amateur musicians and songwriters who do it for the notion of art, don't necessarily get paid, in their minds, they maybe right, they're doing it [for] art. Some bands that I was in, we did it for that purpose, we knew we weren't going to make any money from it, we did it as an art project, it's an expression. It can give you ideas and maybe someone down the line will give you some money for it.

CW: So you would have a 2 definitions of professional; one a noun- he's a professional, he gets paid for doing it; and the other an adjective- he's a professional in their abilities or attitudes. Just as differing definitions.

PB: I don't know. I just see professionalism as an acting professional. It still surrounds that idea of getting paid for something. That's just the way the way I look at it. When I'm going to do a project I… I don't really know. It's interesting that.

CW: At what point do you think you were going that was i.e. "I've got that ability" or did it just happen all of a sudden, did it just hit you when it happened?

PB: No, I always wanted to be professional, I wanted to earn a living from music, so I had that. You know, when you have that you adhere to the rules of professionalism otherwise things don't get done [or] don't necessarily get done well. I don't know wherever that's influenced by my Dad who's like "do a job well and maybe someone will pay you to do it" but you have to prove that you can do it first. But in terms of milestones, music-wise, we were getting paid to do cover band gigs when I was 17 but I didn't that as very creative.

CW: So you were always striving to do something creative and not just be a 'gun for hire'?

PB: Yeah because I was never really interested in music like that. I can appreciate good skills on an instrument but really the music that says something to me doesn't have much to do with that. Or so much to do with that.

CW: What do you define as a great song? What's the part of the song that makes you go 'yeah, that's a good song'?

PB: well, I don't think you can divorce the song from the sound.

CW: Like production or groove?

PB: Not necessarily. You can write the chords down but that's just a representation of what something sounds like. You can write lyrics down but in the end of the day but to hear them, that's when a song comes to life.

CW: So there has to be final product?

PB: There has to be, for me, there has to be an airing of it to mean anything. You can have a song written down on a piece of paper, you could have the chords, you could have the dots, you can have the words and it's there and it's just a sheet of paper with stuff on it until someone sits and plays it and interprets it then it becomes a really thing. It becomes part of the oral tradition or the new oral tradition, we living in a world of records.

CW: So we're getting away for the old classical notated music…

PB: Well, notated music has only really been around for… a thousand years. If it was notate by Romans and Greeks then 2-3000 years.

CW: The Gregorian's were around a thousand years ago…

PB: Naa,

CW: That's when they started notating, in the church…

PB: Yeah, so… don't know. Should maybe have a look at that. I think it's probably some 600-700 years. But anyway, notated music is a blip in terms of how old music is and how old songs are.

CW: So there's no particular way, for you, that makes a particular…

PB: makes a good song?

CW: It's a full package?

PB: Yeah, I think so. In terms of listening to a song… You get bound up by… we're influenced by the things with heard before and they become the nodes, our touchstones, of what a song should be. So I grew up listening to the Beatles, the Police, Led Zeppelin and those become the nodes and circles of a Ven diagram of 'that's what makes a song'.

CW: Mus have this element and must have that element [gestures many more elements] and then it's a song.

PB: Yeah and I don't really know what those elements are.

CW: Suppose it can be quite a list.

PB: Yeah, there's lots of elements to song and you can break them down; melody, lyrics, chords, arrangement. I think all of the element have to be appropriate and work together and I don't know what that is. I think it's subject too.

CW: Yeah, I suppose it open to many levels. Do you feel like you work within these boundaries doing what is expected, like you said you've got your nodes that makes up a song and you can…

PB: I'm always questioning … because there are new things that can crop up and shatter your ideas of what a good song can be. I'm always looking out for them. I rejoice when that happens, when I'm proved wrong, I think that's great.

CW: Like an idea that a song should be 3½ minutes and then, which Beatles song is it that's 8 minutes long, one of the number one's?

PB: Hey Jude.

CW: Yeah, Hey Jude. So it defies the convention of what the length of a song should be. Obviously that's very early example and radio edits change[d] everything. Trying to say "we'll work within the time constraints" do you feel like you work within those constraints? So you might say work in certain sections?

PB No, I Don't. No. Bu I think when you set out to write something or you set out to model something on something you've already written… I don't know how you do it but I generally keep lots of Dictaphones lying around and lots of notepads lying around just crammed with material to use, could be used or might never be used. Which is the capturing the inspiration part then it's afterwards doing the working/modelling part: the form, how it's gong to work, putting it together like architecture or Lego. That's when you have to decide what your intention, for me, I have to decide what my intentions are for that song. So what are my intentions? What do I want to do with it? Does it need to have… Am I going to write it like a straight forward pop song; 3 minutes verse chorus verse chorus middle [8] chorus *yaddy yada yada* Or am I going to do something different? There are just so many things you can do with form that people don't do because you're not supposed to do it but I don't make that much money from making records so I can do what I want, it's doesn't make that much

difference. Having said that, the songs of ours that get played most on the radio are the ones with just normal structures or the *bog* standard structures

CW: Recognised ideas?

PB: Yeah, I have an idea why, it's because that's what people are used to. That's the format people are used to. They use the verse chorus form. They're not used to 32 bar form anymore. No body writes songs like that, yet. In the [19]20's and [19]30's that's all you had essentially.

CW; the last song I can think of in AABA is Nora Jones- Don't Know Why.

PB: Alright

CW: That or Sting- Every breath [You Take], which is an extended AABA

PB: But it still has a… well, I suppose it's not really a chorus is it?

CW: It's repeated middle 8. But he's very good at doing that sort of stuff; tricking the listeners into thinking it's something else.

PB: Yeah but I don't worry about that [using recognised forms].

CW: So you see the recognised ideas like AABA form or similar lyrical themes, like they say 80% of songs are love themes, but you say "I'm going to do something else"?

PB: Yeah, I very rarely write love songs. Think I've probably written 2 or 3 over 20 years.

CW: That's not many.

PB: It's difficult to say. They're difficult to write or they're difficult to write well. Often the songs I hear, that are love songs I often think "Ah, fucks sake, so boring" But there's some people who'll do it great and will have a turn of phrase that says something like Change Clothes by Jay-Z. basically talking about changing clothes. Prince is good at it too but you have to be pretty confident with sexiness which isn't really part of my personality.

CW: I think Guy Garvey did a good one "Kiss like we invented it", is one of my favourite lyrics or John Martyn always wrote a beautiful love song for me. They are very tricky, it's takes a real heart-felt honesty to put it across.

PB: You have to disarm yourself. You have to let your guard down which I'm not really that great at.

CW: So your notepads and Dictaphones, what kind of ideas do you get down for starting? Melodic ideas or lyrical?

PB: Both. Sometimes I'll make myself sit down at the piano or the guitar and I'll just improvise for however long, you know, just [mimic's playing piano on the desk] and then if something happens I'll just point it down.

CW: You just recognise the sort of potential.

PB: Yeah. The improvisations will always be limited by what's possible on the instrument. It's rare but sometimes I'll write a drum part first then figure out something else to go with that. Or sometimes I'll just have an idea in my head, like how a string part should go. I've been doing a project recently that's writing for strings, percussion and piano, and what I've tried to do is just write things on a starting point; sometimes the starting point will be strings, sometimes it'll be piano, sometimes it'll be percussion. But if it's just a string part in my head then I need to figure out a way of writing it down quick otherwise I'll forget. Sometimes I'll sing it into a Dictaphone and think "what the hell was that meant to be". Same with lyrics. I haven't done it for a while now because I've been driving too much. Basically I normally just use the Metro [Newcastle's tram and underground public transport] all the time, I find that's a good time to write down ideas …

CW: So do you write when the moment comes to you or do you go "Ok, I need to write something"? Is it on demand or waiting for inspiration to hit you?

PB: I really wait for inspiration. Coax it out by putting yourself in the right environment

 CW: Do you have a set environment you always work in?

PB: Not really, not for initial ideas, well for musical ideas I have to sit down with a musical instrument generally.

CW: A constraint you've got to live with

PB: But for lyrical ideas the Metro's good. See a lot of different people on the Metro, you can imagine little worlds and stories. There's a café in Sunderland that I go to quite a lot which doesn't have a PRS license so doesn't play any music whatsoever, so it's silent. Well it's not silent, it's just people bustling around really so that's great. They've got big glass windows and I sit there, watch the world go by.

CW: I usually find I get my best ideas when I go out for a walk or a run…

PB: Yeah, quite often.

CW: And like you said, got notepads or Dictaphone's with me so I can go *click* [imitates click a Dictaphone on to record]. [It] distances me away from being on the guitar, being distracted by the guitar…

PB: Yeah, that's it. It's very rare that'll write lyrics while I'm at [a musical instruments]. Generally, I'll come up with the best ideas for lyrics when I've got no musical things goings on. Then I can refer back and edit, add. But it takes a while for me to write a song. It does take a while because I start planning the notion of the record around it. I don't necessarily think of my idea of the song as a product (not a product!)… a recording or presentation in sound, is the right idea but it's what I find.

CW: So do you find it's a long time before you say "right, it's time. I'm going to do it' Or do you do it in little stages?

PB: I think it just depends. Both. Whatever is appropriate.

CW: So adaptive?

