

**Dancing with(in) possibilities:  
Emerging public and convivial pedagogies for  
ecological citizenship**

**by**

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## Abstract

This research project explores ways in which ecological citizenship can be stimulated through collaborative public pedagogy and transgressive learning (t-learning) processes. This research identifies 'places' of innovation to cover sections that would usually be described in terms of 'problem statement', 'research focus', 'intended outcomes / main contribution' and 'theory and methodology'. The Place of Worry is identified through the triple C Crisis (Covid, Capitalism and Climate-Change) which reveal the disconnect to the diverse ecologies (both social and natural) that sustain us. The Place of Possibility demonstrates that through ecological citizenship we can begin to absent absences (De Sousa Santos, 2016) and transform into an embodied response to the triple C crisis. The Place of Emergence transforms these possibilities into practice by demonstrating the place between the worry and the possibility allows for an emergence of a new kind of solution, referred to as the third space within this thesis. The Place of Process delves into the t-learning stories that emerged through research creation and works with iterative feedback and cycles of creation. The unfolding of this t-learning project is guided by the use of metaphor and symbolism as a figuration of macro- and microscopic interactions within these learning fields/ecosystems. Symbolic figuration and speculative metaphor are valuable in this thesis and in my own collaborative meaning-making endeavour as they offer translation protocols for when language fails to embody, the rich embodied experience of this form of learning. The embodiment of this work will help to create restorative care practices through transgressive learning (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2016) and research-creation (Manning, 2016). The study has a particular focus on the emergence of identities and onto-epistemological orientation within the social learning journey towards ecological citizenship and the various ways in which they can be embodied to enable public pedagogy.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

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### 1.0 Introduction to researcher

I am a young, vibrant being, who has a deep care and passion to enrich the educational capacities of what it means to live, learn and lead (Kulundu-Bolus et al, 2020) with the health of our Earth and its beings in mind. This has prompted me to explore ecological citizenship as an onto-epistemological figuration which seeks to honour the interconnectedness, entanglements and assemblages of all species. I draw from these practical wisdoms embedded in these relational ontologies to nourish and expand pedagogical innovation. This thesis explores education holistically and creatively, and deliberately chooses to blur the boundaries of the formal and traditional ways in which it is defined and expressed. I have been on a nomadic – theoretical (Braidotti, 2011) and practical – journey over the last year to fully immerse myself and begin to embody what this education might look like. I have done this through an embodied and deeply personal and relational politics of affirmation (Braidotti, 2011) to learn from the relationships between people, more-than-human beings, places and things that are attempting to shake the status quo and explore unexplored territories.

I grew up in a family who immersed me in multicultural experiences through travel and worldly experiences. From a young age I was provided with diverse experiences and learning opportunities, immersing myself in microbiomes from all over the world, fostering a deep love for the natural world and its unique cultures – continuously expanding my perceptions and understandings. I have learnt so much through this very privileged engagement with the world: it has enriched my educational capacities and made me an advocate for cultivating curiosity and experiential learning. I take inspiration from the idea that “Knowledge is not rooted in facts, it’s rooted in curiosity. One inspired teacher can alter a student for life by instilling curiosity.” (Chopra & Tanzi, 2013). It feels important for me to mention my privilege, as I embarked on this journey I was able to experience a variety of spaces, places and festival gatherings which enriched my learning experience - yet this type of learning is not the reality for many

others, particularly in an unequal society like South Africa. It is my hope that this research does not only highlight the attendance of these gatherings but also reveals the possibilities that creativity and ecological citizenship unveil in learning and environmental education that these experiences afforded me.

My family has had a strong focus and enculturation into traditional western positivist 'scientific' and hyper-rationalist meaning-making – often stating “if you cannot prove it, I won't believe it”. This was echoed in how I began to feel accepted within educational contexts too. While the 'science' they instructed has in some ways become mentality limiting for me in what it assimilates into my framings of knowledge, it has cultivated a curiosity within me for something beyond the limits of scientific rationality. My childhood gave me the space to engage with and question all kinds of ideas from a playful and curious point of view by observing what I am seeing and feeling; I didn't feel the need to root my observation into stand-alone, contextually dislocated and reified 'facts' and universalisms alone, but rather remained curious as to how insight, knowing, being and doing could emerge. I also became comfortable with how plural knowledge reveals itself, and thus offers a broader overview of the interconnection, relationality and sometimes seemingly messy entanglements between things. All of this has brought me to this thesis, and a relational understanding of meaning-making.

As a past student of journalism and linguistics, I have cultivated a deep understanding of how we sculpt and shape our narratives, our figurations and our cognition into forms that convey a specific meaning. I have come to understand how smaller fragments build and then emulate bigger ideas which lead us to communicate more conceptually. I have found myself exploring the co-created meaning that is shaped within our own minds and among one another; it seems that energy, solidarity and learning channels exchange information through practice-based networks (Bradrotti, 2011) in a macro and microcosmic way affecting both the internal realities of the participants and how they further apply, realise and transform (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020) their ways of practice in social settings. These exchanges are not always rooted in words or language (indeed they can sometimes be hindered by language) but are often a far more nuanced idiomatic, symbolic and/or metaphorical account of our interactions.

My research has become a praxis of dancing among worries and possibilities to find an emergence and processing power that aids regeneration. Here, it is important to mention that while I draw on some decolonial theory and methodology, I choose to situate this study as a regenerative and transgressive approach to challenging higher education and embodied pedagogical innovation. I have been moving into the cracks (Akomolafe, 2021) and learning, living and leading (Kulundu-Bolus et al., 2020) into the connection between being and doing to aid meaning-making that restores our inherent interconnected entanglements (Barad, 2007) that uphold ecological citizenship.

My own shifting identity and ontological framing has played a strong influence in determining the pathways and the drivers of my learning experience in becoming an ecological citizen, and has therefore prompted and iteratively stimulated me to explore the onto-epistemological (Barad, 2007) framings inherent and present within my own experience as well as contextualising this with the co-development of a collaborative public pedagogy. I explore how identity is not a singular aspect or framing of self, but rather an entangled web of relations, interconnections and becoming and beings, that are in a state of flux (Murriss & Bezalek 2019), and are influenced in our ecosystems of relations. In understanding this, I am accompanied by post-humanist thinkers such as Bayo Akomolafe, Karen Barad and Donna Haraway.

This approach to learning, one in which I have continually observed and interacted with the phenomena I am sensing into, has kept me busy (emotionally, spiritually, practically and bio-physically) – expanding and transforming into new ways of being and doing. I have begun to cultivate an understanding of what it means to embody; I have learnt that this mode of learning has been and currently is inherently transformative and an informative approach to learning for me and for others in my field. I have been inspired by the work of Laura Ellingson (2009) who unpacks embodiment techniques and practices in research.

It is through this embodied praxis that I begin to unravel this story of pedagogical pathways towards ecological citizenship and the role it can play within environmental education. In this first section I explore the key components that appear in my research questions: public pedagogy; embodiment; alternative communities and teachers as

well as social and transgressive learning. These descriptions and contextual framings create a scaffolding and entry point into the rest of this research journey. From there I will begin to introduce the ‘places’ of learning, which are also pathways. These are namely: the Place of **Worry**, the Place of **Possibility**, the Place of **Emergence** and lastly, the Place of **Process**. In the conclusion I have created a handbook (bodybook) which serves to provide insight into pathways towards pedagogical innovation for ecological citizenship and recaps, and summarises the lessons and insights I have learnt from this research journey.

In my diffractive writing/thinking/feeling/dancing/cooking/digesting/menstruating, I intend to create a rich elixir of words to be consumed and digested, poetically sprinkled with metaphor which eases the reader into actively feeling and sensing into this research. Through this iteration of experiences there is a phenomenological experience (Ellingson, 2017) that opens an opportunity for collaborative convivial meaning-making that supports ecological citizenship, one which is tentacular – holding multiple points in tandem which aligns with trans theory (Truman & Shannon, 2018, p. 6). Conviviality and convivial approaches to learning and meaning-making will be unpacked in more detail throughout the thesis, and this method is central to the entire research design of this project. This research responds to Kuludu-Bolus et al.’s (2020) call for co-conspirators who are moving towards transgressive pedagogical praxis that aid in regenerative futures through the intersectionality of our being and doing. She also cautioned us not to fear making a mess while creatively doing so, as it is through this experimental endeavour that the gems of our time can be unearthed, not confined to an academic silo or binary thinking, but rather fostering a plurality of knowledges (Kulundu-Bolus et al., 2020). And so, through this convivial, iterative and co-engaged practice-based research, I am wit(h)ness to an emerging array of public pedagogies which engage, inspire and ignite an ecological citizen’s learning.

## 1.1 Questions

My main research question asks: what and how?

- How does transgressive social learning enable ecological meaning-making and enrich ecological citizenship with collaboration?
- What opportunities exist for embodied and relational learning towards

ecological citizenship in alternative communities and networks in South Africa?

- What value does t-learning bring to innovation in public pedagogies for ecological citizenship?

Embedded within these questions I explore the following sub-questions:

- How do facilitated and/or convivial embodied practices enable new dialogical learning amongst ecological citizens in this time of crisis? (by convivial I refer to dancing, cooking, meditation, storytelling, permaculture/gardening, yoga, and the role of intuitive creativity and imaginal thinking)
- What forms of individual and collective transformation and learning occurs in these alternative social learning practices?
- How can these insights support the design of learning resources and pedagogies to support embodied ecological citizenship education?

## **1.2 Introduction to concepts**

In this section I explore pedagogy, embodiment, alternative teachers and communities as well as social and t-learning as concepts that emerge within my research questions.

### **1.3.1 What is public pedagogy?**

The definition of public pedagogies is the “spaces, sites, and languages of education and learning that exist outside of the walls of the institution of schools” (Sandlin, Schultz, Burdick 2009 p1). These spaces and sights can exist in the form of social media, television, museums, parks and nature (Sandlin et al., 2009, p. 2). Communication and networking are useful strategies in generating a public pedagogy and have been one facet in which I have placed great attention and care in learning to cultivate, through not only conversations, questions and verbal cues but also through a myriad of other activities such as gardening, cooking, dancing, walking and menstruating which have opened up a pluriversity of meaning-making between various entities. My educational journey into ecological citizenship so far has been infused with public pedagogy that has enabled me to become more embodied and connected to my sense of self through the conversations I’ve had with other ecological citizens both in human form and the more-than-humans.

