A SHAMAN, A SHERPA, AND A HEALER: A POST-INTENTIONAL PHENOMENOLOGY OF SONGWRITING

by

BRIAN E. KUMM

(Under the Direction of Corey W. Johnson)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the phenomenon of songwriting. Through a series of in depth interviews, three songwriters provided rich descriptions of their lived experiences with the phenomenon. Post-intentional phenomenology was used as the primary guiding theoretical framework for this study, which negotiated the tenets of both phenomenology and poststructuralism. Songwriting was described in terms of portaling, everesting, and gravitating-levitating and was revealed as a complex phenomenon of cathartic and transcendent experiences. The findings highlight the need for unstructured, expressive, and artistic leisure, which can be transformative in times of personal or social unrest.

INDEX WORDS: Songwriting, Post-intentional phenomenology, Creativity, Leisure

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Dianne Kendall Hickly (mom number 2).

March 1, 1947 – July 23, 2011

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I sincerely want to say thank you to everyone who contributed to the successful completion of this thesis. Unfortunately with projects like these, the number of people and the variety of contributions are so vast that some will inadvertently be left out. Please know, however, that I am truly grateful for each person who has graced my life with their presence and their assistance along this journey. Without each of you the entire experience would not have been nearly as rich and fulfilling. Thank you for being a part of this process and a part of my journey. To you very fine folks I offer the following humble thanks and song dedications!

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anything other than grad school. During the writing of this thesis we lost a member of our family and I want to thank you for helping me deal with that in a productive way. To all my family—my sister, nieces, Bob, Shawn, and Dana—thanks for always understanding the constraints on my time and allowing us to just pick up our relationships wherever they left off when we do see each other. I just want to *Thank You (falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)* (Sly and the Family Stone)!

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INTRODUCTION

...Now the heartland is broken

The breadbasket, a dustbowl

And all the hope for a golden harvest

Withers in the sudden cold...

...And all the seed from a horn ‘o plenty

Turns grey on the frozen soil

And all the grain to feed the hungry

Is seen in dreams, but doesn’t grow...

(Kumm, 2009)

When set to music, the above verses swirl in melody and express the intense emotions of longing and grief over unrealized dreams. Working in metaphor, the song paints a haunting imagine of a once fertile pasture being held in the unrelenting grip of drought, blight, and famine, which was analogous to my feelings over my broken marriage. It is basically “another somebody done somebody wrong song,” but without any of the levity of B. J. Thomas’ 1975 hit. Yet, as I penned these lyrics they became something of a balm for my soul. As a result I began to believe that music, whether born of ecstasy or despondency, is perhaps one of the most profound expressions of the human condition. I began to question what it means to express that condition in songwriting.

My experience as a songwriter has not always revolved around tragic and painful events. In fact some of my earliest and happiest memories involve music. I can vividly recall my father playing old Willie Nelson and Johnny Cash tunes at our family's traditional New Year's Eve Wiener Roast. The temperature in the Virginia's Alleghany Mountains would often dip well below zero, but the extended family throughout the valley would venture over to the old family farm where a bond fire would roar, libations would flow, and horrendous renditions of country-western classics would be belted across the front pastures. It was a special event and the music, though thoroughly slaughtered by the libations, was just as special. Though my father has slowed in his older age, he and I continue the tradition whenever possible.

However, music was not just for special occasions; it was also a common every day affair. My mother loves to tell the story of how my father would sit in the kitchen at nights and play his guitar for self-amusement. One of his favorites was Glen Campbell's Rhinestone Cowboy. Whenever he sang this song they would realize just how intently I had been listening. Just as he would hit the apex of the verse and lead into the chorus—"like a rhinestone cowboy"—I would shout from my bedroom, "Cowboy, Cowboy, Cowboy!" and shatter my parents' belief that I had been sound asleep. I was in my room mimicking his entire repertoire.

There is hardly a time I can remember where my life did not involve music. My mother always played Elvis Presley records as I laid down for afternoon naps and throughout my childhood I was obsessed with 1950s rock 'n roll and celebrated the rockabilly revival of the 1980s. I even adopted the dress, language, and mannerisms of my childhood hero—Brian Setzer of the Stray Cats. I was probably the only six year old

kid slicking his hair into a pompadour and rolling Milk Duds into his t-shirt sleeve on a daily basis and not just on Halloween. It was fun and fantastic to live in an imaginary world of hip-cats and daddy-o's.

Even though my father had taught me some songs on his acoustic guitar as a child, it wasn't until my 13th birthday, when I received an electric guitar, that I found my niche in songwriting. Just like Frank Zappa's (1979) lyric in Joe's Garage, "It was a Stratocaster with a whammy bar." My father had traded an old shotgun to a coworker for the instrument, and when it was placed in my hands, I feel in love. I could hear music perfectly in my head and I worked feverously at transferring that information to my hands. There was something irresistible and perfect about those six strings pinched under my fingertips and I wrote songs with that guitar until those fingers nearly bled.

Through the many years after receiving that first guitar, songwriting has had a consistent presence in my life. It served as a vehicle for communicating things I often felt were otherwise inexpressible. Often this would take the form of instrumental music where lyrics were neither necessary nor appropriate. Other times, the lyrical content was straight forward, overt, and even comical. And on other occasions, I found a hiding place within metaphors, riddles, and poetic license where I could bear my soul without risk of exposure.

My most recent experience of songwriting, during the dissolution of my marriage, contained aspects from all of the above; yet it was also very different. For one thing, I was unusually prolific. I wrote 23 completed pieces of music in one year and have enough pages of uncompleted verses, choruses, and hooks to fill a small Rubbermaid bin.

It seemed as though I was channeling music from beyond. All I needed to do was yield to the music and allow it to flow through me.

Yet as transcendent as this experience seemed it was thoroughly grounded in the mundane. The underlying theme of my entire body of work from this period is based on conversations and interactions with my estranged wife. The content of these interactions—money, shared debt, living arrangements, taxes, and lawyers—could hardly catapult one into a transcendent realm of writing. Likewise the language I used, though often cryptic, was common. There was nothing transcendental about it.

The seemingly paradoxical nature of my experience with songwriting spawned my current scholarly interest in the phenomenon. I want to explore the experience of songwriting in all of its complexity. My research question stems from a Heideggerian interpretive approach: what is it to find one's self in the phenomenon of songwriting?

I recognize that this is an ontological question that assumes there is indeed something to in which to be found. In order to remain true to my desire to understand complexity of the phenomenon and avoid essentializing, I also incorporate some of the post-structural perspectives found in the philosophy of Derrida. Where post-structural and phenomenological thought collide and create a tension is precisely where post-intentional phenomenology resides. I assume that there is something in which to be found, but I also assume that whatever it is, it is not fixed or absolute and is always contextual.

Through this framework, I pull on elements of both phenomenology and deconstructionism without an objective to resolve the tension between them. Rather, I embrace life on the fault line and acknowledge my own uncertainty as to which side of

that line our thinking should reside. The cursory review of literature and theoretical discussion below further illustrate my use of these two philosophical perspectives. I also couch the use of theory found in the literature within my own experience in order to explain the importance of attending to both sides of the coin.

Cursory Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

While driving home from a friend's house, I spontaneously sang a melody. The lyric seemed catchy—a sardonic country lament on spending my anniversary alone as a husband recently separated from his wife. As I arrived home, I dug through what felt like a series of challenges to use new song forms and structures, but as I met these challenges the song grew into a rather humorous, but poignant description of how I viewed my wife and her actions. It was an exhilarating experience. I felt as though I had written a song that was well beyond my capabilities.

I later emailed a rough recording of this song to a friend. His response was positive. In fact, he demanded that I perform that song and any others like it with his band during a series of dates they scheduled for the fall of 2009. His invitation made me rethink the meaning of the song and I was struck with a realization of its inherent deceptiveness. Through the painting of ironic lyrical images of my separated spouse, I was actually exposing my own hand as the artist. Every word seemed to not only highlight my own insecurity and vulnerability, but also remind me of how much of the content was conjured out of thin air. My songs, at best, were only a poor reflection of myself and I could not stand to perform them as such.

On the one hand, my interest is in the radical experience of feeling a song flow through a songwriter—its genesis in a realm beyond logic and its exodus through writing.

On the other hand, I realize that at the heart of songwriting is a not so straight-forward process of ascribing meaning and order to life events. It is something of a double-edged sword; in ascribing one meaning, another meaning is left unexplored. Additionally, the meaning is often fabricated and not reflective of any factuality. The complexity of this process is just as important to explore as the sensations of the experience itself. It is between these two somewhat extremes that I find myself questioning the phenomenon of songwriting and apply a lens of phenomenology to explore the experience and deconstructionism to critique the meaning-making that is central to the writing process.

While deconstructionism and phenomenology may initially seem philosophically discordant, I believe post-intentional phenomenology provides a framework where both perspectives work harmoniously to illuminate the phenomenon in much of its contextuality, plurality, and fluidity. This philosophical orientation opens up phenomenological ideas of knowledge and essential meanings to be viewed as tentative, malleable, and never quite fixed or concrete. It makes room for exploring the tensions between different and sometimes contradictory meanings. By adopting this framework, I hope to utilize the strengths of both traditions and gain a richer understanding of the creative phenomenon of songwriting.

Clearly my philosophical orientation serves as grand or overarching theoretical framework. However, as Anfara and Mertz (2006) suggest, researchers should build a framework incorporating "any empirical or quasi-empirical theory of social and/or psychological processes, at a variety of levels (e.g., grand, mid-range, and explanatory), that can be applied to the understanding of phenomena," (p. xxvii). As the grand-level theory, post-intentional phenomenology calls for a different use of theory at the mid and

explanatory levels. Vagle (2010) outlined a research approach for post-intentional phenomenology that recommends situating a study within a larger theoretical context, yet suspending the use of theory until the data are analyzed. Utilizing Vagle's approach, the present study of songwriting is situated within theoretical discussions found in the leisure, creativity, and songwriting literature. At the explanatory or micro-level, certain constructs and concepts are pulled from the mid-level to identify relevant questions, problems, or challenges that the present study may inform.

Before deciding to study the phenomenon of songwriting, a variety of possible approaches were explored. Each research approach came with a theoretical framework that seemed to shape the questions a researcher could reasonably pose and expect to answer. Post-intentional phenomenology was selected as a good fit for my epistemological orientation and the questions I wanted to explore. There is no small amount of uncertainty in my beliefs about how we know what we know. Similarly, I do not stake a firm claim in any ontological perspective. I appreciate the way in which post-intentional phenomenology allows room for uncertainty and is accepting of even seemingly paradoxical ideas.

Grand-level Theories

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is an evolving philosophy. Edmund Husserl is uniformly agreed to be the fountainhead of what is currently known as phenomenology; however, the roots of his own philosophy can be traced to the writings of Kant, Hegel, and Brentano (Groenewald, 2004). Though modern phenomenology may have been born of Husserl between the first and second World Wars, it was not considered reputable until well into

the 1970s when a methodological realization of the philosophy was established (Groenwald, 2004). Over the decades since Husserl, phenomenology was expanded upon and refined by the likes of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre. It stands to reason that developments in phenomenology as both a philosophy and methodology will continue. It is my position that post-intentional phenomenology is one such development.

Husserl's phenomenology is essentially derived from the philosophical tradition of epistemology (Lawlor, 2002). As such it has developed into both a philosophical system of how we know what we know and a corresponding methodological approach to obtaining that knowledge. As a student of Brentano, Husserl built the core of his philosophy on a belief in an intentional nature of consciousness, which asserts that human consciousness is unceasingly and intentionally directed towards an object. The epistemological claim this concept makes in phenomenology is that humans are perpetually and fundamentally part of a meaningful world, which can only be understood by phenomena entering into human consciousness through experience (Groenwald, 2004; Larkin, Watts, and Clifton, 2006). Intentionality of consciousness is the cornerstone of the entire phenomenological project.

Building upon the foundation of intentionality of consciousness, phenomenologists adhere to a structure of concepts that explain the process of gaining knowledge. The process begins with the natural attitude, which is understood to be the common, unquestioning acceptance of the world in its most immediate presentation to our senses (Sokolowski, 2000). For example, when a person sees a glass of water, they immediately understand and know it is a glass of water. However, upon closer inspection they may discover that the glass does not contain water but some other clear liquid. This

process of perception, acceptance, and discovery builds a body of internal understanding and theory related to the world and its many phenomena. The body of knowledge built through the natural attitude represents the epistemological assumption of phenomenology and establishes a need to transcend this unquestioned knowledge to better understand the meanings that distinguish one phenomenon from another (Sokolowski, 2000).

Phenomenologists believe that it is possible to pull back from the natural attitude, through a process known as phenomenological reduction, and view phenomena from a transcendent perspective known as the phenomenological attitude (Sokolowski, 2000). The process of phenomenological reduction is based on a practice of bracketing or, as Vagle (2010) described it, bridling, which simply refers to the adherence to a radical skepticism and questioning of what is understood through the natural attitude. This is a practice of questioning not only what is perceived in the natural attitude—a suspension of all judgment, theory, and beliefs—but also one where we "look at that which we normally look through" (Sokowski, 2000, p. 50). Bridling results in the phenomenological attitude, which transcends the mundane natural order of worldly life and ascends to the realm of philosophy, where meaning is ascribed to phenomena (Sokolowski, 2000).

My interest in phenomenology stemmed from my own experience with songwriting. I was interested in the potential phenomenology held for describing the experience—what it is like to be in a flow of creative energy. Indeed, I hoped to describe a transcendent experience in a way that would expand my own understanding of the meaning of songwriting. Phenomenology provides the intellectual space to delve into

intangible, deeply subjective experiences, which makes it keenly attractive for exploring experiences such as mine.

The problem with phenomenology is that it only does half of the job. There is an internal assumption in phenomenology that meaning is only made through phenomenological reduction. Yet, I believe meaning is already being made by those experiencing the phenomenon and such meanings are extraordinarily complex and inherently unstable. The process of writing itself, as I described in my experience above, is a meaning-making activity. However, the meanings are at once both created and limited by the artist. To tease out some of complexities related to issues of meaning, I turned to the philosophy of Jacques Derrida.

Deconstructionism

Derrida was a prolific philosopher who devoted much of his work to undermining the entirety of Western philosophy (Prasad, 2005; Lawlor, 2002). Indeed, Derrida built a significant portion of his philosophy upon Eugen Fink's body of work exploring the limitations of phenomenology, where he exposed three paradoxes inherent in the philosophy (Lawlor, 2002). The first two are related to language: First, having ascended to the transcendent attitude, how will the phenomenologist communicate what is discovered to those still in the natural attitude? Second, the phenomenologist only has words from the natural attitude to describe that which is transcendent. The third paradox is more related to ontology: If the mundane world can only be understood in transcendent terms, what is the nature of the world? It cannot be both transcendent and mundane at the same time (Lawlor, 2002).

Related to the first two phenomenological paradoxes, Derrida believed that language established the conditions necessary for any experience to have meaning (Lawlor, 2002). Language is based upon differences in meanings between words, which Derrida believed existed as an inherent characteristic of language rather than some structure tacitly or explicitly agreed upon by society. Derrida's ultimate conclusion is that language is inextricably connected to speech and thought, and its inherent instability undermines our belief in a true experience or concrete meaning (Lawlor, 2002). Therefore, the project of deconstruction is to open texts, be they written, verbal, or performed, to other voices and alternative meanings (Prasad, 2005).

By destabilizing language as the root of knowledge and meaning, Derrida attacked Heidegger's ontology: The belief that language is something of an absolute, sufficient to describe reality. Contrary to Heidegger, Derrida asserted that the instability of language misrepresents reality to us (Lawlor, 2002). Language is merely a tool used to set a false order and organization to the world in which we live (Prasad, 2005). In a sense, language was the last battleground where, for Derrida, ontology, phenomenology, and all absolutes met their end.

Yet, Derrida's philosophy of deconstructionism is far from nihilistic and destructive. It works to explore the fluidity and multifarious meanings of phenomenon that are often marginalized (Prasad, 2005). Derrida moved from hard and fast ontological assumptions to notions of hauntology, which is a state between being and not being (Lawlor, 2002). Derrida operated largely within the in-between spaces where truth may not exist, but we must carry on as if it did (Lawlor, 2002). His philosophic work can be viewed as a radical critique aimed at decentering texts with challenging contrary

narratives (Prasad, 2005). I feel this is a particularly advantageous approach to exploring meaning in any creative art, and in this case, songwriting.

While I will never dare to claim that Derrida's philosophy is more accessible than Husserl's, I do find it more congruent with my own aesthetic sensibilities. As a songwriter, I worked in a middle ground away from pure fantasy and pure fact. I played with words using irony, metaphor, and hyperbole in order to shape a sense of meaning around my experience, but the meaning was never true. Faced with the realization that all meaning, whether in my songs or in my research, is attempt to impose a particular interpretation of/on experience, I began to see deconstructionism as a useful perspective in which to ground my desire for this to be a polyvocal research endeavor.

Post-Intentional Phenomenology

Post-intentional phenomenology provides a framework for phenomenology and the poststructural ideals of deconstructionism to work in concert toward exploring songwriting. The phenomenological idea of intentionality, where one's consciousness is believed to engage the world, can be viewed with a consideration to post-structural values of unstable, malleable, and ever-changing meanings (Vagle, 2010). As such, the work of post-intentional phenomenologists includes not only "returning to the things themselves," the mantra of traditional phenomenologists, but also going to the context of the things themselves. By exploring the directly lived experiences of individuals intentionally engaged with a phenomenon and also the multiple aspects of life that affect and situate those experiences, post-intentional phenomenologist can better grapple with the vast and complex meaning of phenomena. Whereas deconstructionist have traditionally worked to decenter texts and create a fluid channel of marginalized narratives and

phenomenologists have traditionally worked to describe perceived meanings, under this new framework it is possible to engage in a combination of both and gain a richer understanding of phenomena.

If you will indulge the metaphor, my use of post-intentional phenomenology may be viewed as a pair of 3D glasses. The frames contain two lenses—phenomenology and deconstructionism. The lenses perceive different light waves. As such, they seem to be contradictory. However, when placed in the frame of post-intentional phenomenology, they work harmoniously to provide a depth and dimension to our overall perception that is otherwise missing (Fig. 1). Post-intentional phenomenology is an interesting contribution to the philosophical dialogue related to phenomenology; however, it is not an attempt to bridge the differences between phenomenology and deconstructionism. It is a unique perspective of concepts central to phenomenology that make space for other philosophical perspectives for the purpose of gaining a richer understanding of phenomena.

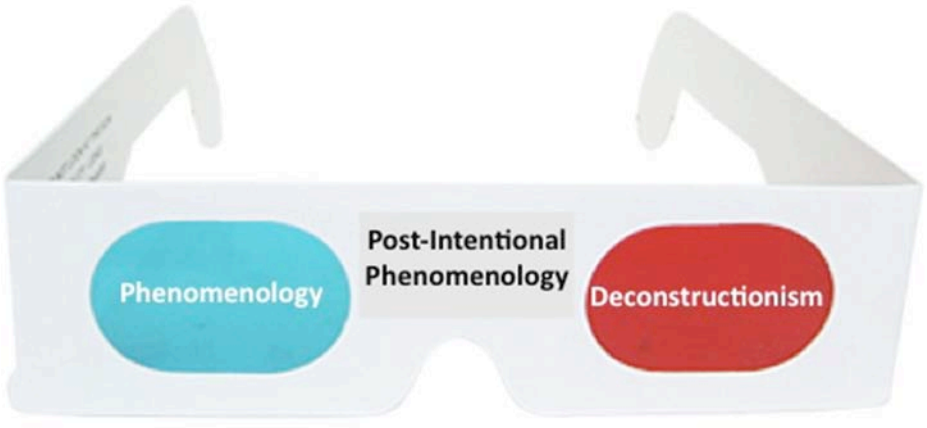

Figure 1: Post-Intentional Phenomenology.

The central phenomenon I seek to explore has been clearly identified as songwriting. I have also discussed the aspects of my own songwriting experience that predicated my grand-level theoretical framework. Yet, the phenomenon of songwriting is extremely broad. The question now begs: How can I begin to contextualize the phenomenon in order to narrow the scope of my interest. To do this, I return to my own experience and explore the context of my songwriting. The context of my experience will help locate mid-level theories in which I can situate the present study.

Mid Level Theories and Situating the Study

During the time I wrote those 23 pieces of music, I was working a second shift job. I would return home from work around 9:45pm, and after taking care of my basic domestic duties, I would take my dog for a long walk through the neighborhood. The quiet, empty streets, lit only by the moon seemed to settle my nerves and calm my normally busy mind. By the time we returned home from our walk, I typically would be humming a melody, chorus, or verse. My night would then be filled with trying to capture those musical musings.

With a glass of Guinness, the television on mute, the ambient light of my stained glass lamps painting the room in soft hues, and my guitar across my lap I would put pen to paper and write what came to mind. One song, called Walking Man, analogized my constant dog walking with the retracing of my memories of marriage. In the case of Walking Man, as with many other songs, one or two verses and the chorus was written on one night and finished the next morning. Other songs were never finished. The archive of unfinished work fills a small Rubbermaid tub in my living room.

The finished songs were always recorded and emailed to my dear and trusted songwriting friend. Even though I declined my friend's invitation to perform my songs with him, I needed them to be heard by someone I trusted. He provided critical affirmation of not only my songs, but also the experience I was living through, my interpretation of those events, and my general humanity and dignity as a person trying to make sense of an incredibly painful situation. My friend told me that Walking Man was the best song I had ever written and asked if he could perform it as his own. I gave him my blessing and felt a strange serenity about the song being heard but not having to play it.

There are many attributes of my experience that can help frame and contextualize the phenomenon I wish to study. However, I believe my experience can best be characterized by concepts found in leisure, creativity, and songwriting studies (Fig. 2). I also believe that by studying experiences similar to my own, our understanding of these concepts can be expanded. Indeed some aspects of the phenomenon may seem to incorporate pieces of multiple concepts, but not align fully to any particular one. Thus post-intentional phenomenology holds significant promise to challenge our conceptions and expand the meaning we have assigned to leisure, creativity, and songwriting.

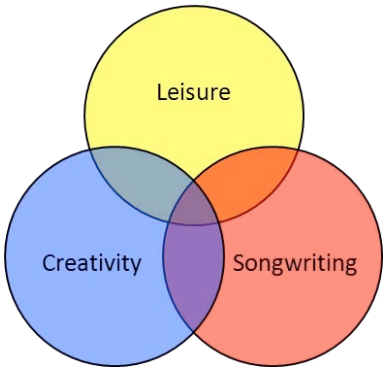

Figure 2: Mid-level Theories

Leisure

Predominately, North American leisure scholars have conceptualized leisure from a social psychological paradigm (Samdahl, 1999) as a condition deeply related to perceived freedom and intrinsic motivation (Neulinger, 1974). Definitions stemming from this perspective include unobligated time, enjoyable activities, or a state of mind (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Other scholars have contributed to conceptualizations of leisure that break from the dominate social psychology paradigm. Based in a critical perspective, some scholars have connected leisure to emancipatory politics, participatory democracy, community development, and gender performances (e. g., Hemmingway, 1999; Stormann, 1993; Arai & Pedlar, 1997; Johnson, 2008). In so doing, scholars have vastly expanded the conceptual framework for understanding leisure beyond one merely seen as a personal experience to one imbedded in multifarious social contexts (Parr & Lashua, 2004).

It is understandable that, among the variety of perspectives represented in the leisure literature, an all encompassing and generally accepted definition of leisure cannot be located. Rather, scholars operationalize the term for the purposes of their research and theorization. For the present study, I adopt the concept of leisure as a state of mind. When viewed as a state of mind, leisure is seen as subjective, open to contextualities, and less restricted by boundaries of time, place, and activity (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). That is to say, I allow leisure to be defined by those who experience it.

Conceptualizing leisure as a subjective state of mind seems congruent with the subjective focus of phenomenology. However, I feel that my own experience was also deeply connected to issues of time and perceived freedom associated with other

conceptualizations of leisure. I needed to feel free from my work obligations and be on my own time in a place where I felt comfortable in order to engage in songwriting. These aspects may be at the root of the leisure aspects of my experience; however, this may not be the case with other songwriters. By keeping leisure subjective in its definition, I hope to explore the variety of meanings songwriters associate with leisure in relation to their songwriting experience.

It is worth noting the limited ways in which leisure research has approached creative arts such as songwriting. In North America, the study of leisure has traditionally been considered an applied field (Kelly & Freysinger, 2000) and the creative arts have generally been relegated to studies with decidedly applied ends (i. e., novel tourism, youth advocacy and intervention, physical and mental health therapy). Scholars have also creative activities as a vehicle to challenge the work-leisure dichotomy (e. g., Stebbins, 1992, 2001; Miller, 2008). No study can be located within the current body of leisure research that centers on songwriting or any other creative art.

The phenomenon of songwriting is certainly related to leisure. However, I do not believe that songwriting is purely a leisure-based phenomenon. The ambiguity I felt regarding how to best conceptualize leisure in relation to my own songwriting experience illustrates the multiple layers of meaning and fluidity of meaning surrounding the phenomenon. The lack of leisure research focusing on creative arts as the central phenomenon also illustrates this point. Creativity may provide another critical component to help us piece together the many aspects of the phenomenon of songwriting.

Creativity

Creativity is most often seen in terms of eminently creative individuals such as Bach, Picasso, Baryshnikov, Einstein, and Frank Lloyd Wright. This common perspective is based on the idea that creativity is eminent and therefore a trait that one is either born with or without. While this perspective may appreciate the variety of creative endeavors and expressions, it is limited by its failure to recognize other conceptions of creativity, such as "everyday creativity" (Richards, 2007) or the personally meaningful interpretations of experiences as proposed by Beghetto and Kaufman (2007). Spontaneously singing to a child or the personal meaning derived from such experiences may be more important concepts of creativity for the "regular" people.

Creativity, like leisure, has been conceptualized in a myriad of ways. Most conceptualizations utilize selective lists of conditions to be met in order for an activity or experience to qualify as creative. While the lists qualifying creativity and their corresponding conceptualizations vary, a common and useful definition was proposed by Plucker, Beghetto, and Dow (2004) from a meta-analysis of definitions and concepts of creativity utilized across the interdisciplinary field of creativity. Their definition stated that creativity "… is the interaction among aptitude, process, and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both novel and useful as defined within a social context" (Plucker, et al., 2004, p. 90). This definition deeply resonates with my own creative experience.