PB: Yeah.

CW So do you and your brother write together or do you write separately and team up later to finish off?

PB: We generally write separately. W get together on the arrangement, studio production part of the process. Which I still see as essential to the song, the song, for me, is not just the chords and melody and that's it. There's more to it than that. Like Beethoven's 5th Symphony you could recognise it if I played it on a piano[mimic's the opening motif] but that's not it.

CW: So it's the one of the full score as he intended, is the one?

PB: Yeah, or the interpretation of the score by a…

CW: an appropriate orchestra?

PB: Yeah. It's a funny thing about recording it needs to be set down "well that's the final word" and anything else is like a cover version. That's why you get "it's not as good as the original". What was the original? You've called something the original, so what is the original if it isn't a first recorded version?

CW: Do you feel like that with your live versions?

PB: Oh yeah, we're like our own cover band, totally.

CW: That's interesting.

PB: That's exactly how we approach it. Like we're playing somebody else's songs. Ruining them!

CW: You have some quite elaborate songs. And the production…

PB: We have to think "how do we interpret the song?" That's one of the problems we have playing live, that it's never as good as the record because it just becomes an interpretation of it. We do get some people coming up to us saying they prefer us live than on the record.

CW: People have varying opinions. Do you ever get stuck with writers block or have you got yourself a system? Like you said earlier about going to the café to lyrics?

PB: I've never really worried about it. I've never worried about writers block but then again we've never really written anything to any deadlines. I've got so much material, in terms of musical ideas, basically other people's musical ideas that I've turned around, messed around with and stolen or done something different with them, that I probably won't realise them all in my lifetime. I'm not saying they're very good ideas, I'd like to have a go at doing them all.

CW: That's a great attitude to have. Saying every idea is taken from other people, some people might say, "It's all been done" "There's only 12 notes in a [chromatic] scale" but to say, "there's a night sky of ideas available"…

PB: I think so. I don't know if it's limitless… probably not.

CW: You could then start looking at what the legal system say the limits are

PB: Yeah! I don't think any of the songs I've written so far sound like any other persons songs but quite often I'll clash 4/5 ideas together to make something. Like 'what if Thelonious Monk didn't paly piano but played guitar and used this scale instead of that scale but was in a blues rock band but with a Bryan Ferry, early Roxy Music, approach to form? So you don't have any choruses, say. "right, I'll see what I can do with that bit of material" sometimes you can just imagine things.

CW: Do you think there were any ideas that you had when you were younger, which you had to overcome? Like we talked about earlier, this idea that things aren't original, in fact it's all an adaptation of the older stuff that you've got to overcome. You kind of mentioned earlier, like Bob Dylan that "I'm just a vessel, the songs come through me" Do you think there are ideas like that, that stop songwriters from writing? Like industry myths and stuff.

PB: Probably, yeah. Yeah. You hear a lot of that sort of thing 'you've just got to wait for the inspiration'. Just go out and listen to some fucking records man. If you can't inspiration in the multitude of music and lyrics and poems and stories and novels and literature and whatever and people's lives that are out there, then what are you trying to achieve? Are you trying to write songs that'll make it? So you can make it in the music biz? Fucking hell man! It's much more fun than that, it's much more fun than that and it should be much more fun than that. Don't wait for anything. Go out and find out about… Even me with my pitiful boring existence, I've never lived anywhere else other than the North East (well I lived in Wales for a year), I'm a total creature of habit, I like certain ways of doing things but it's rich. Life's really really rich. And recorded music and books, film and television give you a multitude of things to be influenced by, or turned off by or rail against. It's a soup. It's amazing, there's many things to take things from, it can be depressing at times because there's lots of horrible things going on in the world. You can interpret it, you can talk about it through songs, stories or whatever. There's myth of originality. What's the most original thing in the world ever? Like a work of art? If that hasn't been influenced by anything!

CW: They're coming around to that way of thinking. There's a lot of people putting across ideas trying to stop all the legal actions that saying 'that's ripped off this and this is ripped off that'. People suing each other all the time over creative ownership.

PB: Well of course it has. But instead of ripping just one thing off, rip 20 things off all at the same time and that's the idea of collage; create something new out of it. It can be done.

CW: Definitely, I like that.

PB: I don't think I've done it very well, *yet*. But I want to try. I want to try harder, try and find more about music, more about words because I don't feel like I know very much about it. Keep trying to find my own little place.

CW: Sounds pretty good. We better make a move, we've got classes.

PB: Oh yeah.

CW: Thanks very much.

Appendix 9 Interview Transcript: Peter Brewis 31st October 2017

	Opening conversation talking about the latest Logic Pro updates while I set up the Dictaphone and mobile phone recording
Chris Whiting:	I find I work so much quicker and better.
Peter Brewis:	Right, oh right, yeah. Maybe I should just take... I can't take the plunge yet 'cause I'm still in the middle of things.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah, but-
Peter Brewis:	So I think as of next year, once the next thing's finished, just gonna get on with this and embrace the future for a change.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah, it's... It took me a few weeks to adjust, to find buttons where were and move and stuff. Once I got it, it was fantastic.
Peter Brewis:	All right, yeah. I should go for it.
Chris Whiting:	I mean, having to make that change, that whole 64 bit thing and all that nonsense.
Peter Brewis:	Alright, okay. Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	'Cause I updated my Native Instrument [packages], so I thought "Let's just do it all and get it all in one go."
Peter Brewis:	Right, right.
Chris Whiting:	So, it's a big change.
Peter Brewis:	When you do it all together.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah. I wasn't in the middle of it, so it's fine.
Peter Brewis:	Yeah, that's the thing. I suppose we're of the generation, or I certainly am of the generation where I started with a cassette four track, a cassette tape, and then moved sort of gradually toward... Well, then I had a reel to reel, 8-

track, reel to reel, and then gradually moved to like mini discs and things like that.

Chris Whiting: Yeah, kinda like the big, solid disk recorder, the Fostex and stuff.

Peter Brewis: Well, I used a hard disc, yeah, we went to hard disks, and then eventually, like really only ten years ago, we went to use like laptops to record with. That's the thing that I've used the longest now, really. I've used that longer than I've used tape or anything else now.

Chris Whiting: I started doing recording when I was doing my GCCEs, in the night class in college. I think that was still tape if I remember rightly.

Peter Brewis: Might've been like ADAT or something, you remember they had the video tapes and-

Chris Whiting: Yeah, I remember we had the Fostex hard drives when we went to college-

Peter Brewis: They're great. They are still great.

Chris Whiting: Still quite a lot of people still use them. Yeah. But then I also used mini discs for like a year or for however long that lasted, but yeah, I remember during college, Logic 5, when that came out-

Peter Brewis: Yeah.

Chris Whiting: And that became the more user friendly thing. And I don't know-

Peter Brewis: I think I had the same one, maybe Logic 5.

Chris Whiting: I was working on studio, I was doing session guitar stuff, and maybe using Logic, so I started learning Logic by looking over the shoulder and now it's like that's the program I'm gonna use as well.

Peter Brewis: Yeah, absolutely, yeah.

Chris Whiting: And of course a laptop [crosstalk 00:02:48].

Peter Brewis:	You know I was thinking about this, Logic really has become or like Pro Tools, like the visualization of like, music. I think it's really affected how people, not just how songs sound, because it's also the grid now.
Chris Whiting:	The arrangement and the way you build it up.
Peter Brewis:	Yeah, exactly. It's become like, tempo-obsessed. You know, like strict ... you don't have to do that. Of course, you don't have to. However for editing and for doing like structured song, you can kind of move things.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah, in chunks like four bars, a little bit. The automation of it, it's one of the things I'm going to do with these templates is to ... I just set all the starting tempos to I think the most you can get is five BPM. So set it all for five BPM, students are asking when they open up, they have to think, what tempo what tempo am I going to?
Peter Brewis:	Yeah, alright, okay, you're right.
Chris Whiting:	Because, I mean, that's, for college, cause they always have it open it's 120 BPM. You'd get like 80% of the tracks handed in at 120 [bpm]. They just wouldn't think...
Peter Brewis:	Well this is it. Remember when we had the hard disc recorder when we were recording our second album. And we were really sort of obsessive with the tempos of the songs. And we rehearsed them. The keyboard player Andy and Dave. We tried them out at different tempos but by the actual metronome.
Chris Whiting:	Ah right.
Peter Brewis:	There was no visualization of it. There was no kind of ... You could have done it to a click. You could have done it to a click. We didn't want to do that. You know, we wanted to make songs that kind of, ebbed and flowed and breathed and changed tempos and sort of had riffs in the middle of the song. Or you could speed up a chorus. Whatever. You know.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah.
Peter Brewis:	So we always started listening to this metronome. Yeah and then we start. And that was it. There was a way. But I mean, we still kind of do that now.

Trying not to play the grid as much as we can. And that's all we're gonna have- We're gonna use it for a reason.

Chris Whiting: Yeah.

Peter Brewis: Don't just use it to stay in time.

Chris Whiting: No.

Peter Brewis: That's fucking boring.

Chris Whiting: I do actually change the tempo a bit? I tempo map it-

Peter Brewis: Yeah, yeah, of course, yeah.