The learning and educational capacity of public pedagogy are linked to the interests and desires of the individual and social movements and therefore “public pedagogy has come to signify a crucial concept within educational scholarship – that schools are not the sole sites of teaching, learning, or curricula, and that perhaps they are not even the most influential” (Sandlin et al., 2009, p. 2). This is particularly interesting for my study, as I have immersed myself in convivial practices in various contexts and ecological citizenship communities that may open up new potential for public pedagogies that can contribute to transgressive learning for ecological citizenship.

Public pedagogy offers a resource for various educational scholars and does not limit the benefits to any particular context. The benefactors of this thesis will be those interested in convivial, regenerative and collaborative approaches to education both within the formal and informal educational spheres. This research could also benefit incoming teachers, to showcase that learning is not a one-way flow and that in order

to make a difference in the field, it is imperative to see the iterative, cyclical aspect to our own nature. It hopes to inspire an innovative approach to cultivating curiosity among learners and within themselves to deepen insight and understanding which enables more authentic and deeper connections through finding resonances between our desires, as these are spaces of learning and conceptual expansion.

Pedagogy aims to enhance the educational process(es) through combining theory and practice. Pedagogy is a constantly evolving field, as new research and innovations continue to shape the way we think about teaching and learning – it has been through research creation (Manning, 2016) and t-learning that I have come to discover public and convivial pedagogies that inspire ecological citizenship. Convivial pedagogies refer to educational approaches that emphasise social interaction, collaboration, and community building. These pedagogies prioritise the relationships and connections that are formed among learners and between learners and their *‘teachers’*, and they aim to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Furthermore, the aim of this study is to contribute to the larger framework of efforts to transform, decolonize, radically reconceptualize higher education including pedagogies and research (Knowles, 2022), from an embodied feminist perspective.

It is through public pedagogy that I have had the opportunity to work with theories such as nomadic theory, t-learning and research creation that have enabled me to explore learning territories that are not contained by formal education but expand and cross boundaries between formal and informal education, which we will come to understand as the conceptual third space in the Place of Process. Here, the emphasis has been on embodied praxis.

### **1.3.2 What do I mean by embodiment?**

“Embodiment is an integral aspect of all research processes” (Ellingson, 2017, p. 1). We embody our beliefs and thoughts through the way we conduct ourselves. Yet, it is more than this. Embodiment or incarnation can be defined as the giving of human form to a spirit – to make manifest or comprehensible an idea or concept, through a physical presentation (Ellingson, 2017). According to Merleau-Ponty (1968), our bodies are

very much a part of our existence and who we are, yet they are often reduced and objectified so that we feel disconnected from them, usually by mind-body splits (Barad, 2010). Embodiment teaches that our bodies are not simply houses for our thoughts and emotions; they are a part of us. Further, post-humanist thinkers consider embodiment to be porous, and entangled with the embodiment of other more-than-human assemblages. As Karen Barad (2003, p. 810) noted, there are no such things as ‘things’ only relationships. In my exploration of ecological citizenship and embodiment, I have found that aspects of embodied ecological citizenship are situated in the nexus between embodiment and entangled relationality. Donna Haraway (2016) spoke of “making kin with the critters” (p. 161) as they are a part of our make-up, a part of the natural cycle and are especially important in transforming life from one form to the next:

Making kin is perhaps the hardest and most urgent part. Feminists of our time have been leaders in unravelling the supposed necessity of ties between sex and gender, race and sex, race and nation, class and race, gender and morphology, sex and reproduction, and reproduction and composing persons... If there is to be multispecies ecojustice, which can also embrace diverse human people, it is high time the feminists exercise leadership in imagination, theory, and action to unravel the ties of both genealogy and kin, kin and species. (Haraway, 2015 p. 161)

In order to make kin, we must reorder how we associate with these abiotic forces, and how we develop educational interventions that support relational learning and community building (Kulundu-Bolus et al., 2020) that are attentive to the self in relation to the other. Of particular interest in this journey into embodied ecological citizenship and what it means for me, I have sought a connection with the microbial species both within and around my body as they are the critters (or creatures) that have been largely misunderstood and unnoticed, yet are the ones digesting matter and enabling the regenerative force within an ecology, in this case my inner ecology. Through embodied practices we may be able to connect theory and epistemology to practical strategies (Ellingson, 2017, p. 1). Through my own real world-experiences as well as from having a curiosity to dig for the root of matters (and what matters – see Haraway, 2015) and make meaning in relation to things/beings/doings, or as Barad (2007) calls

‘matterings’, I have been able to cultivate a pathway and places along that pathway, towards an ecological (i.e. relational) world view, which I argue is foundational to ecological citizenship, and the learning that is needed.

This resonates strongly with De Sousa Santo’s (2020) concept of ecologies of knowledge(s), that knowledge and the ways we co-create them are plural, entangled and inherently ecological, i.e., relational and embodied. The convivial processes of gardening, cooking (and how these are related to each other) as well as personal health and menstrual healing have generatively created a new sense of ecological relationality and supported my own learning and awareness of what I am digesting and how this impacts my being and my ‘beingness’ in relation to the world and community around me (and inside me). I have managed to reconfigure how I think about microbes, my ovaries, my womb, combining ingredients to make meals, tasting new flavours, working with the soil and plants in my garden, the seasons and moon, my online community and the endless adventures I participate in with teachers, mentors and co-researchers in my exploration into innovative pedagogical pathways for ecological citizenship education in South Africa. The practising of these activities as well as the parallel and collaborative iterative theoretical framing of how these activities work and having the capacity to critically reflect on that relationship have aided in my own transgressive learning; my worldview has shifted internally and externally with an embodied understanding of what pedagogies for ecological citizenship in South Africa may look, feel and act like.

Embodiment for me, has been opening up to the deep visceral senses of my body consciously becoming aware of the signals it sends to me. Through this sensing I feel how particular life forms communicate and commune with me – this has expanded into an awareness of the microbial interactions happening within my gut, on my skin and how they further aid in my overall health and well-being. If we are to heal climate crises, there is much mending that can occur from within our own guts and bodies.

### **1.3.3 What are alternative teachers and communities?**

Wenger et al. (2011) defined communities within a social learning context as a learning partnership among those who have a shared value or interest within a particular domain. Communities often share a “collective intention” (ibid., p. 9) and aid in learning about a particular domain. This definition is generally used to describe human communities, and it is not specifically intended to include microbes. However, scientists, biologists and ecologists often use the term ‘community’ to refer to groups of organisms that live in a specific environment and interact with each other. The term is used in many different fields, and depending on the context, it can refer to different types of groups, including human communities, microbial communities, and even communities of plants or animals.

Microbes live in communities; they are communal. These microorganisms are tiny organisms that can be found in nearly every environment on Earth. They include bacteria, viruses, fungi, and protozoa. Microbes can form complex communities in various environments, such as soil, water, and the human body. These communities are known as microbiomes and can play important roles in the functioning of their host environments.

For example, the gut microbiome is a community of microbes that live in the human gastrointestinal tract. It plays a vital role in maintaining human health, by helping to digest food, producing vitamins, and regulating the immune system. Similarly, the soil microbiome is an important community of microbes that lives in the soil and helps to regulate nutrient cycling and plant growth. These microbes also establish complex and important relationships with the roots of plants and trees and aid in a communicative network for these plants and trees – the role these organisms play is imperative to the survival of the symbiotic and interconnected web of nature.

It was through my journalism final year project that I began to see communities in different contexts as I came to learn that it is not only humans who form communities, but the microbial species within the soil, our guts and many other body parts are also part of our functioning and vitality. It was through figurative and embodied ways of communing with the microbes in my gut that I began to heal and restore my endocrine system’s health, leading me to believe that they are also part of my community, and as Wenger et al. (2011) have argued, they had a shared value and interest in my well-

being. In this way my microbial and human community helped me foster health and well-being of my human body, while at the same time, led me towards ecologically entangled social learning that includes other microbiomes and the soil.

My understanding of communities shifted significantly after discovering the work of Martha Chaves (2016) with a collective of alternative communities in Colombia called CASA (which stands for the Council of Sustainable Settlements in Latin America). They refer to *Buen Vivir* directly translated from Spanish as ‘the good life’, a term emerging within Latin America to describe the “departure from the modern development narrative” (p.42).

*Buen Vivir* is rooted in indigenous traditions and defines a set of shared principles, namely:

- 1) Bio-centric perspective
- 2) Dichotomies such as nature/culture divide are discarded in favour of extended communities of relations where non-human actors are also considered subjects
- 3) A critique of the rationality of individualism and commodification of capitalist logic
- 4) A focus of decolonisation of knowledge and power by creating spaces of intercultural dialogue, placing importance on sensitivities and spirituality.

(Chaves, 2016, p. 43)

Chaves (2016, p. 42) defined an ecovillage as a “planetary knowledge community grounded in holistic ontology and seeking to construct viable living systems as an alternative to the unsustainable legacy of modernity”. This definition resonates with the alternative communities in which I have co-conspired (Kulundu-Bolus et al., 2020) in the creation of this research within South Africa. While the different communities each have their own intentions as to how they work with their land and their objectives, the underlying theme is to work to create a system that is regenerative and holistic in nature. Through these interactions, I have encountered a broader understanding of those who have been my teachers on this journey, needless to say including those more-than-human.

The teachers on my journey have therefore included the microbes within my own body as well as the soil, and their teachings have emerged in how they interact with my organs and entire body. I have learnt from their effective networking strategies and have also adopted an ontology that works to promote the power of decomposition in completing the life cycle. Within my body this movement is referred to as digestion, whereas in the soil it is decomposition. I have also learnt from particular organs, such as my womb and ovaries; this will be explored more comprehensively as we move into the 'places' and subsequent field sites that populate them.