Plucker, Begheto, and Dow's (2004) definition implied that creativity is a process that can be developed and is engaged in a certain environment, which affects productivity. Secondly, it requires a product to be produced. In my case, a song was

produced in my quiet apartment as I coaxed the muses to come forth. Third, the product must be validated socially. I feel that this social component is critical to my own experience. Apart from my friend's validation of my songwriting, what would my creative work have been? It seems to me that the meaning of our experiences are conferred upon us by our social interactions. This is an important aspect to consider in relation to songwriting, which I had mistakenly thought of as a solitary pursuit.

The definition put forth by Plucker, Begheto, and Dow (2004) also rings true with Doyle's (1998) study of fiction writers' creative experiences. Doyle's study posed interesting research questions: "How do particular works of fiction come into being? What is the writer's experience of creating a story—from the first impulse to its final realization" (p. 29)? Doyle wrote of her participants' need for a space to write, a physical environment where they could work though their thoughts and begin a creative process of writing. Additionally, the participants spoke of an importance in sharing their work and the validation they receive when another person understand their writing.

Doyle's (1998) work with fiction writers will also provide an interesting comparison. Her research participants were intentionally working in fiction and they felt that a lyricist's understanding of the creative process would be different. They felt that lyricists speak from their own, truer voices rather than embodying other, fictional personas. In view of the deconstructionist perspective that all writing is fiction, at least on some level, will songwriters' description of their creative process differ from that of those deliberately creating fictional stories?

Songwriting

Music is a grand and expansive phenomenon spanning the full range of academic study. While biologists, anthropologists, and psychologists continue to look into the nature and origins of song as either an evolutionary adaptation or an invention of the mind (Zimmer, 2010), the study of music as a central interest has traditionally belonged principally to the fields of musicology or the fine arts. However, other fields of study have risen to explicate other aspects of the phenomenon. Particularly interesting for the present study is the way in which songwriting or songwriters are attended to in the related literature.

The vast majority of the songwriting literature portrays a highly romanticized notion of songwriters. The literature paints images of multi-million dollar contacts and professional songwriters that work as "wizards…[and] hide away in secret rooms on [Nashville's] Music Row" (Elliott, 2005, p. 4). The image portrayed of songwriters is consistent with the most common view of creativity as an eminent trait rather than an aptitude or process. In a biographical overview of Warren Zevon's life as a songwriter, Plasketes (2005) reinforced this perception of songwriters as eminently creative and larger than life beings. He wrote, "His soul will loiter, lurk, and lean against an afterlife light post—grinning and glowering, a ghostly, gonzo gunslinger, and guardian angel of ashtrays…Zevon's spirit and songs will hover, haunt, howl, and wreak heavenly havoc…" (Plasketes, 2005, p. 108).

Though popular culture may hold songwriters in such high regard that they seem transcendent, songwriters themselves generally tend to reject the notion that they are extraordinary or special people (Esther, 2010). Beyond the misplaced fascination with

songwriters as unique and eminently creative people, the majority of research deals with publishing and lyrical content analysis (Galenson, 2009; Petre, Pennebaker, James, Siversten, & Borge, 2008).

The review of the songwriting literature proved unproductive in identifying an appropriate theoretical perspective for this study. In fact, the literature related to songwriting does not address questions related to the experience of writing songs, the creative process, or of the meaning of songwriting as a phenomenon. In this regard, the present study stands to make a significant contribution to our understanding of songwriting, creativity, and even leisure as complex and interrelated phenomena. Post-intentional phenomenology is a promising approach towards making an expansive exploration into the varied meanings surrounding these phenomena and illuminating new perspectives.

Micro-Level Theories

Creative Leisure

The study of creativity and the study of leisure are valid and important pursuits in their own rights. For the most part, these respective areas of study have remained separate and distinct, not taking into account the potential overlap. Part of the lack of interdisciplinary study could be due to a lack of agreed upon terms, definitions, and concepts of leisure and creativity. However, the interdisciplinary study of leisure and creativity is critical. Hegarty (2009) explained the study of one or the other alone is not enough to understand the thoughts, feelings, and needs of our existence; combining the two allows us to get to the heart of the human experience.

Considering the commonly accepted perspective found in the creativity literature that it must produce a product, and leisure's freedom to be unproductive, it may seem that leisure and creativity are not immediately congruent. The very word "creative" has "create," or rather, "produce" at its root. Production is not required for leisure and, in the eyes of many, it may even disqualify an experience from being considered as such. However, just as Pieper (1952) validated a more leisured way of receiving knowledge through intellectus, there are also two sides to the creativity coin.

Hegarty (2009) may have found part of the other side of the coin in his new construct—creative leisure. He built this construct on shared psychological ground of self-expression and self-actualization common in certain conceptions of both leisure and creativity. As Hegarty (2009) explains, in creative leisure "one experiences a high sense of freedom, intrinsic motivation and reward, one expresses the self to the self, and this is done for the sake of doing it" (p. 11). He further explained that the "product" produced in creative leisure is solely produced for and judged by the producer. Hegarty believed this construct moves us closer towards evaluating the more complete expression of our humanity.

Hegarty's (2009) construct is problematic in so far as it denies an essential component found in the vast majority of conceptualizations of creativity—that creativity must produce a product that is shared and validated socially (Plucker, et al., 2006). While, Hegarty's work stems from a phenomenological study, it appears as though he overly privileged the social-psychological theory of leisure. His construct of creative leisure is based upon self-expression, self-evaluation, and intrinsic motivation. With the exclusion of the social component of creativity, I doubt Hegarty's (2009) claim that

creative leisure brings us closer to connecting with our human experience at a deeper level.

As I consider Hegarty's omission of the social component of creativity and leisure, I am struck by what Stevenson (2006) wrote regarding creative industries and leisure. She wrote:

> …despite the merging of leisure and culture at the level of lived experience, leisure studies scholars have contributed surprisingly little to this research oeuvre. This is worrying because leisure studies has the potential to add considerably to our understanding of the arts and entertainment as social phenomena… (Stevenson, 2006, p. 355).

Have we hit an impasse where leisure and creativity are incompatible? Or are we held captive by an overly domineering social psychological paradigm that dictates that all creative expression must be entirely personal?

Certainly the above questions may seem almost rhetorical; however, real limitations are present in the social psychological paradigm utilized by Hegarty (2009). While his research fails, in my opinion, to provide an adequate framework for understanding songwriting as a creative and leisure related phenomenon, I acknowledge the value his construct may provide for other researchers. The purpose of the present study is to explore the lived experiences people have had with the phenomenon of songwriting with considerations of a variety of social as well as person contexts.

Methodology

Phenomenology is both a philosophy and a methodology. Every step of the research process is interlocked with certain epistemological and ontological beliefs.

What follows is an overview of post-intentional phenomenology, including philosophical and methodological information. Following this overview is a description of the methods to be employed in the present study. Lastly, my plans for analysis and representation of data are presented.

Overview

Phenomenon is a term used to describe anything, whether tangible or intangible, that enters into one's consciousness. Traditionally, phenomenological researchers have sought to describe a phenomenon's "essence" through the research process. Though essence is a term used to describe the structure of essential meanings that explains a phenomenon (Dahlberg, 2006), it is often misinterpreted to mean a reduction to a generalizable "truth." However, as an individual engages with phenomena, the experience and "essence" is temporal, changing, malleable, and fluid. Thus, the area of phenomenological intentionality can be viewed through a post-structural lens (Vagle, 2010). The present study will employ Vagle's (2010) post-intentional perspective.

In order for the phenomenon to reveal itself, a researcher must approach the phenomenon in the phenomenological attitude. The phenomenological stands in contrast to the natural attitude, which is merely the common, unquestioning way in which human beings interact with and view the world. The phenomenological attitude is different from the natural attitude in that it is a state where an individual has become skeptical and questions all that enters her consciousness. The person in the phenomenological attitude not only questions what they see, but also how they see and with what they see (Sokolowski, 2000).

The term used to describe the process of questioning that must accompany the phenomenological attitude is bridling (Vagle, 2010). Similar to how a bridle is used to restrain a powerful animal, the act of continual question and skepticism restrains the researcher from leaping forward and applying her own experiences, biases, or another researcher's theory to immediately explain a phenomena (Vagle, 2009; Dahlberg, 2006). Although bridling is often thought of as an act of suspending all biases and a priori thoughts, it should be noted that suspension is different from elimination. Phenomenologists do not claim to eliminate biases through some type of mental gymnastics. It simply refers to the practice of continual questioning, reflecting, and re-questioning (Solokowski, 2000).

Traditionally phenomenological studies have employed in depth interviews as the primary data collection method. The conventional thinking is that interviewing people who experience the phenomenon allows the researcher to explore participant's intentionality. Merleau-Ponty (1964) described intentionality as an invisible thread that connects humans to the world. Throughout the interview, analysis, and interpretation process, the practice of bridling is believed to result in a better understanding of participants' intentionality. Dwelling and steeping in the information gained from the interviews is believed to reveal the meanings of the phenomenon (Sokolowski, 2000).

Post-intentional phenomenology, however, adopts a poststructural view of intentionality (the intentional relationship a person has with the phenomenon). As such, essences are referred to as "tentative manifestations" and believed to be malleable, contextual, fluid, and ever changing (Vagle, 2010). Researchers employing post-intentional phenomenological theory in their studies are encouraged to employ various

other methods for data collection normally categorized as belonging to an entirely different methodology in order to better understand the fluid phenomenon.

The final step in the post-intentional phenomenological research approach is crafting a text that captures the tentative manifestations of the phenomenon in its multiple, partial, and varied contexts. Vagle (2010) asserted that regardless of what understanding is opened up through the research, the knowledge will "move with and through the researcher's intentional relationships with the phenomenon—not simply in the researcher, in the participants, in the text, or in their power positions, but in the dynamic intentional relationships that tie participants, the researcher, the produced text, and their positionality together" (p. 5). In this way intentionality can be read post-structurally—changing, moving, and unstable.

Discussion of Methods

Vagle (2010) prescribed five components for conducting post-intentional phenomenological research:

1. Identify a phenomenon in its multiple, partial, and varied contexts
2. Devise a clear, yet flexible process for collecting data appropriate for the phenomenon under investigation
3. Make a bridling plan
4. Read and write your way through your data in a systematic, responsive manner
5. Craft a text that captures tentative manifestations of the phenomenon in its multiple, partial, and varied contexts (p. 9)

The following is a systematic attempt to describe my methods as prescribed by Vagle's five component plan.

Identify a Phenomenon in its Multiple, Partial, and Varied Contexts.

Songwriting can occur in practically any environment. From writing in the car, to a quiet room, the potential context for the phenomenon seems virtually endless. It is also engaged in by a multiplicity of individuals representing the full breadth of the demographic and genre spectrum. Songwriters can include people of any age, race, ethnicity, class, and gender. Songwriting can be described as the work of DJs, vocalist, lyricist, and various instrumentalists working in innumerable processes for creating their unique style of music.

In order to narrow the scope for the present study, I began with examining my own experience as a songwriter. I wrote while driving, showering, and sitting in my office; however, when the songs began to materialize fully I was almost always in a physical space where I could safely and quietly reflect, pause, and ruminate over the ideas. As discussed in the theoretical discussion of creativity, environment is important to the process. Doyle (1998) may describe my experience of developing the initial idea for a song in the car as the seed incident and the working through the song in the physical environment conducive for reflection as the *writingrealm*.

Cohen's (2009) lyrical description of his life as a songwriter in Tower of Song captures a sentiment that resonates with my experience:

I was born like this, I had no choice

I was born with the gift of a golden voice

And twenty-seven angels from the Great Beyond

They tied me to this table right here

In the Tower of Song

His lyrics speak not only to a transcendent experience but also indicate a context where he engages with the phenomenon. I believe this is both a physical and immaterial space and the natural beginning for my study is to make regular visits to the physical "tower" and get to know its residents. Once there, I might be able to gain an understanding of the immaterial "tower." While my personal frame of reference to the phenomenon provides a starting point of where I should conduct my research, I must remain open to the phenomenon during the study and be willing to go out to new contexts if I feel the phenomenon may be better understood elsewhere (Vagle, 2010).

Initially, I planned to use a YouTube channel that featured musicians from Athens, Georgia to select participants for this study. The participants I was seeking were songwriters working in a genre of music known as Americana and who primarily write alone using a guitar. For the most part, participant matching these criteria would fit a similar profile to me. However, there were many limiting factors that required me to rethink my sampling procedures.

First, several of the songwriters that I identified as prospective participants from the website had moved away from Athens. Additionally, several songwriters with mangers and legal representation simply did not respond to my attempts at contact. The time commitment this study required further limited the pool of songwriters willing to participate. While Athens is generally recognized as a music hub and certainly a great number of songwriters live within its city limits, during the summer month when I was collecting data, many of the songwriters where on the road touring.

In light of these conditions, I reconsidered my sampling procedure. I questioned my need to find songwriters with a similar profile to my own. Phenomenologically speaking, diversity amongst the participant's profiles should help me to see the phenomenon in multiple and varied contexts rather than detract from it. With this in mind, I followed a purposeful sampling procedure with only two criteria for selecting participants: (1) participants must self identify as songwriters; and (2) participants must have had meaningful experiences writing songs.

The purpose of the two-fold criteria for this study is to place the focus squarely upon the phenomenon. The variety of contexts in which participants have experienced the phenomenon should give narrative to tentative manifestations rather than be the central focus of the study. I value and honor the diversity of backgrounds, genres, tools, approaches, and techniques in which each participant experiences songwriting. I considered it a great privilege to have been able to interview the songwriters that participated in this study and it is my hope that this text will reflect the diversity and complexity of their lived experiences.

While I did not have close personal relationships with the songwriters in this study, I did consider each of them to be acquaintances. I once performed on the same bill as one participant and I attended a performance of another. The third participant I knew through a mutual friend. Prior to this study, however, I had not had any significant conversations with any of the participants. At most we spoke in passing and in small talk.

I did not collect detailed information regarding specific demographics. The participants self-disclosed the following information, which I used to create the following brief participant profiles:

- Erik James: A white man who self-identified as gay and works primarily collaboratively in the rock genre. He considers his voice his instrument and writes both lyrics and music, but requires a collaborator to actualize the accompaniment. He is in his 40s. Erik has been highly successful within the music scene in Athens, GA. His primary source of income is from his full-time employment in a field related to music, but it is not directly connected to his own creative work as a songwriter.
- Tenzing Norgay: A white man who self-identified as heterosexual and works alone in the rock genre. He plays all the instruments on his recordings as well as composes lyrics. He is in his late 20s. Tenzing has performed his music several times in Athens, GA., and described receiving very positive feed back related to his songwriting. He is very much involved in recording music and considers that part of his process. At the same of data collection, Tenzing was unemployed.
- Juliette: A white woman who self-identified as heterosexual and works alone in a folk genre. She is a guitarist and writes both music and lyrics. Juliette is in her 50s and has received national recognition for her songwriting. She is very well established within the music scene in Athens, GA., but her primary source of income is from her full-time job, which is not related to music.

Devise a Clear, yet Flexible Process for Collecting Data.

Selected participants were interviewed in an environment of their choosing, where they feel comfortable, on three separate occasions. The interviews followed the general structure described by Seidman (2006). The first interview focused on the context in which the participant experienced the phenomenon of songwriting. The second interview focused on the specific details of the experience of songwriting itself. And the third interview was used to tie up loose ends and revisit anything from the first two interviews that may warrant further exploration. The interviews were approximately one and a half hour in duration, but were kept flexible to accommodate for the needs of both the participants and the direction of the interviews.

If participants deemed it pertinent, I explored with them any of the tools, instruments, lyrical content, or any other items in order to further understand the phenomenon. Any such explorations were recorded so that the transcripts reflect the meaning of those items in the participants' own words. I also provided participants with a notebook and pen with which they could journal or jot down important ideas between the interviews that could be used as data later. Only one participant elected to keep a journal. His entries were discussed briefly during his interviews; however, he did not return the journal for further analysis.

Make a Bridling Plan.

During the entire research process I kept a private electronic bridling journal (Appendix D). I confided in the journal on a regular basis about my feelings, beliefs, assumptions, challenges, perceived emerging manifestations of the phenomenon, and changes or developments in the study. The journal was intended to be a means by which

I critically examine my own perspectives, question my assumptions of normality, and scrutinize what I think I know of the phenomenon in order to remain highly skeptical and in the phenomenological attitude. Additionally, a trusted colleague, Joseph Pate, lead me through a bridling interview using the protocol I developed for the study before data collection began. The components of my bridling plane provided me with a written reference of my own subjectivities to which I was able to return to through out the research process to reflect upon and inform my beliefs about the phenomenon.

Joseph and I periodically met to discuss my subjectivities and reflect upon the development of the study. When needed we met in a private location and discussed my beliefs and ideas in an attempt to help me maintain a phenomenological attitude towards the study. No personal or otherwise directly identifiable information related to any participants was discussed. I felt privileged and genuinely grateful that Joseph, a doctoral candidate also working in post-intentional phenomenology, was willing to help me with this aspect of my study.

While bridling is a practice of questioning, reflecting, and re-questioning one's beliefs and assumptions related to the phenomenon of interest, it is not an attempt to eliminate bias. Post-intentional phenomenology acknowledges that the knowledge generated in the research process involves not only the research participants' intentionality, but also the intentionality of the researcher. I came to believe, therefore, that my own background as a songwriter was perhaps a delimitation of this study. It was my hope that the bridling process would not only help foreground myself as the interpreter and instrument for this study, but also add to the context and strengthen the overall study.

Read and Write Your Way Through Your Data.

Post-intentional phenomenology calls for a whole-part-whole analysis plan (Vagle, 2010). The process first involved reading all the data and getting re-acquainted with the information. Next, I read all data line-by-line where took careful notes and marked passages that contained meanings. This process was repeated for a minimum of three times for each participant's data. The second time through the process, according to Vagle (2010), I should have been able to make initial meaning statements and by the third time I should have been able to articulate my own analytic thoughts. Once this initial process was completed, I began the same process except it involved reading across all participants' data.

While Vagle's (2010) approach called for a purposeful engagement with the data during a period set aside for analysis, it is important to note, however, that analysis was on going, concurrent with data collection, and recursive. I adopted this approach as a guideline to follow in order to give my study an intentional structure and to safeguard against feeling lost and confused about what to do with the data once I had it. It was not an attempt to separate my analytical processes that were constantly at work in this study at every level. From the decision to study the phenomenon of songwriting to the interview questions and follow up probes, I embraced my role as an analytic, thinking, and interpreting participant in this study.

In addition to following Vagle's (2010) approach, I also included detailed notes within the transcripts as a form of bridling. Within the transcripts, my notes were delineated from the words of the participants by brackets [ ] and by being set in a normal, non-bolded typeface. The bolded text indicated the participants' voice. I also

highlighted portions of the transcripts (Appendix E) that I felt were significant. The color scheme I used for highlights is as follows:

- Yellow indicated significant comments originating from Erik
- Blue indicated significant comments originating from Tenzing
- Orange indicated significant comments originating from Juliette

When concept or idea was expressed by more than one participant I used the following color:

- Green indicated significant ideas shared by Erik and the participant in whose transcript the mark appears.
- Bright pink indicated significant ideas shared Tenzing and the participant in whose transcript the mark appeared.
- Orange indicated significant ideas shared by Juliette and the participant in whose transcript the mark appeared.
- Red indicated significant ideas shared by all participants

Because analysis, collection, and writing are recursive and take place concurrently, the notes in the transcripts evolved as I progressed through the interviews. During the analysis of Juliette's data I began blocking off sections of her words in order to indicate data that directly influenced a song I wrote as part of my data analysis process (Appendix E). The blocks simply made it easy to locate the portions of the interviews that were drawn upon to write the song.

My experience with this research project did not go exactly as Vagle (2010) described. I did not always have to wait until I had conducted my second line-by-line reading for the phenomenon to manifest itself. When it came to Erik and Tenzing, the

tentative manifestations of the phenomenon were revealed within a few days of the first interview. The process of bridling and remaining skeptical as I continued to follow the research and analysis procedure only served to confirm and elaborate what I originally suspected (Appendix D).

Juliette's data was very different. After the first interview, I believed I understood the phenomenon based on her descriptions; however, as I continued through the data analysis process I recognized that I had only previously understood a part of the tentative manifestation. I read through her transcripts at least four times before I began to more fully understand the phenomenon.

Craft a Text that Captures Tentative Manifestations.

While analysis was recursive, I began crafting a text as soon as I believed tentative manifestations revealed themselves. The writing process was also part of the analysis and I crafted a text intended to reflect the multiple, partial, and varied contexts of the phenomenon. This process has often been referred to as more of an art than a science. As such, I played with forms of writing and include song lyrics, narratives, and poetry. My hope was to present the data in whatever form best transferred a lived contextual experience into a meaningful representation.

I feel it is important to acknowledge that, as a qualitative research, this project did not seek a conclusion per se (Wolcott, 2009). The data contained and represented herein shall continue to be analyzed and reconsidered long after this thesis is bound and shelved. What I believed as the text was constructed may not change. The manifestations of the phenomenon are tentative. They are fluid. Like my understanding of research,

songwriting, the world around me the manifestations of this phenomenon are not fixed, secured, or absolute. They are ever changing.

Rather than feel discouraged by the impossibility of conclusion, I felt invigorated by the infinite possibilities of what the phenomenon of songwriting may mean to people. This thesis was merely an attempt to show a few ways I have interpreted the experiences of the participants and present them as they described them to me. In the following section I attempt show how one might experience songwriting as a process of catharsis and transcending, which I believe manifests as portaling, everesting, and gravitating-levitating.

I decided to represent data in the form of short narratives interspersed with poetry and song lyrics. In keeping with the ideals of Creative Analytic Practice (Parry & Johnson, 2007), my intentions for presenting information in this way included illuminating some of the depth and complexity of lived experiences (including my own as a member of the research project and interpreter of the data), expressing what I have learned in an evocative way, and to challenge traditional ways of scientific writing. At times, I felt the process of analyzing and writing through the data mirrored the participants' descriptions of songwriting. It is my hope that some of the following text will evoke a bit of that experience in the reader as well.

CHAPTER 2

TENTATIVE MANIFESTATIONS

Through out the process of this research endeavor, many people have asked me why. Why is it important to study songwriting? What value could possibly come from such a study? While my initial responses to these questions were generally lengthy justifications full of philosophic and theoretical rhetoric, now, whenever I am placed "on the stand" I simply appeal the humanity of the judge. Imagine a world without it—quiet commutes, mute weddings, silent parties, and not a single note for any holiday or celebration. Indeed, what if there was no music for the grief and ecstasy we experiences along life's journey? What if there was no music to communicate the feelings deep in our souls? I would hate to imagine such an existence.

Not long ago, while at a writing retreat and working on this thesis, I experienced some of the importance of music first hand. On the first night of the retreat, I received notification that a dear family friend, Diane, had been killed in a motorcycle accident. During times of loss and grief, music is particularly important to me as a healthy outlet for my feelings. It was during the weeks following the news of Diane's death that I was steeping in the data. The descriptions the participants of this provided of songwriting became especially poignant under those circumstances.

Each participant's experiences were complex and multifaceted and yielded a unique tentative manifestation. Erik James described songwriting as portaling. Through his songwriting experiences he was able to transform perceived disadvantages and

weaknesses into advantages and strengths. Similarly, Juliette's experiences were ways she could both survive and transcend trauma to become a healer and help others. She expressed a two-fold experience of gravitating—feeling heavy, turning inward, and living in a deep, tender place within herself—and levitating, which involved being a conduit for love and positivity that can heal herself and others. The final participant, Tenzing Norgay, emphasized the importance of deliberative and intentional crafting of songs. Describing this work of songwriting as an Everest to climb, he provided a rich description of a process where evocative experiences generated ideas that he systematically collects and later uses to build songs.

When considering the data collected across the whole of the participants, two tentative manifestations were revealed. All of the participants spoke about the songwriting as a cathartic and transcendent experience. Songwriting was frequently mentioned as a way to heal one's self by relieving an internal need to express one's self. Additionally, the experiences of participants were equally centered around transcending the personal healing or expression in to help others. Under the circumstances that I found myself while at the writing retreat, these aspects resonated deeply with me.

The narratives, poems, and song lyrics I present to you are all comprised directly from the data. The poems were constructed with selected quotes from the participant's interviews. Some poems are a collection of quotes that represent specific ideas but are drawn from across the span of the three interviews. Others were constructed from a single section of an individual transcript. Block quotes were pulled from the transcripts in the same way. Besides my role of selecting which lines of text to include, editing of the participants' words was only done for grammatical purposes.

The text reflects conversations drawn upon from all interviews in a way that does not necessarily follow the "real" sequence in which the interviews occurred. The stories are presented in a way that centers on the clear communication of ideas, rather than a chronological sequencing of events, that flows in a conversational tone. In this way the narratives have been constructed. Additionally the settings of the stories and some intermittent dialogue was also inserted in order to make the participants less identifiable, to inject levity into some of the heavier stories, to make the narratives more readable, and at times to massage the language used to convey the spirit of the message without it coming across, as Tenzing put it, like a "blunt instrument." The narratives below each present one tentative manifestation based upon each participant's interviews. I then construct a narrative that places the three participants in conversation with each other, which illuminates the two shared tentative manifestations of catharting and transcending.

Dinner with a Shaman

Erik was sitting opposite to me at a vintage 1950s kitchen table. Its matte white, laminate top was encircled by a polished aluminum band, which framed its circumference. The aluminum chairs matched perfectly with their powder blue channel back-styled cushions. As I eased down into the chair its padded seat whistled as my weight displaced the air that gave it its fluff. Erik smiled. It seemed to give him immense satisfaction to hear the slight whistling toot from the cushion each time I shifted in this chair.

In the center of the table there was a small collection of condiments and an aluminum napkin dispenser that looked like it had been swiped from the local Waffle House. Tucked in and around the napkin holder and various condiments were small glass

bottles of ink. There must have been at least four of the squatty containers on the table. From my vantage point, the scene looked to be equal parts Charles Dickens and Jack Kerouac. Eric looked at me in a way that made me think that he was especially proud of his ability to combine 19th century romanticism with the roguish bohemian aesthetics of the beat era—and at his kitchen table nonetheless!