Chris Whiting: -up 2 BPM [inaudible 00:05:29] back down one for the next version, then-

Peter Brewis: Yeah.

Chris Whiting: So, it gradually builds up and stuff. And, did one, probably took it too far, the other day, quite extreme tempo changes. I played-

Peter Brewis: It's interesting trying those things out.

Chris Whiting: Yeah. I was playing it for my wife when we're driving, she's like "is the tempo changing?" and that's too much, that's throwing me off.

Peter Brewis: Yeah.

Chris Whiting: If she's picking up that, I've gone too far.

Chris Whiting: But, yeah.

Peter Brewis: Interesting though. Hm.

Chris Whiting: I'm trying to learn Ableton-

Peter Brewis: Alright, okay, yeah.

Chris Whiting: 'Cause that is a different way of-

Chris Whiting: Yeah, but have you tried any of that?

Peter Brewis:	I haven't really, I have a little bit. But not, I haven't really worked on it properly.
Chris Whiting:	No, no, I have dabbled with it a bit before, but. The whole process, it really makes you write in a very different way because of that live function where you're looping things, and adapting ideas as they play, and then-
Peter Brewis:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	-saving to queue down and stuff. It's quite interesting.
Peter Brewis:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	It's gonna go [crosstalk 00:06:33].
Peter Brewis:	I know that's what Warm Digits do, use Ableton, yeah.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah. I'm thinking I'm gonna do a bit of... I'm gonna try and mix the two, you know, take what I've done in Logic as a track, and then write... take out the essential loops of them, put them in Ableton, and reimagine them, try and perform them live, and use them in that aspect.
Peter Brewis:	Okay, right.
Chris Whiting:	That's what I'm looking at.
Peter Brewis:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	So I was re-reading the interview we did in 2013-
Peter Brewis:	God.
Chris Whiting:	Four years ago.
Peter Brewis:	Right.
Chris Whiting:	What do you think has changed in your sort of, practice, if anything, since then?
Peter Brewis:	Uh, I can't remember what I said.

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Chris Whiting: (laughs)

Peter Brewis: Um... Yeah, I don't know. I think after having kids, I think me and Dave have to work a lot quicker.

Chris Whiting: Hm. One of the things you've mentioned is that you don't work to a deadline, you let an idea evolve and you work at it, but you actually said you never worked to a deadline the last time.

Peter Brewis: Um...

Chris Whiting: I mean, that's something that maybe-

Peter Brewis: I think maybe that's changed a little bit. You know, there was a period after 2013 when me and Dave didn't really get into the studio that much together.

Chris Whiting: Yeah.

Peter Brewis: And if we didn't have... we'd have to be a lot more disciplined. Not with how we write or anything, but how we used our time effectively, and...

Chris Whiting: So you still explore, and kind of experiment stuff, but you would-

Peter Brewis: Yeah.

Chris Whiting: You wouldn't work at it. Maybe be a bit more regimented in what you would continue with?

Peter Brewis: Yeah, maybe. I think we did a lot more of just saying "that's not going to work", you know, so like let's leave it. I think a little bit more instinctual, you know... realizing why some things are not gonna work straight away, or not gonna work at anytime soon.

Chris Whiting: Yeah.

Peter Brewis: So just stay. You know what, will you shelve this for now? But what we had going was, over the years we built up like massive on Dictaphones, masses of just material, like lyric books and loads and loads and loads of note books of terrible lyrics, mainly. Terrible ideas. But I think that's another thing that we

kind of... I think we've worked on our own on our lyrics, maybe, a little bit more? Because you don't really need to be in the studio to do that so much.

Chris Whiting: Yeah.

Peter Brewis: Um, structures of the songs have become maybe a bit more conventional.

Chris Whiting: Oh, okay.

Peter Brewis: And I think we've written some proper, actual songs.

Chris Whiting: Any reason, or is that just...?

Peter Brewis: Well, I think as I said before, I kind of wanted to make some songs that my kid would actually like.

Chris Whiting: (laughs)

Peter Brewis: Rather than just being like "oh, where's this going?"

Chris Whiting: Okay.

Peter Brewis: And I think we can kind of do quite a lot of weird stuff as long as there's the repetition at certain points, as long as you have verse, chorus, verse, chorus, or you know, some kind of tangible structure-

Chris Whiting: Yeah.

Peter Brewis: Before you go off somewhere else. And you can do kind of what you want with the harmony, you can do what you want to a certain extent. As long as there's some type of structure to it.

Chris Whiting: Yeah.

Peter Brewis: And this is something I've been thinking of for a while, and I haven't really... I haven't taken it to it's kind of, the end game really, with the idea of seeing how far you can push. See how atonal you can get things and seeing how odd you can make things but in a structure which is just like a plastic popsicle trick.

Chris Whiting: You got quite experimental when you did that concert, you did, I think, with… Paul [Smith of Maximo Park].

Peter Brewis: Yeah, yeah. That was kind of all over the place. Yeah.

Chris Whiting: I reviewed it for NE:MM and I described it as a Bartok meets Motown sort of thing.

Peter Brewis: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Chris Whiting: Some weird, sort of tonal ideas but grounded a bit more, in that pop sensibility.

Peter Brewis: I think yeah, I think so. I think that was one of the things that we tried out. But I suppose that it was kind of also unconventional in terms that Paul was singing about, you know, there were like trouble diaries.

Chris Whiting: Yeah.

Peter Brewis: So it was weirder on a lot of different levels. But it's still... the ensemble just says Motown basically. Kind of drums that did that, (drum noises)-

Chris Whiting: Oh, and the strings.

Peter Brewis: Piano strings, and bass and clean guitar. And that was it. We feel like we picked an ensemble and then that was it.

Chris Whiting: Yeah.

Peter Brewis: The ensemble dictated the direction of and intentions-

Chris Whiting: Yeah.

Chris Whiting: Whereas, has you had a brass section, you might have been more, maybe Philly sounds or Stax.

Peter Brewis: Yeah, maybe, yeah. I think know how to right for brass though. so, I don't know how right.

Peter Brewis:	We tried a little bit with the last Field Music album... I think it's worth a go at. But thankfully we had some help from the guys who were actually playing, so...
Chris Whiting:	Hmm.
Peter Brewis:	And, yeah, so that was... I still think that's something I'd like to kind of explore at some point.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah. That's interesting.
Peter Brewis:	So I think I'd quite like to do it in a kind of three piece rock band, and just do... so almost like it sounds like, you know, just like—.
Peter Brewis:	Yeah like a shitty 70's rock band, or something.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah!
Peter Brewis:	Like doing it with, um, you know tight structures but different tonalities.
Chris Whiting:	Right.
Peter Brewis:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah, and that would be quite limiting just the three of you.
Peter Brewis:	Yeah. Yeah, I've been doing a bunch of that recently. I think I've been doing too much of... yeah. Expanding the ensembles and all of that too much. You know, like music tour with a seven piece band, next year, and then we're gonna do some shows at the Northern Stage, with like a 12 piece band.
Chris Whiting:	Oh wow.
Peter Brewis:	They haven't been announced yet, but it doesn't mater.
Chris Whiting:	(laughs)
Peter Brewis:	Um...
Chris Whiting:	[inaudible 00:14:03] watching it open.

Peter Brewis: Yeah, anyway, you know, it's like the usual sort of throw everything at the wall

Chris Whiting: Hmm, that's interesting, yeah. So-

Peter Brewis: I think I need to get away from that a little bit.

Chris Whiting: Okay. Challenge yourself in a different manner.

Peter Brewis: Just see what I can do, 'cause Field Music used to be a three piece, and we used to play at all of the stuff, you know, everything we did, we used to just play it live as a three piece sort of keyboard player, but he also happened to be a Doors fan, so he could play the bass with this hand. And do the organ or piano with this hand. And me and David would either be...

Peter Brewis: Yeah, it was a great kind of three piece, quite a slippery little rock band that you could like, and it was very reactive, as well. We could say okay, what do we do now? And change things on the fly, you know? We can't really do that with a thirteen piece... But- you can. But it's a lot more difficult, you know.

Chris Whiting: Yeah. So do you think... now Field Music's been going for quite a few years now, hasn't it?

Peter Brewis: Uh, yeah.

Chris Whiting: Do you think with the success of Plumb, would you say that brought you more attention and-

Peter Brewis: Maybe, yeah.

Chris Whiting: -and the band, a bit.

Peter Brewis: Maybe.

Chris Whiting: Having that threshold or milestone, do you think it's gonna cement a bit more of what Field Music, what the sound is?

Peter Brewis: Um, I hope not. I hope not, I hope it still can be whatever we want it to be, really.