Since adopting a more biocentric perspective I have also become more cognisant of the other forces operating in nature and have sought their wisdom, such as the moon and how it cycles from full to new moon. I have learned to notice its patterns in relation to the sun, how it affects bodies of water and indeed my own menstrual health. The seasons have also been another important teacher – these iterative and cyclical movements embed lessons of iterative research practice, cycling patterns of meaning-making, and the role of composting and regenerative processes that aid knowledge-making. This will be explored in more depth throughout this thesis, showing the transgression and transformative learning nestled within ecological citizenship embodiment. The teachers and communities I have been part of have made me awestruck and curious and I have learned to absorb lessons and learnings from a variety of sources. It has been this kind of engagement that has enabled me to enrich my understanding of pedagogy and stimulated t-learning throughout this research journey.

#### **1.3.4 What is social and transgressive learning?**

Transgressive and transformative learning offers a progressive and optimally disruptive (Wals et al., 2009) approach to social learning that moves beyond social reproduction and towards boundary crossing and innovative and creative social learning practice. Kulundu (2018, p. 91) has examined how transgressive learning operates between trans-epistemic agility and 'intersectional resonance', i.e., the learning that occurs in between and through complex and interrelated societal dynamics amongst a community of change drivers, as well as the ways in which commonalities and dissonances can be established through different intersectional

relations. It is in the generation of new collaborative pedagogies that these bridges between people, the Earth and the inter-/intra-relationships can begin to connect and restore. Ecological citizenship demonstrates through its constant emergence that cyclical and iterative thinking and regeneration enables learning that bridges our understanding between entities (Barad, 2010). We need to learn within the interconnectedness of binaries, polarities and opposing perspectives through learning in communities and networks, fostering diversity and decentralised knowledge exchanges (Pellow, 2016; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020).

Fundamentally, t-learning is a collaborative, iterative living and learning project that encourages 'trans' ontological and epistemological migration in social learning (transdisciplinary, trans-epistemic, transgressive – i.e. breaking boundaries), and the t also stands for 'together' thereby implying solidarity/relationality/resonance and conviviality (Bengtsson, 2019; Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2015). Considering this, Bengtsson (2019, p. 1) stated that “there can be no definite conduct to or understanding of transgression, as transgression itself entails a subversion of rules, contexts, and borders”, and that no certain definition exists for t-learning. He does, however, propose that transgressive learning be seen as a collection of contextually diverse techniques, practices, beings and doings that venture to bring about change through and in learning (Bengtsson, 2019).

Significant to t-learning theoretical framing, as well as praxis, is the concept of ‘co-defining concerns’ and enabling co-design throughout the research project (or learning activity, through iterative engagement (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2016); this is of particular interest for the context and framing of my study which has co-developed embodied pedagogies and resources in an ongoing and reflexive manner, not only with humans but co-designed with the more-than-human too.

I explore pathways and practices (and practical wisdoms) that emerge in three alternative eco-communities: (Khula Dharma, Pachamama and Wild Spirit Ecobackpackers) and two courses (Perma-Leadership and Sacred Menstruation), and the life worlds, knowledge(s) and meaning-making practices embedded in them, and then examine what forms of transgressive social learning are taking place. I then

explore the question of how these can be applied in the co-construction of new public pedagogies for ecological citizenship.

In terms of t-learning, I am particularly inspired by public pedagogies and convivial research undertaken by a group of early career scholar activists from around the world. They gathered in Colombia to use convivial practice as a public pedagogy towards building new transgressive-learning living theory and pedagogies (McGarry et al., 2022). The collective used public pedagogies as a transgressive learning practice in Colombia, to produce an entirely new approach to imagining tertiary education during a time of crisis, entitled 'The Pluriversity for Stuck Humxns' in which they found embodied, and subsequent embodied figurations of seeing 'departments' of knowing, doing and being as organs of a larger ecological assemblage or body.

When considering South African environmental education and education for sustainable developments (O'Donoghue, 2014) as bridging disciplinary boundaries and expanding epistemological perceptivity and attentiveness, to meet emerging matters of concern, transgressive learning offers the theoretical frameworks and praxis to navigate such a journey across bridges of difference. Bengtsson (2019) identified the importance of creative practice and conviviality in this t-learning work and Lotz-Sisitka et al. (2016) highlighted the importance of phenomenological, embodied, and 'sense-able' approaches to encourage and support t-learning.

It is through public pedagogy, embodiment, alternative communities and t-learning that I have curated my research questions (see section 1.2) which seek to expand pedagogical innovation for the field of ecological citizenship that is arising in these transformative times.

## **1.4 Mini methodology**

As a means to help the reader in navigating this thesis and its construction, I briefly expand on two methodological components: multiple-genre text and diffraction which is done from an autoethnographic embodied methodology. As this has been a real-life journey, filled with plot twists, new insights and spiral learning, it seems important to

make the reader aware that the argument being presented is one that crosses borders, challenges evidence hierarchies, and makes leaps into various fields as it attempts to logically and creatively present a way in which to navigate the complexity of learning. Through embodied and co-creative convivial spaces I have transgressively sought new public pedagogies for ecological citizenship which aims at restoring our connection to the interconnected web of which we are a part, therefore calling for a variety of sources and ways of learning.

I approached this thesis through the many lens' I have come to interact with and have crystallised into my own meaning making of the world. As the natural world has been a great teacher of mine, I find myself observing patterns that are present both within my own, I offer an autoethnographic embodied methodology which seeks to share these narratives and perspective shifts. By introducing the places, I hope to create a framework that can be replicated within various contexts, showcasing that within these spaces one is able to address themes that emerge within spaces where transformative learning takes place.

### **1.4.1 Multi-genre text**

A multi-genre text is a type of thesis or research project that uses a variety of genres or types of writing to communicate information and ideas. Unlike a traditional thesis, which usually consists of a single long essay or argument, a multi-genre text can incorporate different genres, such as poetry, narratives, letters, diagrams, artworks, and other creative and non-traditional forms of writing.

The purpose of a multi-genre text is to explore a topic or idea from multiple perspectives and to engage the reader in a more dynamic and immersive way than a traditional thesis might. Multiple genres support and affirm other ways of knowing, being and doing, and aim to create more room to express knowledge in different ways. By using different genres, I aim to communicate the complexity and richness of research in more accessible and interesting ways.

### **1.4.2 Diffraction**

Diffraction is a concept that originated in the field of physics and refers to the bending and spreading of waves as they encounter an obstacle or a small aperture. Haraway (1997) used this term as a metaphor to dismantle the relationship between knowledge and power. She argued that diffraction provides a way of understanding how different knowledge perspectives interact with each other and how this interaction can create new forms of knowledge and understanding.

Haraway (1997) suggested that diffraction is a more useful metaphor than the traditional scientific concept of reflection, which assumes that there is a fixed reality that can be accurately reflected. Instead, diffraction allows for the recognition of multiple perspectives and the ways in which these perspectives interact with each other to create complex patterns and meanings. Diffraction as a physical phenomenon creates patterns whereby the particles begin to form geocentric circles within the opening or obstacle, thereby creating an image that correlates with that of a bridge.

In diffraction-based environmental education research, the researcher considers multiple perspectives, viewpoints, and methodologies as interacting with each other, like waves interacting with obstacles (Murriss & Bozalek, 2019). These interactions can create new patterns and meanings that can change the research process and its outcomes. I used diffraction in multiple engagements and experiences and noted how the theoretical underpinnings of research-recreation, nomadic theory and t-learning added lenses for me to place meaning into the bigger context of pedagogical innovation, allowing for more creative and emancipatory techniques to research and learning. As this thesis progresses, we will come to see how the ailments within my own body have simultaneously opened a pathway for healing and transformation, and it is through these diffractive relationships between microbes and ovaries, between myself and eco-communities, between the tangible and intangible and between the convivial and logical, that a multi-genre'd diffractive figuration of embodied ecological citizenship and associated pedagogical insights emerged. While this is a research project, led by questions, diffractive embodiment and collaborative curiosity, I am only able to offer insights into how meaning-making occurred, how learning emerged and how alternative pathways into ecological citizenship were experienced by myself and

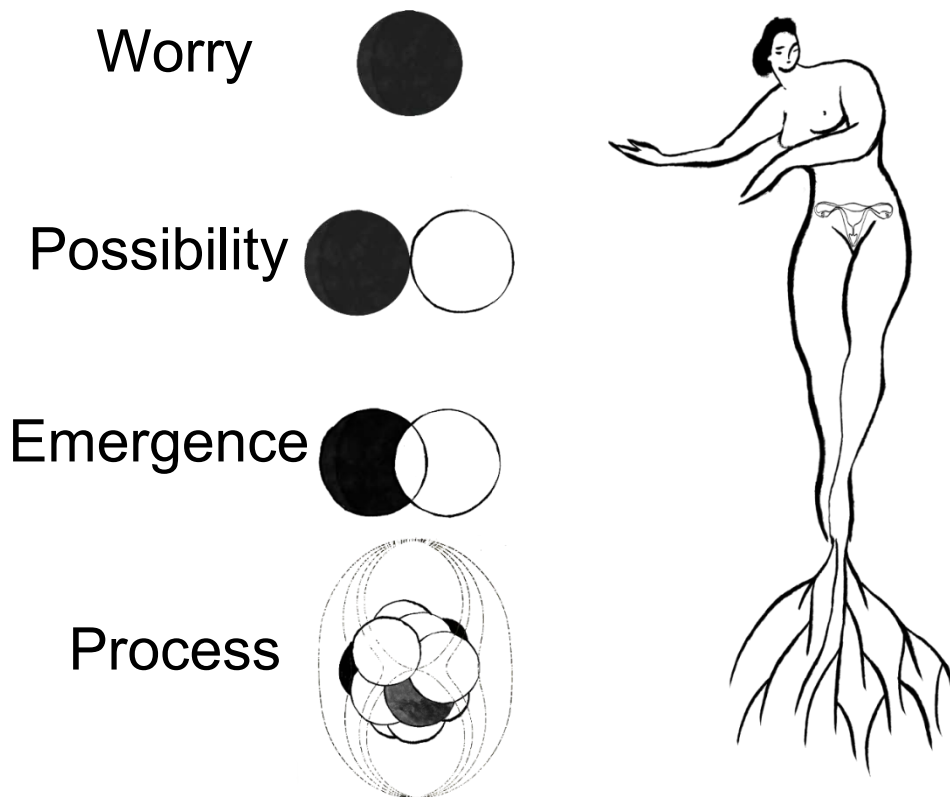
my community. I do not make claims that this will be the same everywhere, or even be replicable. This is an exploratory creative enquiry with a keen focus on the event of learning (Manning, 2016). The 'places' within this thesis became placeholders to bring these kaleidoscopes of interactions, ideas and thoughts into learnings that assist in framing a t-learning approach to convivial pedagogical innovation.