As I looked around kitchen I noticed dozens of spiral bound notebooks, an old typewriter, stacks of loose paper, a dozen or so more bottles of ink, and, in various places, fountain pens. There was a large window with a gentle, sheer treatment of linen. To the left of the window, in one of the room's corners, was the refrigerator. Its surface was filled with magnets advertising various global travel destinations. In the middle of the fridge was a poster of Joanna Lumley in character as Patsy Stone with the phrase "Sweetie Darling" in giant letters across it. Upon its top sat two Siamese cats.

"Don't worry about them," he said. "They're sweet hearts."

I turned back to Erik just as he shoved his chair back from the table and sprung to his feet. "That's my dinner," he announced in a giddy voice as he made a b-line for the front door.

"I didn't hear a knock," I said as he left the room. I could hear some general banter at the door and soon the sound of Erik's steps coming back across the house to the kitchen.

With audible relief he sighed, "God, I love Chinese food! Don't you?" Before I could answer, Erik was back, sitting at the table, in the exact position he was in before. Except now he cradled in his left hand a small ceramic bowl filled with rice and chicken and in his right he balanced a pair of delicate, ceramic chopsticks. I started to answer

Erik's question, but was interrupted by a sudden burst of thunder and a subsequent power failure. Erik laughed and opened the kitchen window to admire the sound of the wind outside and the smell of the coming rain.

"I'm going to fix us up with some alternative lighting," he said as he once again disappeared into a side room. He soon reappeared with four very large candlesticks. Here we sat in a darkened kitchen filled with the smell of Chinese food, the glow of candlelight, and a storm on just the other side of the window blowing the linen drapery wildly towards the table. "What a scene!" I thought as I began our interview.

I asked Erik to think back to when he began writing songs and to tell me about that. As he spoke I listened quietly and jotted down some notes on my pad.

> I started writing songs when I was 13 years old. I grew up in South Georgia, in a military town. Everyone was so macho. It was full of butt-cuts, corvettes, used car lots, and Styx and Van Halen. It was just across the river from Alabama and full of soldiers. And, you know, I was picked on in school. I was this little gay kid and it was like running the gauntlet everyday. It was the mid-80s in South Georgia. So I was radioactive.

Erik paused to take another bite with his chopsticks. It was clear that he ate with them frequently. "Do you want any?" He asked while focusing his attention back on me and away from his story.

"No," I said. "I ate before coming over. I couldn't possibly eat anything else. Thanks, but you go ahead." And with that, Erik's eyes drifted back toward his bowl and deep into thought.

"Do you know Lee Drugs?" He asked. "They were everywhere in the South back then. Do you know what I'm talking about?"

"No. I grew up down here, but I don't remember that."

Well my brother and I found this crate of records at a Lee Drug Store. It was like two big boxes of punk rock and new wave records for 99 cents each—at Lee Drugs! There were Bauhaus, Siouxsie and the Banshees... all this British stuff that we had never heard of, but we grabbed them because the covers were cool. And I guess it was actually 1981, because I remember hear this song on the radio. I remember that there were no guitars and this man was singing about pain the way a blues singer would sing about pain. It was Tainted Love by Soft Cell. I remember thinking, "Holy shit! My life is changed for ever."

"Now *that* I remember," I laughed. Erik got up to get a little more Chinese food and continued talking as he shuffled at his kitchen counter: "It's completely hilarious to me that I can look back and say, 'Yes, the shot heard 'round the world for me was Tainted Love by Soft Cell.'"

It was like receiving a postcard from this other world where men wore eyeliner and sang like blues singers. Music had provided us with this portal into this other world. It was very much all the gender ambiguity. Annie Lennox, Boy George, David Bowie—they were like peacocks among pigeons. It was all so much freer then where I was living. South Georgia in the 80s was awful. But being kind of punk rock was a way to be in people's faces about that.

As Erik was talking, another massive clap of thunder rattled the house. The cats both leapt down from their perch on the top of the refrigerator and scrambled into one of

the side rooms. The wind was picking up and I noticed that the temperature had made a dramatic drop from where it was earlier in the evening. "It's okay guys," Erik called out to reassure the kitties. "They might have the right idea," I said. Erik just smiled and with anticipation in his voice said, "I love a summer storm."

"So that had a big impact on you, I guess. Can you tell me about your songwriting? Did that experience influence it?"

> I was just like, "this is what I'm going to do with my life! I'm going to be a freaking singer-songwriter! I'm going to be like those guys!" I knew it was my destiny and this is what I was going to charge forth into the world doing. It's was 1980-something in South Georgia and I was so outrageous and out of the closet that people were like, "Are you out of your mind?' But I was like, "I need to make art. I have something to say that nobody else can say and that people need to hear."

At this point Erik had retuned to the table with crab rangoons. When he offered one to me, I couldn't refuse. "There so good. Little puffs of cream cheese and crab meat," Erik relished. I could not deny that I was very pleased to have one myself.

> But as an artist you recognize that what you're doing is—even if you're singing about these crazy, exotic emotions, and things—you're taking people on a guided tour of their own feelings. It sounds so new-agey, but it's almost a shamanistic role. You articulate all of the things that they have been feeling and can't put into words or sounds. When you get into that state that's bigger than you... and you feel like something bigger than you is coming through you. You're a conduit.

> And that's the whole shamanistic thing. If you're thinking while you're making art, you're not doing it right.

Erik stemmed his flow just long enough to finish his crab rangoon and offer me another, which I gladly accepted. "Tell me more about that," I said.

> Well, I think the thing that makes great songs great is that they take you out of yourself. They lift you out of your word for a second and transport you to another place. And each marvelous song takes you to a different universe of its own world. My attempts to create art, were attempts to create my own portal into this kind of world where all the things that I was were not disadvantages, but were advantages. Do you know what I mean?

I really felt like we were onto something, but I did not want to assume that I understood what Erik was describing. So I listened patiently and scribbled down a few notes as he continued to explain.

> It wasn't particularly cool to be gay in South Georgia. It was all about feeling strong while being androgynous. In my head the world that I was trying to escape to was a place where I was powerful. I was a star and people cared about what I had to say. It was a way to take the world of my imagination and actualize it in some way in the world. I think this is what happens with every artist: there is some form of dissatisfaction with the world as it actually is and you are trying to create the world of your imagination. It is for me, anyway.

The lights suddenly flickered back on and Erik got up and put his bowl and chopsticks in the sink. "We can talk as long as you want because when we finish I have

to do dishes," He said as the bowl clinked against another dish in the sink. "Now that we have power, I'm going to make some coffee." He said. "Do you want some?"

I blew out the candles and replied, "I'd love some coffee." I normally do not drink coffee, but it was getting late and sitting in the candlelight had made me a little sleepy.

"This stuff is the best. You can only get it at the small ethnic market down on this side of town. It's cheap. I guess nobody knows about it yet."

While he was rummaging through the kitchen drawers looking for a can opener, he continued to tell his story. "The thing is that vulnerability, going there and being open and soft, it makes you so strong. It's hard to explain. It's just such a mighty thing."

I asked Eric to think about a song that he wrote and tell me about it. And included a bit of a dare: "Maybe you can be a little shamanistic with me... because I want to understand what you mean by that other world." I was sincerely hoping that he would guide me through the portal he was talking about. Erik let out a chuckle as he turned the crank on the can opener. I thought this was a sign that he would not be that open with me; I know I would have trouble. For me songwriting is very private. But as Erik turned towards me his face changed. It looked as though he was willing to tell me anything I wanted to know. He began to speak in very a poetic style, "I'm very comfortable telling my story. What do you want to know?" I asked, "Can you tell me what that other place you mentioned is like, when you go through the portal?"

The Place

It's quiet

Like you've jumped out of an airplane

Perfectly quiet

Except for the wind in your ears

It’s a brain-space, an un-thinking

It’s not a hole that needs to be filled; It’s a space that’s opened up

It’s like putting your cruise control at 180 and climbing in the back seat

It’s like trust

You’ve handed everything over to this greater thing

God!

What a relief!

The chattering monkey in your head

Making these phantoms to scare you

Constantly droning on...

Like radios... slightly off the channel

Just blurry static

But when I’m writing, when I’m catching an idea

Everything’s gone quiet...

That constant yammering

Yammering jammering

The noise is you

That’s your conscious voice, your “I”

A jittering mess

But,

In that moment

When I heard those words and... melody

Everything was still

And as calm

And undisturbed

As a glacial lake

Yeah,

At the point you've really let go of control

All the gibbering, screeching, fingers in everything...

Worrying, shallow, urgent mind

That's constantly questioning and over-analyzing

When it's...

Finally quiet...

A much bigger mind talks.

Erik was standing at the counter. The coffee was percolating and the smell was amazing. The cats made their way back into the kitchen and spooled around Erik's feet. With the smell of the coffee and lights back on, I was feeling much more pert. I pressed Erik, "A bigger mind? "

A Bigger Mind

That's the wildness

The part of your mind that's far ahead of the rest of you

Where all flashes of genius come from

If mortals are lucky enough to catch them

From that place

That’s beyond thought

It sounds so corny when I say it...

I honestly do believe in God.

It’s complicated, but...

I believe God is there.

God loves us.

God is an artist.

Go smell some wisteria and tell me God isn’t a fucking artist.

And...

God is for everybody

Lepers and doctors

Kings and beggars

Or if you’re a whore

God loves you all the same

And maybe I’m crazy

But I think that’s what gives songs pulse-quickening power

Art to connect with people

It just seems that I alone am not quite good enough

To reach over that barrier of self into the universal thing

That’s when the retro-rockets, the booster rockets kick in

When it’s no longer about me; it’s about us

There are things that are rational

There are things that are explainable

There are things that are quantifiable

And then...

There are things that are out of time

That's what the whole creative process is

I could tell that the coffee was almost ready. And it was a good thing too, because just then we had another crash of thunder and a short interval of flickering lights. Erik opened the window a little further. I could here the rain beating against the awning and roof. "Here it comes," he said.

And here Erik came with our coffee. With both of us at the table and warm mugs nuzzled in our hands, I asked Erik to describe what writing a song is like for him.

A Storm Breaking

It's Like a Storm Breaking

Like tonight

The sultriness of the summer

The thunderstorms

Like this one

Are just part of me

It really is...

Like a storm breaking

You see it coming in from a ways off

And it starts to take shape

There's a cloud

There's a feeling

Something irresolvable

And it’s not going to fade quietly

The laws of physics take over

Cold sinks, heat rises—pain meets God

And art happens

It’s really intense

First...

Flashes of words and twists of melody...

In my head

They whip around each other

And moisture condenses

And then...

BOOM!

Art happens

Like Athena springing from your forehead fully formed

I’m hearing my mouth

My mouth will start to make the sounds

And it’s a response

To a world that isn’t meeting our needs

And that’s the pain...

A yearning, a longing for something that doesn’t exist

So you make it exist.

Like water falling from the sky

It’s what allows life to exist on this planet

I started to take a sip of coffee, but it was still too hot. I pulled back from the mug with fogged glasses and slightly burned tongue. “Pain meets God and then art happens?” I asked.

“Well, it’s an exorcism.” He said quickly. He went on to describe it further for me.

An Exorcism

It’s healing

Like shrapnel coming out of the flesh

Working it’s way out through the skin

As the body expels it

That is the work of art

The art is healing

It’s like surgery

It’s like you’ve been broken by life

And the bones have improperly healed

You’re all gimped up.

Writing is where I go to heal.

To stitch back up

To open and clean out

And re-stitch whatever wounds are there

To re-break those bones and set them properly

But the breaking

The re-breaking

OUCH!

But that's where we start

That's where the operation begins

Deep in...

It's very private

It's very personal

It's a way to safely exorcize

Those particular sadnesses or fears

I looked at Eric and asked, "Did you say ex-or-cize?" With out missing a beat, he responded in a mater of fact tone: "It's both ex-or-cize and ex-er-cise. Which do you want first, physical activity or casting out demons?"

There are exercises you can do to stay limber so you can access the place quickly. There is a workhorse part of the creative mind. It's a muscle just like anything else. You have to keep it limber and constantly keep it working. And exorcizing is working out your shit. Artists are often very sensitive people. And often things have happened in the past that have left them somewhat injured. I believe people store hardships and sadness in their bodies. Art is working that out, like the shrapnel I told you about, but also transforming that into gold. It's an experience of taking what could be a negative incident and spinning it into gold. You know you've really won, when you've taken pain and spun it into pleasure.

I asked Erik to tell me more about his experiences and he described writing songs in a variety of contexts. He writes songs alone, with full ensembles, but he mostly writes collaboratively. He indicated,

> It's like two people building a bridge over a river at the same time, simultaneously. One is sinking the supports down into the mud at the bottom of the river and the other person is paving the road. But it's happening in mid air at the same time. It's exhausting, but it's exhilarating.

He stopped again to close the window. Some of the rain started to drizzle in. While he was up, he refreshed his coffee.

> I mean a creative partnership is like a marriage. The writing is the sex act. And the songs are your babies, your little babies that you make together. And that's kind of, in a way, why I need a mate to make my songs. I'd probably definitely be the song's mommy. Does that sound crazy?

Erik took a sip of coffee and offered me a refresh. My cup was still full so I declined.

> It's a love relationship. It's kind of like falling in love. You have this thing that happens when the two of you are together that is intense and has this life beyond you both. And they go out into the world. Your little songs march out there in the world. They have there own DNA and they have their own magic. Be brave little song!

Erik perked up in his chair and leaned in towards the table. He said, "It's like the work makes its own magic, special karma in the world of people." He continued, "It's like that Goethe quote: 'Be bold and great forces will come to your aid.'"

> It's like a ball of yarn. You'll get just two or three lines while you're in the shower, but as soon as you start to pull a thread out of that ball of yarn it all starts to unravel into your lap. Literally. You write those first few words down and it starts to all come together. You've got an idea rattling around in your head and it's a ball of yarn where you start to pull and there's more ideas behind that one and then it all kind of comes together. It's like a sort of gate in your head opens up. It's like something has arrived. I can understand why people came up with the concept of angelic visitations and muses and things because it does seem to come from somewhere else. And for me, the best songs I've ever written are like... I don't know... It's like they happen and they're already hit songs in another galaxy. When it's on, it's on, and it comes with its whole magic intact.

It was getting late, nearly midnight, but I couldn't let this go. I asked Erik, "What is it like to find yourself in that moment when it comes? "I would describe it as being in a state where the last thing you're doing at that particular moment is sitting there going, 'How do I feel?' It's really difficult to quantify because it is, kind of, transcendent. It is something that is so far beyond words. It is a type of holy ecstasy." Erik replied.

Directing Traffic

It's like you're pulling things down out of the ether

Out of the ephemeral

And putting them into specific and concrete terms

When a song is working

It comes whirling out of the ether

All you can do is throw the parts at it

And hope they land in the right places

They come together with a velocity generated from within

The song is already there

In an invisible world

You're just trying to throw the right elements in at the right time

Things are just doing themselves

Just falling into place

With such sureness and speed

We're just here to direct the traffic

Erik and I sat in the quiet for a moment and contemplated the breadth of description he just laid out. We sipped our coffee, talked about local bands, and listened to the rain. After a few minutes of relaxing silence, I asked if there was anything else he wanted to add.

> I think that ultimately trying to describe this on tape is going to be a fairly approximate and fruitless endeavor. We're playing Operation. You know that game with the little tweezers. Every time we get close, we'll be hitting the sides and the red nose will be lighting up and making that buzzing noise.

With my head full of data and initial analytic thoughts making their way in, we finished our coffee and said our farewells. I got into my car, found *Tainted Love* on my iPod, and headed home. Looking at the clock, I realized it was half past midnight. Where did the time go? Had this self-described shaman taken me through a time warp or that portal he was talking about?

As soon as I got through the front door of my house, I put my backpack down in the hallway, and headed straight for bed. I was exhausted. The morning came too quick, but it brought with it a revelation. The word “portaling” floated in my head. I contemplated what portaling was, where I had heard it, and why it haunted my imagination.

As I listened to and transcribed Erik’s interviews, I recognized that Erik had described part of his experience as traveling through a portal. Portaling began to take shape in my analysis as the process of traveling to a particular headspace where songs were birthed, broke like summer storms, and included the exorcism of hurt and pain. Portaling is also a transformative process. Erik described taking pain and spinning it into pleasure, transforming his weaknesses into strengths, and even being able to guide others through their own emotions. Ultimately, portaling is a process of bringing the ideals that exist in our imagination into existence in the material world.

Erik described his dissatisfaction with various circumstances and how songwriting was a way to actualize something better. He likened portaling to holy ecstasy where a bigger, god-like mind spoke. The songs broke like summer storms, came whirling out of the ether with their own magic, and sprung from his forehead fully formed like Athena. The process of portaling resulted in Erik being empowered and able to transform his circumstances.

Erik’s experience was both personal and socially oriented. He expressed having a deep need to make art. He had something unique to say that the world needed to hear. Songwriting provided a way to be open about his sexual identity, be “in people’s faces about it,” and celebrate his identity. Additionally, Erik’s songwriting served as a way to

help create portals for others to experience transformation and to be vocal about the need for social change.

Breakfast with a Healer

I'm not really sure this mug is clean enough to place to my lips, but the coffee is a non-negotiable at this hour in the morning. Last night's interview with Erik was great—he's a great talker. I just hope I have enough energy for this 8:30 interview. But it's all a learning experience, so no pressure, right? And at least there's coffee and the storm last night did cool things off a little. Sip. Sip. God! How is it that this mug can be too completely different colors on the inside and out?

8:50. I guess I should expect as much. When you have to reschedule twice, that is probably a good sign that you are not going to get an interview. Musicians are weird. You get an agent, a contract, a little money or notoriety, and all of a sudden you think you are freaking Carol King or something. At least call me. Sip. Sip.

Maybe she forgot. Musicians live in their own worlds—too busy being creative to be responsible, I guess. She will probably call me around 4:00 and tell me how sorry she is. We'll reschedule again, and then... wait! Maybe I should call her. Sip. Sip. But it's only 9:10 and if she's asleep, then she'll really be annoyed. Anyway, it always looks so desperate to call.

9:30. Well damn it, now it's hot! And here come all the regulars filling up the patio. I should probably switch to juice or something, but cup number three is still half full and I hate to waste. Sip. Sip. It's a quarter to 10. I'm calling! Gulp—coffee gone. Why are musicians so fickle? If you've changed your mind, at least have the courtesy tell me.

As I pull her name up in my phone, I look up to see her walking down the sidewalk towards me.

In a bright cheery voice she greeted me, “Hey! Have you been here long?”

“No, not really,” I said in a voice so convincing that I just might even start believing it.

“I know I’m early, but I wanted to go ahead and order breakfast. I know how busy they get at this time,” she announced. “Do you want more coffee?”
With three cups already in my veins any more would only added to my anxiety over this time-issue. “No, thanks.” I replied just as the café door swallowed her in the same way I swallowed my last bit of coffee—gulp.

Suddenly it hits me. It is as if the café door had just swung back open and smacked me right in the middle of my forehead: “Wait a minute! What? Were we scheduled for 10? Shit, I’m an hour and a half early.” I sat there rubbing my head hoping this sudden revelation won’t leave a noticeable mark. But then I resigned, “Oh well, I guess that’s part of the learning experience.”

Juliette’s presence was calming. With both of us at the table and the IRB paper work behind us, the earlier events of the day receded into the periphery, as did all the other patrons, sights, smells, and sounds until they were merely the indistinguishable, muted background colors on the canvas of the day. In the foreground, however, sat the figure of a slender woman with strong, square shoulders, and a face that was neither young nor old, but rather experienced and content. She was bright and happy.

With out any further delay we began our session.

"Tell me a little bit about how you got into songwriting." I said in an open and intrigued voice. Her response shocked me. It was not the story I was expecting—not in the least. I did not expect any of the participants I interviewed to have perfect lives or childhoods, but I could not have imagined—not in a million years—Juliette's response.

Her story began with a statement that was equal parts disclaimer and warning. She said, "The only reason that I'm interested in doing this with you is so that it will potentially help somebody else who went through what I went through... 'cause it saved my life." At hearing these words, my entire body shifted. I sat up straighter in a more neutral position, I put my pen down and folded my hands one on top of the other. She had my attention and I could feel my forehead furrow and my pupils narrow as I prepared for whatever might follow. I was sure that whatever it was going to be, it was going to be important and should my attention falter I might loose her trust as well as the crux of her experience.

She shared with me a story that very well could have been borrowed from a Stephen King novel. She painted an image of an antebellum house haunted with the ghosts of the oppressed slaves from whom endless labor was forcibly extracted to maintain the estate. The spirit of the old house—its tyrannical design—remained fully in tact. It played host to centuries of horrors and it's current master, Juliette's stepfather, extended its cruel legacy to now include his own family members. The children and women who slept under its roof, lived under their own glass ceiling as horrors typically reserved for nightmares were psychologically applied to their own lives—there was no escape and nothing you could do to rise above your subservient role to the man who's name was on the deed.

Juliette's mom was a busy woman who constantly stirred in the kitchen. Three meals a day for seven people left no room for thoughtful reflection on the conditions experienced by herself or her children. There was a steady stream of heat spilling from the oven, which mixed with the hot stagnant summer air to create a convection of temperatures in the old house that would leave blisters on your soul. The heat was omnipresent and the front porch and rocking chairs allowed only the slightest refuge, and only during a really good summer storm. Otherwise the haze from the heat only added to the delirium of existence on the old plantation.

Not too far away lived another man, Juliette's biological father. A man whose personal demons were so foul that almost any other conditions would seem like a trade up. Juliette was caught between a cruel psychological tyrant and a man possessed with insatiable urges to ravage that which most fathers would give anything to protect. Of course I speculate, but the images she provided made me question whether her mother viewed a providing master as preferable to a despot who would desecrate his own family. Or maybe she did not know what was actually at the core of these men. Perhaps all that cooking was a way to compensate for a life that was devoid of any other form of nourishment. Either way, it was clear that a single mom of five had few options and Juliette's stepfather provided many of their physical needs.

Whatever the exchange entailed for her mother, Juliette's unfettered, free-flying soul, was entirely unsatisfied and saw it as less of a new deal and more of a raw one—a life with no release, a life in a pressure cooker, a life between a rock and a hard spot. It was obvious that an intervention was overdue in this story, but before Juliette could offer that break, the waitress interrupted to deliver her breakfast.

It was probably already over 90 degrees, but the steam rising from the eggs was still visible. In a way, it seemed eerily similar to the ghosts she had described. The site and the heat made me think about what it must have been like for Juliette in that old house. "I'm going to go get some water," I said excusing my self, "I'll be right back."

When I returned to our table, the sun had shifted. It was now positioned just behind a large hardwood near the sidewalk. The long shadow it cast was a welcome break from the heat! Juliette continued her story. As she spoke, I continued to picture the scenes she described in my imagination:

For most people, it was just a typical Sunday in the Deep South. The churches, which sit on every corner, were filled to their capacity. And Juliette was required to be among the throngs of worshipers. Church, however, provided no sanctuary from the pains she felt. Instead, she felt further controlled, watched, and monitored. Juliette described how she had just returned from a nightmare of a weekend at her father's house and she simply wanted to die. She said, "My dad and I had just been in a three-day sexual thing with a bunch of drugs and women... and then I come back and I'm in church. And I'm like, "This is so fucked up. Why is this happening to me? If everywhere I turned I was either getting hit or raped or talked down to, why would I want to live?"

But then it happened—relief! That particular Sunday, a friend of Juliette's was singing a solo at their church. She said her friend sang the most beautiful note that she had ever heard and it changed her life. She tried to describe the sound but couldn't find the words, just that it "made me feel like there was hope." She said, "If something can sound that pretty and make me not want to die, then maybe I can do that for somebody else. That was how that all started. There has got to be goodness somewhere on this

planet, if that sound can happen. So I committed myself to making that sound for people." In response I asked, "Can you tell me about a song that you wrote and what that experience was like?"

> It was like this lifeline for me. When I was 16, I got my first guitar. And we lived in that house and it had a really big front porch. There was a wooden swing out there and the only way I could get privacy was to hide out there during storms. There were seven people in that house and it was before A/C so everything was open and my stepfather wouldn't let me sing... and the guitar and my voice would resonate through the house. So I had to sit out on the porch. And during a storm no one could hear what I was doing out there. I just remember being out there during this storm and I ended up writing this song that later got a lot of notoriety.

Probing a little further, I asked her to describe what was happening on the porch as well as what she was feeling while writing the song.

> Well, it was what I would know now to be tornado weather. I remember mom peaked her head out while I was writing and she said, 'Get in this house!' And I was like, 'No! Get away!' Looking back now, it's obvious that she was scared and I would be scare now too. But back then, it was worse for me in the house. People won't mess with you when you're out in a storm, but I was scared in that house.

Noticing that the sun had now shifted past the big hardwood that had been providing us shade for the past several minutes, she looked at me with obvious concern

and asked, “Do you want to go inside? Is it too bright for you? It is getting a little sticky now, isn’t it?”

“I’m okay for now,” I said. She offered again to move inside so that I didn’t have to sit in the sun, but I was too worried about loosing the momentum of the interview. I wanted to be sure that we captured every word and we were on a roll. I also feared that it would be too noisy inside with the morning rush to get a good recording. “Tell me more about writing that song,” I persisted.

> I remember looking to my right, down Main Street, and seeing these massive sheets of rain coming towards the house. I was sitting on the wooden porch swing and the chains started to rattle at the top. Nobody was around because of the storm and that’s why I always got happier during storms... because nobody would come outside. See there was so much abuse and fear that the guitar and the swing were really the only respite that I had.

Sensing that some aspects of this story were difficult for Juliette to share with me, I interrupted: “If this is too much, you certainly don’t have to tell me any more.” She reassured me saying, “No. I want to tell you because it may help some one else down the line.”

> So the guitar was the first thing. I didn’t really know how to play. It was just this thing in my lap, but I could make sounds that my stepfather couldn’t stop. He said that my opinion didn’t count, so I had to write down my opinions. And there was so much to say. So I ended up writing this song... I just wrote about everything I could see when I did a circle—what everyone was doing inside, what I was doing, what the town was doing, and all these feeling and memories I had. I

just remember being on the porch—finally—and the sound of the guitar.... was like... ah! Unbelievable!

Being a guitar player myself, I felt like I knew what she meant by the sound of the guitar. But I probed asking, "What about the guitar and it's sound? Is that important?"