Chris Whiting:	Yeah.
Peter Brewis:	Uh...
Peter Brewis:	But I suppose that's why we keep doing other things outside of making rock records. I think that's why we do a soundtrack or we'll do an outside thing. You know the thing with Paul or Dave's solo thing and maybe kind of want it to be something which can change.
Peter Brewis:	Having said that, it's not gonna change too much.
Chris Whiting:	You're not gonna become a death metal band.
Peter Brewis:	No, I don't think so. No, I don't think so, I don't think so. I think ... I don't know. I fearful the idea of finding your sound, though and then just sticking with it.
Chris Whiting:	Would you say you're more of a sort of a Beatles than a Rolling Stones?
Peter Brewis:	I'd like to think so. Yeah, we're probably not that good. Well, you know, I mean, the Beatles were the big inspiration. Here, you had these four guys who were just like a rock and roll band, really. They were able to remain sounding like themselves no matter what they did.
Peter Brewis:	Yeah, absolutely, it's still kind of like ... I mean, Revolution number 9 probably the furthest they ever took it on record. But it still kind of sounds like the Beatles.
Chris Whiting:	Only they could have done it sort of attitude in there.
Peter Brewis:	Yeah.
Chris Whiting:	When you're writing, do you, there's a string of questions that kind of roll off this, but when you write, do you just write and then see what happens? Or do you write and think 'I need to do some Field Music stuff'?
Peter Brewis:	Generally, I write and see what happens. And really, whatever I write, I assume would be Field Music. That the thing, it's like whatever I decide it's gonna be. Having said that, sometimes, the songs don't always work within the context of whatever album we're doing. That might change, but

depending on ... You know, when I did the thing with Paul Smith, it was a definite ensemble then and I definitely went away and wrote things specifically for that.

Peter Brewis: But then again, because I've got a backlog of ideas on the Dictaphone or stored somewhere, I can go back and revisit them and think, "How can I use this for whatever I'm doing at the moment?"

Chris Whiting: Yeah, so you've got a more a bit like the cutting room floor things.

Peter Brewis: Yeah.

Chris Whiting: Didn't make it into Field Music because they weren't maybe appropriate for the album or Field Music.

Peter Brewis: Yeah, and I've got ideas from 15 years ago that I still really like but I haven't quite found a way of either arranging it or writing the right lyrics for them. And I've got lyrical things. Lyrics are different, because I think I wouldn't write the same lyrics as I did when I was 20, not now.

Peter Brewis: Definitely not. So those notebooks are kind of away somewhere in a dusty pile. Because you've got to be in the moment with the lyrics. If you're writing about what you think-

Chris Whiting: Do you find with lyrics that there's kind of two sets of old lyrics, there's ones where you're like, "Wow, that really captured a moment which I just couldn't capture now because I've gone through that moment." Like your first breakup, I was pretty naïve then, but it really captures the moment. Those could be good lyrics. Or "Oh my God, I was stupidly and naïve and that's something that I just can't say or wouldn't say now."

Peter Brewis: Well, I don't know if there's anything wrong with... But I supposed you'd have to write it in character in a way. Because I've kind of thought about how can I now write about, like, romantic things when I'm in the situation that I'm at? How can I write about things like that? Because they are still really important, like your first breakup.

Peter Brewis: So I'd like to maybe go back to the notes that I probably made then when I was writing shockingly bad lyrics, because I had no experience of any other

lyricists other than a very small, you know, when I was 17 or whatever. And just get a sense of myself and what it was like, to see if I can get a sense and then see if I can write about it now.

Chris Whiting: That sounds like kind of co-writing-

Peter Brewis: With yourself.

Chris Whiting: Yeah. You know, when there's someone like Steve Mac or someone gets an artist in, a young singer/songwriter and crafts what they have as raw emotions and says "Okay, well, you know, that's not quite right. Say it more like this and that's a pop song that will sell."

Peter Brewis: Yeah, yeah.

Chris Whiting: Kind of like Adele's songs. They might be about her situation but someone else has helped her craft it.

Peter Brewis: Yeah, absolutely, yeah.

Chris Whiting: So you're kind of crafting yourself from earlier.

Peter Brewis: But it's about ... I suppose for me, it about, you know, I didn't have the vocabulary to really express how I was feeling. It don't know how young you are, your first breakup or whatever, your first girlfriend, or all of those sort of things. It definitely feels really intense and really real and really ... I was never very literate as a teenager, I didn't do that, I did guitar and I played football. I didn't really read books. Maybe Terry Pratchett books or something like that.

Peter Brewis: And it's brilliant and I wish I'd kind of actually taken more from that and read more, really. Then I might have been a ... You don't want to go around just quoting people or using other people's ideas and pass them off as your own. Although, there's actually nothing wrong with that either, as long as you're transforming into something, into something else.

Peter Brewis: But actually, having said that, is it all not sort of just kind of quotations in the end, whatever you do?

Chris Whiting:	Yeah, taking the Terry Pratchett idea and all the witches novels were Shakespeare-
Peter Brewis:	Yeah, yeah, they're quoting themselves. Yeah, they're transforming other ideas. And Shakespeare transformed his ideas, you know.
Peter Brewis:	Yeah, exactly, he based his plays on old plays or other texts.
Chris Whiting:	It's known that Romeo and Juliet was actually based on a Greek tragedy.
Peter Brewis:	Right, yeah.
Chris Whiting:	Yeah.
Peter Brewis:	I didn't know that, I didn't know about ... But it happens. The recycling of things. But I suppose when you're a 17-year-old and you're writing lyrics, there are only so many words you can recite, ideas about looking, the way of looking at the world.
Chris Whiting:	Like the whole metaphor of hearts. It's a real cliché to say "Oh, my heart's breaking." It's just such a cliché to use-
Peter Brewis:	Yeah, so how else do you say that? How else do you say that thing, which is ... Yeah, how do you make the every day sound kind of original? And you have to try to find your own voice, and I haven't found that yet, definitely haven't. I don't think so. I'm better than I was. Like, musically, I haven't found it yet, I haven't found my voice yet, really.
Chris Whiting:	So you still feel you're doing a lot more experimentation and exploration?
Peter Brewis:	Well, I need to. I haven't, I haven't, but I need to.
Chris Whiting:	It sounds like, to you, it'd be a dangerous thing to find that voice, because then you'll be like, "This is what I do. I'm Peter Brewis and this is what I do."
Peter Brewis:	But I think I find voices on the road all the way, and for once they become slightly too familiar, I get bored of them. If you have to talk to yourself, you want yourself to kind of change a bit.

Chris Whiting: Yeah, I don't know who originally said it. I've got a quote of Neil Gaiman saying it, but "You only ever learn to write the story you're writing." So in his case, he didn't learn to write novels, he just learned to write that novel. And then when he went to write different novel, he had to learn to write that one.

Peter Brewis: How to learn how to do it again. Yeah, yeah, and actually, that's kind of, for me, that would be a good way of looking at it. I mean, I don't think there's ... It sustains the idea of what I want to do, but you know, I think I accept that I'm not really that successful in the music industry itself. I'm kind of not that successful, and there's lots of reasons for that.

Chris Whiting: You mean in the commercial in the commercial sense of the amount of records sold and all that?

Peter Brewis: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, in the commercial sense, I'm not very successful at all. However, it's enough to make it worthwhile doing, you know.

Chris Whiting: Yeah, you earn a living from it which in itself is success.

Peter Brewis: Barely. But I get to do exactly what I want to do, exactly what I want to do, and I think I need to remember that and think "What do I really want to do today? What do I really want to do?" It's different when you've got responsibilities. You know, I've got a house now, I've got a child. Shit! I need to write some proper songs that might get on the radio. And I never really thought about that too much, even though I totally love pop music, always have. But now, it feels different.

Chris Whiting: So, yeah, in terms of what you take from pop music it wasn't that you wanted to emulate the success of pop music it was to emulate the feel-

Peter Brewis: Yeah, [inaudible 00:27:12]. Yeah, yeah.

Chris Whiting: I mean, I would certainly feel the same way.

Peter Brewis: But I lot of really unsuccessful pop music as well. I remember when all the CD reissues came out, when CDs were a big thing, and all of these CD reissues came out. Was that in late ... Mid to late-90s. And you've got all these 60s and 70s and 80s as well, kind of like these nuggets of ... Well, this pop music

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that never quite made it into the wide public consciousness, so it was like discovery.

Chris Whiting: I remember when there were shops like Fopp selling £5 a CD-

Peter Brewis: Yes, yes, yeah.

Chris Whiting: - which, that then felt really amazing [inaudible 00:28:01].

Peter Brewis: Yeah, yeah, totally great.

Chris Whiting: I would literally have stacks of CDs each month I would just go and buy-

Peter Brewis: Yeah, yeah, that's what I did, yeah. You get the entire Beach Boys back catalogue for like 30 quid. All the Beatles back catalogue. And then all of these other things, which were kind of like really unsuccessful. Successful in a minor way, but kind of got lost unless you had, like, the original vinyl of it.

Chris Whiting: Or, like, the early release of artists who went on to be bigger. I love John Martyn but the stuff that come out before that wasn't typically great, but I bought it in order to see-

Peter Brewis: Yeah, yeah, of course, yeah.

Chris Whiting: Track the development of their sound.

Peter Brewis: Yeah, wasn't it like Stormbringer and ...

Chris Whiting: Yeah, Stormbringer and the other one he did with his wife.

Peter Brewis: Oh yeah, Beverly Martyn

Chris Whiting: Yeah, I really didn't like those ones, but was there ones before the Tumbler and the] first album they did? London Conversations.

Peter Brewis: London Conversations, that's right.

Chris Whiting: Which, for me, was very much the same as Bob Dylan's first album, 11 tracks but only one of them was an original track.

Peter Brewis: Right, right.