## 1.5 Places

This research project identifies 'places' of innovation to cover sections that would normally be described in terms of 'problem statement', 'research focus', 'intended outcomes / main contribution' and 'theory and methodology'. When we speak of a 'place' it is usually a space that has geocentric connections, located within a landscape. The 'place' introduced here is rather a field of knowing, doing and being which we as humans have labelled and therefore created (Trell & Van Hoven, 2010). This concept of place is connected to the themes of identity and citizenship as they are key concepts in coming to an embodied understanding of ecological citizenship. The idea of place within this thesis is used as a meaning-making *tool or instrument*. These are labels or markers that offer a form of construction to scaffold a bigger conceptual field of pedagogical innovation. We create *places* to aid in creating a space in which we can begin to connect to a more embodied sense of the topic, to know that it has various intersecting dimensions. I have arranged these as four places and four seasons:

- 1) The Place of Worry – Winter: Thematic focus
- 2) The Place of Possibility – Spring: Embodiment
- 3) The Place of Emergence – Summer: Alternative teachers and communities

#### 4) The Place of Process – Autumn: Social and t-learning



*Image 1: An image from the Bodybook showing each of the places explored within this thesis, alongside a body with roots extending from it, signifying that this thesis is an embodied understanding of ecological citizenship and that these processes complexify and build off one another through this thesis.*

As we approach the worries that arise in the Place of **Worry**, we will unpack how these worries are related in an interdisciplinary, interdimensional, interdependent, interconnected manner calling us to explore a pathway of ecological citizenship. This leads us into the Place of **Possibility**; out of the crumbled heartache our worries bore into ourselves and create the wounds and cracks (Akomolafe, 2021), we seek to reimagine how we can absent absences (Kaplan, 2002) and create something new, namely pedagogical praxis for ecological citizenship through research creation. Once we have settled into the creative capacity inherent in the possibility, we are guided to the Place of **Emergence** where we unpack metaphors and are introduced to the 'Third

Space' or bridge between our *worries* and the *possibilities*. The third space existed all along, even within our experience of the place of worry. The Place of **Process** is how these three previous places continue to unfold in an iterative manner and with them t-learning stories and internal/relational narratives have emerged to showcase pedagogical insights that aid an ecological perspective. This cyclically composts (in a sometimes messy way) a regenerative force through the repetition of moving between the poles of call and response learning (Kulundu, 2018) in the form of ongoing iterative feedback, diffraction and research-creation. This, as I will argue, is an approach to embodied ecological citizenship learning. Within collaborative public pedagogies (unpacked in the following sections), along with the aid of t-learning narratives, I reflect on field sites of learning that can help the reader to place their understanding into the context of an insight for future pedagogical praxis.

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## CHAPTER TWO: PLACE OF WORRY

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The snow falls in a flurry of worry  
It blankets the ground with a white flurry  
The cold wind blows with a chill and a hurry  
As snowflakes drift in a flurry, oh the worry

17 October 2022, Kenton-on-Sea



*Image 2: A circle represents the nexus point in which these crises are interconnected, interdimensional and interrelated in an assemblage of relationality. The circle also represents the continuum in which these crises exist, as opposed to binaries and dichotomies. It can also represent the new moon, where it appears as darkness within the sky.*

## **2.0 Introduction**

This research begins within the Place of Worry, in a time of the triple C crisis (Covid, Capitalism and Climate Change), with a multitude of causes – social, political, economic, environmental and technological (Klingberg, 2020) – that raise concerns. The Place of Worry becomes the nexus of these issues – allowing them to co-exist and revealing how they are interrelated. The Place of Worry is the first space in which the journey to transform, transgress and re-member arises. Firstly, I explore how these crises often sit in a framing that favours a more polarised, binarised, dichotomised approach to meaning-making which brings with it an ‘either or’ fracturing or severing of our entangled relationality.

I then begin to unpack how dichotomy thinking leads to a disembodiment of these crises. To enable a more embodied perspective of these crises we explore an ecological perspective that captures the continuum in which these crises sit, namely an ecological citizenship that generates the nexus of interconnected, inter-dimensionality and complexity of these causes. I then demonstrate how my own journey of being disembodied has propelled an onto-epistemological enquiry into how I might continue meaning-making practices that offer a transgressive approach to environmental education and show how this has enabled me to embody a representation of ecological citizenship.

### **2.1 The cracks as catalysts**

It is no secret that our world is in crisis – there are catastrophes occurring globally affecting our natural world, our political systems and the health of our bodies (Ellingson, 2017; Morton, 2013). While this can feel paralysing, in this research project I explore how the crisis can be a call to remember, reimagine and to regenerate as a way to embody ecological citizenship. It is within this space of catastrophe that I have come to recognise that these catastrophes can also be catalysts for change and transformation. It is often within the ‘wound’, the ‘crack’ or ailment that wisdom is later realised, applied and brought into process(es) of transformation. Akomolafe (2021) raised this question: What if the way we respond to the crisis is part of the crisis? I This expresses sentiments I have carried through this research process. The crises

we are facing are multi-layered, non-binary, messy, entangled and interdependent, and require a particular kind of healing that shifts and morphs to suit different situations and contexts; they implore us to seek responses that offer a multitude of knowing and being. Haraway (2016) and Akomolafe (2021) suggested the crisis shouldn't implore us to seek solutions; rather our first response could be to dwell with and "stay with the trouble", to understand where the cracks lie (Haraway, 2016) – this is different to a solution or future oriented approach that foregrounds solutions. Thus, initially I spend some time staying with the trouble, putting solutions aside and experiencing a 'wit(h)ness' with what perpetuates these crises. This research is guided by call and response learning; perhaps it is the response to these crises that is the real threat to our ecological world, or is it the inability to hear the call? Or apathetic wilful ignorance, or a freeze state from being overwhelmed, or hearing what we want to hear rather than what is being said? In this section, I begin to unpack when we emphasise one end of the linear spectrum, creating dichotomies and binaries. I then go on to share how call and response learning is not about the call or response but rather an intuitive and ongoing iterative process which inspires the pedagogy of this thesis.

### **2.1.1 Triple C crisis**

I articulate the triple C threat as the three-fold crisis of Covid 19, Capitalism and Climate Change, which offer three entry points to consider the unique inequalities and disorder of our time. As Fox (2022, p. 107) argued, Covid 19, as the more recent driving force that has subverted society, has led to shifting disparities – "a 'thousand tiny dis/advantages' produced by people's daily interactions with human and non-human matter, making sense of the unequal occupational patterning of coronavirus incidence". New relationalities and assemblages of meaning are emerging and thus new educational responses are required.

According to Fox (ibid.), our relationality with the more-than-human world along with our relationalities with each other as citizens, shift in the post-covid world; there is a more messy and unwieldy (and often existential) shift in our meaning-making and onto-epistemological framing. This re-framing is happening in an extremely divisive time, with anti-vax vs pro-vax antagonism, which sits in a world where new framings of "Roe vs Wade" "Me-Too", "Black Lives Matter", Queer Pluralisms, "Climate School

Strikes" and many other social movements are responding to a myriad of massive and tiny 'dis/advantages'. In my own experience, our relationality with (and disembodiment from) the more-than-human and wild ecological world has, through colonial imperialism, capitalism and associated hyper-individuality, rendered notions of citizenship to adopt universalisms, hegemonic, patriarchal and 'dominion over nature' narratives of modernity (Bonneuil, 2015) which have in turn influenced the formation of our identities, worldviews thus further influencing citizenship. This form of citizenship separates itself from the rich assemblage with the more-than-human world in an ecological apartheid (McGarry, 2013). Our world is deeply embedded within physical, social, political and economic materialities, including but not limited to human bodies (Klingberg, 2020) that have mostly lost particular capacities to care for the planet, people and to establish equitable and symbiotic relationships with each other (Pellow, 2016).

The disconnection and disembodiment from more-than-human relationality can sometimes be seen in linear, product-oriented and goal-driven design with little account for regeneration of resources. It can also materialise a highly technical and solutions-orientated responses, that do not always consider the relational and contextual nuance of these disconnections and disembodiment (Sun & Yang 2016). With this framing we can forget to account for the multiplicity of perspectives and the plural knowledges (Reiter, 2018) and ecosystems of knowledge (De Sousa Santos, 2020) that are experienced in other humans and the more-than-humans. For some this has been described as a body blindness that affects the connection between one's own perception of body as well as its connection to the planet (Reid & Taylor, 2000). I would argue in my personal experience and enculturation that the dominant narrative that has been asserted into my life leads to thinking in a linear way: 'produce' – 'consume' – 'throw-away'. This mentality and its cultural implications are present within so many aspects of my daily life and broader society. These 'system'-based models most often adopt linear movement that is based on outcomes which have an input and an output, a subject and an object (Merleau-Ponty, 1968; Sun & Yang, 2016). This linear model and its embedded dichotomies, has the potential to create separation, binaries, assimilative perspectives (Pellow, 2016) and generally a sense of 'othering'.

This dominance of linearity and binary thinking and the particularly divisive period that it has engendered, leads research and practice to often operate at either end of the scale with art and science being the anchors at each end of the spectrum of meaning-making (Ellingson, 2017). Reid and Taylor (2000, p. 441) argued that “our current institutions of higher education, in the United States and elsewhere, are key players in maintaining the body-blindness, and the accompanying blindness to place, politics, and history, of technocratic managerialism”. This was echoed by Lotz-Sisitka (2009) who argued that our educational systems need to encourage embodied adaptation practices, reflexive justice (and agency), reflexivity and expanded creative capabilities. This body-blindness is reinforced when we fracture and silo our thinking into various departments, subjects, and knowledge commodification systems, a tendency especially in neo-liberal directives of universities, which adopt the neo-liberal framework as the most influential operational vehicle for colonial, patriarchal, capitalist interests (De Sousa Santos, 2020). The fractured and siloed thinking that we experience in our education and organisational structures results in separation that becomes difficult to bridge back together worldwide and through a multitude of disciplines; at least this has been my personal experience.