Um... yeah! It's really important because it initiates a lot of my songs actually. I think because the touch feelings I had were so unsafe, so to have a guitar with it's shape almost like a person... It's like the torso of a person. It was the only touch that didn't feel scary to me. It doesn't talk back and it does what I want it to do. It's like a friend. It's cuddly and it's not going to hurt me. A lot of people have hurt me, but guitars can't. It just immediately calms me down. It sounds hopeful, warm, light, and kind of fluffy. It just took me away from that house.

Suddenly, Juliette blurted out, "Let's go in side! I'm sticking to this chair." I conceded and Juliette went to look for a table while I packed up my computer and followed after her. When I met up with Juliette in one of the café's corner booths, she was sitting up straight and smiling. She was just as bright and cheery as when she first walked up from the sidewalk. I plugged in my computer and started recording as Juliette finished her story.

But Brian, I wrote that song when I was 16 and it wasn't until I was 46 that it got produced and received all this notoriety. It took me 30 years to let anybody here it. I grew up in a really terrible situation and it was a way to survive. I wasn't doing well and was so suicidal. I was just looking for some relief. But, it was the defining song of my life and I felt like I couldn't move forward until I got it out of

me and out there for people to hear. It was like I was stuck in that moment of hell.

When Juliette said the word "survive," my ears perked up. I asked her to tell me more about what it was like for songwriting to be a way to survive.

It feels heavy and tearful. Being a survivor is just being heavy. I was upset for most of my life. Traumatized. I was in complete agony and needed to get out of it. But I have this fighting spirit in side. And so music was really the only way out for me, even though what I was writing was tragic. It's a way to heal myself and, like, catalog trauma. It's like, how do you find relief? You access music. And that was my past, now I do it to bring levity to others who feel heavy. But a lot of art comes from extreme emotions. You know, laughing and crying are just a microcosm apart. It looks the same but it feels different.

Just then, my ex-wife and her new boyfriend walked by and greeted us. I was struck by the irony of how I suddenly felt very heavy. Though several years had passed since our divorce, the pain from those memories began creeping to the surface. I couldn't help but feel the connection to what Juliette was describing about songwriting as surviving to my own experience during that period of my life. The heaviness must have shown on my face because Juliette stopped speaking and asked if I was okay and how I knew them. When I explained my situation, she looked genuinely sad. It was almost like she could feel my pain and I immediately reassured her that I was okay and much happier on this side of things.

We talked for five minutes or so about connections we shared through mutual friends and acquaintances, feeling heavy and sad, and then the conversation shifted.

Juliette began to tell me how the pain she suffered not only created heaviness, but also developed deepness, thoughtfulness, sensitivity, and unusually high levels of empathy and sympathy for people. "I care too much," she said. "I've suffered so much that it's really hard for me to know people suffer. If I hear a child even remotely just whimper, it really just traumatizes me."

> I wouldn't wish it on any one, but what I've been through has probably made me a better person. I'm very tender inside. So, I'm terribly sensitive. I'm just a big gushy mess. I live in this soft spot and I'm just trying to get it out there to help other people find their soft spot. My stuff really takes people in. I find the softest, most kind, and gentle spot and voice how that can be helpful... I get into the deepest part of myself. It's the place that people don't necessarily see or perceive. I'm kind of always there. I kind of live in the deepest place. And that's kind of where I write from. Typically something is bugging me or something is exciting me so much that I have to get it out. I either need a resolution or have found one. Through the first part of my life it was because things were bugging me, and now it's because things are exciting. So writing isn't to save my life where as it was before. Now it's to possibly save somebody else's life or bring joy to my own.

I asked Juliette to tell me more about the resolution concept. "Is having a resolution or needing one a formulaic thing? What is that all about?" I asked.

> It's never mechanical for me. It's very heartfelt. It's totally spiritually related. It feels like it's so beyond my conscious and study mind, and my brain is always processing. It feels like a gift that comes from somewhere else. It just feels other

> worldly, like, very spiritual and far away... like I'm a channel, a conduit to flow love through. I like it. It's not really any kind of goodness that I feel like is from humans. Maybe it is, but it seems like it comes from outer space or somewhere. It's like very angelic entities that don't have a negative approach to life are flowing through me and showing me, from the other side, what it's like to live a good, fun, clean, pleasant, happy existence, which I didn't have. So I've had to create it.

Several questions began to take shape in my thinking. Does Juliette create that which she never had? Does it come from deep within or from outer space? Is it her or other entities writing through her? Does it matter? I jotted my questions down quietly on my notepad and asked, "What is it like when you're a conduit?" Her response was concise, "Pleasant. Easy." I tried another line of questions: "Can you tell me more about having to create it?" Again, her response was very direct. "It's like a choice to channel something positive verses something negative." She paused, then continued:

> Most of my family is very religious. They would say, 'Heaven and Hell, Jesus and Satan.' I use angelic, universal, and higher power. And when I'm allowing that to flow through me it's easier to write for sure. But it's a conscious click on, click off kind of thing. It's like a gift and a responsibility. I believe people are born and come back a lot. So the fact that the first 45 years of my life sucked tells me that I must have done something really shitty before. But it's like I've paid that credit card off. So everything is fairly easy for me now. It's peaceful, but I still have a duty. It's like the angels are stacking up points on the other side. They're like, 'We sent you all those messages, you perceived them, you let us

> come through you, you wrote them down. Good job. You're not going to be in quite as much trouble as you would have been.' So it's a responsibility and I see my job as not hurting people and showing them how to have peace and joy in their lives.

As Juliette finished speaking her phone buzzed. "Oops! I've only got a few minutes left. What else do you want to know?" Responding quickly, and almost with out thinking, I asked, "Why do you do this?"

> Just to totally heal myself and heal others. That's it. That's the bottom line. It sounds pretty. It's fun. It's challenging. It's entertaining. It feels good to play the guitar. I just think it's a gift and you should share your gifts. It's a calling. If it wasn't for music I would be dead for sure. My theory is that if it can do that for me then it can do that for someone else too.

"Are you a healer," I asked? Juliette's response was a resounding "yes!" With this, Juliette and I got up from our seats at the same time, but she seemed to move much quicker than me. My head was spinning from all that I heard. Juliette put her hand on my shoulder and expressed how happy she was to be a part of this study. We continued to chat as we walked back out into the heat and off in our separate directions.

As part of the analysis of Juliette's data I wrote a song that retells part of her story while highlighting important aspects of her songwriting experiences. Songwriting was a way Juliette could feel safe and secure during turbulent and difficult times. She described it as the only respite she had as a young woman. The difficulties she experienced left her wounded, but songwriting also served as a source of hope and

healing. Juliette described her most recent experiences with songwriting as a form of helping others find the hope and healing she experienced.

The song is rooted in the data, but express my interpretation of what Juliette shared with me. The lyrics are included below; however, a rough recording may be listened to at www.americansongspace.com/briankumm.

A Song For Juliette

I'm only telling you 'cause it saved my life

You can't imagine where I have been

On the front porch I resort to hiding

But I can write when the lightening strikes

And clouds spin

The tempest is howling, but inside it's war

And I'm only frightened when I cross that door

I'm only telling you 'cause it saved my life

But I'm free and I'm safe in a world I create

In a song for Juliette

See, a long, long time ago they stole a girl

She can't remember any innocence

But in the rain the worlds came to wash and cleanse

A broken girl caught in a world of fallen men

Now no one can hold me 'cause no one holds love

Except for my six-string and it's gentle touch

See, a long, long time ago they stole a girl

But I can see her face and the tears have left

In a song for Juliette

And there in the dark times when I felt I could die

It's in the voice of a song that I found my life

And if there's a heaven or some spirit beyond

If there's any hope for me it's here in a song

So now I play my songs for you and hope that you'll hear

The sound so beautiful it made me want to live

In a song for Juliette

Juliette described some of her experiences with songwriting as surviving. Surviving entails what Juliette described as being heavy, cataloging trauma, and finding relief and healing. While she would not wish it on anyone, Juliette felt that the pain and trauma she survived helped her to develop a heightened sensitivity for others. She described writing from this sensitive place within her as a way to either heal herself or help others find healing. The heaviness, and need to turn inward for writing is part of a tentative manifestation of songwriting as gravitating, which includes the aspects of Juliette's experiences related to surviving and living in the deep tender place within.

Contrary to experiencing songwriting as gravitating, Juliette described her more recent experiences as channeling love, spirits, and messages from divine sources. Songwriting is no longer just a lifeline to bring relief from heaviness. It is about bringing levity to others who are experiencing their own heaviness and bringing healing to not only herself, but others as well. Songwriting is fun, light, and easy as opposed to an act

of survival. These newer experiences of songwriting are part of a tentative manifestation of songwriting as levitating.

Juliette said, “Laughing and crying are just a microcosm apart. It looks the same, but it feels different.” I would add to this that sometimes it is possible to laugh until you cry, or cry and laugh simultaneously. The emotional experiences related to songwriting are complex and futile to categorically isolate. Keeping with Juliette’s metaphor of laughing and crying, songwriting as an experience of gravitating or levitating is awfully complex. The two may seem identical, but feel different. One may lead to the other, or both may occur simultaneously. To reflect the complexities of the experience, I intentionally hyphenated the tentative manifestation as gravitating-levitating.

Beer with a Sherpa

The following passage occurs near the beginning of William H. Murray’s *The Scottish Himalayan Expedition* (1951):

> But when I said that nothing had been done I erred in one important matter. We had definitely committed ourselves and were halfway out of our ruts. We had put down our passage money—booked a sailing to Bombay. This may sound too simple, but is great in consequence. Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one’s favor all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings, and material

assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way. I leaned a deep respect for one of Goethe's couplets:

> Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it.
>
> Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it! (pp. 7-8)

Eric had mentioned this Goethe quote in his interviews; and while he may have misquoted Goethe, my search for the quote's source lead me to Murray's book about a reconnaissance trip in preparation for his Everest expedition. Of course Murray may also have misquoted Goethe, but the whole notion of mountaineering and the need to commit oneself to the task in order for magic and providence to move seemed consistent with gist of what Erik was trying to articulate. It was not until I met with Tenzing Norgay, however, that I realized just how prophetic it really was.

Tenzing Norgay, as he decided to call him self, was not a very large man, but fit and strong. We stood in his living room briefly before he announced, "I'm going to grab a beer and a smoke and we can go outside. Do you want one?" I was thirsty and it was after 5:00, so I agreed. I could hear a slight pop, then a fizz, and the rattling of discarded bottle caps before he soon returned with two cold ones and a welcoming smile.

"Let's take this out on the porch," he said. With beers in hand, we retired to the expanse of his porch where we sat in two very agreeable rocking chairs. Sitting there and looking out across the front of his wooded property, I felt like I was in the country. We were still "in town," but the rocking chair, the beer, and the retreating sunlight, and the rising sound of cicadas put me in a more relaxed state of mind.

"This is beautiful," I mused as I admired the porch.

"Yeah, I like to sit out here during this time of the day."

I could certainly understand why. The light was just breaking through the leafy hardwoods, and seemed to paint the driveway, the porch, anything it hit really, in the pink hues of the sunset. It was most unusual, but very welcoming. "I just hope the mosquitoes don't get us," he said drawing me back to reality. "Why don't we get started," I suggested.

"Shoot!"

"Tell me about 'Tenzing Norgay,'" I said. "That's an unusual pseudonym."

I leaned about it form the Cohen brothers. It's one of the many references in my life. The movie is Intolerable Cruelty and George Clooney is the lawyer. Catherine Zeta Jones plays a gold-digging wife that hires a private investigator to catch her husband cheating so she can divorce him and take his money. George Clooney defends her husband against her and he eventually wins. Anyway, to make a long story short, he explains to his assistant that Tenzing Norgay was the Sherpa that helped this guy climb Mr. Everest. He was like, "Every person who's gotten to Everest had a Tenzing Norgay." So they found "her Tenzing Norgay," the guy who helped her screw over her husband. Everybody's always got some help somewhere along the way.

"You're Tenzing Norgay, the Sherpa?" I asked. Leaning back in his rocking chair with a Cheshire grin stretched across his face he responded with a simple, "Yup!" I was instantly excited—I knew he would be guiding me through his experiences, but what path would that take? We enjoy a few sips of beer before I started with the first question, "Tell me about how you got into songwriting,"

Well, my mom was a writer, a poet, and a scholar. I mean she was a literature professor. Her craft was writing, but she also loved music. And when I got a little older and was really into certain artists' lyrics, but didn't understand what they were saying, she would explain it to me. And so, I just loved lyrics and writing; and rhyming and poetry came naturally to me. Music had those two things to offer. I knew how much my mom loved music, but I also knew that she had a craft, and I felt like I wanted music to be my craft.

Tenzing swatted at a mosquito as I asked, "When did you start to think of yourself as a songwriter?"

I feel like I'm still learning how to be a songwriter. When I was in either 4th or 5th grade, I wrote a song called Transparencies that was about how we perceive the world. We used transparencies in school, so that's where that came from. And then much later I wrote a set of 10 songs within a week and recorded them. But they were really personal, sometimes to the extent that they felt too personal. But then I got into production and recording and I noticed that it got a lot better. I could hear what I was working on and it became a lot more systematic and efficient. I'm working on a full album, a sonic experience now.

"You mentioned your mom, but was there anything from your father that influenced you?" Tenzing lit his cigarette and took a deep drag. He held his breath just for a moment before releasing a long plume of smoke from his lungs.

Well, my dad actually taught the piano from an early age. We have some genetic similarities, but the way we think... like, he just baffles me sometimes. I've always thought he lives in his own world—kind of lost in a fantasy world—where

> up is down. And that's a really, really dangerous world to be in. But at the same time it's a universally appealing thing. It's just as essential as focusing on what's going on around you. You have to have time for that and music enables me to do that in a way that's healthy. So it could be a good or bad thing.

In what seemed like one smooth motion, Tenzing carefully placed his cigarette on the ashtray that was sitting on a table between us, lunged forward, and rocked to his feet. "I'm going to go get some bug spray. Be right back."

While Tenzing was inside, I took a minute to look at my note pad and visually explore my surroundings. There was a diverse range of flowerpots and gardening tools on the porch, and just beyond the porch railing, in the yard, stood a sizable ceramic gnome. It was all quite convivial and homey. The cicadas were getting a little louder, which always makes me feel a little nostalgic being that summer porch sitting was a favorite pastime of mine as a child.

Tenzing reappeared with bug spray. He gave himself a thorough spritzing and then handed the bottle off to me. I gave my legs and arms a quick squirt and set the bottle on the table next to the ashtray. Tenzing resumed his position in his rocker, lifted his cigarette to his lips, and inhaled. With smoke curling from his nostrils, he continued to share his thoughts with me.

> Songwriting has always been like an objective... like an Everest to climb, but one that you'll always be climbing or, just, your time will get faster every time you go up it. Singing has also been a bit of an Everest for me, especially with playing guitar. Because I don't consider myself an amazing singer or amazing musician,

it's kind of just a writing exercise. It's like a project that I do. It's kind of like being a carpenter and working on a little woodwork... you just keep witling away.

Tenzing smacked another mosquito. "The damn things love me!" He said. "This stuff's not strong enough I guess." I asked Tenzing to tell me more and he obliged.

It's a craft. All the people who've been great songwriters have really cared a lot about the quality of what they're doing. And I take it seriously to the extent that other people might look at me and think I'm wasting my life, but I have to do it. And I think I've gotten more committed to trying to be a crafter of music and songs and narratives as life has gotten progressively harder. It was always kind of hard for me, but then it just... I got on my own and a bunch of crazy shit happened in a pretty short span of years.

As I listened to Tenzing, I couldn't help but to think about Juliette's story. But just as with Juliette, I didn't ask for details. And Tenzing did not share any details. As I listened and recognized Tenzing's right to take the conversation wherever he felt like it needed to go, he shared that he felt dissatisfaction for the world and his circumstances—being unemployed and feeling a general sense of alienation. In contrast, however, he also expressed having a deep desire for something better and to experience continual improvement.

In a lot of ways my dad is kind of symptomatic of things culturally that I don't like. I just want things to be better, I want things to be richer. I think a lot of people listen to music and like things just because they're told to by a bunch of slick-ass producers. It's just a marketing game. There's just a bunch of superficial shit out there and I feel like people can agree on much better things

and be more connected as a community if they break through a lot of those manufactured ideas. Good music gets better every time you listen to it, which means it doesn't sink in right away. A lot of people, my dad included, don't have that kind of patience with music. But there are rewards to trying to understand things and give them meaning.

Tenzing paused just long enough to take a deep draw from his cigarette, swat another mosquito, and flick his ashes into the tray before continuing.

Maybe I'm a snob, but I just get fed up. I mean when style becomes superior to substance... it's like, 'No! Style is always a reflection of substance.' It never comes up above substance. It's like fucking hipsters. The one thing that a lot of the bands that are getting a lot of buzz in Athens have in common is that the members are all well-to-do kids. I can't afford to get drunk every night and do nothing but party. But my point is everybody loves music and everybody's like, "Music—it's the lifeblood!" But not everybody is really willing to work on it. People think it's just all about a vibe. And that's why their music is boring.... because they just try to feel cool.

I laughed out loud when I heard him mention hipsters. "It's funny," I said, "with Athfest, I looked through the catalog of bands and the one thing that jumped out at me was the fact that so many of the people playing in all these different bands are all the same people. It all feels incestuous to me." Tenzing agreed. He took a long draw off his cigarette before squashing it in the ashtray. Not wanting to stray too far into hipster territory, I asked "can you tell me more about what you mean when you say 'its like climbing an Everest?'"

Well that's just it. That's what I mean. To me the substance, the authenticity, is all about an aspiration towards something better. It's just about trying to do something good. And in light of everything I've been through and in the sense of Everest, it's feels like... you know, on the one hand I feel so defeated by my odds in the world, but on the other hand it's like the ultimate challenge. So songwriting has become more and more of a building process over time and piecing elements together. When you're with a band and you're tight and noodling around you could hit something that's just magic, but the conditions for that are very rare. That's why I have to take the long way 'round.

"The long way 'round?" I asked.

As a kid, I always thought of my self... I always thought, like, "I could freaking climb Mount Everest without a coat!" But as I got old enough to understand what an amazing accomplishment it is I was like, "Wow! There's a lot to that." The more time I've spent working on songs, the more time I spend. It's a really slow building process, piecing things together. It's like if this one little thing was my final product, you know, like a little square or something, then the giant square was what I started out with. I do lot's of edits.

Tenzing rocked forward and onto his feet again. "This might be a good time for another beer." He said. "You want one?"

"Yeah, that'd be great."

"While I'm in there, I'll grab a couple of screen shots I printed for a guy from one of the bigger studios today. You'll see what I mean by big squares and editing."

Tenzing disappeared inside again. When he emerged he had a small collection of papers tucked under his left arm, a beer bottle in each hand, and a small bucket dangling from his left pinky. "Let me grab that," I offered. I set the bucket on the table between us where the ashtray and bug spay also sat. It was a citronella candle.

"Between that and the bug spray, we should be good," he said handing me my beer. Reaching his hand back through the door just enough to flip on the porch light, he remarked, "I'll leave this on just long enough to show you these screen shots. I sure as hell don't want to attract more bugs!"

Tenzing sat down and produced his lighter. He lit the candle and then lit another cigarette. "Nasty habit. I really ought to quit," he said through his Cheshire smile. Tenzing showed me a series very complex images. They were obviously screen shots from the Pro Tools digital recording sessions he was working on for his album, but I did not fully understand the technological things he was explaining. There were dozens of wide lines that looked like a page from a grammar school composition notebook. Within those lines sat small colorful rectangles that represented different pieces of the song. They were all different sizes and way too many to count.

He spoke for some time about what each square represented, how it was produced, and how what he was showing me was an edited version. The original song was apparently even more complex. There were eight pages (Appendix F) of screen shots, which highlighted the enormity of the project. The songs apparently consumed 220 gigabytes of hard drive, which was edited down from 265 gigs just two days prior. "For 13 songs that's about 17 gigs per song. Wow!" I offered in response. "The computer I am recording our interview on only has a 111 gig hard drive."

I was impressed, but I wanted to understand the experience of writing songs and how this related. "Tenzing," I probed, "think about one of the songs you wrote and tell me about what that was like." Tenzing got up to flip off the porch light as he explained:

> Well, see, it's just like those screen shots. I always want to give myself enough strategic data to work with. So I'm constantly emailing ideas to myself. And over time I'll go to my computer and search through all of these emails and put those pieces together. I used to write all my ideas down, but now with computers I just email it to myself because I have the benefit of copying and pasting... and back up. I'm eventually going to start scanning everything I've written down into my computer. I'm never really going to remember every idea or certain phrases that I thought were cool... so I have books and notebooks and they're already kind of organized. I'm mentally preparing myself for an evolution over time in how I catalog ideas and preserve them. It's all about keeping organized and keeping track of everything.

I wasn't sure of the connection he was trying to make, but I wanted to be open. "Can you tell me more about this?"

> There's just too much other shit going on in life to always be able to block everything out and say, 'Okay, I'm inspired; I'm going to write a song.' And the shitty thing is that a lot of that inspiration comes when you're busy doing other things. So I have a very structured and efficient system of documenting ideas to go back to and work on later. Because I have to use so many pieces from here and there, I have to find a way that I can realistically reference them. I force myself to write down ideas as soon as I get them. So if I get an idea, I'll write a

down a couple of things that come right off the top of my head and put them in the briefcase for later.

I took sip of my beer and nodded my head. The connection seemed clearer to me, but I wanted to remain skeptical, so I asked, “Can you tell me more about inspiration coming to you?”

I don’t know where it comes from exactly. How do you explain a thought or a series of thoughts or a logical chain? It happens so quickly you wouldn’t be able to remember the order that it arrived to you in. Sometimes I’ll get a little phrase or just a little snippet. And it might remind me of a setting or place or feeling and then I’ll have a way to describe that. Most of my songs have come from small ideas, but sometimes the idea can be too big. There’s something about the way I work that tends to be unfocused and incredibly expansive. I get these ideas and just go crazy with them and I don’t really know what to do with them or get intimidated by them. They can end up being more than I anticipated or more than I can handle.

Tenzing paused to extinguish his cigarette and enjoy his beer. The cicadas’ chirping had reached a cacophonous level. Through his Cheshire smile, Tenzing quipped, “Yeah, I feel like I’m climbing Everest when I write, but from the comfort of my own home.” I added my two cents, “Yeah, with good beer and cigarettes!”

But that’s why it’s important to focus on the doing of it. I mean everybody on the planet has to have cool ideas sometimes, but it’s all about what you do with it. It’s kind of like it’s not really much of anything until you make something out of

it. It's all in the execution. There is a big difference between hearing it in your head and getting it down.

"You were going to tell me about a song that you wrote and what that was like." He took out another cigarette and said, "Oh yeah."

The song *Fast Dog*, which is going to be the first song on the album and is also the song that we're basically named after, was originally called The Flat Land. I drove through the salt flats during my freshman year of college. We were driving across the country and didn't really know what they were. But we got to the salt flats and I was like, "What the fuck is going on?" It was like an ocean of white sand that was completely flat and that was all you could see... that and a kind of mirage on the horizon. It was so flat and so white. It was just surreal. It was kind of like being on another planet. It was just so evocative.

"I've been out there too," I said. "It's really crazy." Tenzing nodded in agreement as he took another drink of his beer and drag of his cigarette.

Well, a couple of years earlier I saw the movie The World's Fastest Indian, which is based on this true story of this old man from New Zealand who sets the land speed record on this little tweaked out Indian motorcycle that he spent a lot of time perfecting. And the land speed records were set at the salt flats. I had no idea that's where they tested for land speed and when I found out I was like, "Awesome!" I just got this line and the whole song came from that.

"You use the word evocative. Tell me more about that." Tenzing leaned forward in his rocking chair, put his hands on his knees, and looked over at me.

It *was* evocative. The salt flats, when you look at them, are at once beautiful and they seem really empty. So empty that you would not necessarily want to stay in that place forever. I guess it seems like a passing state of mind that's very vivid. To me no state of mind is permanent.

"Tell me more about a passing state of mind," I persisted.

You're never going to feel shitty or great forever. It passes and it's like you can capture an experience, and they're all different, or a state of mind, or both... or you can just invent some experience. But it's almost always evocative. It's inspired by personal experience, even if I wasn't the one involved with what I'm writing about, I thought about it a lot. And that's why I wrote about it, but it's just like capturing little short stories or something.

It was completely dark on the porch except for the flickering lights of the citronella candle and the glow from Tenzing's cigarette. With a stifled yawn he observed, "It might be a good time to go inside." I agreed. So we packed up all the things we had been collecting on the little table between us and proceeded indoors.

On crossing the threshold, we were blinded for a split second before our eyes adjusted to the light. Tenzing sat on one side of a corner sectional and I on the other. I placed my beer and computer on the coffee table in front of us. "So we were talking about evocative and passing states of mind."

It's just like whenever you hear a song that reminds you of a place or feeling. And I think that's how the song begins—as an evocative idea—and then it evolves as one when you flesh it out. You're trying to make it even more evocative of what you intend. You want to evoke that kind of feeling in the

listener and yourself when you listen back to it. People who aren't interested in making music evocative don't get very far.

"Do you have other examples that you want to talk about?"

I don't know where my song *Care Less* came from exactly. I was probably just pissed off. I mean, I didn't sit down and go, 'I'm going to write an angry song right now.' But then at the same time, I might be writing about something and get angry while I'm writing it. It was like playing that chord progression conjured those thoughts somehow.

I swirled my beer around in the bottom of the bottle before finishing it off. Tenzing was looking at his bottle deep in thought. We sat in a brief moment of silence before he volunteered, "The one thing that I know about myself as an artist is that I'm drawing from a freaking huge pool of references. I've seen so many movies and I've listened to so much music that I'm drawing from a gigantic frame of reference."

While we were talking Tenzing's wife came into the room and reminded us of what time it was. We all agreed that it was getting late and I certainly did not want to over stay my welcome. I asked Tenzing if he had anything else he wanted to add before we parted. He said, "You can't really explain what it means to you aside from all the little elements that make it up. Those are the intangibles."

"When do you reach the top of Everest?" I asked. Leaning back in the sofa and wearing the same Cheshire grin as before, he said, "When I'm dead. Basically, that's when I can die happy."

As I left Tenzing's porch and headed home, I was fixated on the way he described songwriting as being like an Everest to climb. The fact that he had selected the name of

one of the first two people to summit Everest—Tenzing Norgay—was also compelling. I immediately knew that one of the tentative manifestations of songwriting based on Tenzing's experiences was everesting. But what exactly is everesting?