Chris Whiting: They're all covers. That one original track is almost exactly the same as a Bob Dylan song, the music, melody, just different lyrics. I can't remember the songs now. Yeah, but they generally had the same approach to their first album and find their sound. Whereas now artists don't do an album of covers and then go on to find their sound.

Peter Brewis: Not really, I suppose ... Did Rumour do it? Did she do an album of-. Anyway, I don't know. I mean, I suppose I was in cover bands for years-

Chris Whiting: I lot of people learn their craft on their instrument first-

Peter Brewis: Yeah, that's it.

Chris Whiting: You don't do an album of covers under your name-

Peter Brewis: No, no, no.

Chris Whiting: You didn't do a 'Field Music covers [19]80's pop songs, which I would love to hear if you'd think about doing it.

Peter Brewis: No, no, not anymore.

Chris Whiting: Thinking about finding an artistic voice, say you don't feel like you found yours.

Peter Brewis: No, I don't think I ever will. I don't think I ever will.

Chris Whiting: Obviously there must be a voice of the artist inside of everything you do. How do you feel about it and what you've done so far?

Peter Brewis: I feel good about it, listening back to what I've done, if I ever ... I mean, I very rarely do it, but I feel fine about it. But I have the urge, whenever I listen to any of it from a while ago, to go back and sort of correct myself, change things, change that or I wouldn't have said that.

Peter Brewis: But yeah, I don't know.

Chris Whiting: So you say when you listen back to stuff that's kind of recorded, you reflect on what you would change, how you'd do it now in that moment, do you

kind of have stages of reflecting in the work, so 'that's recorded. Let's listen back' or as you're recording, or as you're writing?

Peter Brewis: Yeah, it probably got a little bit too reflective I think now, because you can basically take the mixes home with you and listen to them in the car or listen to them at home or on your headphones, it becomes a little bit too-

Peter Brewis: It just becomes a little bit too ... there's a tendency in the studio to say, "I'll sort that out later on." But I think, unless you're gonna spend an entire ... it's more relaxed in a way because you don't have to spend that real block of time in the studio trying to get something.

Chris Whiting: So when you're in the moment of creating, don't feel pressured to perfect your, what happens. You can say, "Okay, let's just do this on and look at it later."

Peter Brewis: Yeah. And I think that goes with either writing .... 'Cause everything's editable all the time now. Everything's kind of changeable and editable, it's really ... and I would not necessarily have done that before. I would have done it with a band before. And it would have been me, Dave, and Andy together editing material there together, just three people. But now it's kind of ... I'll go in and I'll sort my song out, Dave will come in to make suggestions. He's played bass on it or something like that, and then he'll go away. So I kind of miss being in a band, writing and arranging a song, which is part of the writing process, really, these days, as three people in a room playing together. I don't do that now. And there's something lost in that I think.

Peter Brewis: Me and Dave still do sometimes, and you can hear the songs when me and Dave have sat down in a room and worked out drums and guitar together. You hear the variations, you hear the mistakes, you hear the slipups, and you hear the differences. We had a song called "Disappointed," and we did that on the last album, and we worked it out, what we were going to do, and then recorded it.

Chris Whiting: That was one of the singles right?

Peter Brewis:	Yeah. It was just a mistake, just a massive mistake. It's meant to be a gap and I'd go to play a drum fill at the wrong time, and Dave was like, "Leave it, it's fine." And it just becomes part of the energy of the song, you know, the-
Chris Whiting:	Like that Percy Sledge song, 'When a man loves a woman. There's a bit where all the backing vocals come in and then suddenly drop out.
Peter Brewis:	Yeah it's wonderful. Jean Genie, they all go to the chorus at the wrong time. The voice says, "That's alright," and then they go to the chorus. It's like a total fuck up but they left it in. That is very rare now when that happens, because then it's all editable, so you can always sort it out.
Chris Whiting:	Did you do much selective, so actually that's an exceptional mistake and that's not-
Peter Brewis:	Absolutely, yeah.
Chris Whiting:	So some ideas have become good music ideas and some don't. How do you think you're going to work out what is a Field Music idea. Would could be a Field Music song.
Peter Brewis:	It's normally just kind of like testing out what lyrics and music are gonna work together, and then present them to Dave. And I think Dave's excited by it, then I will continue. If he sounds like he can't be assed with it, then I have to either have a total conviction about it, or I'll just leave it.
Chris Whiting:	So it's about characteristics of the music itself, or-
Peter Brewis:	No no.
Chris Whiting:	Or about an energy that you both kind of feel?
Peter Brewis:	Yeah. There just needs to be some kind of conviction between the two of us that this is what we're going to do. And sometime Dave's very, "I don't know how this one's going to work." And I say, "Look, Dave. Just trust me. Wait 'til I've sorted it out a bit later on and then you'll get it."
Chris Whiting:	How's this is going to work in the context of the album-

Peter Brewis:	Just how it's going to work musically. I don't really see where you're going with this song at all. I don't see what you're doing with it. And I've thought that with Dave's stuff. "Really? Okay ...." It gets in the head of the vision that Dave has of something. We just have to trust each other, and if it doesn't work, then we just say, "Okay. That's fine. It doesn't work."
Chris Whiting:	Either revisit it later, or find a project where it does work.
Peter Brewis:	Yeah or just put it in the pile.
Chris Whiting:	You've gotta have the failures unfortunately haven't you?
Peter Brewis:	Yeah absolutely. You can't be scared of that sort of thing. Let me see what time it is. We'll wait for another five minutes, I think.
Chris Whiting:	Okay. Yeah.
Peter Brewis:	So I'm working on another project at the moment with another songwriter who I totally love. The songs are kind of a lot straighter than Field Music songs, I think. They're like actual proper songs. And I never thought I'd be really so into that. And now she said, "Well, you have to write some songs for this project as well." So we have to do it together.
Chris Whiting:	So you're not just producing. You're actually-
Peter Brewis:	I'm actually. Well, I was meant to be just producing, but it's become, "Why don't you write two songs." I don't think I could write songs like ... You know, I kind of like normal songs, but that have such an impact, you know. You know like Leonard Cohen writes normal songs, but like edged beyond normal, like ... there's just like .... That's a new challenge for me now to have to write songs that are kind of normal.
Chris Whiting:	So is this kind of like the artistic voice where because these songs are for this artist, you're having to kind of find that artistic voice?
Peter Brewis:	Yeah. And you know, I'm struggling with it. I'm struggling with it. I really want to do it. But when I put my songs that I've written for this thing along side hers, it's like mine are totally shit. How do you do this? How do you do it? I

don't know how to do it. You have to show me how to do it." "I don't know. That's how I do it."

Chris Whiting: I was doing a session with Cortney Dixon a while ago, and what she does herself, with her music, she's incredible at. And I remember thinking straightaway the first session I was like, "I can't write your songs. You write them so well that anything I do I'll be tripping and treading on your feet." So what we ended up doing is to say, "Well, let's work on other material for neither of us, and see what becomes of it.

Peter Brewis: See, I've always wondered how a band like Fleetwood Mac did it. How did they have really three very distinctive songwriters, all of whom I really really like. But how do they make it ... because Stevie Nicks sounds like nothing like Christine McVie.

Chris Whiting: No. That's a good example, that. Yeah.

Peter Brewis: Lindsey Buckingham is nothing like ... you know they're not like...[inaudible 00:40:08]. They sounded like ... Rumours is their classic example, right? Everything's just perfect, and just everything works.

Chris Whiting: Yeah. The solo albums are all very different. You wouldn't have put them together the other way around, "let's put you three together". But it's something it's all about the band. The way the band-

Peter Brewis: It might be to do with the actual band, which is the weirdest thing. Because I think like I said, the Beatles, they had three songwriters. But actually they're really not in fact as distinctive, because I think they all wrote together. You know, George's songs, really, even in the end, there were definitely McCartneyisms and Lennonisms in there. And with McCartney and Lennon, not all the time, but there's definitely a crossing of-

Chris Whiting: Maybe it's something like because they know it's for that band, the intention is there. That they know that line up, that sound, these harmonies, these will work for this song. These lyrics will work for what the Beatles brand.]

Peter Brewis: Yeah. I don't know.

Chris Whiting: When you see something like ... similar to the process of like Motown or Stax or something where the team writes for the different artists. Possibly using the same band each time, but-

Peter Brewis: Yeah. Maybe that explains why we're not so successful, actually. Because we never really think that. We never really think how are we going to make different media with different writers. I think because our records are too all over the place or something, to make sense. It makes sense to us, but maybe to other people it doesn't really make sense. We need a producer.

Chris Whiting: You said before you do that yourself.

Peter Brewis: I couldn't be bothered.

Chris Whiting: Do you think your fan base, do you think it changes?

Peter Brewis: All five of them. I don't know. It's interesting. I think there are certain people I see at the gigs. You see the same people and it's, "Hey, how are you doing? You alright Martin. How's it?" "Yeah yeah. Talk of the Town is still your best album, you know." Like alright okay. They're still staying so there seems to be, thankfully, a few people who are interested in what we're doing and will check it out. But that's not gonna last forever. And maybe there are new people who, I don't know. There are some people who don't bother anymore. I don't know. There's a risk in it. I don't know.