When I began to collect into these pockets of knowledge(s), and experiencing these silos where we were encouraged not to collectively digest knowledge, but succeed as individuals, I felt a sense of isolation, disconnect and disembodiment. These sealed systems/subjects/silos leave little room to identify with those different from oneself and make it difficult to integrate within the cycle of regeneration found within all processes and more-than-human assemblages and relationships. The formation of siloes engenders a specific capacity of meaning-making that ignores the more holistic and interconnected aspects of learning.

### **2.1.2 Connecting the dots**

Moving within this Place of Worry, I have co-created ways to build bridges between these binaries with others, within the context of the triple C threat, yet what continually shows as an obstacle in these connective practices is language. Working with such a diverse set of people, some based in corporate settings, some in permaculture and ecovillages with others in spaces of facilitating embodiment practices like yoga and

tantric arts has led to a diversity difficult to confine and put into a language/ label. I find resonances with a diversity of people yet not all in the same way.

Within a broader view of communication and language, there is a consensus that not all forms of communication use words and language; signs and symbols also encode information. Ferdinand de Saussure (1857 -1913) a Swiss linguist, developed a theory that emphasised language as a system of signs, which included language and many other sign systems that exist in the world. Semiotics is the study of meaning-making and semiotics with “everything that can be seen or be interpreted as a sign” (Yakin & Totu 2014, p. 5). Saussure developed a model where the symbol influences the meaning but also how that symbol is interpreted to make meaning. He proposed that the sign has a signifier and is signified; this information is a form of triangulation (Chandler, 1994) which demonstrates how the sign is both represented and interpreted, which does not always correlate. “A linguistic sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept and a sound pattern” (Chandler, 1994, p. 17). When particular signs are used there can be a sense of commonality, as the sound pattern is the same – yet the meaning behind these words and sounds may differ based on who is encoding them and the context in which they are used. For example, mentioning the word ‘dog’ – one might know what a dog is, but there are different ideas of what dog might mean (what breed, how big or small, is there an excitement or a worry associated with a dog?). These assumptions give us an opportunity to rationalise information and to have a common understanding, yet our experiences of these concepts differ.

Thus, meaning is not inherent and there is a multiplicity of ways to understand something. This will be explored throughout this thesis. Language is also not only spoken communication; meaning-making can take different forms and generate a space for an embodied knowing through practices such as movement, gestures and artworks.

McGarry (2022) explored ‘Suitably Strange’ devices which can be utilised to prompt imaginal thinking in our collaborative meaning-making capacities. Of particular interest, he referred to a “spade with two handles” (p. 97) for co-defining concerns. This image generates an understanding that while we are working to unearth the same

space, we also have different ways of doing this. He also stressed the importance of becoming “comfortable in the cacophony of the problem” (ibid., p. 7) or as Haraway (2016, p. 98) expressed, ‘staying with the trouble’ to actively listen to what is being said as even among paradoxical stories, there is a chance that the phenomenon to which we speak is the same. We need an instrument for empathising and a critical capacity that restores educational interventions and adopts complexity in our practice of meaning-making so as to create meaning in more than one mode or mind.

I have found it deeply compelling to sit in the discomfort of longing for a single right path, or a morally right side – when indeed there is not one way to deal with this crisis, not just one identity that we need to become; chaos (ecosystems and the cosmos) are rich in diversity, compounded with a pluriversity of particles (Akomolafe & Ladha, 2017) and therefore we need to become aware of the deeper sensations we feel, at different moments and at different places within us. These are all points of interaction, of a conversation propelling a response and the more in tune and aware we can become of these sensations, the more we are able to respond instead of react. It is through embodiment practices that I have come to understand and generate an understanding of what ecological citizenship entails, a concept that will look different for different people. As I explored embodiment practices, I generated principles and insights from the Place of Process that aided in this mean-making process for others and placed them in the bodybook for pedagogical pathways to ecological citizenship.

### **2.1.3 Call and response learning**

Call and response learning is inspired by the tradition of singing in Africa: “one person sings a phrase, and inspired by their contribution, the crowd sings back; this becomes an intuitive ongoing iterative process of improvisation and meaning-making together” (Kulundu-Bolus et al., 2020, p. 113).

Call and response learning highlights the symbiotic relationship that is formed between entities – all of communication relies on the sending and receiving of signals to create dialogue and meaning. It seems that systems (and beings) operate in giving and receiving, inhaling and exhaling, etc. The contrast between these opposing forces creates definition, in the way that negative space and positive space generate an

image. Yet by naming and focussing on the 'call' or the 'response' we forget that there is indeed another process that happens between these movements which can offer more meaning than the call or the response. This concept is introduced as the 'Third space' or the space between these movements and contrasts, a space, according to Akomolafe (2021), to dance in the cracks forming between these, in the Place of Emergence.

I find it important to enquire how these calls and responses require our intuition and abilities to make meaning in order to generate a response. For example, our identities are not a fixed state of being, we have the option to transition and reform our opinions and beliefs at any moment, yet the mind is continually trying to create meaning that is 'rational'. It is within this kind of meaning-making that we can begin to box ourselves into an identity, yet when I have allowed myself to continually shift and follow the impulses of intuition, this has offered a far more generative experience and understanding of life.

From my own experience, it is the pendulum-like swing between various opposing polarities that have propelled this research and enabled me to become more embodied through seeing the interconnectedness of lessons. Through the polarity and the binary traversing we are able to come to deeper understanding. This lends itself to beginning to answer one of my main research questions: How does transgressive social learning enable ecological meaning-making and enrich ecological citizenship with collaboration? One way it enables ecological meaning-making is through this collective iteration through convivial call and response, and embodied learning.

This leads us into spaces to experiment and transgressively swing between, yet when we locate ourselves within one confinement, we can miss the richness of this process. This project therefore aims to create multiple entries to call and respond for various individuals, to open these spaces to the endless possibilities in reconnecting back to the infinite intelligence nestled within our inherent nature. It is not solely my efforts that generate this kind of research. Through engaging in learning through convivial conversations and practice-based action research with other people with the more-than-human world and the ecological diversity of a plethora of ecosystems, I have been in a constant space of call and response learning, and I have come to

gravitate towards particular spaces and places which nourish an aspect that feels I am cultivating research worthy of my longing (Kulundu-Bolus, 2020) “It is not simply about re-visiting how one sees the world; it is about expanding our way of being by opening ourselves up to alternatives and bringing these alternatives to life through our writing, our art making and our performances.” (ibid., p.231)

In this research I explore alternative ways of creating meaning moving from a Place of Worry, into a Place of Possibility which results in emergence and a process of digesting and meaning-making, I open to explore what this might mean for a variety of people and within a variety of contexts, to further expand into ecological citizenship. The various pathways I have traversed in this nomadic theory approach have led me towards inspired thinking and action in utilising my own pedagogical insights within various spaces, using my body as the learning vessel. I have therefore predominately been called towards embodied practices such as humming, dancing, cooking, gardening and remaining curious to how we form connections with other beings and landscapes. It has been through these activities that emergence of partnerships, resonances and exchanges occur, both on a communicative level of words as well as through movement and sensorial experiences within our bodies and the critters that live within them.

## **2.2 Wounded as a Womb(an)**

My womb(an)hood has been an important ‘active mess’ and generative embodied learning space through which I have learnt to connect to the idea of a cycle. The ‘mess’ has led me on a learning journey of myself and the natural world. I was diagnosed with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) at the end of 2019 which activated a learning journey of myself and how I imbue into the world. From a young age the education and general consensus in my social influence around menstruation is that it is a curse. We are taught from a young age that it is a burden and that it is often painful. I suffered with painful periods and thought this was normal. I, along with many adolescent friends, were put on the birth control pill to ‘help’ with acne and making ‘your period regular’. The pill strips one of a natural menstrual cycle; one does not go through the natural peaks and troughs of hormones and instead one is kept at a consistent level. You have a withdrawal bleed on the pill which often gets interpreted as your period,

but it is not. The pill became for me the epitome of linear thinking – designed to keep one’s wave of hormones in a consistent stream.

Since cycling into my womb health, I have become a great deal more connected to the cycle of creation (physically, metaphorically, ecologically and spiritually). I have become intuitive and creative, harnessing a deeper connection to myself and those around me. This embodied learning journey, with all its metaphor, meanings, insights, and ontological shifts, I refer to as my “womb-wisdom” a shorthand for a rich learning process which led me on a path to rediscover my feminine energy, the space of creation, and personal agency, and eventually pathways towards ecological citizenship. I’ve come to learn in my experience that the polarity of energies contained within one – non-dualism, have come to show the malleable nature of duality, in that something can be defined by what it is or by what it is not.

As Rainer Maria Rilke (1981) says in his poem:

“Take your well-disciplined strengths, stretch them between two great opposing poles, because inside human beings is where God learns”

Many can relate to the idea that we hold both feminine and masculine energies, and further unnamed energies between and beyond: I had been raised in a patriarchal South African society that praised me for my masculine traits and oftentimes shamed me for the softer, more emotional aspects of what would colloquially be called ‘feminine nature’. I was therefore encultured and educated to favour an unbalanced worldview, which resulted in me trying to maintain a constant state of masculine normative socialisation, in a state of doing, incessant activity of achieving, progressing and consumer-based materialism. My ‘feminine nature’ was often ignored for fear of being relegated or judged for being too ‘soft, arty or chaotic’. In further grappling with this concept of ‘feminine energy’ I came across a scholar who compared the work of Haraway and Starhawk, exemplifying how the concept of eco-femininity exemplifies the understanding of the spiral. Haran (2019) showcases how both these scholars, while individual and with different framings and premises, share this sentiment of this cyclical nature. While I could logical understand the concept of a cycle, it was only in the embodied process of reconnecting to this part of myself that I began to understand the bigger implications this fundamental energetic current plays.