Everesting is a process of slowing building and piecing songs together. It involves systematic collecting and cataloging ideas, which are then crafted into a song. The crafting process can be highly technical, time consuming, and require a variety of tools. At first glance everesting may appear to be more of a skill and a practice than what Erik and Juliette described. Yet, the ideas from which the songs are built come into being through a process of evocation.

Rather than try to explain where ideas come from, Tenzing described how his songs came into being. Using the example of Land Speed, he described how a startling landscape scene evoked memories. The evoked memories mixed with his, then, present experience and resulted a moment of inspiration. He described the result as receiving a few lyrics. As Tenzing crafted the lyrics into a song, he continued to evoke memories from his expansive frame of references. Everesting is a recursive process where evocation and crafting go hand in hand.

Tenzing described the evocative aspects of the experience as being like capturing vivid but passing states of mind. He said, "It is almost always evocative." It is an experience where an external stimulus will summon an internal reference that is strongly connected to personal meanings. For *Fast Dog* the stimulus was a stark and desolate landscape; for his song *Care Less* the stimulus was the sound of the chords as he played the guitar. These descriptions revealed everesting as more than an external process of

editing and crafting. It is also a process of evoking emotions, memories, ideas, and sentiments from an internal frame of references.

Everesting can be viewed as a process of simultaneously ascending and descending the "mountain" of songwriting. The ascension is the external crafting, building, and editing aspects of songwriting and the descension is the internal referencing and evoking of emotions, memories, and ideas with which the song is constructed. Everesting is a complex process that occurs over a significant amount of time. The technical tools used to construct songs requires time to master and the process of constructing songs is time and labor intensive. While the moment of evocation—the spark of inspiration—may seem instantaneous, the internal frame of references that is being drawn upon during the moment of evocation is built over the course of a lifetime.

A Shaman, a Sherpa, and a Healer Walk into a Bar

Waiting in the lobby of a large downtown bar, Juliette, Erik, Tenzing and myself greeted each other in hopes of being seated soon. After introductions, we were led promptly by a cheerful host to a private booth towards the back of the room. There was a window with view out to the sidewalk on one side and the open dinning/bar room on the other. It was quiet and private enough to set us all at ease, but not secluded from the other patrons to the point of exile. While we could hear the conversations of other patrons, we could not quite make out what they were saying.

Brian: I'm glad everyone could make it. First, I want to thank each of you for participating in this study; and second, there were a few things I wanted to ask each of you as a group. But before we get into things too far, let's order some food, drinks, and what not.

Juliette: I don't drink, but you all go ahead. I'm going to order some dinner. The chef here used to work at a place down the block and he's supposed to be really good.

Erik: I'm going to do the same if that's okay with you. Can you pass me a menu?

Tenzing: Well, not me. I'm going to have a beer. Can you pass me the draft list?

We shuffled the menus around the tables, made our selections, and gave our orders to the waiter. When we were sure had everything sufficiently written down, we shuffled the menus once more toward his direction and thanked him for his service.

Brian: Should we get started, then?

Juliette: I don't see why not.

Brian: Okay. Well, I was curious as to why you all do what you do. Why songwriting?

Juliette: Well, I can start if you want.

Tenzing: Go for it.

Juliette: It all comes back to why are we here. And, in my opinion, it's so that we emanate love and acceptance. I don't know what else it could possibly be. Why would we be tortured down here on this planet, if it wasn't to figure out some way to find love and peace and then to let other people know how... How do you find it? Access music! Access the musical part of you... the artist. Go build a house, if that's what it takes. In my case, it's music.

Erik: Yeah, I mean, ultimately you do it for yourself, sure... you make art because you have art inside your body and you have to do it, but you also want that... you want to create that visceral reaction. You want to instill that catharsis.

Tenzing: What it comes down to, for me, is that you're doing it for your own peace of mind. It's about expressing yourself and telling the world something that you know, whether it's something that you imagined because you can relate, or something you experienced... there's a cathartic element to that. But, you know, when I write I'm trying to evoke a feeling in other people too.

Juliette: Any cathartic stuff that I do is for me, but ultimately it's also for anyone who might hear it. So it all goes back to that. I would hope that somebody would get some levity on this heavy planet. It can be heavy here.

As we were talking, the waiter returned with a two heavy pint glasses. He stood at the entrance to our booth and placed one glass in front of Tenzing and the other in front of me. He also lowered a large bowl of sweet potato fries down into the center of the table.

Juliette: Wow! Who ordered that?

Brian: I did. I thought we could snack on these while we talk.

Tenzing: Cool, thanks!

Erik: Oh! I love sweet potato fries! They're so good. It used to be that you could only really get them at the Grit, but now they're everywhere. Thank God!

Brian: Well, help your selves.

Our waiter interrupted our admiration of the French fries and said, "I'll be right back with your waters and your food should be out in just a minute." He turned and left almost before we could thank him.

Brian: I want to go back to this catharsis thing. That word has been brought up a few times. Can you all tell me more about that?

Erik: I had a friend and a collaborator who used to always say the funniest thing after we just wrote a good song. He'd go, "Wooo! Somebody open a window! I just catharted!" And that to me is... you know... why bother if you're not going to do that? I've never understood people who are super obscure with their work. They don't want anyone to see into it or understand or identify with it. It's like, "Why?" Fucking make something people can relate to or go home. That's what makes art so pleasurable, the fact that it can be so evocative. You can go to these points in your life that were painful at the time, that hurt, and were scary, or sad, or anger... you know, whatever... and relieve them and cathart and not actually have to suffer the actual pain of being there.

Tenzing: So... there you go again with being evocative. That's how most of my songs come about... It's almost always evocative. I mean you can never really describe why something sounds Chinese, for example. I mean you

could if you went into the history of it and why the sounds are recognizable. But the thing is that it's probably not going to be broken down technically like that. The key is just to feel it out.

Erik: In a way it can be synesthetic. Do you know synesthesia?

Brian: No... what is that?

Erik: Well there was a composer, for example, named Ottorino Respighi... Respighi was famous because he made instruments sound like visual things. He has pieces like The Fountains of Rome, The Pines of Rome and they're very synesthetic. It's like you can hear droplets of water splashing, you can see the sunlight sparkling. In some ways it's a little gimmicky. I mean, sure. Okay, that's nice. But it's very pretty. It's very post-impressionist. But that's what gives it it's umph, though. It takes people there.

Juliette: Well, what I mean is if I sing, it's like going back to wherever... whatever song I wrote, I typically go back to where I was and sometimes that's not such a good place. And that's why it's so important to get some songs done.

Brian: Do you go back to those places in your imagination, emotionally, or....

Juliette: Both!

Erik: Well that's kind of what I mean. Like, the reason I love guitars is because, to me, it sounds like kudzu twinning around things and weeds waving in the wind on the side of the highway. It has a very... and I'm sure a lot of that has to with just growing up in the south, my dad having Allman

Brothers on the radio in the car on summer afternoons, salted peanuts in your RC Cola bottle.... I experience art in a very tactile way generally and on multiple levels.

"Okay... I've got a BBQ sandwich and a burger," announced a young waitress standing at the entrance to our booth. Juliette said, "Oh, good! I've got the BBQ and the burger is his!" Erik and Juliette both seemed elated to have their meals. "Oh my God! I'm so hungry," Erik piped. Tenzing and I sipped our beers and looked enviously at the lovely portions served to our comrades.

"Pass me that menu," Tenzing said with his Cheshire smile. "I think I might have something after all." I slid the menu down the table towards Tenzing and grabbed a few fries on the way back. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see the name of the bar printed on the glass window and the name of our town below it: "Athens, GA." I lifted my glass to my lips and relished the realization of where I was at that moment—at a table enjoying a conversation about songwriting with three very talented, skilled, and respected songwriters in a town that has been internationally recognized as a music hub. "Damn I'm lucky!" I thought as I took another sip.

Juliette: But to get back to that cathartic thing, kind of back to what I was saying about going back to those places, and that not always being a good thing... I feel like my music really takes people in, and sometimes I don't even want to go. But I feel like a lot of people just live at the surface. They live in the house, the job, the car... the stuff! You know? But I try to encourage people to look deeper. You know, like, allow yourself to get deep inside and don't be afraid of what you're going to find. Stop looking

outside and just turn in for a little bit. Sometimes it's miraculous what you find.

Tenzing: Yeah, I've had a rough life too and music felt like an outlet. It always felt like you could just do what ever you wanted in that world. You could always turn to it and mess around with that stuff.

Erik: It's what I call the artist's disease. It's like pain goes in, art comes out. But, yay! Because otherwise we'd go crazy. It's that healing thing I was telling you about. I think a lot of people who can't do that, who can't work that chemical shift, the only way they get through life is by not feeling anything.

Juliette: Yeah... I don't know what I would have done without music. I don't know that I would have been as well adjusted as I have become. Yeah, I don't know... I guess other people write. I'm not sure what they do... I'm not sure how people who aren't musically inclined process. It's been a lifesaver for me though. If nothing else it sounds pretty. I don't know... It's been a lifeline to me!

Erik: It goes all the way back to ancient Greece to an instrument called the Kithara, which was a harp that you would sing these incredibly sad songs on. At one point I was really freaked out by the fact that so much of my work was so down, that I wrote these incredibly sad songs all the time. I'm a fairly sunny person on a day-to-day basis. I was talking to this guy who was like a friend of a friend and he was like, "Dude, you're like one of those people in Italy that they pay to go to funerals and grieve." Like,

they don't know anything about the person that died, but they will go there and compose sonnets on the spot. You know? I think we have a need for that in our world. I think as a species it's our nature to hide our pain. So if we can hear something that can feel it for us, and puts into words all those things we feel. It can be like, "Oh my God! This artist has been reading my journal."

"Are y'all doing okay?" asked the waiter. "Do you guys need another beer?" Tenzing ordered a sandwich and I asked for a glass of water. "It'll be just a second," said the waiter as he turned and left.

Juliette: Well, before it was more of a survival sort of feeling. Now it's more to create joy and help other people embrace the present. My music was somber because my life was somber. And now my life is very happy so my music is happy. None of my really heavy stuff has been released, but you know I wrote something like 300 songs about all my pain.

Tenzing: Yeah, I have a lot of songs that I haven't released because it was personal or too much of a personal issue. The lyrics were too blunt. They were like blunt instruments. You know? And some of them were really good.

Juliette: For me, it was just too tragic. It's just destruction and I'm trying to recover from destruction.

Erik: Brian, I know you write songs. You have to know what we're talking about. I mean, I only know a little bit about your ex-wife, but she sounds like a sociopath to me. Tell me you didn't write a bunch of songs about that.

Brian: No, you're right. I did. I wrote a lot of songs about that. But, like what you're saying, I haven't performed or released much of that out there. It always felt too personal. Or, I like your phrase, Tenzing, like "blunt instruments." It was all too raw. But I had to write them... for my self. But I don't feel like other people have to hear them. So, okay. I think it's safe to say that a big part of this songwriting thing is catharsis. But I want to know more about what you meant by finding something miraculous when you do that, Juliette. Does anybody else feel that way?

Juliette: Now a days, I'm channeling more that anything. The songs are like gifts. I don't feel like it's me necessarily. You know, it just feels other worldly, like, very spiritual and far away. Like I said in my interview with you, it just doesn't feel like any kind of goodness that I feel like is from humans. It might be, but it seems like it comes from outer space or something. And that all came with this spiritual system of beliefs that I have now.

Erik: And it's like I said in my interview too... I can totally understand why people feel like they have angelic visitations because it does feel transcendent. It feels a type of holy ecstasy. You know, like I was saying how songs have their own magic.

Brian: Tenzing, what do you think?

Tenzing: I don't know... I was raised with a fairly religious background... well, not really. My mom's parents were very religious, but my mom was sort of like a bohemian, existentialist Christian. If she were alive today, I'm sure we would be talking about how I'm not really into religion. You know?

Like, higher power is different than believing in religion. And it's great when all that magic stuff is working but the conditions for that are really rare, so I focus on the doing part of it.

The waiter returned with Tenzing's sandwich and a glass of water. "Are you all okay for now?" he asked. Juliette smiled and said, "You can take this with you if you want. It was delicious." Looking at Erik, the waiter asked, "Do you need a to go box?" With food in his mouth and nearly in mid-chew, Erik barked, "No, I'll finish it."

Brian: What does all this mean to you guys? I mean, you all have really described this phenomenon in really interesting ways, which I feel like I can relate to... but help me understand why you've chosen to describe it that way."

Tenzing: I'm not sure I understand your question.

Juliette: What do you want to know?

Erik: I think I can answer that. For me, you know, songwriting was about feeling powerful while being androgynous. I personally have always kind of felt sort of weirdly androgynous. Not physically androgynous, but mentally. And I think that's kind of what I always liked about rock n' roll. The hard music with these liquid, fluid vocals that could be considered to be very womanly. That's what I always liked about what I was doing. it was like a fucking rocket and in the nose cone is all these daisies. I don't know, it's hard to explain. I just always liked the contrast of that... I liked the energy of that. I liked the fact that it took me out of my comfort zone and I had to learn to embrace feedback... and I don't mean like audience feedback. I mean, like, screaming guitars. So I think that, in a way, my

unwillingness to want to look weak or too feminine or whatever pushed me to make this whole very in-your-face, agro-rock n' roll, which I think kept me from ever becoming too remote from the world of men.... being around a bunch of flannel shirted dog boys... you know... but, it can be very lonely because out on the road gay guys don't come see live music. They go dancing.

Juliette: You know for me it was about survival. My guitar could make sounds that my stepfather couldn't stop. My guitar was my only respite.

Brian: And now you're healing other people through your music, right?

Juliette: Yup! It's a complete 100% desire to fix everybody!

Erik: One thing I mentioned in my interview was taking painful experiences and spinning them into gold. It's like you could be crushed by all the painful things in life, but instead songwriting lets us turn all of that into something positive.

Juliette: Exactly! Now what I do is all about being positive and helping others. It's not so tragic anymore. It's like I said, I had to get that out in order to move on, but I'm also totally about helping others now.

We continued to sit at our both for several more minutes while Tenzing finished his sandwich. "Thank you all so much for being a part of this," I said earnestly. "Is there anything any of you would want to add before we conclude?" Everybody seemed content with both the refreshments and conversation so we said our adieus. The stories and comments these participants shared illustrated that songwriting is both a process of catharting—working out deep emotions, finding healing, evoking memories—and

transcending—succumbing to a higher power, being receptive, and transforming one's self and circumstances.

Songwriting can be transformative. In Erik's case, he felt powerful where he normally felt powerless or disadvantaged. For Juliette, songwriting helped her to not only survive but rise above her hurts to help others. Not only did the participants use language that described something transcendent, or super-natural in their experiences, but it also indicated an element of finding an ability to go beyond their circumstances. Cathartic, transformative, and transcendent elements were present in all of their stories.

Conclusion

Juliette described songwriting as a lifeline for her. Throughout a series of painful events from a very early age, songwriting was a means to survive trauma. It was also a way for Juliette to transcend those hurts and help others. As she said, "It's a complete 100% desire to fix everybody." Her ability to turn inward, feel deeply, and write from a tender place of empathy developed from her experiences of surviving but also empowered her to help others.

Juliette conveyed a story of how songwriting served as a lifeline for her. She proclaimed, "The only reason that I'm interested in doing this with you is so that it will potentially help somebody else who went through what I went I went through. Because it saved my life, basically." Songwriting for Juliette was a way to survive. She found a respite from the difficulties in her life through songwriting.

Yet, based upon her proclamation, she was also a person who overcame her struggles and was committed to helping others do the same. Juliette described surviving as living a heavy life. The heaviness of surviving cultivated a deep sensitivity within her

from which she wrote many songs. From the deep, inward, sensitive, and sometimes heavy place, she wrote songs that helped her move on from traumatic experiences that previously defined her life. Through songwriting, she transcended the role of a victim to that of a healer, which is now the defining narrative of her life.

The experiences Juliette described as surviving, turning inward, and living in a deep, tender, and inward place are encapsulated in the term gravitating. Gravitating describes the heaviness of surviving as well as the attraction to turn inward that Juliette related to songwriting. While this was one of the primary experiences she had with songwriting, it was not the only one. Once Juliette allowed a higher power to flow through her, songwriting became a transcendent experience that allowed her to help others.

Juliette said, "now I do it (songwriting) to bring levity to those who feel heavy." This aspect of her experience is best described as levitating, which involves channeling positivity, spirits, and messages from beyond. She described her self as a conduit for love to flow through. It is a spiritual experience for Juliette and one that is "never mechanical." Levitating describes getting lighter—or moving beyond the heaviness of surviving—by a spiritual force.

In many ways, Erik's experiences echo those of Juliette. He described songwriting as an experience of creating a portal into another world where all of his disadvantages were advantages. Through the portal he could transform himself and the world around him into something that better reflected the beauty and perfection of the world of his imagination. His experiences were not so much about escaping undesirable situations as they were about engaging those situations in an intentional way that allowed

him to take “what could be a negative incident and [spin] it into gold.” For Erik, songwriting provided the cathartic experience of exorcizing pain and hurt as well as the transcendent experience of taking on a Shamanistic role and helping others understand their own emotions.

Erik’s portaling experiences were very much connected to a feeling of alienation due to his sexual identity as a gay man. He described songwriting as a way to fulfill his need to feel powerful while being androgynous. Songwriting, as portaling, was a way he could actualize the world of his imagination and transform his weaknesses into strengths. In a very real way, Erik’s experiences were spawned by feelings of hurt and desire to change his hurtful circumstances. Through songwriting he not only transformed his circumstances, but also transcended them to help others.

Tenzing Norgay, the self-selected pseudonym of one of the participants, is the actual name of a famous Sherpa and one of the first two people to summit Mt. Everest. Tenzing continually used images of Mt. Everest to describe his experiences with songwriting. He said, “Songwriting has always been like an objective, like an Everest to climb, but one that you’ll always be climbing.” Everesting, for Tenzing, is a slow process of building songs out of small ideas collected and catalogued over the years. It is a highly technical process that involves creatively editing, paring down, and piece-milling ideas together.

While Everesting is an external process of constructing of songs, the generation of materials from which songs are built—the ideas—come from the evocation of internal emotions and memories. Tenzing described himself as having an extremely vast internal bank of references informed by movies, books, music, and conversations. Most of his

songs came into being due to an external experience resonating with an internal reference. The connection of the external to the internal was where Tenzing experienced the spark of inspiration, his ideas. He then wrote down his ideas and organized them to use later in a systematic way of constructing songs. Everesting, as a process of external crafting and evoking internal references, is not sequential and finite, but recursive and ongoing.

All of the participants expressed very unique and complex experiences, which revealed tentative manifestations of the phenomenon in and of them selves. Yet, across the whole of the data, there were two shared tentative manifestations. The individual experiences provided a rich description of the partial, contextual, and fluid phenomenon of songwriting. When exploring what these aspects mean on a more collective level, catharting and transcending were prominent meanings of the overall descriptions provided.

On the one hand songwriting was a cathartic process. Juliette wrote from a deep place, Erik spoke about songwriting as an exorcism, and even Tenzing's description of evocation seem to indicate catharsis. Erik may have described it best when he said

> I had a friend and a collaborator who used to always say the funniest thing after we just wrote a good song. He'd go, "Wooo! Somebody open a window! I just catharted!" And that to me is... you know... why bother if you're not going to do that?

On the other hand songwriting was also a way to transcend circumstances, alienation, and hurt to transform one's self and help others. Again, Erik provided a fantastic description

when he said, “It’s an experience of taking what could be a negative incident and spinning it into gold.”

Catharting provided a source of healing, self expression, and self actualization. Transcending provided a way to move beyond one’s self towards benefiting a collective. Tenzing described music and songwriting as a way of challenge others, building a better consensus and community rather than just consuming “manufactured ideas.” Juliette clearly had many cathartic experiences with songwriting, yet she is very clear in her intentions to help others. As a transcendent experience, songwriting allowed Erik to reach beyond the “barrier of self into a universal thing.”

Catharting may seem like an obvious aspect of songwriting. We write because we have something to express, yet it never concludes there. The experience of healing that songwriting provides for the self is extended to others. The transcendent aspects of songwriting provide opportunity for empowerment and transformation. As a holistic experience songwriting provides both catharsis and transcendence.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of songwriters. The research question driving this study was: What is it to find one's self in the phenomenon of songwriting? Post-intentional phenomenology was the overarching theoretical perspective guiding my decision making from data collection to choices in how to represent the findings. This guiding framework allowed this study to explore lived experiences phenomenologically while incorporating poststructural perspectives on the inherent contextuality, fluidity, and instability of such experiences. The study was further situated and informed by the literature on songwriters, leisure, and creativity.

Three participants were recruited through a purposeful sampling procedure. The participants' backgrounds, genres, writing processes, and instruments varied greatly; however, they all met the study's two criteria for participation. First, they all self-identified as songwriters; and second, they all expressed that they had meaningful experiences with the phenomenon of songwriting.

Data was primarily collected through multiple, in-depth interviews. Participants were interviewed a total of three times each. Each interview was approximately one and a half hour in duration and followed a sequential exploration of context, phenomenon, and meaning respectively. Additionally, Participants were provided with a notebook and asked to keep a journal of their experiences in between interviews; however, no journals

were returned to be used as data. The songwriters frequently referenced specific songs they had written as a way to illustrate their experiences. At times they even shared screen shots from digital recording sessions, mp3 versions of songs, and printed lyric with descriptive explanations of the intended meaning of the songs.

Each interview was recorded and transcribed. Any additional data sources, such as screen shots and lyric sheets, were discussed during the interviews, recorded, and included in the transcripts. Where pertinent to the study these materials have been included in the appendixes. Initial and developing analytic thoughts were embedded within the transcripts. Separated from the participants' responses by brackets, these analytic thoughts were purposefully included to document the progression of the analysis as well as serve as a method of bridling my assumptions. Sections of the transcripts were highlighted with an intentional color-coded scheme to mark portions that contained significant meanings. The colors were also used to aid in referencing meanings as they appeared across the whole of data.

Data collection, analysis, and the crafting of this text was on-going, concurrent, and recursive. As soon as tentative manifestations of the phenomenon were recognized, they were included in the text. Writing about the tentative manifestations in this way helped to further refine my analysis, interpretation, and understanding of songwriting. In addition to reading the transcripts in a whole-part-whole analysis (Vagle, 2010), the audio recordings of the interviews were listened to multiple times in order to immerse and steep in the data. Throughout the entire research process, from preparation to data collection to analysis, a bridling journal was kept to document and scrutinize my assumptions, beliefs, and responses to both the phenomenon and the research process.

Five tentative manifestations of the phenomenon of songwriting resulted from this study. Each participant's experiences yielded one tentative manifestation and two tentative manifestations resulted from analysis of the whole of data. Erik, Tenzing, and Juliette described songwriting as complex experiences of portaling, everesting, and gravitating-levitating respectively. Consistent among all participants were experiences with songwriting best described as catharting and transcending. These tentative manifestations were represented in a way that hopefully included the contextuality and complexity of the experiences as well as evoked a resonant response in the reader.

While these tentative manifestations helped to answer the research question, they were partial, tentative, and non-conclusive. Erik perhaps said it best: "We're playing operation...every time we get close, we'll be hitting the sides and the red nose will be lighting up and making that buzzing noise." Throughout the study it was clear that along with the participants' context of experiences the phenomenon was constantly shifting and changing. Thus the findings are tentative manifestations of the phenomenon on songwriting that express some of the complexity of participants' lived experiences.

The present study contributes to the general body of knowledge related to leisure, songwriting, and creativity, by adding a rich description of both the lived experiences of songwriters and meanings of the phenomenon. Additionally, the tentative manifestations presented in this thesis highlight the need for unstructured, expressive, and artistic leisure experiences. In a time of great social unrest, economic uncertainty, and the unmitigated vulnerably of women and marginalized groups, the cathartic and transcendent aspects of songwriting can serve as a valuable outlet for personal healing, empowerment, and social resistance.

Discussion

The purpose of this section is to discuss the finding in relation to existing literature. Specifically, concepts and theories discussed in the cursory review of the literature will be compared and contrasted to the findings of this study. The areas of leisure, creativity, and songwriting will be discussed.

Leisure

Leisure was a present component of the participants' experiences with songwriting. Their descriptions are consistent with, but not exclusive to the conceptualizations of leisure discussed in chapter two. The social psychological perspective that leisure is related to perceived freedom and intrinsic motivation only accounted for a portion of the participants' experiences. Leisure was also found to be related to contexts, gender, sexual identity, and a need to challenge, resist, and transform personal and social circumstances. The participants' also expressed being in a state of receptivity (intellectus) and rational, discursive work (ratio), which illustrates Pieper's (1952) conceptualization of leisure and work. As it relates to songwriting, leisure seemed to be a very fluid and complex dynamic.

The social psychological perspective of leisure (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997) assumes many things about leisure. Among those assumptions are is the belief that there are options and choices available for people to choose to participate in. Additionally, it presumes that people are empowered and enfranchised to autonomously choose to engage in those activities. Such assumptions convey an image of leisure as an inherently equitable and beneficial phenomenon. It also leaves individuals to their own devices as to whether or not they have leisure.

When considering the finding of this study, the social psychological notion of leisure as a phenomenon to be found at the intersection of perceived freedom and intrinsic motivation does not suffice. Particularly the experiences of Erik and Juliette do not reflect those of empowered and autonomous individuals. They did not so much choose the activity of songwriting, as much as they were driven to it out of necessity. For Juliette it was a means for survival; for Erik it was a way of escape. To conclude that the participants *chose* to engage in songwriting as a respite, escape, or even as a pleasurable activity is too simplistic in light of the context described by the participants.

Juliette described her early experiences with songwriting as a respite from a troubled life and a way to catalogue trauma and sooth her emotional pain. This was particularly important for Juliette. Her guitar and the periodic privacy afforded by thunderstorms allowed her to express herself in a way that could not be silenced by her stepfather. She was self-expressive, but the meaning of this self-expression was ultimately about survival. As Juliette put it, "If it wasn't for music I would be dead for sure." Survival is not a matter of choice, but necessity.

There was some ambiguity as to why participants engaged in songwriting. All participants expressed elements of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. While all of the songwriters wrote songs for the cathartic experience, they also wrote for transformative purposes. Songwriting was not only about self-actualization, but also about helping, inspiring, and enlightening others. For Erik, it was even an outlet for social activism.