Chris Whiting: Well, the change is inevitable so why not change yourself before the fans change?

Peter Brewis: Yes.

Chris Whiting: Very soon we'll find, oh God, our fans are getting old and aren't buying records. We need to appeal to teenage girls.

Chris Whiting: Well they don't buy records anyway, so it's like what would you do to steal the appeal of those fifty-year-old blokes who still go to a record shop and buy vinyl?

Peter Brewis: Yeah. Actually that's a news, isn't it? Yeah. We do still kind of appeal to people who buy records. The last album we actually sold some actual records.

Chris Whiting: Yeah. And the BBC 6 music listenership? Are those the people who-?

Peter Brewis: Yeah. We've been looking really. That's kind of the fans who we seem to fit in with. When we started there was no 6 music. First two albums, well, first album there was no 6 music, and we had to get on Radio 1, basically. And we never did.

Chris Whiting: Yeah. You're not a Radio 2 band. The Radio 1 has taken over the big selling, the top selling. The top selling. BBC 6 broke the last gap in the market for those people who are passionate about independent, off-the-track, alternative music.

Peter Brewis: Yeah. And really it makes a big difference. And there are those sorts of stations all across the world, really, the sort of 6 music kind of stations.

Chris Whiting: And having the BBC brand behind it really pushes- You've got Marc Riley.

Peter Brewis: We've been very, very lucky really. We're different. But still good but different. Remind you that Marc Riley might not have liked us. [inaudible 00:44:50]

Chris Whiting: The influence of someone with that position to disseminate for you.

Peter Brewis: Yeah. So, as long as he's in the job. That would be ... he's good. He's been great. A very good friend as well.

Peter Brewis: Right. Well thanks for-

Chris Whiting: Thank you!

Appendix 10 Interview Transcript: MaryAnn Tedstone 5th June 2013

Originally conducted and used as part of my master's research module submitted to Bath Spa, 2013.

CW- I'm going to do a semi-structured sort of thing of areas to fling through but otherwise just a chatty sort of thing. So, just to start off, do you want to tell us how you got into music because I know you have quite a rich history with that.

MT- Music generally?

CW- Yeah, just to paint a picture.

MT- My dad was a teacher, started a recorder group and he spent a lot of his spare time doing this recorder group so for me it was either he went away and spent time with these other kids where he was teaching or I had to play the recorder so I could join the recorder group. So that's what I did. I was about 4 at the time. That was quite a big influence as we did quite well. We travelled down to London and we went to Rome and went to Italy, Russia Germany on tour. I think that was quite a useful experience. As I grew older I took more part in directing and arranging the music. But I think my first songwriting experience was 8, I wrote a song called 'Mischievous Mermaids' and it got played on TV. That was quite cool. But I didn't write anything else until I got a job with Royal Shakespeare Company. I'd written some Roman music and sent some to Michael Boyde… actually I tell a lie. After 8, the first one [next song] was when I was 15 and Michael Boyde was at our local film Theatre. He was artist director at the Tron Theatre and we were doing a show for him playing music that someone had written for him then the composer walked out half way through the production and left him high and dry. So I finished the composition of the music. Hen he really owed me one as I did it all for free. Then when I'd done the Roman music I sent it to him to see what he thought and he really liked it. So he got me in on a play and that was the first big job I'd had. It was a really good one. Michael [Tedstone] came along and helped with that one, he co-wrote it all. It was the first co-write we had done. Michael was 18/19 at the time, so it was a really big experience for Michael as well.

CW- So you would have been about 30 at the time?

MT- Yes, I was about 30 at the time.

CW- So there's this big gap there. At 15 you'd done this job, picking up the pieces and 15 years later, you call in the favour.

MT- I hadn't done anything in between though.

CW- But you'd gone off to study hadn't you?

MT- I'd carried with the recorder and got into early music baroque and renaissance music. When I was 17 I left school and starting commuting from Glasgow to London for music lessons with someone who was great. Then he was professor of music at the Guildhall [of Music] so he helped me get in there and he helped me get through the duration of that course. But that was quite a commitment because I had to work. I left school and went to work at the Inland Revenue and worked enough to get overtime to get enough time off to go and do the lessons. And I still had to do 4 hours practice a day. I would finish at 6-7 and then I would practice, go to bed then get and do it all again. It was really intense. I did that for a year then I went to the Guildhall [of Music] and did a 4 year course there.

CW- Was it always the recorder for you or did you dabble in other instruments?

MT-Always dabbled in other instruments. I played trombone which was my second study. Then I swapped to harpsichord when I was at Guildhall. I'd always done things like play in orchestras and jazz bands and had a really good knowledge of the orchestra as a whole because I'd played other instruments. I played violin, grade 6 cello. I don't think there's an instrument in the orchestra I can't play.

CW- Grade 6, that's not really dabbling, that's quite proficient. Are you similar [standard] with all of them?

MT- I did that in 6 weeks.

CW-! There's nothing half measure with you is there?

MT- But I quit everything. I quit school for the duration of that 6 weeks. What happened was, the music group we were going down to London to play at the Royal Albert Hall and the cellist dropped out so I said I'll play the cello part. Dad said "You can't play cello at all." But I said "no but I'll manage it." So he said "ok" and I said "I can't go to school, I either do cello or I do nothing" so he said "right, fine". But you could do that then, didn't go to school for 6 weeks and played the cello. I went to a cello teacher to make sure I was doing everything I should be doing and she said it was bang on and fine. So I went down to London and played the part. I won't do that ever again though, it was seat of pants stuff.

CW- That's pretty amazing. This turn at 30 into songwriting with the Shakespeare Group, was that something you intended or did you happen to stumble [into it]?

MT- No, what happened was our mum died suddenly so there was pot of money and we wanted to do something was helpful long term for me and Michael [Tedstone]. Michael was interested because he'd done an arrangement of a piece on Mac we had a home and it was good. Dad thought I should be trying to write because I'd be good at it but I hadn't really done it. So he got us a very basic home studio that sat in Glasgow, I couldn't take it down to London, but it was in Glasgow. Basically that started it off. 4 weeks later I got my first job with the BBC. After we got that studio. That was doing the authentic instrumentation for 'Meet the

Ancestors' because they've got some authentic instruments in the theme tune (that was me). After I got 'Meet the Ancestors' I rang up 'Time Team' (Channel 4) and told them what I had with 'Meet the Ancestors (MTA)' and asked them to take me on to do some music for them too. Because 'MTA' was there direct competition so I said "this is what I'm doing for MTA, if you give me more leeway, this is what I can do for you".

CW- You very proactive. I know this anyway from our previous conversations. (I know I'm setting this us a bit) but would you say that was the key aspect to your success?

MT- One of them. It's certainly one of them. I think we know so many people who want to do what we're doing but aren't doing it because they don't bang doors enough. You have to be proactive. I think being proactive is almost the most important thing. It's got to be decent music though. I think that's why Michael and I are a good team because I don't think Michael would be able to be like that but I couldn't do what Michael does either. Michael's attention to detail is amazing and mine isn't, I get bored after 5 minutes. I'm looking for the next thing all the time but that's our two distinct personalities. He's so patient, he'll sit there looking at the same thing for hour after hour and I can't. I'm like a flippity-digit, I'm off the next thing. I don't work as hard as him but I do get things done.

CW- You're two halves of each other, you need the half, which you've obviously got down as a working relationship. So you say hat's one of the aspects [of why you are so successful], that you are proactive, what are the other big ones for you?

MT- I think we've got different skillsets. Michael's grown up with computers and I've grown up with a classical music education. It gives us a very wide ranging idea of how things should go. Sometimes we'll come at a project with completely different visions but they'll normally coalesce at one point of another and it means that we're always another set of ears for the other person. There's nothing worse then working on something for 4 or 5 days then you can't tell if it's good or not, you loose perspective. The fact that I'm not in there [the studio] al the time, because Michael's in the studio all day everyday and I'm not. I'll go in a couple of days a week. I'll go in and do topline but normally I'm on the phone trying to plan things sort things out, trying to get us the next job. My musical input is an awful lot less than Michaels. I think is really important because whenever I go in and listen to something it's with fresh ears. I'm able to say to him 'if you tweek this' or the string part's not right' or 'the bow's not right'. I think that's quite important.

CW- The whole being a songwriter isn't just about creating music, you've got you're whole system going for you.

MT- I think the smallest part of being a songwriter is the music. It's the kernel that makes you a good product but it's the rest of the package that… Because someone like Richard Parfitt is always saying "it's all about the music really" and I look at him and I think "No, it's not". It

would be great if it was but it's not. It's about who you know, who you can get to, who you can talk to, how you can make those connections so that when the person who has a job to other and they think 'who can I offer this job to?' they think 'I've just spoken to MaryAnn, I'll give her a call'. That's what you're after, that's what it's really about. There's an awful lot of songwriters out there and they're all a good standard. There's an awful lot of sync writers, there's an awful amount of singers out there. People sit there and think 'well, if I'm good enough', that's bollocks. It's not about if you're good enough, it's about how hard you work at it and how people you can prove yourself to, how many times you can get somebody out of a hole they've got themselves into, how many time you can help somebody out so they can help you out. That's what it's really about.