As I was moving with and dwelling in the Place of Worry that was my womb, the more I stayed with it the less the agonising menstruation felt like an ‘inconvenience’; rather it became a painful but powerful call to ‘sync into balance’. It was an invitation to return to my body and create. I had to feel and learn to process all the emotions that had been buried within my body, within my womb and my blood lines. I had to bring love, care and compassion to these parts of myself that were aching with sorrow, to mourn these parts of myself so I could create space for the new. In this process it taught me the regenerative agency I had in becoming an active creator and participant in the process I found myself within.

Living in the state of positivist ‘science’, in a state of masculinity and mind in my childhood home and in my education, I had lost my heart, as well as my flow and zest for life. When I realigned and began listening and learning from my intuition, I discovered I could heal myself through this cycle of creation. This ignited my inner dancer (and change maker) which moves between the masculine and feminine to optimally disrupt (Wals et al., 2009) dualism within my own actions. While I acknowledge that dualisms exist in the world, and they have been co-opted by the western modernist project, I take a critical African Feminist (Knowles, 2022) and Post-human Feminist (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2016) approach to how I engage with these dualisms. I am aware that they exist in society, and in how we make meaning and knowledge, but I do not essentialise them as inherent qualities, but rather as something we need to engage with meaningfully, and understand how they interact with knowledge making.

This practically became a learning journey into diet, healthy eating, gardening, permaculture and eventually deeper embodied ecological citizenship. I share this story as a means to place my own positionality within the research, and how this journey has led me to my research longings and questions. My womb health (and womb wisdom) journey has been one pathway towards becoming a more embodied and literate ecological citizen, and I aim to understand how others can find this path, and what kind of learnings encourage this journey. I return to this ‘field site’, my womb as a field in which I learn, diffract and process my meaning-making and thinking throughout the thesis. It finds itself present in all the places of learning I articulate in this thesis.

## 2.3 Re-membering + Re-wilding our bodies

As I have come to recognise within my own educational journey how I felt disembodied and have been working to embody and find this place of interconnected understanding of my role as an ecological citizen, I have been reminded through the word 're-member' how there is a link between being a member (of a community) and 're' as in returning. This has helped me to remember that cultural and historical roots formed me; this has also included an understanding of how I am also a part of the Earth and that my body is intimately connected and entangled within this relationship. Re-wilding has been another concept which has enabled me to reclaim that which has been declared "expired, unmanageable, undomesticated, and politically unruly" (Halberstam, 2018, p. 453) in the context of white settler colonialism. Wildness is a concept that intersects across multiple disciplines, yet at its core it showcases how there is an inherent knowing that the barriers of order imposed can be crossed, in this way wildness also speaks to transgressive theory in that it crosses boundaries and is disruptive.

Re-membering in my environmental education process refers to reconnecting with the natural world and recognising our interconnectedness with it. Starhawk (2011) speaks of Witchcraft and how it takes its teachings from nature, through the movements of the sun, moon, stars, the flight of birds and the growth of trees. Witchcraft is a concept that spans across multiple cultures and countries and can vary in its connotation. For the basis of this thesis, I speak to the European understanding of witchcraft as this is the lineage of my ancestors and becomes a topic I later discuss in my field sites. Before the spread of Christianity, many societies had their own indigenous spiritual and magical practices. Paganism and witchcraft are similar in how they work with the seasons and tune into the patterns of nature. Various indigenous and pagan traditions existed during these pre-Christian times, incorporating magical practices and beliefs in supernatural beings. Some individuals were recognized as practitioners of magic, often associated with healing and divination (Zwissler, 2016). With the spread of Christianity across Europe, pagan beliefs and practices were often demonized by the Church. The early Christian Church regarded any form of magic or supernatural practice that did not align with Christian doctrine as heretical (ibid., 2016). The Church

began to associate folk healers and practitioners of pre-Christian traditions with the devil (Starhawk, 2011; Zwissler, 2016).

Despite the Christianization of Europe, folk magic continued to persist. Rural communities often relied on local healers, cunning folk, and wise women who practiced folk magic and provided services such as herbal remedies, divination, and protection against malevolent forces. The late medieval period saw the rise of the Inquisition, a Church institution aimed at suppressing heresy. In the 15th century, the persecution of supposed witches intensified. The Church and secular authorities conducted witch hunts and trials, during which thousands of individuals, primarily women, were accused of witchcraft, often on flimsy evidence. The *Malleus Maleficarum*, a witch-hunting manual, further fuelled the hysteria. Through this movement, many ancient knowledge lineages were lost as well as trauma that has echoed through generations.

Re-membering involves acknowledging the ways in which human actions have caused harm to the environment and taking steps to repair and restore these relationships. For me this came in the form of remembering these brutal times of witch hunts and reclaim the gifts, stories and knowledge system of my lineage. While I was unable to receive this knowledge through oral or written knowledge, it came through embodied praxis. As I traversed the journey of this thesis, this knowledge began to reveal itself, further exemplifying how knowledge is not rooted in facts but instead curiosity. Re-membering also involved learning about and valuing the diverse ecosystems, species, and processes that make up the Earth's systems, such as the microbes in our gut and soil.

Re-membering our bodies refers to the process of becoming more intimately connected with our physical selves. This can involve learning about the anatomy and functions of our bodies, practising self-care and self-compassion, and working towards a positive body image. Re-membering also involves recognising the ways in which societal and cultural norms have shaped our understanding and relationship with our bodies, and actively working to challenge and overcome these harmful messages. By re-membering my body, I have cultivated a deeper sense of self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-love – this is not limited to an individual understanding of 'self'

but rather one that recognises how my body is also the home to many other organisms and is the space I can come to identify with others through my meaning-making capacities.

Re-membering can also involve reflecting on past experiences and traumas within the community and taking steps to heal and restore relationships. By re-membering, individuals and communities can strengthen their bonds and enhance their collective well-being as an act of ecological citizenship; this forms an important part of regenerating. It is not in identifying, defining and labelling but rather a more embedded process of recognition, which alludes to this very powerful message to again “stay with the trouble” (Haraway, 2016) – as perhaps it is through this process and act that we remember, that we resource and through this a type of healing occurs, offering a chance to decompose and therefore create compost within the triple C crisis.

Re-membering, in this context, refers to the process of reconnecting with one's sense of community and rebuilding relationships within it. Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2020) described a community as a group of individuals who come together based on shared interests, goals, and experiences. They are interconnected and supportive, providing a sense of belonging and identity to its members. Members of a community engage in activities and events that foster a shared purpose and vision. My attempt to re-member my deeply embedded roots within nature has created a space for me to connect with other communities and networks which diverge from those in which I was raised into. This remembering has also led me to question how re-membering is also a deeper reconnection to our instincts and desires to thrive as an ecosystem, and to ponder how we are continually changing and that through exploring, being a nomad and embracing cycles of creation, we come to restore our connections with deep layers. Consistently remembering is a means to connect to the world around us and within us.

## **2.4 Summary**

The Place of Worry highlights how pedagogies that support the dominant discourse of linear oriented systems experience this severing and disconnection, namely an ecological apartheid. I began with exploring the triple C crisis as a means to

understand the disembodiment and then went on to explain how our meaning-making is often defined by the language we use. Yet it is more complex than this and by incorporating embodied practices we can come to hold a pluriverse way of interacting with diversity experienced. My womb became this space in which I learned to optimally disrupt binaries through 'staying with the trouble'. I was further called to remember my creativity and agency through reconnecting to these ecological ways of living and meaning-making. In the next chapter, the Place of Possibility, we explore cyclical living and expand on nomadic theory and research creation, showcasing how the womb becomes a figurative and diffractive space to seek public pedagogies for ecological citizenship.

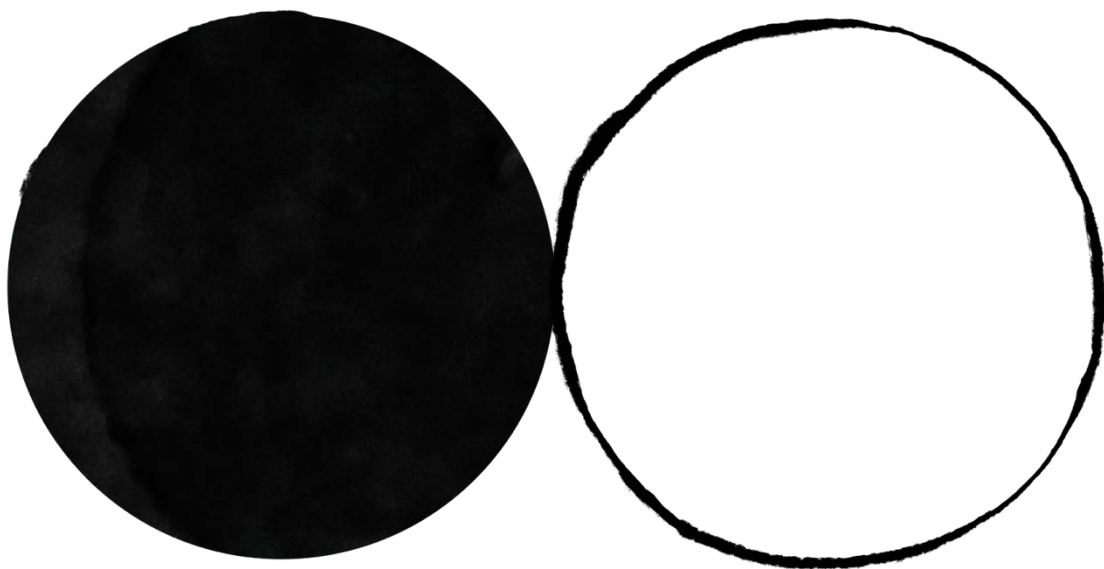
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## CHAPTER THREE: PLACE OF POSSIBILITY

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A thaw of hope brings possibility  
As colours start to bloom with glee  
The days grow longer and warmer with ease  
As the hope of spring brings possibility

17 October 2022, Kenton-on-Sea



*Image 3: An extension of the Place of Worry, showing how there is a flipside to our worries 'the other side of the coin' or perhaps the bright side/ fullness of the moon, lending itself to possibility, imagination and desires in the places where we might feel heavier and melancholic feelings.*

### **3.0 Introduction**

The Place of Possibility responds to the Place of Worry with an optimistic and desirable outcome to the triple C crisis, seeing that the issues that arise are often the spaces where possibility seeps through their cracks (Holloway & Sergi, 2010). It seeks to transform and generate a more restorative approach with the use of imagination (McGarry, 2013), affirmation and conviviality (Bradrotti, 2011). This section introduces Nomadic theory (Bradrotti, 2011; Murriss & Bezalek 2019; Springgay & Truman, 2017) and research creation (Manning, 2016). To counter the wounds of my womb(an)hood, I have focussed on affirmative pedagogies and creating without an end goal in mind, instead becoming immersed in the process and then critically reflecting on my experiences through noting the onto-epistemological shifts (Barad 2007; Chavés et al., 2015) and using research creation (Manning, 2016; Springgay & Truman, 2017) as a way to orient this research. The Place of Possibility can be envisioned as a womb; as a space that arose as a worry it has been transformed into possibility. My womb has become my first supervisor, mentor and teacher as I have opened to its wisdom through embodied practice. I will explain how I have used the figuration of the womb as a diffractive organ to aid in an embodied and regenerative metaphor of learning and educational capacity, enhancing and deepening my connection with my body overall.