Songwriting provided the portal through which Erik could transform his feelings of weakness into strengths. Being a songwriter was a way Erik could "be in people's

faces" about his sexuality. Though Juliette described her earlier experiences with songwriting as a means to survive, her more recent experiences were a way to bring levity to others who are caught in a struggle to survive. Being unemployed, Tenzing found a measure of personal validation through his songwriting, but also expressed a central component of his songwriting was to challenge others to think differently about their lives. Self-expression and personal desire was important to all the participants, but songwriting extended beyond the cathartic.

Participants clearly had a desire to transcend their own circumstances, self-expression, and individuality. Erik expressed this sentiment in his poems titled A Bigger Mind. He said described it as art with the power to connect with people:

It just seems that I alone am not quite good enough
To reach over that barrier of self into the universal thing
That's when the retro-rockets, the booster rockets kick in
When it's no longer about me; it's about us

For Erik, songwriting was "about us." He even described taking on a Shamanistic role and taking other people on guided tours of their own emotions.

The experiences described by the participants challenged any true dichotomy between a purely sociological and social psychological perspective of leisure. Rather, they seemed to illustrate interconnectedness between social structure and personal agency. While some may read the data and conclude that there were both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for engaging in songwriting as leisure, I believe the data points primarily to an experience contrary to that theorized by social psychologists—these participants were driven to songwriting as a necessity. Songwriting may have involved

self-expression and actualization, but was it also a way of connecting to and helping others. Social psychology does not offer an adequate explanation of the experiences described by the participants of this study.

Pieper's (1952) concept of leisure and work centered on the notion of being at ease and receptive to the world as it is presented to us. He called this receptivity intellectus. It was a leisured way of knowing opposite from ratio, which was a discursive and laborious way of knowing. While he advocated for a more sensible way of life by combining of the two, his concept placed leisure into opposition with work. The present study is consistent with Pieper's (1952) concept of intellectus and ratio.

Each of the participants described experiences of being in a state of receptivity while songwriting. Yet, participants also expressed elements songwriting as being work-like. Both aspects seem to work together in songwriting in a way consistent with Pieper's (1952) ideal. Additionally, the descriptions of songwriting provided by the participants pointed to a experience where receptive intellectus and discursive, work-like ratio are reciprocating and complementary.

Holy ecstasy, evoking, transcendent, being a conduit, and channeling messages and entities from beyond the grave are some of the phrases participants used to describe their receptive experiences with songwriting. Perhaps one of the more poignant descriptions is that of Juliette:

> It just feels other worldly, like, very spiritual and far away... like I'm a channel, a conduit to flow love through... it seems like it comes from outer space or somewhere. It's like very angelic entities that don't have a negative approach to life are flowing through me and showing me, from the other side, what it's like to

> live a good, fun, clean, pleasant, happy existence, which I didn't have. So I've had to create it.

Juliette's experiences involved a great deal of receptivity, to the extent of allowing angelic entities to flow through her. Yet, at the end of her description, she included the very important phrase, "So I've had to create it," which indicates that there is at least some element of ratio involved as well as.

Tenzing's description of everesting involved high levels of ratio. His experiences with songwriting were described as a slow process of building songs out of ideas collected over an extended period of time. However, Tenzing also described being receptive. When he saw the salt flats, they evoked meaningful memories and feelings, which produced the lyrics he later crafted into a song. Most of Tenzing's songs began in the same way, and he explained that he continued to evoke feelings as he edited, shaped, and constructed the songs into a finished product.

Erik simply needed to direct the traffic as the he received songs that were "already hit[s]... in another galaxy." He even described the experiences as songs "just doing themselves [and] just falling into place." Yet Erik's description of songwriting being like pulling a thread on a ball of yarn, which once you pull the thread, the yarn unravels into your lap, indicated at least some component of ratio. Some experiences of songwriting required Erik to pull the thread to begin the "unraveling" process of the song.

It is unclear whether intellectus or ratio comes first. While they seemed to be reciprocal and complementary aspects of songwriting, the levels to which they are present in a person's experience may vary. While Pieper provided us with an intellectually rich concept, he did not leave us with a measurable phenomenon. It is

difficult to study these types of experiences, and the participants all expressed doubt in the feasibility of describing or understanding it.

Creativity

Songwriting is certainly a creative endeavor. While the present study was focused primarily on the experiences participants had with the phenomenon of songwriting, several aspects of their creative processes were included in the descriptions they provided. The findings of the present study affirm the theories explored from the creativity literature in chapter one. However, the findings presented in this study challenge the conclusiveness of conceptualizations of creativity and may be useful to expand our understanding of creativity for future studies.

Plucker, Beghetto, and Dow's (2004) definition of creativity posited that creativity "...is the interaction among aptitude, process, and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both novel and useful as defined within a social context" (p. 90). The findings of the present study were consistent with this conceptualization. However, the findings suggest that there may be additional aspects to include with this list. While the participants' songs were consistently socially validated, they often rejected popular music as being inauthentic, fabricated, or manufactured. This suggests that social validation is complex and includes personal aesthetic, ethical, and less tangible standards than mere popularity.

While each participant received various levels of recognition for songwriting, Juliette was perhaps the most widely celebrated with multiple nationally broadcasted songs. Yet, Juliette was very vocal about a need to write songs for "the right reasons." When speaking about the music scene in Athens, she said:

> What's amazing is that on any given night there's 10 to 40 bands playing... on one night! And within three city blocks too... it's not like it's spread out over miles. I mean it's not even a mile. So... I think it increases the criticism.... or the speculation as to why you're doing it.... or... how good you are because you're a dime a dozen. That's why you've got to do it for the right reasons because then it doesn't matter.

The scrutiny and judgment songwriters often experience in a large creative community like Athens, can make social validation difficult to come by. For Juliette, social validation is not the only qualifier. Her commitment to "heal herself and others" is equally important.

Tenzing expressed a desire to write songs that help listeners think deeply or differently about what they hear. He warned that much of what is social validated is often engineered by a vast marketing machine. For Tenzing, the marketing machine pushed more than entertainment—it pushed ideas that shaped our communities. His desire was to improve things through deep music. As he put it:

> I think a lot of people listen to music and like things just because they're told to by a bunch of slick-ass producers. It's just a marketing game. There's just a bunch of superficial shit out there and I feel like people can agree on much better things and be more connected as a community if they break through a lot of those manufactured ideas. Good music gets better every time you listen to it, which means it doesn't sink in right away. A lot of people, my dad included, don't have that kind of patience with music. But there are rewards to trying to understand things and give them meaning.

These descriptions suggest that even if these songwriters' products were not socially validated, there is a personal ethic or commitment that is at least equally important and they would continue to write songs. It is important to note that even these commitments are socially oriented and pertain to helping a community and not just one's self. While it socially focused, it is not dependent on validation. Plucker, et al.'s (2004) concept of creativity should be expanded upon to clarify the social aspects. What does it mean to be socially validated? The present study suggests that social validation is a complex and there may be other aspects of creativity to include in the concept.

In keeping with Doyle's (1998) study of fiction writers, participants spoke about various rituals they employed when writing. While this study did not centrally focus on creative processes, the participants described how space, process, and tools were integral to writing. Writing was either helped or hindered by environment. While process was important, the experience of songwriting described in the present study differed from those of fiction writers in Doyle's study as writing was recursive rather than strictly progressing from a moment of inspiration to a period of developing the idea into a product. In addition, Doyle's assumption that lyricists write in a truer, more authentic voice and therefore had an easier time writing was not supported by the findings.

Juliette had an extensive list of items she required for her writing sessions. She explained how she needed to have a certain brand of water, special jell pens, rough hand-made paper, her favorite guitar, and other specialized accoutrements at her disposal before she could begin writing. Tenzing described a need to set aside a specific amount of time before he could begin writing. When working collaboratively, Erik required his partners to "empty their junk drawer" of ideas combed through his many notebooks,

consumed large volumes of coffee, and smoked. Consistent with Doyle's (1998) study, these patterns of behavior were more than idiosyncrasies; they were rituals that helped facilitate the experience of songwriting.

Doyle (1998) wrote that writers needed a physical space conducive for the creative process. She called this space the *writingrealm* and explained that a writer would enter it to develop and idea gain from a seed incident. Consistent with her conclusion, the songwriters in the present study expressed a similar process. Tenzing's description of how his song Land Speed came into being illustrates this process. He first experienced a moment of evocation where an external stimulus struck an accord with a personal memory with significant personal meaning produced an idea and a set of lyrics. The idea was then taken into the recording studio, edited, built upon, and crafted into a song. Unlike the experiences of fiction writers described by Doyle, Tenzing did not have just one seed incident separate from entering the writingrealm. The process of evoking significant memories and feelings was recursive along with the crafting of his song.

Space was extremely important for Juliette. She expressed the need for privacy and an inability to work collaboratively. When she was 16 years old, she only found that level of privacy on her front porch during severe thunderstorms. Juliette attributed her need for privacy to the traumas she endured as a young woman and a need to be able to write with out any potential judgment from other songwriters. Some of her later experiences included attempts at collaborative writing; however, those attempts did not yield any products.

It was assumed by Doyle (1998) that songwriters write in a more authentic voice and experience less difficulty in bringing their creative works to fruition. The present

study does not support this assumption. In fact, bringing a song to fruition was found to be different from finishing a song and deeply connected to various personal meanings. Juliette, for example, wrote and finished a song when she was 16 years old, but did not allow the song to come to fruition until 30 years later. Fruition, for Juliette, meant releasing the song for others to hear. Until she became more comfortable with the meanings attached to the song, she could not release it.

It may be more difficult to write in one's own voice than it is to assume a fictional persona. Tenzing often wrote about topics that were not directly related to his own experiences. At times he even wrote songs with fictional narratives. Yet, he explained that even though the songs were less personal they still evoked personal meanings and feelings. Ultimately, it can not be determined if fictional writing is easier than writing from one's own voice; however, it was clear that there were significant struggles in determining when to release a song for public consumption due to their personal meaning.

Doyle's (1998) study of fiction writers explored how works of fiction come into being and well as the writers' experience from "first impulse to its final realization" (p. 29). The present study affirms many of the ritualistic experiences she described as well as a need for a specific space for writing. However, the process expressed in the present study differs from those of the fiction writers she interviewed. The process described in the present study was recursive between inspiration and writing rather than sequential. Additionally, the present study did not confirm Doyle's assumption that writing in a personal voice is easier than writing in fictionalized personae.

Creative-Leisure

One of the primary studies I referenced in preparation for this research project was Hegarty's (2009) study of creative-leisure. The critique I offered in the first chapter contended that his study of creativity failed to acknowledge the social aspects of creativity that Plucker, Beghetto, and Dow (2004) claimed were inherent. Being built solely upon concepts of self-expression, self-evaluation, and intrinsic motivation, this may have seemed like a foregone conclusion. However, in light of the present study, Hegarty's construct seemed to at least counter some of the overly social aspects of creativity posited by Plucker et al (2004).

The present study did not fully support Hegarty's (2009) description of creative leisure as an experience where one experiences "a high sense of freedom, intrinsic motivation and reward... expresses the self to the self, and this is done for the sake of doing it" (p. 11). While participants may have experienced some measure of a sense of freedom and intrinsic motivation and reward, the lived experiences of the songwriters were much more complex. Often participants were driven to the activity as a means of survival. Participants engaged in and songwriting for many reasons other than just for the sake of doing it. There were deep meanings and purposes for songwriting including social activism and transformation.

Hegarty (2009) did not include any social aspects in his construct of creative-leisure. The findings of this study make his omission problematic. However, the social aspects of creativity espoused by Plucker, Beghetto, and Dow (2004) also failed to fully account for the participants' experiences. The present study suggests that the social and personal aspects of creativity and leisure are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The

lived experiences of the songwriters who participated in this study are too complex to be defined solely by one or the other.

Songwriting

As stated in chapter one, the songwriting literature proved unproductive in identifying appropriate theories in which to situate the present study. The literature centrally focused on the songwriters as persons rather than songwriting as a phenomenon. As such, songwriters were portrayed in colorful, grandiose, and mythical ways (e.g., Plasketes, 2005; Elliot, 2005). Other studies focused on the publishing process and lyrical content analysis (e.g., Galenson, 2009; Petre, Pennebaker, James, Siversten, & Borge, 2008). The specific focus of this study was the phenomenon of songwriting, not lyrical content or the songwriters as persons per se. However, the findings of this study ultimately trouble the image presented of songwriters as larger than life beings.

Participants consistently described their experiences with language laden with mystical and supernatural overtones. These descriptions were used metaphorically to describe complex experiences. Their importance lies in interpreted, not literal, meanings; however, the very presence of such language indicated that the experiences were often very unique and could only be described in extravagant terms. The mythic perceptions of songwriters may easily be construed; however, the whole of the data does not support this perception.

The romanticized image multi-million dollar contracts and songwriters as "wizards... [who] hide away in secret rooms on [Nashville's] Music Row" (Elliott, 2005, p. 4) was not supported by the experiences expressed by the participants of this study. Though Erik described himself as a Shaman, his experiences and those of the other

participants were far from the glamorous life implied by Elliot's statement. The songwriters interviewed expressed many hardships and struggles as songwriters. None of the participants were able to rely solely on songwriting for their income. All of the participants expressed various reasons for feelings of alienation and vulnerability. Indeed, there was hardly anything glamorous about Juliette's description of songwriting as a means of survival.

Though songwriting was found to be an experience of transcending personal and social circumstances, the songwriters recognized the difference between their experience with the phenomenon and them selves. Erik's poem A Bigger Mind illustrated his need for something bigger than himself for his transcendent songwriting experiences. Juliette also expressed this need for something bigger than herself in her description of being shown how to have a good, fun, happy existence by angelic entities. The literature on songwriting has perhaps misappropriated the label of transcendent from the phenomenon to the songwriter.

Implications

The present study contributes to the general body of knowledge related to leisure, songwriting, and creativity, by adding a rich description of both the lived experiences of songwriters and meanings of the phenomenon. Additionally, the tentative manifestations presented in this thesis illuminate several areas for future research and highlight the need for unstructured, expressive, and artistic leisure experiences. In a time of great social unrest, economic uncertainty, and the unmitigated vulnerably of women and marginalized groups, the cathartic and transcendent aspects of songwriting can serve as a valuable outlet for personal healing, empowerment, and social resistance.

Much of the current body of literature found on the topic of songwriters focused on one of two things: (1) the songwriter as a person or character to be analyzed along with lyrical content and performances; and (2) the creative process, which if understood would presumably lead to greater levels of productivity. While the present study considered the contextualities of person and process, it focused primarily upon the phenomenon of songwriting. The rich descriptions of yielded by this study help provide insight into the participants' subjective experiences with songwriting. These insights help illuminate what it means to find one's self in the phenomenon of songwriting.

The descriptions provided by participants challenged common assumptions and conceptions of both leisure and creativity. In addition, understanding the phenomenon of songwriting from the participants' point of view troubled certain notions of songwriters as larger than life people. Stemming from this informed perspective, areas for future research became apparent. The fields of leisure studies and creativity were identified as promising disciplines for further inquiry into the lived experiences of songwriters. Furthermore, interdisciplinary research involving both leisure and creativity scholars is recommended.

The social psychological view of leisure was found to be inadequate in explaining participants' leisure experiences with songwriting. It was apparent that participants were not always choosing songwriting as a leisure activity, but were reaching out for songwriting as a lifeline. Participants' descriptions indicated that social forces were greatly influencing their engagement with songwriting. Furthermore, songwriting was found to be more than an activity done for its own sake. It was directly linked to

participants' perceived need to enact a change in the social world in which they wrote their songs.

The present study acknowledged the insufficiencies of leisure as a subjective state of mind; however, further inquiry is warranted to explore the dynamics between individuals' leisure activity of songwriting and the social structures that may drive their engagement. It is recommended that research be conducted from a sociological perspective to elucidate this aspect of participants' experiences.

The study of creativity would also benefit from further research form a sociological perspective. Social validation, as a requirement for creativity, was perceived by participants to be both less central to their creativity and often dictated by marketing and production teams with vast resources. A critical analysis of the social discourse and policing of popular music by the capitalist music industry is recommended. This line of inquiry may be particularly timely in consideration of the proliferation of home recording and publishing software, Internet file sharing, and the growing independent music scene. Such a study may provide both insights into changing markets as well as provide space of marginalized voice to be heard.

Erik said songwriting was a way for him to "be in people's faces" about his sexual identity. Songwriting served as a personally transformative phenomenon and a site for resistance to a world that is hostile towards gay men. Participatory action research that incorporates the arts and focuses on issues relevant to marginalized groups, including LGBTQ, is recommended. For songwriters like Erik who work primarily collaboratively, participatory action research would be a natural fit. Using the arts and

participatory action research could make issues of marginalized groups public in a way that strikes an accord with a shared humanity.

Research is recommended to further explore the various therapeutic and healing aspects of songwriting that Juliette spoke of. The emotional and psychological trauma endured by women who have suffered abuse could benefit from such inquiry. Juliette described her guitar as being similar in shape to a human form, pleasurable to touch, and vehicle for positive physical sensations. Not only should songwriting be explored as a therapeutic tool for people who are suffering physically or mentally, but assess to instruments in health care facilities may be beneficial for patients. It is especially recommended that a broad course of inquiry into the lived experiences of individuals with mental illness and their interaction with music be undertaken.

Tenzing, as a person who was unemployed, expressed feeling validated and satisfied in his songwriting. He viewed songwriting as a particularly monolithic task to be accomplished and developed a strong personal identity as a result. His workplace treated him as though he was expendable, but songwriting was a way of valuing his uniqueness. During times of increased economic turbulence and job uncertainty, songwriting and other artistic leisure activities may serve as a valuable means for rebuilding confidence in people who are experiencing unemployment. It is recommended that leisure service professional consider the economic climate and increasing percentage of unemployment in their communities and develop art programs, including instructional, performance, and instrument sharing programs.

Final Note

In 1964, Bob Dylan sang, “The times they are a-changing.” In 2011, the times are still a-changing. Songwriting as an unstructured, receptive, and artistic form of leisure is critically needed in changing times. Its cathartic aspects can sooth the discomfort and distress associated with change and uncertainty; and its transcendent aspects can serve as a catalyst for revolution and bring positive change quickly.

The world faces dire circumstance in almost every realm. Wars continue to be waged on multiple fronts across the globe, the worldwide economic system threats collapse, entire cross-sections of the environment are disappearing at alarming rates, and many of the world’s leaders have relegated themselves to a form of political trench warfare rather than work for real solutions. There are legitimate and systemic reasons many people feel distressed. Even when change is good, it can generate dis-ease (Kleiber, 1999). And some change is desperately needed, such as equal rights and representation under the law for all.

Songwriting has power to both heal the wounds created by stress and anxiety on an individual and collective level. It can rebuild personal confidence, sooth personal hurts, and, as Erik put it, “reach over the barrier of self into the universal thing.” It not only can rebuild communities, but also transform communities. Songwriting has the potential to ignite revolution and bring the changes needed in society. The tentative manifestations contained in this thesis show songwriting as a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that is both personal and social transformative.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "A Post-Intentional Phenomenology of Songwriting" conducted by Brian Kumm from the Department of Counseling and Human Development at the University of Georgia (706-542-5064) under the direction of Dr. Johnson, Department of Counseling and Human Development, University of Georgia (706-542-4335). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at anytime without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to explore what it means to find oneself engaged in the activity of songwriting. This study will use conversational interviews, journaling, and talking about my experiences as a songwriter.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

1) Participate in three conversational interviews, approximately an hour to an hour in a half length, where I will talk about my experiences writing songs.

2) Discuss songs I have written and describe my writing experiences while the interviewer takes field notes and asks me questions concerning the experiences.

3) Maintain a journal throughout the time of the study to be handed in or copied for the researchers during the last interview session.

4) Suggest a pseudonym to be used during analysis and write up of the findings.

5) For participation in this study, I will receive a $5 iTunes gift card at the conclusion of each interview totaling $15 worth of gift cards. Should I decide to discontinue my participation in this study, I will be able to keep the gift cards I have received for my participation to date, but will be ineligible to continue receiving incentives after I discontinue my participation.

No risks are expected and the benefit for me is that my engagement with songwriting may help me understand and improve my lived experiences. Additionally, this study has potential to benefit the fields of leisure studies and creativity by adding to the base of knowledge an in depth understanding of what it means to live through the experience of songwriting. The benefits of this study may also include informing how one may approach the creative act of songwriting, which may be especially important for members of a musical community such as Athens, Georgia.

Each interview session will be audio recorded. No individually-identifiable information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission except if it is required by law. I will suggest a pseudonym which will

be used to refer to my responses during the data formation and representation. Upon completion of the interview, any direct identifier to me, the participant, will be broken and the use of a pseudonym will occur from that point forward. During the time of the study and beyond, any identifying information will be kept under lock and key for hard copies and/or through the use of password protected computer programs. Only the investigators will have access to the audio files, which will not be publically disseminated. The audio files will be destroyed after 5 years of the date of the study.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date

Telephone: _____
Email: _____

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.
Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVAL FORM

The University of Georgia

Office of The Vice President for Research
DHHS Assurance ID No. : FWA00003901

Institutional Review Board
Human Subjects Office
612 Boyd GSRC
Athens, Georgia 30602-7411
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APPROVAL FORM

Date Proposal Received: 2011-06-03 **Project Number:** 2011-10937-0

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Title of Study: A Post-Intentional Phenomenology of Songwriting

45 CFR 46 Category: Administrative 2
Parameters:
None;

Change(s) Required for Approval:
Revised Consent Document(s);

Approved : 2011-06-23 Begin date : 2011-06-23 Expiration date : 2016-06-22

NOTE: Any research conducted before the approval date or after the end data collection date shown above is not covered by IRB approval, and cannot be retroactively approved.

Number Assigned by Sponsored Programs:

Funding Agency:

Your human subjects study has been approved.

Please be aware that it is your responsibility to inform the IRB:
. . . of any adverse events or unanticipated risks to the subjects or others within 24 to 72 hours;
. . . of any significant changes or additions to your study and obtain approval of them before they are put into effect;
. . . that you need to extend the approval period beyond the expiration date shown above;
. . . that you have completed your data collection as approved, within the approval period shown above, so that your file may be closed.

For additional information regarding your responsibilities as an investigtor refer to the IRB Guidelines.
Use the attached Researcher Request Form for requesting renewals, changes, or closures.
Keep this original approval form for your records.

Chairperson or Designee,
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW AND JOURNALING PROTOCOLS

Phenomenological Interview Guide

The interview is intended to be a phenomenological based interview. It is the belief of the investigator that as the interview(s) unfold and the phenomenon is explored, essential questions and avenues not understood prior to the experience may reveal themselves and need to be followed. The interviewer will attempt to "bridle" (i.e. acknowledge, confront, restrain, and discursively write through his own ideas, opinions, thoughts and assertions) his pre-understanding throughout the interview and analysis. Through the use of probes, the interviewer will elicit responses from the initial question.

The phenomenon of study: *Songwriting*

Guiding Question: *Think of a time when you were writing a song and tell me about it.*

Follow Up Probes:

You mentioned _____. *Tell me more about that.*
You mentioned _____. *What was that like for you?*
You mentioned _____. *Can you give me a specific example of that?*

Journaling Protocol

Each participant will be provided with a journal or ask them to create an electronic/hard copy journal which can be accessed or viewed during each session. During the initial participant selection, I will inform participants at the completion of the study that I would like to be given, or have a copy made available of this journal to access and use during analysis.

Within the journal, I will ask them to:

- Write down experiences they have, think about, or reflect on concerning songwriting
- Note different writing experiences they have in-between sessions
- Encourage their record of a description as thick and rich as possible of these experiences
- Although the primary function of the journal is discursive in nature, I will also encourage them to represent their thoughts, feelings, and ideas on songwriting through visual means (drawing, collaging of words and images, painting, videos, etc.) and to access quotes or others' ideas, thoughts, or images which they find salient and meaningful in describing their experiences.

APPENDIX D

EXAMPLES OF BRIDLING

July 7th

I feel like I'm pulling teeth and I feel like we're both kind of floating (participant and I). I was thinking about this on the way over, and I'm thinking about it now… just how mentally tired I am of thinking about all of this. And before I say more about that, I'll just say this… I feel like (participant's) mind wanders quite a bit and that's just how his personality is and how he is in the world. And I think that to a degree I am very similar. I think that I kind of float the same way. My mind kind of wanders and I go where I will.

So going back to being tired… This is a lot like how I deal with music and songwriting. I wrestle with ideas. I listen to songs over and over and over. And I wrestle with the ideas. And I can't have too much going on… so for example, I shouldn't have interviews scheduled back to back to back…. Because it creates over load. I need a least one day for ideas to settle and for me to process information and allow things to emerge rather than go with what I think first time around. I need to be able to allow things to be sifted out… all the ideas, metaphors, and crazy descriptions that have been shared. I need to be able to let all that stuff settle. Right now it's all too stirred up and it's hard to tell what's what.

It's also like Josef Pieper's intellectus. Sometimes when you're not processing that information and just letting it be, things just leap out at you. I think Vagle said in that workshop last month that the phenomenon comes bursting forth. And I think it really does. It just jumps out at you. And it's important to give space for that to happen. So I need time to let things settle, to discursively process things, and to allow things to reveal themselves. But if you have too much down time it's like you have to restart that engine.

You really want to keep the engine running. You don't want it to over heat or get so cold you have to prime it to get it to start.

This is what I feel like songwriting is: You have to keep the engine warm, but you can't over heat it. You have to be careful to not over work the songs, but you have to work on them. There is a balance that's needed—like Pieper's intellectus and ratio. This is why I think this research is more like an art than a science. It's like writing a song. You have to think, but you also have to allow the phenomenon to burst forth and reveal itself.

I always thought of writing a song as a negotiation between the song and myself. The song has it's own voice and things to say, but I have to negotiate how that comes out and comes across. The thing is, however, that so far none of these participants have described having a similar experience. I feel like this is part of what Erik was describing when he said he was directing traffic, but I don't feel like I can just come out and ask him about it.

But right now, I feel a little bit lost. No one has described anything like what I experience. A week ago, I felt like Tenzing had this whole description of "dualities" and that they all revolved around authenticity verses superficiality. Now I have pretty much scratched that whole idea. It may be an element of the phenomenon, but I don't think this is "it." There has to be something more to it than just comparing two ends of a spectrum between good music, authenticity, and superficiality and manufactured ideas.