CW- That's a good life lesson from any trade really, isn't it? Someone said to me a while ago 'In life you need at least 2 of 3 things; to be good at what you do, turn up on time and for people to like you. If you have all 3, amazing, but if you don't have of them then forget it.

MT- I think being good at what you do id the least important because I think about if we need to get a guitarist in, which we sometime do, we'll go to the person that's easiest to work with every time. Sometimes we'll say 'no he's not good enough' but most of the time it's not down to that, it's down to will they come in at a moments notice, will they drop everything, will they need to be paid in which case they're very unlikely to get anything from us, especially if they want to be paid up front. If we can get them in to do a sync and we can offer them money if we get the sync then that's always much more beneficial to us. In fact, because it's a gamble for everyone, we might spend 3 days on a brief and it's a gamble for them but at least we're all working for the same thing. If the musician gets a payout because the sync was good then they benefited from not taking the money up front. You always want someone with that positive attitude because people coming in saying you'll have to pay me at least £25 for that, £25's nothing in the long run but having to find money for each project makes things tough.

CW- you'd think musicians would be leaning more towards the royalty thing as you hear so many great [horror] stories about; the guy who the saxophone on 'Careless Whisper' [George Michael] got paid £200 and that was it no royalties.

MT- Well the thing is, did he make up the part or did he just paly it? Because if he just played it then should he get royalties, I don't think so.

CW- Performance royalties.

MT- Well performance royalties is fine but…

CW- I don't know if he made it up [the sax part] I only know half that story. Narrowing in on the tiny kernel, the smallest part, when you guys write. For you, like you said, Michael is the technical guy, he's on the computer so he's locked down at the studio

MT- He's the track writer, he writes the tracks [beats, harmony, arrangement, production] and I do the topline [lyrics and melody].

CW- Do you write your parts in a regular time and space, like if you're writing in the studio or where it takes your mood?

MT- No, I don't think we've done that for a long time. I think that's quite an amateurish approach. I think when you've got a lot of work to do you'll look at the diary and think 'well that singer's coming in [to the studio] to do a song on that day so we better get a song done before they come in to do it.' So it's more diary driven. If we've got a singer coming in to do a new song then we'll have a new song ready. Normally we might do that song a hour before they come in ,so we'll just arrive an hour early. That's normally what we'll do. It's very time constrained. If we spent 3 days I don't think we'd get a better [song]. If you've only got an hour and you have an idea, you have to get it out there. If you have 3 days you have all this 'should I say this? Or should we go down this route'. If you've got an hour to do the song then there is no other route, it's just you've got an idea do the song, here it is. 90% of the time you've got a better product because you've been forced down a route and you just have to take it.

CW- (This is going to lead into something else I know but) with saying 'you've got an hour to write the song' do you still continue to rewrite and adjust and amend?

MT- Yeah. Also we only ever do that if we know the singer. Someone like Tabitha [Pegg] whose voice we know very well, we know what she can and can't do, we tend to know what the songs got to do. For another singer it's completely different. If we have an unknown singer come in we won't try and write a song, what we'll tend to do is get them to sing a song that with already written [not for them] but not used, see how she does on that. But we won't waste the time trying to write something that may or may not work. It's always time pressure driven what we do.

CW- So you're not shooting in the dark trying to get just the right idea for them.

MT- We used to but I don' think you benefit from it. I don't think the songs benefit from it. I don't think laying around in grassy field trying to work out what you are trying to say is beneficial because nobody really cares what you've got to say. If the song's good, the song's good. I think it's more important that you get a well-crafted song that means something to people, that people can identify with. I think that's more important.

CW- So as your professional stance you feel it is less about you writing about how you think or feel on a subject and that you're writing *for* an audience with something that'll appeal to them?

MT- I don't think we're writing for an audience, I think we're writing for the artist. Someone like Tabitha is 17 so we know what pulls on her strings and we know how she feels about

things. So it's best to write something that she can identify with. It's all about getting her to be comfortable with the song and allowing her to emphasise with the her own song is more important. When I was in Bath in February we wrote a couple of songs I always had Tabitha in mind for those songs. The song we did together, I knew who it was going to be aimed at and we did a Tabitha song. That's beneficial because we've turned that into something good and we're going to use it for Tabitha. Whereas the one I did with Richard [Atkinson] I don't think we'll end up using at all, it was because he wanted to do something with his guitar riff, it was a more sophisticated grown up riff and we don't have a singer who could sing something like that. That's not we're doing right now. So we'll get that song down and move on.

CW- Richard writes more for himself and yours is a completely different discipline.

MT- At the beginning when we first started, we were writing songs for me to sing and then the kind of songs were very different. When we're first signed to Big Life [Management] it was all about, I was going to sing those songs but we stopped those after about 6 months because I haven't got the voice or it.

CW- Having spoken to you so often it's made me look at singers in a whole new light and say 'you're a good singer but you've not got a voice that would grab me. It's just good.'

MT- It's really hard. Tabitha is the first singer with had in 7 years that we've wanted to take further. We've had others that we've taken a certain distance and then it's failed. It's failed for a variety of reasons, all of which are very common but mostly because they've got a self-destruct button, or they're worried they're going to be screwed over. They're very rarely for musical reasons, they're usually inter-personal reasons between us and the singer or the singer and their people. Those concerns normally get in the way. I think that's why the industry's getting younger and younger with the artist because to find someone who's less concerned with that and more concerned with the music, you have to go younger and younger each time.

CW- So the song that we started [All the Same], it started with chord progression, if I remember rightly? Is that your usual MO?

MT- Yeah, the way did it is exactly the way me and Michael do it. So I'd get you to play something over and over then I 'll come up the word and the tune. Sometimes Michael's gone away and come and said 'here's a complete song, chords and a bit of a tune' and it just tweeking a little bit or change the words a little bit. It really depends on the type of song we're after as well. Michael's very good at listening to current music and trying to get that in to the track. I know what I like and he's always trying to get me to listen to more current styles and I do but not as much as he does.

CW- I noticed you're very good at getting a good solid melody down very quickly. A good hook that people will like and then you apply words on top of that, is that fair to say? I like that.

MT- Sometimes the hoof [melody] and the words come at the same time. They'll come at the same time mostly. Normally I'd be trying something out or I'd thought something earlier or there'll be… there's normally a lyric hook in there somewhere and I'll just start singing it. They come at the same time you know, Chris. I don't hum something and think what are the words that'll go with that but it's not lyric driven either, they come at the same time.

CW- Do you think the songs are melodically driven more than lyrics perhaps?

MT- No, I don't, I think they're lyric driven. I'm just more experienced with melody. I did ask Joe Bennett about this once because he asked us to write a song in a night and then me, Michael and Ali [Gilfillan] went away and then came back [with songs] and he was guessing how we had written them. He knew it wasn't melody driven but he also knew I knew what I was doing with melody. I think it's lyric driven but I know what I'm doing with melody.

CW- I read a nice analogy for songwriting that it's like driving [by Jack Perricone] whereby, when you're starting you're thinking 'handbrake, clutch…' you go through each bit (and check the mirrors) but when once you know how to drive and are experienced, you just go 'I'll pulling away now'. Do you feel like you're like that with melody, so many year of experience with it, you don't think, you just do?

MT- Yeah, that's true except that one of the thing me and Michael try not to do, is to go down cul-de-sac's. Everybody has a palette of options and we say 'no, you've done that before and you keep doing that. Let's stop that and do something else' and checking each other, saying 'don't do that again. It worked but we've got to do something different now'. So we spend a lot of time making sure that happens [checking] so that we're not taking the same type of options. I think people are very bad at that, having a formula and I don't think it helps them. You have to look at it as an objective exercise and think 'do I always do this? If so, why? And what can I change to make it better?' Because every year, you want to look back at it and say 'the songs you wrote this year were better than the songs you wrote last year' and I think people aren't objective enough to sit there and say 'are they better? Am I embarrassed by it because it's not as good as what I'm writing this year?'

CW- I definitely do that [bad writing habits]. We've talked about this before where we've said 'he always does that, that melody, they always do that'. I've noticed it with students as well, where I could recognize a student's song by a certain melody line or chord progression because they use it so often. How would you define a song, if you have a particular definition, or do you think it's something indefinable?

MT- I would say a song is emotion defined by words and music.

CW- Is a working definition for you is how you approach your job and say 'this is a song and this isn't, that's not what I do there' [desperately trying not to ask a leading question, instead asking nothing at all!]

MT- I think when we go to write a song we always want to know a vague back story. So I'll be like 'what are we writing about? What's the emotion? Is it about somebody left somebody? Are they getting together? What?' I need to know the emotional field I'm working in for melody and lyrics *and* chords, you want to know what your palette is. It's emotion driven. So the definition of a song is it has to be emotion but then you need words and music. I think that define what we do. If you don't have that 1 emotion in a song and keep referring back to it then your song becomes too vague and not enough people can identify with it. You always have to thinking 'who's buying this song? Who's my demographic?' It's always commercial and I think it should be otherwise it's just people pleasuring themselves with their own music and it becomes rather incestuous. I think you've got to have commercial interest and I think that's healthy.

CW- Do you think that's one of the things that defines you attitude as a professional? The acceptance that this [songwriting] is a commercial endeavour, you don't feel too precious about being artistic?