### **3.1 Nomadic theory**

My approach to this research has been to generate convivial interactions with participants and environments which I learn from which has aided in me creating networks and relationships within a variety of contexts both in-person and online. This conviviality sparks an exchange of energy which can be described as a child-like awe and wonder. I have come to learn that when we move in/with/from this innocent and awe-like state, there is an openness to creativity which stimulates responses that are innovative and generative, and are true to our own sovereign ways of knowing and doing that are grounded in a “creative process of knowing our world” and being able to “curate learning spaces together” (Burt et al., 2018, p. 509). Rosi Braidotti’s (2011) nomadic theory speaks into this influx movement of learning; in it she examines the continual state of becoming. This is engendered in dynamic power relations also noted to be in a state of flux. Braidotti’s approach sits within the Place of Possibility as she

seeks to develop a positive critical theory, whereby focus is placed upon politics of affirmation – instead of particular discourses which focus on trauma, melancholy and vulnerability. While I begin in the Place of Worry, I have found that the Place of Possibility is where something arises from and through the worry – particularly when one does not turn away from but rather sits with – “to stay with the trouble” (Haraway, 2016) and to wit(h)ness (Hoffman, 2007). I have come to realise that things are always shifting and evolving and when we stay present with things and emotions that may not seem comfortable at the time, they also shift and often offer rich teaching or learning. This is an example of moving from the Place of Worry to the Place of Possibility.

Nomadic theory refers to a philosophical and cultural approach that emphasises mobility, fluidity, and the rejection of fixed identities and boundaries (Braidotti, 2011). It draws on the ideas of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and asserts that the world is characterised by constant movement and change, rather than stability and permanence. Nomadic theory critiques the notion of fixed identities, categories and hierarchies (Braidotti, 2011), and instead sees individuals and groups as constantly shifting and negotiating their relationships and positions in the world. The approach emphasises the importance of fluidity, creativity and the ability to adapt and transform, as key components of human experience and culture. Deleuzian vitalism critiques reductive approaches to understanding life, such as those that see life as mere material processes or solely determined by external forces. It sees life as having its own creative agency and a capacity to generate new possibilities (Murriss & Bozalek, 2019). The philosophy also emphasises the importance of affect and sensation as integral to the experience of life and the creation of new realities (Braidotti, 2011), pairing well with embodiment practices. Through experiencing different contexts, I have had the chance to continuously return to my assumptions, ideologies and understandings and reconstitute them into a mode of learning that is more holistic and integrative of a plurality of knowledge (Reiter, 2018).

### **3.2 Research creation**

To assist my central theoretical framework of t-learning, with a focus on embodied praxis, creativity and co-design, I used research creation, first coined by Erin Manning (2016), to name an in-movement research approach that is not solely focussed on

creating an output but instead recognises that the relationship we build with our environments and ourself creates an overall bridge between barriers (or in my case binaries) that emerge in our shaping of identity and worldview in the time of the triple C crises.

These bridges become learning pathways that bring about new insights and understanding. Manning (2016) suggested that research-creation does not need new methods, rather a re-accounting of what writing can do in the process of thinking-doing. It emerged from the wide field of arts-based research, but further reframes research that is open-ended and un-didactic, rather iterative, diffractive (Haraway, 2016) and collaborative. Furthermore, a research-creation approach relates strongly to Kulundu-Bolus et al.'s (2020) approach of 'call and response' learning. Call and response learning in the context of environmental education is transformative in the way that it is "contextually responsive, adaptive and moves towards solidarity in this time of crisis" (Kulundu-Bolus et al., 2020, p. 113).

The concept of research-creation emphasises the connection and relational entanglement between different elements involved in its process. Rather than reinforcing the notion of art being distinct from thinking, research-creation integrates research and artistic creation, resulting in the emergence of new ideas through the combination of different techniques (Springgay & Truman, 2017). This process involves a continuous exchange between artistic practices and theoretical concepts, leading to the formation of "concepts in-the-making" (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 88). This research has formulated 'places' in the conveyance of this journey to offer a framework that creates a space for creative expression while still speaking to the theories and frameworks upholding this thesis. Research-creation can be described as a multifaceted intersection of art, theory, and research (Springgay & Truman, 2017p. 152).

### **3.3 Womb wisdom**

As I have "stayed with the trouble" (Haraway 2016), particularly with regard to my womb to aid in a holistic approach to caring for my womb and ovaries once finding out I had PCOS, I have come to listen to this organ assemblage and its wisdom, realising

that it clears out on a cyclical basis. This research has been in consultation with my womb as it is also the part of me that led me to become more environmentally aware and connected to the regenerative power nestled within natural processes, as well as the space that governs my creative agency. The womb therefore becomes a Place of Possibility as it has led me to notice the wisdom in living more cyclically, cultivating an embodied and ecological connection within my own body and the world around me. I call this section 'womb wisdom', as I will elaborate how the womb can be a space to absent absences (Bhaskar, 2016) and to come to recognise the iterative turn in the death and rebirth phase of a cycle. I then expand on how I have used my womb as a diffractive organ in my meaning-making processes leading to onto-epistemological shifts. Lastly, I share the ways in which I have cultivated a deeper relationship with this space and its applicability in becoming an ecological citizen.

### **3.3.1 Absent absences**

The womb can be seen as a liminal space where we are able to absent absences through creation. Kaplan (2002) coined the term 'actively absent' and McGarry (2013) pointed out how the womb becomes such a space, as "the womb is predominantly an empty space, but from it emerges something unique and miraculous" (p. 255). Lotz-Sitsika (2020) coined the term 'pregnant with possibility' when referring to the value that can be generated within this low theory approach as we are embroiled in a space of change, being called upon to create change while not knowing exactly what those changes are.

The natural world and the planet are often referred to as Mother Earth or Mother Nature, Gaia, Pachamama; there are many other variations and languages that attribute mother qualities to the Earth. The Earth and its soil are also sometimes spoken of as a womb. I pondered on the idea of calling the Earth a womb. Does it have to do with the endless cycles of creation that happen here within this space, with the fertility and ability to sustain life? Is it because it provides the nutrients for us to grow, much like a mother's placenta feeds the baby through what she consumes?

Ultimately for me, a nurturing essence is signified – the ability to care for, provide, soothe and heal. When I think of being nurtured, I feel nourished and cosy – I feel

provided for and in return I am required to grow, to evolve and to allow the things that are being nurtured to shift more into their essence. Another way to consider this would be with a seed and soil analogy – the seed is able to express itself through the nourishment received from the soil, ultimately becoming a plant or tree. The soil is a composting space and if it does not have capacity and nutrients to provide to the seed/seedling/plant then growth will cease. If the plant dies it could also then nourish the soil once again with decomposed matter for future seeds, thus the death contributes to nutrition for a new life, highlighting the symbiotic nature of life. Hooks (1994) described this process: “The process of nurturing involves both creation and destruction, as old structures and ways of being must be dismantled to make way for new growth”.

These qualities of nurturing are not always life-giving, and I have also come to celebrate the aspects that regenerate through decomposition, which leads to the continuation of fertility. Just like the womb of a woman who creates life in this bodily vessel, the Earth sustains the ever growing, living and dying parts of its nature. The womb does not always have a foetus growing inside of it; every month it goes through a process of preparing and then releasing what isn't used, so that it can begin a new cycle. This clearing, also known as menstruation, has come to signify an important death in which I can both physically and figuratively notice how things are changing and moving to aid transformation. Kaplan's (2002) process of “active absence” is a continuous and very active practice of keeping space open and empty for new forms of emergence, while my womb is never devoid of life in terms of bacteria and microorganisms and other physical attributes it is through the understanding that when I empty my womb through menstruation I am creating space for something new to emerge, i.e for new life to be created. In order for this opening for things to emerge, there has to be a death, a clearing and a decomposition.

Chavés et al. (2015) noted how the death-rebirth cycle presents itself in transformative learning as a space in which individuals and communities must confront their assumptions and worldviews and embrace new ways of thinking and acting. This alerted me to how often we experience ‘crisis’, ‘catastrophe’ and change, which is uncomfortable at the time, yet perhaps it is a natural state of cyclical death and rebirth. Through this framing, I am creating an embodied learning pathway which brings

metaphorical phenomena to aid in regenerative educational capacities. I have been particularly interested in the decomposers in my interactions with nature and the metaphors they lend to learning and education, along with other post-humanist thinkers such as Haraway (2016) and Tsing (2015). I also noted how the life-giving mother-like qualities of the womb encompass this process of death that should also be celebrated and incorporated into public pedagogy. The womb is the space in which possibility arises, in both its birthing phase and during menstruation, as a form of active absencing (Kaplan, 2002).

Through my own experiences I felt into the possibilities that gestate within my womb space, particularly towards creating solidarity within educational capacities that incorporate a more holistic and regenerative approach. As I have come to work with others and start researching this process, insights have emerged and my onto-epistemological placements have also somewhat shifted, which signifies the death and rebirth phase of the womb through menstruation. "Like a womb, learning environments can provide a nurturing and supportive space for the growth and development of new knowledge and understanding" (Hooks, 1994). The Place of Possibility generates a space in which creativity and imagination can flourish, moving from wounds and crises into a space that generates hope and compassion allowing things to crumble, to end and regenerate into new forms. We move from worry to possibility and it is the cracks and wounds where the light of possibility enters. Pillay (2017, p. 135) referred to this as "the perfectly ordinary creation of space or moment in which we assert a different type of doing" similar to that of Kaplan's active absences.