But this is why I feel like our minds wander. It's as much part of the methodology as anything else. The interviews seem to circle around some of the same ideas over and over. I can't tell where we are in it exactly—are we talking about

phenomenon, context, person, or meaning? Or are they all one in the same? The point is we haven't really gone deep yet. We haven't gotten to the point of hitting something that resonates with me or what I have experienced.

July 14th

I don't think it matters if I have a strong resonance with what is being described. I have to be open, not necessarily in full agreement. But the question is whether or not I will be able to know when the phenomenon is revealed if I don't have a resonance with it.

Now I felt like there is something to Everesting—as in Mt. Everest. It's not ever-resting, but everesting—always climbing a mountain. I believe that this is connected to his idea of work—the doing of it—which is a matter of lyricism, composition, process, tools, etc.

To be clear, I have never thought of songwriting solely as work. I totally see it as a relationship and a negotiation. I don't feel any resonance with songwriting as work, but I think that is the big part of he experience. I want to be true to what he has expressed in the interviews.

Even in probing about when he said "an idea will come to me" or "a song will come…" or… "It's been brewing in me…" It's obvious that there is something other than work here, but we haven't really gotten to it. But, I really tried to probe, but we always go back to the construction piece.

I have to admit that I feel frustrated because it doesn't resonate with me. I also feel like I'm sort of looking and probing to find something that resonates with me, but I know that I have to check that in order to stay in the phenomenological attitude.

So the question now is whether my feelings of resonance will be any sort of indication of the tentative manifestations or not.

July 20th

So I read through the fist two interviews with Tenzing and I get it now. The piece that was missing is the evoking thing. This resonates with me. It is a process of pulling something out from within that then gets worked on and crafted into a song.

So now I am feeling better about Everesting. I just couldn't get with the idea of crafting something out of nothing. I have always thought that the only thing an artist can really do is speak about them selves. I think that 90% of what an artist produces is an exploration and expression of artist. 10% might be about what ever they were writing about. The bulk of the artist work is a reflection of the artist.

So this evocation piece makes sense to me. It draws out that which is within. However, Tenzing has only mentioned it. It has not been discussed nearly as much as the work part of the experience.

I have to own my beliefs here that art ultimately is a reflection of the artist and that I not only do not feel like songwriting is purely work, but it is also something that I believe is never created out of nothing. In other words, I always feel like it comes from my experiences—it's how I make sense of the world through the negotiation and relationship with the song that feels like a conversation at times.

So far: songwriting is work for Tenzing, rather than an "inspired" experience.

August 20th

This is it. Tenzing is totally doing two types of everesting—internal and external. I just stumbled upon this while finishing the third transcript. This is what I thought earlier, but now I feel like it is confirmed.

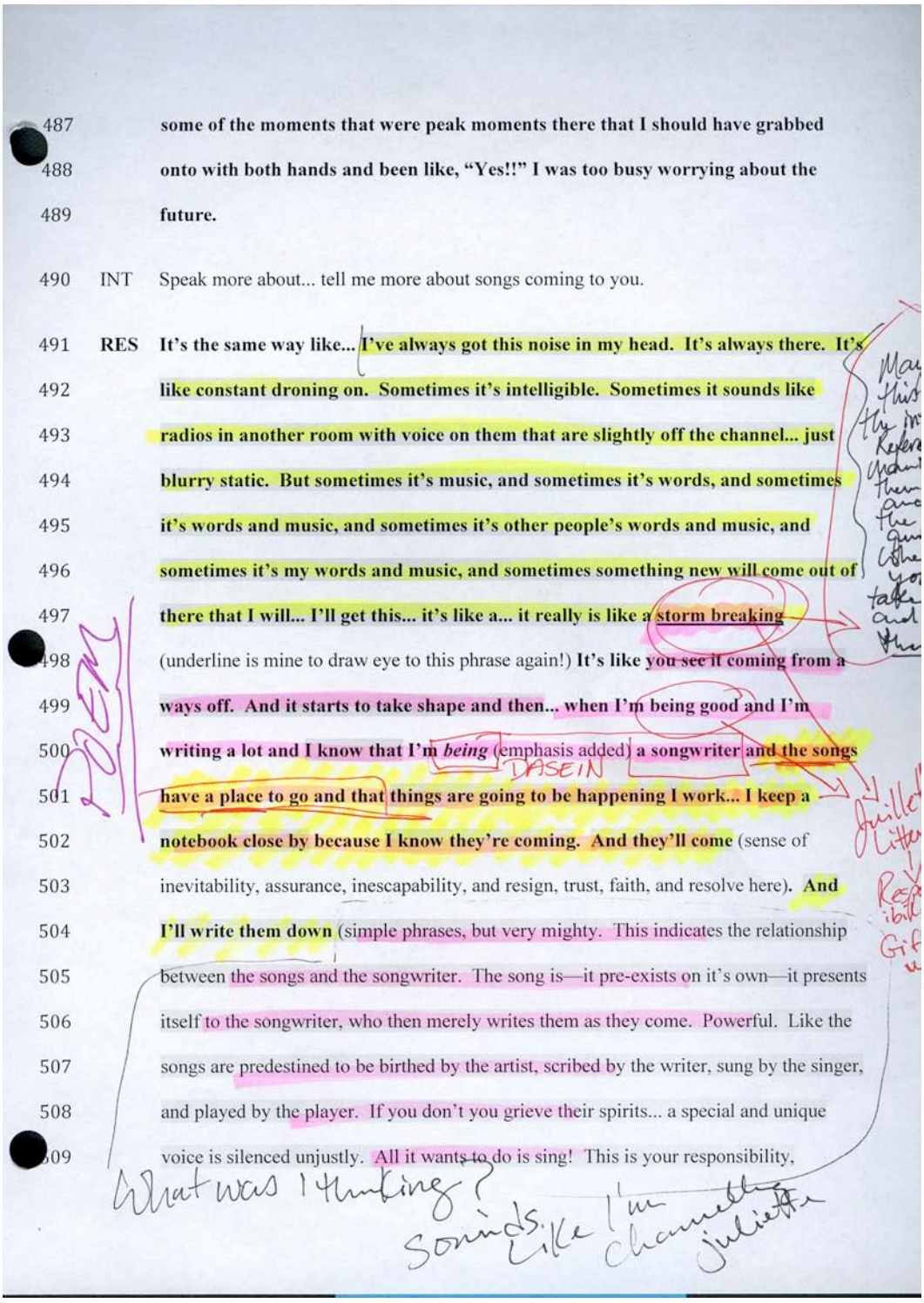
I do feel a resonance with it. I feel like it is very much like my description of songwriting as a negotiation with the song. Tenzing just seems more in control of the process that I feel when I write songs. Tenzing gets the idea, and then he works it out. I get the song coming to me and I negotiate how it comes out. It's very similar. So it makes more sense to me know. I think I was lost in all the technical aspects of his writing process, which are nothing like mine. I keep it as simple as possible and Tenzing uses the most intense process I've ever heard of.

But here's the other thing. I think it is fair to be critical of what the participants are saying as much as what I am thinking. Tenzing may over emphasize the work aspects because he is currently unemployed and needs that part of his life to be validated. Another thing to consider is that this two-sided everesting not only resonates but it affirms both the work aspects and receptive aspects of his experience. It's reciprocal rather than one or the other. It also does not discount either.

I really questioned everything that I thought throughout these interviews and I kept coming back to this idea of everesting. It seems to be confirmed rather than merely resonant. It has really opened my eyes to see a completely different way that people could experience songwriting. I have even revised my own descriptions of songwriting to account more fully for the work side of it.

APPENDIX E

EXAMPLES OF DATA ANALYSIS



some of the moments that were peak moments there that I should have grabbed onto with both hands and been like, "Yes!!" I was too busy worrying about the future.

INT Speak more about... tell me more about songs coming to you.

RES It's the same way like... I've always got this noise in my head. It's always there. It's like constant droning on. Sometimes it's intelligible. Sometimes it sounds like radios in another room with voice on them that are slightly off the channel... just blurry static. But sometimes it's music, and sometimes it's words, and sometimes it's words and music, and sometimes it's other people's words and music, and sometimes it's my words and music, and sometimes something new will come out of there that I will... I'll get this... it's like a... it really is like a storm breaking (underline is mine to draw eye to this phrase again!) **It's like you see it coming from a ways off. And it starts to take shape and then... when I'm being good and I'm writing a lot and I know that I'm *being*** (emphasis added) **a songwriter and the songs have a place to go and that things are going to be happening I work... I keep a notebook close by because I know they're coming. And they'll come** (sense of inevitability, assurance, inescapability, and resign, trust, faith, and resolve here)**. And I'll write them down** (simple phrases, but very mighty. This indicates the relationship between the songs and the songwriter. The song is—it pre-exists on it's own—it presents itself to the songwriter, who then merely writes them as they come. Powerful. Like the songs are predestined to be birthed by the artist, scribed by the writer, sung by the singer, and played by the player. If you don't you grieve their spirits... a special and unique voice is silenced unjustly. All it wants to do is sing! This is your responsibility,

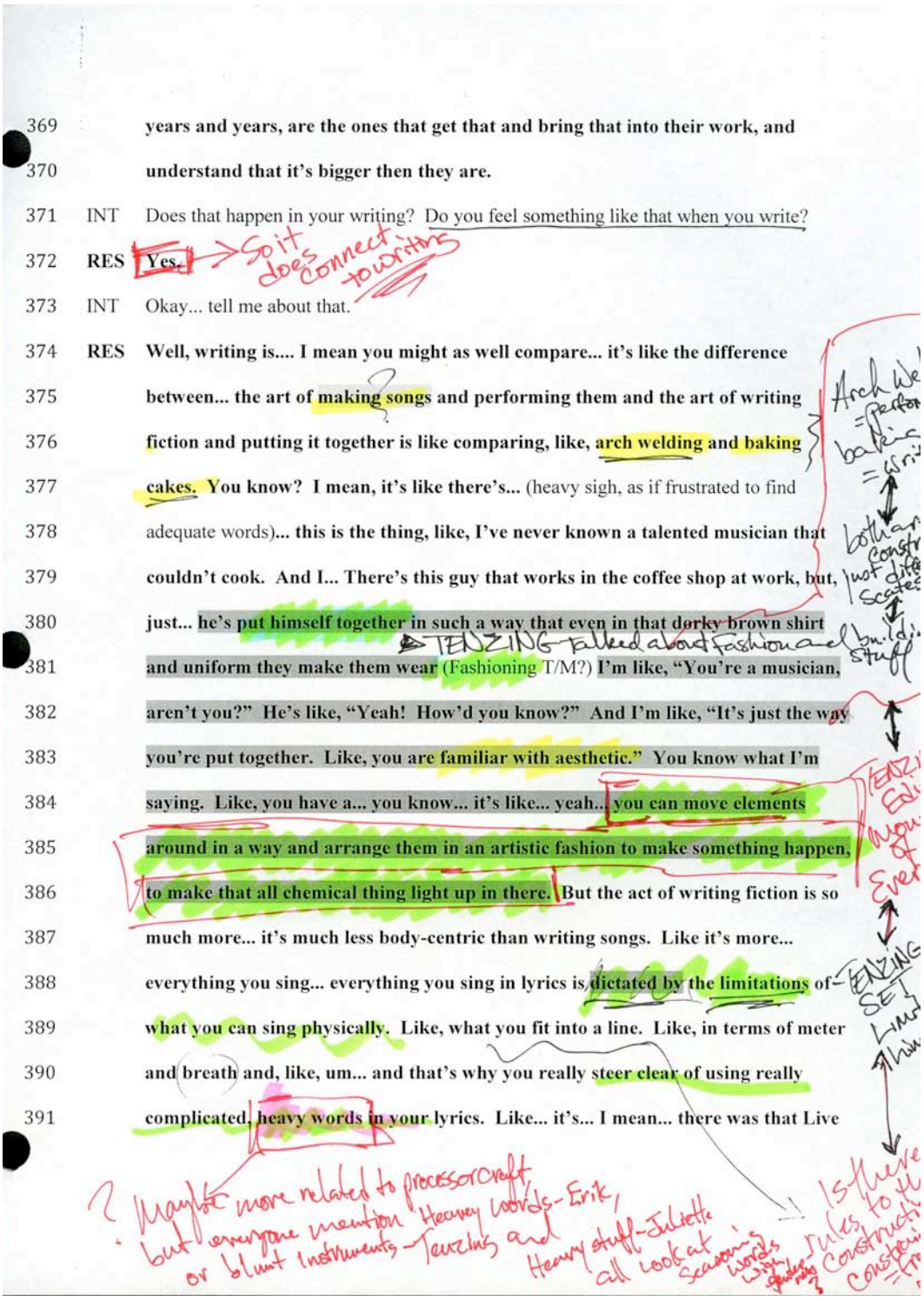
songwriter—allow it!). **And so often you just get two or three lines while you're in the shower. But as soon as you start to pull a thread out of that ball of yarn, it all starts to unravel into your lap** (I have goose bumps right now. This is awesome. This connects back to the Goethe quote and the act of Everesting, which begins at commitment to climb, to mine, to pull, receive, and write, and summits at the unraveling into your lap through the providence and good forces, through the genius, magic, and power that rests in the doing—after all writing is a verb—but these graces—these Sherpas—are as essential to the journey as we are.). **Literally. You write those first few words down and it start to all come together.**

INT Take me through one of those experiences where you've written something. Either like what you're saying started in the shower or anything like that.

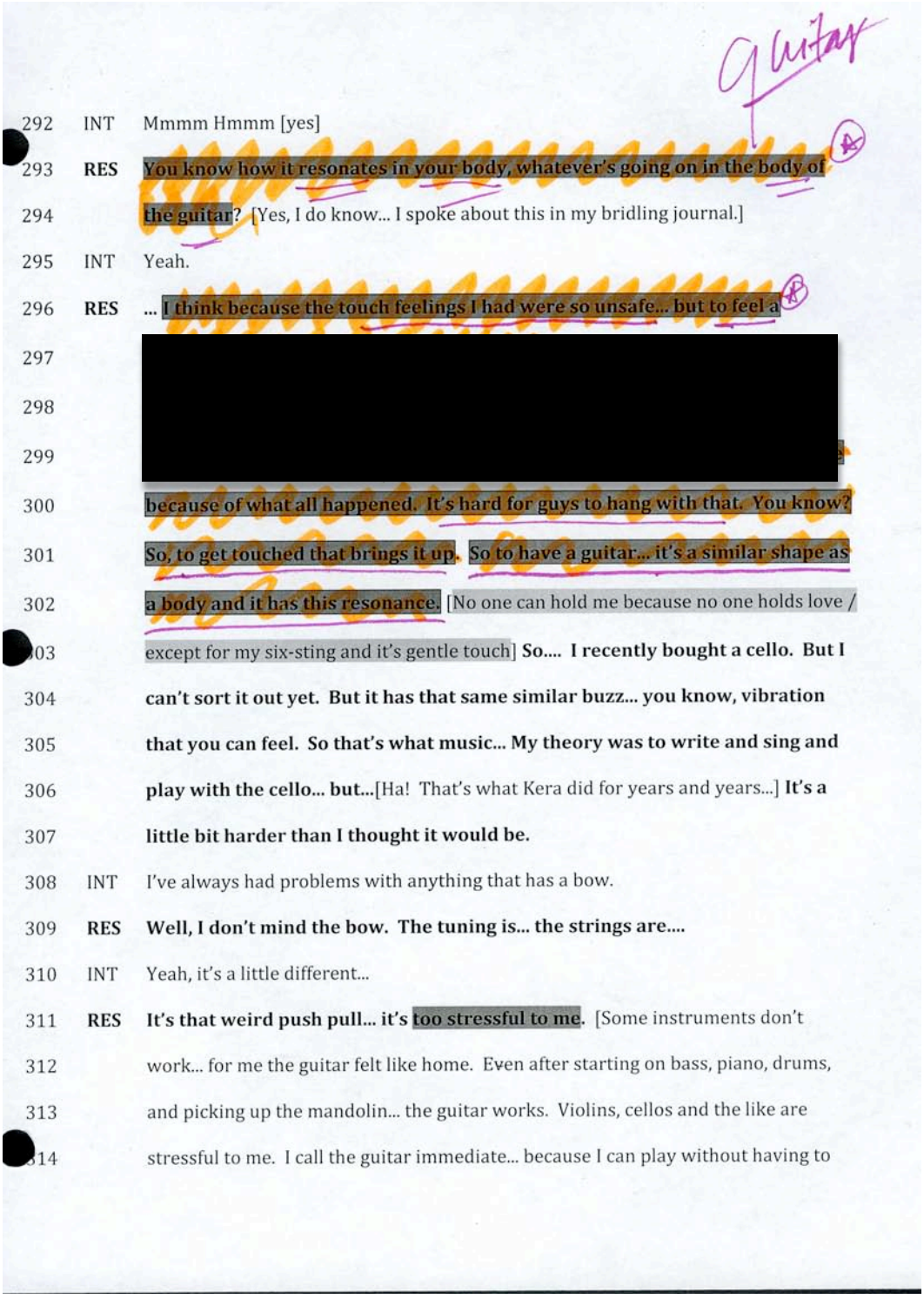
RES **[redacted]vas written was... it was actually one of the first songs that Fred and I ever wrote together, the guitar play from the Pig Stickers. I hadn't even met him yet when I wrote it.**

INT So you actually wrote it and presented it to him?

RES Yeah. And it had a melody and it had... sometimes when I've written the words out, I'll have a melody in my head, but it's still fairly fluid. It could go in different directions. There's definitely a meter and a pattern and a rhythm to it, but... I... had a date. We were supposed to meet at the Globe and he stood me up. And I was watching this couple together... and my brother had been at my house earlier in the day singing this Poi Dog Pondering song I can't remember the name of right now... [redacted]vore." (Great fun tune and band, by the way)



369 **years and years, are the ones that get that and bring that into their work, and**
370 **understand that it's bigger then they are.**
371 INT Does that happen in your writing? Do you feel something like that when you write?
372 **RES Yes.**
373 INT Okay... tell me about that.
374 **RES Well, writing is.... I mean you might as well compare... it's like the difference**
375 **between... the art of making songs and performing them and the art of writing**
376 **fiction and putting it together is like comparing, like, arch welding and baking**
377 **cakes. You know? I mean, it's like there's...** (heavy sigh, as if frustrated to find
378 adequate words)**... this is the thing, like, I've never known a talented musician that**
379 **couldn't cook. And I... There's this guy that works in the coffee shop at work, but,**
380 **just... he's put himself together in such a way that even in that dorky brown shirt**
381 **and uniform they make them wear** (Fashioning T/M?) **I'm like, "You're a musician,**
382 **aren't you?" He's like, "Yeah! How'd you know?" And I'm like, "It's just the way**
383 **you're put together. Like, you are familiar with aesthetic." You know what I'm**
384 **saying. Like, you have a... you know... it's like... yeah... you can move elements**
385 **around in a way and arrange them in an artistic fashion to make something happen,**
386 **to make that all chemical thing light up in there. But the act of writing fiction is so**
387 **much more... it's much less body-centric than writing songs. Like it's more...**
388 **everything you sing... everything you sing in lyrics is dictated by the limitations of**
389 **what you can sing physically. Like, what you fit into a line. Like, in terms of meter**
390 **and breath and, like, um... and that's why you really steer clear of using really**
391 **complicated, heavy words in your lyrics. Like... it's... I mean... there was that Live**



292 INT Mmmm Hmmm [yes]

293 **RES** **You know how it resonates in your body, whatever's going on in the body of**

294 **the guitar?** [Yes, I do know... I spoke about this in my bridling journal.]

295 INT Yeah.

296 **RES** **... I think because the touch feelings I had were so unsafe... but to feel a**

297 [redacted]

298

299

300 **because of what all happened. It's hard for guys to hang with that. You know?**

301 **So, to get touched that brings it up. So to have a guitar... it's a similar shape as**

302 **a body and it has this resonance.** [No one can hold me because no one holds love /

303 except for my six-sting and it's gentle touch] **So.... I recently bought a cello. But I**

304 **can't sort it out yet. But it has that same similar buzz... you know, vibration**

305 **that you can feel. So that's what music... My theory was to write and sing and**

306 **play with the cello... but...**[Ha! That's what Kera did for years and years...] **It's a**

307 **little bit harder than I thought it would be.**

308 INT I've always had problems with anything that has a bow.

309 **RES** **Well, I don't mind the bow. The tuning is... the strings are....**

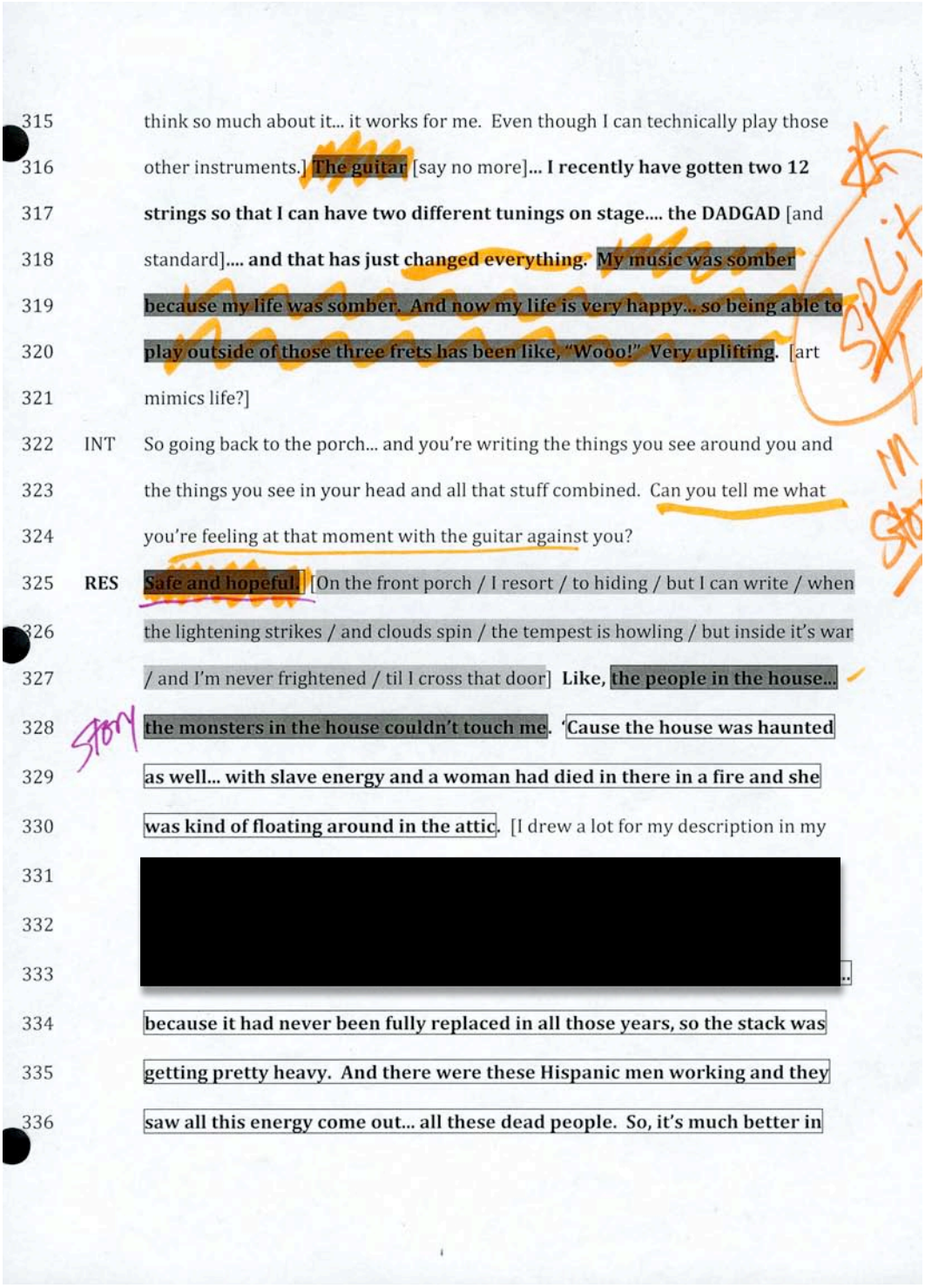
310 INT Yeah, it's a little different...

311 **RES** **It's that weird push pull... it's too stressful to me.** [Some instruments don't

312 work... for me the guitar felt like home. Even after starting on bass, piano, drums,

313 and picking up the mandolin... the guitar works. Violins, cellos and the like are

314 stressful to me. I call the guitar immediate... because I can play without having to



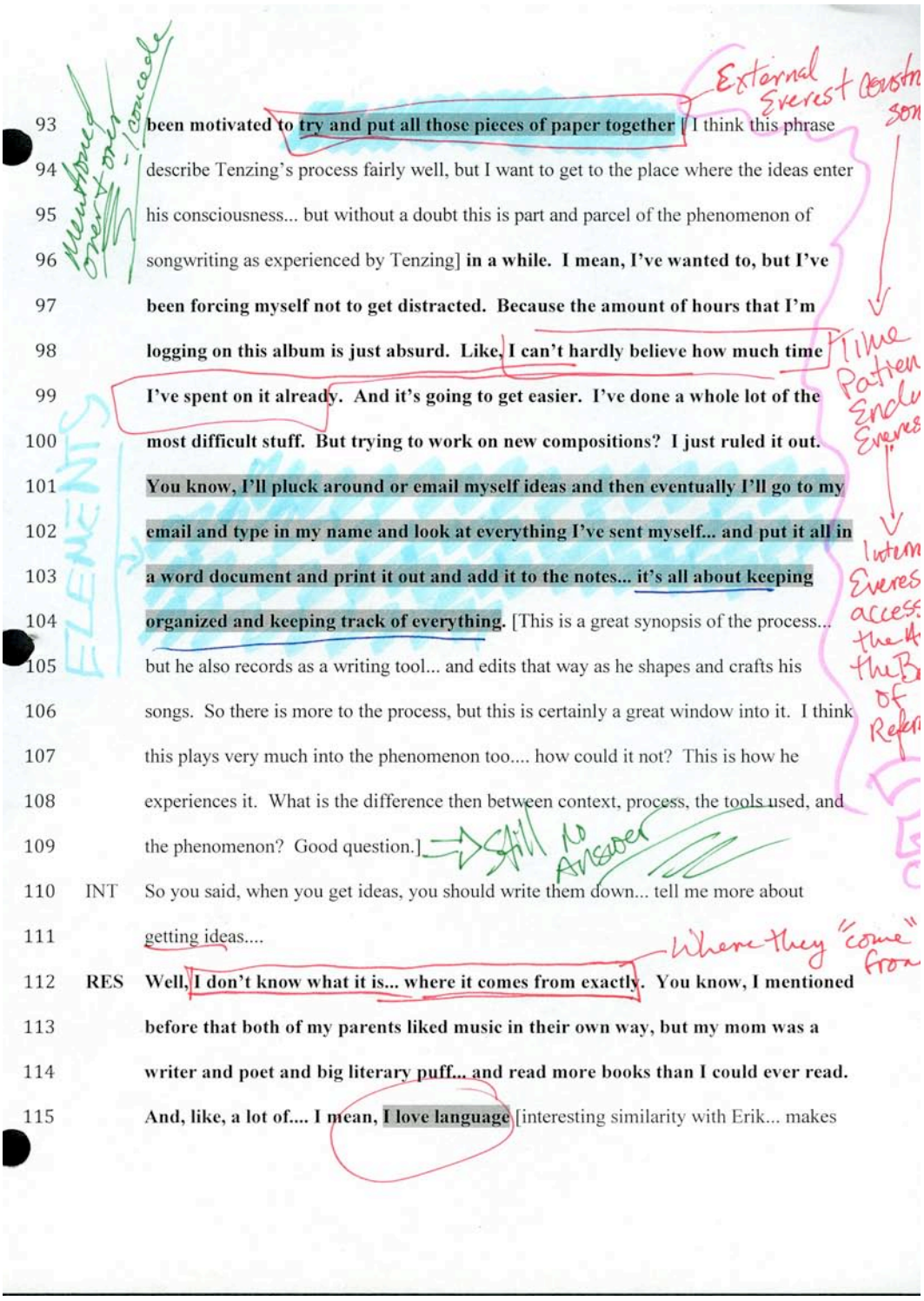
think so much about it... it works for me. Even though I can technically play those other instruments.] **The guitar** [say no more]**... I recently have gotten two 12 strings so that I can have two different tunings on stage.... the DADGAD** [and standard]**.... and that has just changed everything. My music was somber because my life was somber. And now my life is very happy... so being able to play outside of those three frets has been like, "Wooo!" Very uplifting.** [art mimics life?]