MT- I think we learnt that. I used to find it very difficult, when we used to have a singer in and they'd sing it different or not the way I wanted it down or they were singing something I wanted to song, I found it very tough. You just learn, you're either going to do it or you don't. if they're going to sing your song they're going to have to make it their own. You are no longer singing it so it's no longer your song. You have to take it to a point then abandon it and remove your emotions from the song. Doesn't mean you're not passionate about it when you're writing it but you have to know when it's time to let go and then that's it. That's a real experience attitude. You just don't do it at the beginning You see people who are just starting and they're like 'I don't want to change that, it's my baby'. It's not your baby, it's a song. You're either going to sell it, in which case someone else is going to do something horrendous to it. Like the time we did a song with someone and a dubstep artist did a remix of it, which was great because it got the track some publicity but *fucking hell!* Really killed it. But you have to say it's good because at least somebody is spending time on the track and they're interested and it brings a new audience to it. It has to be commercial.

CW- So you for you, would you say emotion is an important part? As other options that cropped up in questionnaires were 'intellectual challenge' or 'physiological' where it make you want to tap your feet?

MT- I think that's bollocks. I think it all comes back to the emotion anyway. If something makes you want to tap your feet it's because the emotional response you are having is that you want to tap your feet. If you heard 'My Heart will go on' [Diane Warren] it doesn't make

you want t tap your feet and that's nothing to do with the speed of the music it's to do with the fact that it's presented to you as 'My Heart Will Go On' and the chord palette everything about it has an emotion attach to it so you don't want to tap your feet to it. So I think any physiological response is emotion lead.

CW- So it's all connected to this same core idea?

MT- Yeah but I am a girl.

CW- Did you see those Ralph Murphy videos, where he put across the argument that all songs are for girls?

MT- That's so true. I mean, boys write songs but all songs are for girls. Boys write songs to get laid. And Girls write songs to get the emotion out, to express themselves, to tell boys how they feel.

CW- I like that. It's a strong way of looking at it for commercial music because your audience is women in that core sense. I assume, but I'm going to ask anyway, that because of your work ethic you never get writers block?

MT- No because what we do is to try and have 2 or 3 projects on the go at one time. At the moment we have a pop song on the go for Tabitha (which is your one, we're still working on your one), we've got the Richard III album which we're trying to get the CD manufactured into the shops and we're doing a Chinese album we're doing a sample pack for a sample company and we're doing some sync stuff. Now that's 5 projects so if one's not working we put it to one side and work on another one but you have to make sure that… Me and Michael will talk about what we're doing this week, what's the priority. I've got a Google calendar which is buzzing through to my phone everyday with make sure you get this done today and this done today. I think it's very organised.

CW- Did either one of ever start getting a writers block that you've now got this system where you don't have it, where you'd think 'I just don't have any ideas today'?

MT- No, early on, when we were first signed to Big Life we were very different from how we are now. Early on we would say 'are we going to write today?' and sometimes we'd take the day off not very often now, it happens less and less. There used to be times when we'd have only written 2 or 3 times a week at the beginning but now we have to make sure we occasionally get a weekend. That's just because that's when people can come in. When you're self-employed and you have to bring in a certain sum of money you have to work as hard as you can to get it in and when you have got it you have to keep working in case net month you can't get it.

CW- You've got to push yourself quite hard. When do you think you went professional? If you consider yourself a professional? I spoke to someone the other day who doesn't.

MT- Yeah because we don't so anything else, we just make our living from writing so we consider ourselves professional. I think I consider we went professional when we got signed because someone gave us a salary. We were very lucky when Big Life signed us as they gave us a sum of money and told us to go away and learn our craft. But that was a learning process as we got signed after only writing one pop song. God knows how that came good but it did.

CW- If I went to students 'she got signed after writing one pop song' they'd be pulling their hair out but that does ignore the years before like you said you started playing recorder at 4 years old and spent time learning your craft. How long ago were you signed to Big Life?

MT- We were signed to Big life in 2005

CW- Not that long ago then.

MT-We haven't been doing it that long. I had all those years after the Guildhall where I was a classical musician.

CW- Just playing with different orchestras [confirms]. Your view might be slightly different having been in the industry for so long but do think you've ever noticed a sudden change in your view of the industry that you've had to change to meet?

MT- I think when we were signed we may have been the last writers (ever) to have been signed on a development deal. We were signed to Big Life for 3 years and they were very patient with us. That just doesn't happen [anymore] and we got in just before the door shut. When we signed to Felt and decided to write sync we weren't sure about that but in retrospect that was a great move because sync is the only place people are really making any money right now. We got in there just before the door shut [again], it's very hard for people to get into sync now because there are so many sync writers out there and it's very cliky. Even when we were signed to Felt we had to work our way up to being their A-list writers but that took years. You never get any feedback in the industry. They'll never say 'this is right' or 'change the kick drum sound on that' or 'that's too fast or too slow' whatever. You don't get that but in sync you do get some feedback, it's not that detailed because the people feedback don't tend to be musicians but at least they'll say 'that's not quite right or not what I', looking for'. At least you know whether what you've done is good or bad. In any other industry you get a lot of feedback, I think its wrong that you don't, I think that needs to change. The other thing that I think needs to change is it's the only industry where you can work for 6 months and not know how much money you've earned. I could ring Felt and ask them 'how much money have I earned since the last statement you gave me?' and they would say 'I don't know. We'll sort it out the month we have to pay you.' So basically, you work and work and work for 6 months and then you have a nail biting month where you think 'have I earned any money?' 'what if it's not enough to pay off the debt we've accrued over

the last 6 months?' which you do. Then you get check and you say 'Thank fuck'. That shouldn't happen. I feel quite strongly that that shouldn't happen, there should be more clarity. If you get paid to do a job it's fine that the publisher gets paid and it's fine that the publisher gets paid first and it's almost fine that they store your money for 6 months to accrue interest before they give it to you. But you need to know what's coming in. There needs to be some sort of a program where you login and say 'I work Felt, this is my number' and they tell you how much money you've earned so far. Tit's a killer and it's a shoddy way to treat people and the PRS don't do it either. We got PRS in the last one [statement] but we don't know if we'll get money in the next one. 2 payments from Felt and 4 from the PRS, that's 6 payments a year and that could be nothing. It's very common to get nothing in a few PRS statements in a year. So you just don' know if this is going to be nothing payment or a nothing payment. It's really terrifying. Even when you're making CD's and you have distribution, the distributor doesn't tell you how much you've made. It would very easy for the distributor to say… if they had an iTunes account and every time a sale was made they buzzed you, it could all be done automatically. The reason these things are closed is because they're taking little bits of money off it each time. You're never sure you're getting what you are due. It's such a closed and secretive part of the industry and it shouldn't be. That's how a publisher makes a lot of their money. They collect their money then they store it in a high interest bank account for a period of time, then that storing process is where they get a lot of their money. Everybody understands that and nobody resents it but we need to know. I think that's quite an important thing that'll have to happen at some point.

CW- That's definitely not something students learn about as being part of the industry. They just hear about the rock and roll life style; the girls and the money and all that rubbish.

MT- The other thing is, if you're with a record label and they give you an advance to get a record made, you don't know if you're paying that advance back. You don't know how many sales you're making unless you ring the record and say 'how many sales have I made?' You just don't know if you're making in rows on your advance at all and with the record label you have to pay that advance back. They might be lashing out for hotel rooms and such but actually you're paying for it. You're going to have to pay that money back. There are s many stories of people leaving having made two albums with £150,000 debt which is going to take the rest of their lives to pay off. It has to be more transparent. With all this, with the banks and everything, people are looking for transparency whereas before they weren't. like the music industry was some magical place where people got wealthy and I think people realised now that it's not. It's needs to be like any other industry with a union, a proper union not like the MU, which is shit. It needs to have a proper union were disputes are solved properly. You shouldn't have to pay for an entertainment layer to do it and you shouldn't have to pay for an entertainment accountant to do it because they could take 50% of your profit. I think that really needs to happen. But that's not relevant to you at all, carry on.

CW- Do you think there are any sort of myths regarding songwriting that are deceiving young students?

MT- I don' think there are myths but I don't think people understand how important the business side of it is. We didn't understand until we got a workspace and we had to pay tax and we decide whether we were going to be a VAT registered company, all these boring types of things are what makes the company work, Suddenly you have to go to work in your own office and that's where it gets serious. It doesn't matter if you're doing data enter or sitting at a computer writing a song, in the end you've still got to find a way of making it work and I think maybe because it's a recession that people don't realise that the business is as important (if not more important) than the actual product, that's the myth.

CW- As opposed to the view that 'I'll just sit around the house, write a song and money will just appear'.

MT- Yeah, and creative people will say 'I'm so bad at business. That's not what I do, it's not what I'm about' and they think it's ok to be like that and it's not ok. If you are like that then it's your own money you are wasting, it's your money you're not investing. That stuff is so important, we spend a lot of time of that stuff. Networking! We had no idea the value of networking. Sounds like a boring thing but it's amazing. Networking just means reaching out to people who need your product and telling them you exist so when they need that product they'll ring you not somebody else, like audio network.

CW- Every musician needs a MaryAnn.