INT So going back to the porch... and you're writing the things you see around you and the things you see in your head and all that stuff combined. Can you tell me what you're feeling at that moment with the guitar against you?

RES **Safe and hopeful.** [On the front porch / I resort / to hiding / but I can write / when the lightening strikes / and clouds spin / the tempest is howling / but inside it's war / and I'm never frightened / til I cross that door] **Like, the people in the house... the monsters in the house couldn't touch me. 'Cause the house was haunted as well... with slave energy and a woman had died in there in a fire and she was kind of floating around in the attic.** [I drew a lot for my description in my

[redacted]

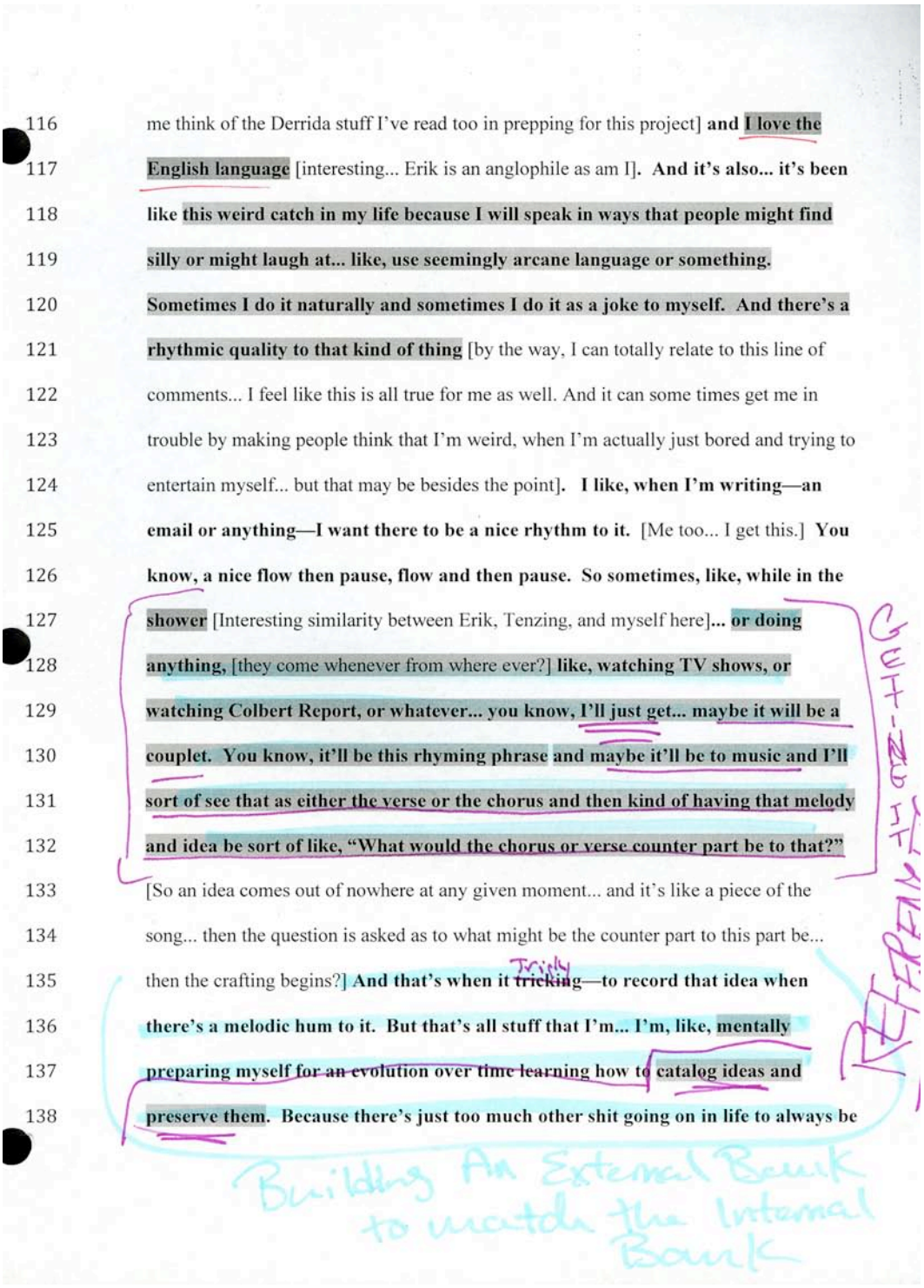
because it had never been fully replaced in all those years, so the stack was getting pretty heavy. And there were these Hispanic men working and they saw all this energy come out... all these dead people. So, it's much better in



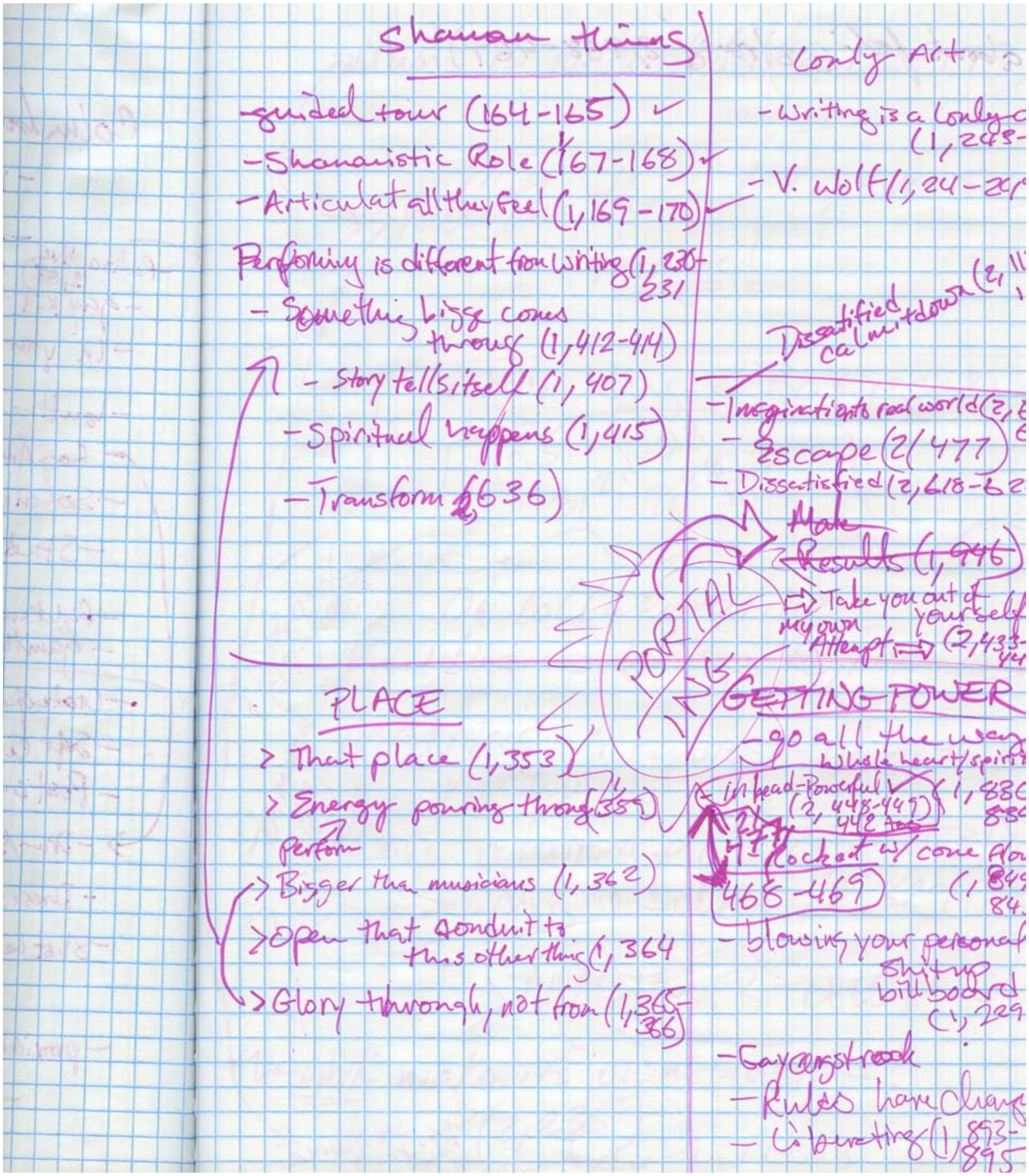
been motivated to try and put all those pieces of paper together [I think this phrase describe Tenzing's process fairly well, but I want to get to the place where the ideas enter his consciousness... but without a doubt this is part and parcel of the phenomenon of songwriting as experienced by Tenzing] **in a while. I mean, I've wanted to, but I've been forcing myself not to get distracted. Because the amount of hours that I'm logging on this album is just absurd. Like, I can't hardly believe how much time I've spent on it already. And it's going to get easier. I've done a whole lot of the most difficult stuff. But trying to work on new compositions? I just ruled it out. You know, I'll pluck around or email myself ideas and then eventually I'll go to my email and type in my name and look at everything I've sent myself... and put it all in a word document and print it out and add it to the notes... it's all about keeping organized and keeping track of everything.** [This is a great synopsis of the process... but he also records as a writing tool... and edits that way as he shapes and crafts his songs. So there is more to the process, but this is certainly a great window into it. I think this plays very much into the phenomenon too.... how could it not? This is how he experiences it. What is the difference then between context, process, the tools used, and the phenomenon? Good question.]

INT So you said, when you get ideas, you should write them down... tell me more about getting ideas....

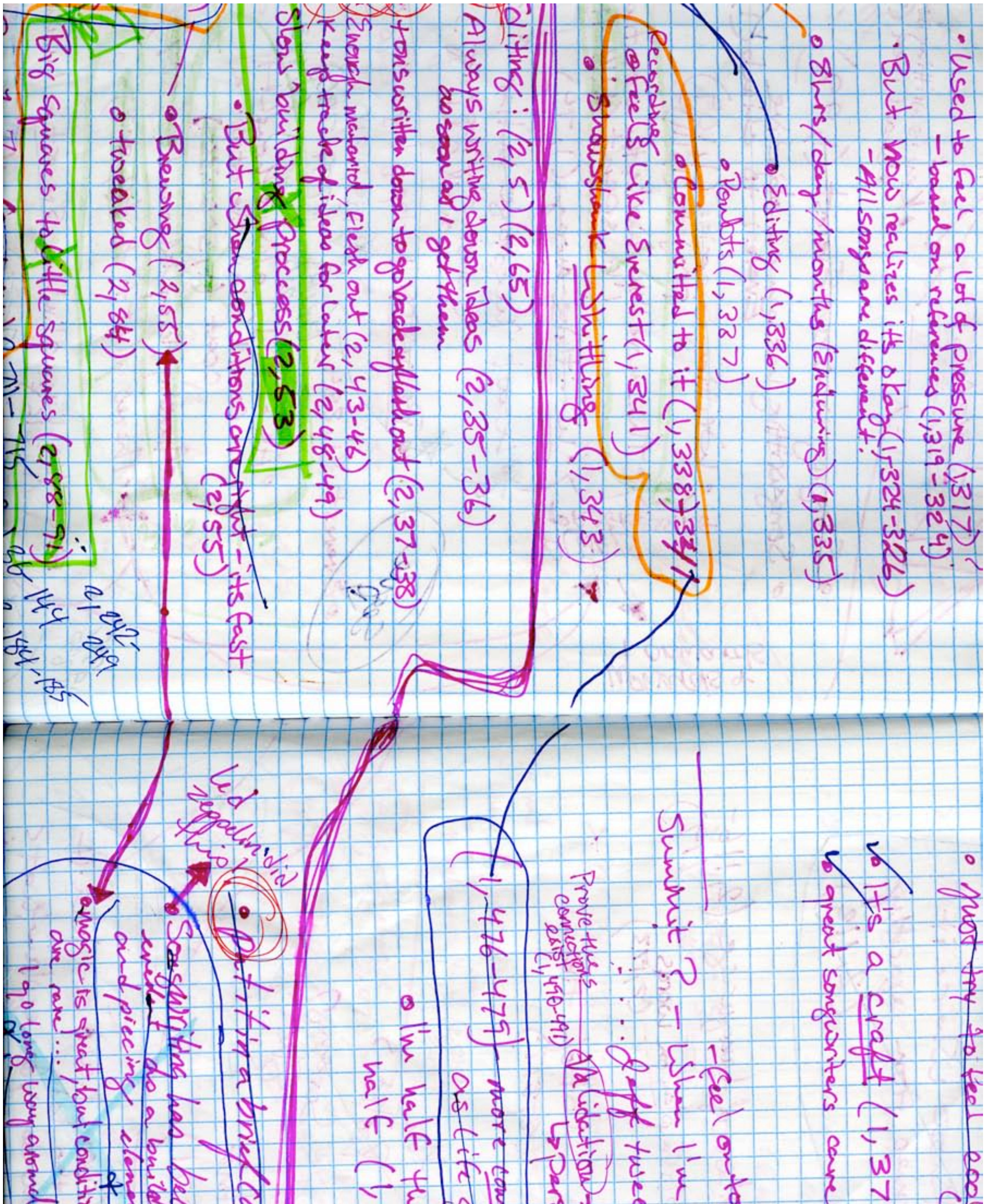
RES **Well, I don't know what it is... where it comes from exactly. You know, I mentioned before that both of my parents liked music in their own way, but my mom was a writer and poet and big literary puff... and read more books than I could ever read. And, like, a lot of.... I mean, I love language** [interesting similarity with Erik... makes



me think of the Derrida stuff I've read too in prepping for this project] **and I love the English language** [interesting... Erik is an anglophile as am I]**. And it's also... it's been like this weird catch in my life because I will speak in ways that people might find silly or might laugh at... like, use seemingly arcane language or something. Sometimes I do it naturally and sometimes I do it as a joke to myself. And there's a rhythmic quality to that kind of thing** [by the way, I can totally relate to this line of comments... I feel like this is all true for me as well. And it can some times get me in trouble by making people think that I'm weird, when I'm actually just bored and trying to entertain myself... but that may be besides the point]**. I like, when I'm writing—an email or anything—I want there to be a nice rhythm to it.** [Me too... I get this.] **You know, a nice flow then pause, flow and then pause. So sometimes, like, while in the shower** [Interesting similarity between Erik, Tenzing, and myself here]**... or doing anything,** [they come whenever from where ever?] **like, watching TV shows, or watching Colbert Report, or whatever... you know, I'll just get... maybe it will be a couplet. You know, it'll be this rhyming phrase and maybe it'll be to music and I'll sort of see that as either the verse or the chorus and then kind of having that melody and idea be sort of like, "What would the chorus or verse counter part be to that?"** [So an idea comes out of nowhere at any given moment... and it's like a piece of the song... then the question is asked as to what might be the counter part to this part be... then the crafting begins?] **And that's when it ~~tricking~~ Tricky—to record that idea when there's a melodic hum to it. But that's all stuff that I'm... I'm, like, mentally preparing myself for an evolution over time learning how to catalog ideas and preserve them. Because there's just too much other shit going on in life to always be**



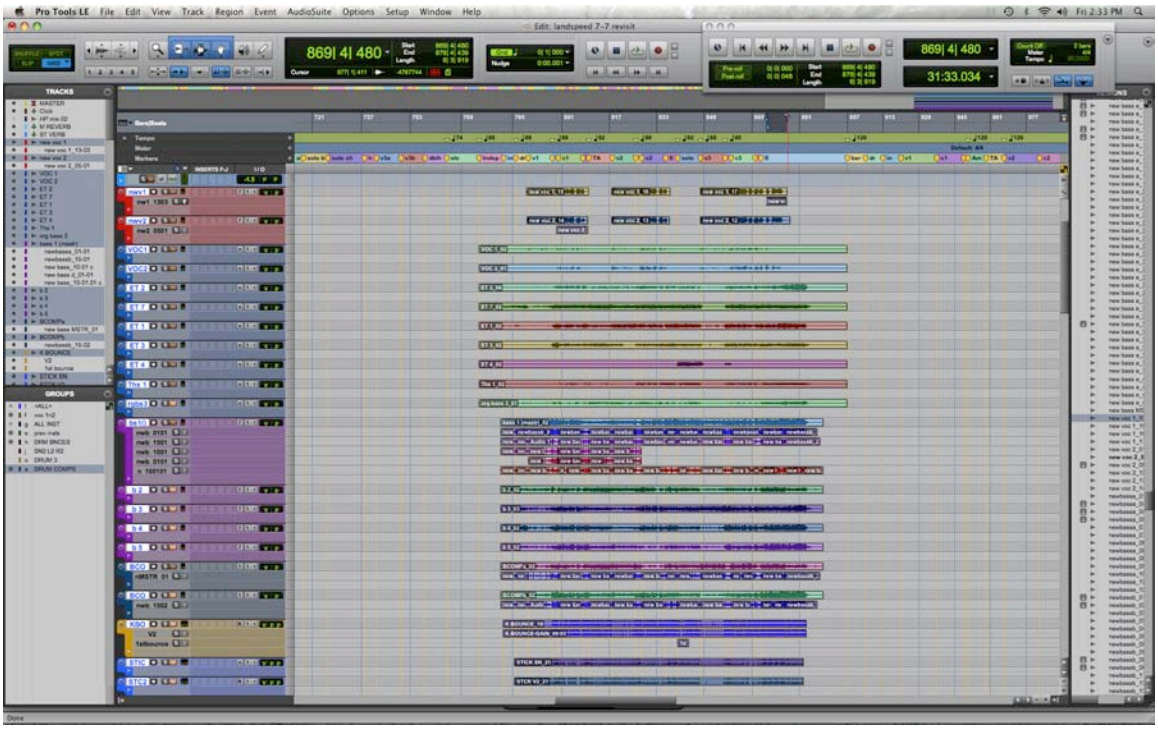
Shaman things
- guided tour (164-165) ✓
- Shamanistic Role (1, 167-168) ✓
- Articulat all they feel (1, 169-170)
Performing is different from writing (1, 230-231)
- Something bigg comes throug (1, 412-414)
- Story tells itself (1, 407)
- Spiritual happens (1, 415)
- Transform (2, 636)
PLACE
> That place (1, 353)
> Energy pouring throug (359) perform
> Bigger than musicians (1, 362)
> Open that conduit to this other thing (1, 364)
> Glory through, not from (1, 365-366)
Lonly Art
- Writing is a lonly (1, 243-
- V. Wolf (1, 24-
Dissatified calm it down (2, 1
- Imagination to real world (2,
- Escape (2, 477)
- Dissatisfied (2, 618-62
Make Results (1, 946)
PORTAL
Take you out of yourself
my own Attempt (2, 433-
GETTING POWER
- go all the way whole heart/spirit
- in head - Powerful (1, 880 (2, 448-449) 884 442
Rocket w/ cone flow (1, 84 84
468-469
- blowing your personal shit up billboard (1, 229
- Say and stand
- Rules have chang
- Liberating (1, 893-895



• Used to feel a lot of pressure (1,317)
– based on references (1,319-324)
• But now realizes its okay (1,324-326)
– All songs are different.
• 8 hrs/day/months (Enduring) (1,335)
• Editing (1,336)
• Doubts (1,337)
• Committed to it (1,338-341)
• Feels like Everest (1,341)
• Snowshoe Whittling (1,343)
Editing: (2,5) (2,65)
Always writing down ideas (2,35-36)
as soon as I get them
Transcription down to go back and flesh out (2,37-38)
Enough material, flesh out (2,43-46)
Keep track of ideas for later (2,48-49)
Slow building process (2,53)
• But under conditions are right - its fast (2,55)
• Brewing (2,55)
• Tweaked (2,54)
Big squares to little squares (2,58-9)
• Just try to feel cool verses (1,370-3
• It's a craft (1,378)
• great songwriters care (1,380)
Summit? – When I'm dead
– feel on top of the w
Validation → connection
→ Personal
Prove the connections exist (1,490-491)
• I'm half the judge + half (1,533-53
(1,476-479) more committed as life got harder
• Songwriting has become more
• Put it in a briefcase for la
Led Zeppelin did this

APPENDIX F

SCREEN SHOTS OF RECORDING SESSIONS


Pro Tools LE File Edit View Track Region Event AudioSuite Options Setup Window Help
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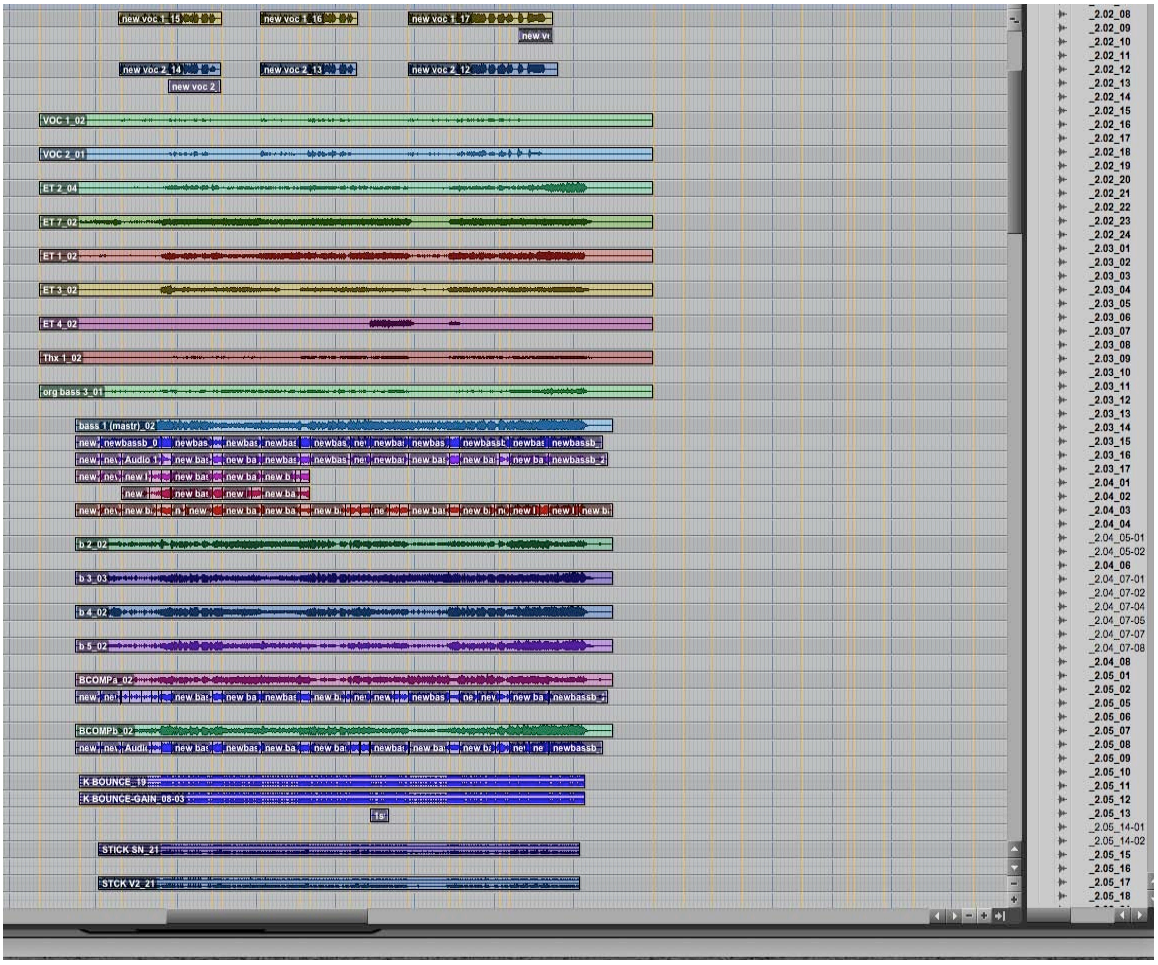
TRACKS
GROUPS


new voc 1_15
new voc 1_16
new voc 1_17
new voc 2_14
new voc 2_13
new voc 2_12
new voc 2
VOC 1_02
VOC 2_01
ET 2_04
ET 7_02
ET 1_02
ET 3_02
ET 4_02
Thx 1_02
org bass 3_01
bass 1 (mastr)_02
b 2_02
b 3_03
b 4_02
b 5_02
BCOMPa_02
BCOMPb_02
K BOUNCE_19
K BOUNCE-GAIN_08-03
STICK SN_21
STCK V2_21