This style of continuation, of showing how the end is simultaneously the beginning, therefore pairs well with nomadic theory and research creation as they both encompass this idea that things are constantly changing, evolving and moving; therefore there is less of a desire to reach an end goal, but rather to become more aware of the relational aspects of our entanglements.

### **3.3.2 The wound as a site of diffractive exploration**

This figuration of the womb has become a diffractive exploration into educational capacities. Murris and Bozalek (2019) suggested that diffraction can provide a lens for exploring the complexities and contradictions that exist in education and further

defined diffraction as "the bending, spreading, and interference of waves that results from their interaction with an obstacle or aperture" (p. 880). Through the wounds and worries I've encountered with my womb, I am prompted to seek the possibility in this space, through reconstructing and re-imagining the creative potential inherent in this space, through embodied phenomenological experiences.

Haraway (1997) used diffraction as a way of thinking about the interactions between different entities as they encounter one another, and how these interactions can create new and unexpected patterns and relationships. She argued that diffraction offers a way to move beyond binary oppositions and instead focus on the complexities and interconnections of different actors.

Barad (2010), on the other hand, used diffraction to describe the way that entities are mutually constituted through their interactions with one another. She argued that diffraction offers a way to think about how different entities are entangled and how they emerge through their intra-actions.

As I have come to reconstitute my relationship with a wounded womb(an)hood into a fully embodied and celebrated ritual of my body, I am syncing with a bigger body of shifts and transitions external to me. On the journey to healing my PCOS holistically I was prompted to become aware of the moon's cycles as this intertwines with the relationship I have with my womb. The moon's cycle occurs over a 29.5 day cycle and the female hormonal cycle occurs between 28 - 32 days. To track my menstrual cycle, I observe the moon and often sync with its rhythm. I often bleed on the full moon which means I am in my ovulatory period around the new moon. While menstruation and ovulation are two markers that are often noted within one's cycle, I have also had a means to track my cycle within those periods through my interactions with the moon – watching the moon grow bigger or smaller I also prepare for energetic differences.

This diffractal relationship has given me a means to iteratively place the cycles that are occurring around me, i.e. the moon, while simultaneously allowing for an embodied experience of menstruation. Through the worries of my wounded womb(an)hood, I have also felt connected to the bigger umbrella of the triple C crisis, and I have learnt to reimagine a different kind of education that honours the intelligence of the body to

bring about change and transformation. In the relationship created between my menstruation and the moon, I have noticed how there are opportunities to release and seed new ideas and themes. I have particularly devoted time to connecting with the energetic currents of the moon, seeing opportunities to seed new ideas and inspiration during the new moon and then releasing fears and celebrating milestones during the full moon. In being aware of how my menstruation aligns with the moon, there is a deep and intrinsic connection to the outside world; during the full moon, I am releasing the physical contents of my womb while simultaneously releasing the fears and worries that feel most present within my psyche. This diffractal relationship has been interesting to follow iteratively and notice how various moons usher in particular themes which seem to ripple through the collective, or at least my observation of it.

Through coming into a deeper relationship with my womb as well as my body, I have been prompted to slow down, to allow things to die, which has felt like an act of rebellion. When I am menstruating I am called to be still, to sit with myself and allow my body to do this clearing, yet it has felt that society has different expectations of me. It feels as if the expectations are for development, progression and producing more – yet I have felt an overwhelming sensation of being burdened and at a capacity in which I have little to give while bleeding. Cyclical living is not embraced as commonly as the linear mindset discussed earlier in the Place of Worry. Feeling this way with my womb has called me to relate with the Earth and to feel the grievances of what it might be feeling, consistently being extracted from, with cement creating barriers over the soil and continuous expanding of our infrastructure – demanding more and recycling less back.

This diffractive relationship has therefore shown me the possibilities in actively absenting (Kaplan, 2002), in allowing, celebrating and commemorating the ‘death’ in becoming still. Through these acts of rebellion I have learnt how there is so much expansiveness in space, in stillness and how within these spaces, there are very important and necessary processes taking place which propel the growth phase of movement in more abundant and healthy ways. I question how this diffraction might be appropriately used within educational affairs, in creating ecological citizenship. Using the seed and soil analogy, it is through allowing things to die that the stimulation of decomposition commences.

### **3.3.3 Field site 1: The emerging metaphor of womb**

As I have now introduced and contextualised, my womb has become my teacher, guide and mentor, and also a field site of this study. I noticed that there are particular shifts, nudges and whispers from her walls – these insights generally become a lot stronger when I am in my luteal phase all the way into menstruation (If you're not familiar with these terms they will be explained further in this chapter). What I have come to discover is that it was well known, in many ancient civilisations and indigenous cultures – the power that is inherent within this process of menstruation. The first shamans who journeyed into the great mystery and explored alternate dimensions were menstruating women (Noble 1991).

As a being who is becoming more spiritually literate and in deep reverence for the creations that surround our natural world, I am in particular awe of being a womb holder. I have the potential to bring a spirit and incarnation into this earthly space. The womb is a portal between these worlds of spirit and matter.

A day or two before the rivers of red flow between my legs, I can feel the ache of my body calling me to slow down and to start dropping into a deep stillness. It is within these still spaces that I receive intuitive insights and begin to release the death of what resides within this space. To slow down, feels to me, an intimate activism to the incessant progression and fast-paced norm inherent in capitalism. Yet, this slowing down is needed to listen to that which was percolating beneath the surface (or within my case the womb) which creates space for insight to emerge.

These cycles of life are present within everything, even in the way we learn and assimilate knowledge – ceaseless moving through phases that can be described as birth, life, death, rebirth. Yet these cycles that occur all around us and within us do not all coincide, nor do they have the same time span – instead they offer us a template to see the interconnectedness of each part of life. It is through accepting and honouring the space of death that I have been able to shift from this state of worry and move into assimilating into the possibility of something new. As Taylor (2008) states that transformation occurs through a process of letting go of old ways of thinking and

being, and embracing new ones. This process can be difficult and painful, involving a death of the old self and a rebirth of the new self.

Coming to work intimately with my own womb and aid in its healing has prompted me to become a more ecological citizen, through opening into more holistic understandings and entanglements with the Earth. I explore through this research in what ways a womb can become a metaphorical figuration of social learning process and embodied learning towards ecological citizenship. As I have documented my own shifts through the womb wisdom that moves through me, I begin to also implant and create a metaphorical baby to birth into the world. Holding these tensions of unknowing within me as I shift through the cycles of learning, I come into deeper realisations, understanding and am therefore more equipped to absent absences through my own experience. I have also discovered the learning potential of creating actively absent spaces for myself and my knowledge co-creators in the study.

Through connecting to my womb wisdom, I have learnt not to operate only within this linear perspective and have included the use of cyclical or iterative practical wisdoms, which like the phases of the moon, or the seasons in our year, offer cycles and metaphors and lived practical examples of transformation and transition within and around our bodies, the Earth and its various critters' personal cycles. This cyclical wisdom can be seen to imitate spiral learning, whereby we come back to subjects with a renewed sense and understanding. This cyclic processing is revealed in the Place of Process as I came to learn and tell stories through returning to subjects and spaces within different contexts and further embodied understanding.

### **3.4 Summary**

The Place of Possibility highlights how through nomadic theory, research creation and womb wisdom, I was able to generate educational interventions (often deeply personal) that honour the cyclical nature of regeneration and therefore promote an ecological citizenship public pedagogy. Here womb became a diffractive organ which generates a multitude of possibilities to regeneratively stimulate public and convivial pedagogies for ecological citizenship.

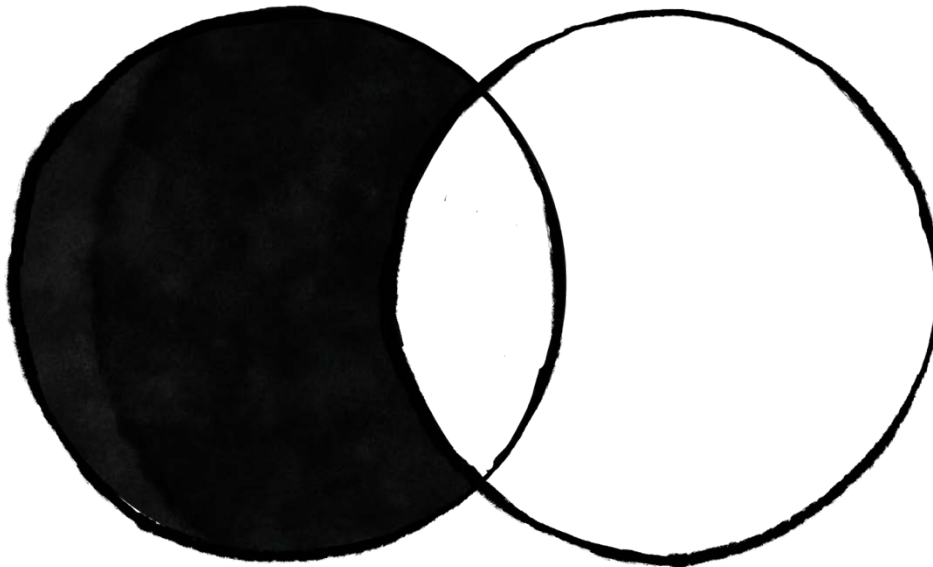
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## CHAPTER FOUR: PLACE OF EMERGENCE

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The sun rises and brings emergence  
The trees stretch their limbs with a magnitude of emergence  
Wildflowers bloom with a vibrant emergence  
As the days of summer bring together an emergence

17 October 2022, Kenton-on-Sea



*Image 4: It is within the intersection (not polarity) of past and future, death and rebirth, science and art, western and indigenous knowledge that the bridge for regeneration begins to reveal itself. This simple image, known as 'vesica piscis' encapsulates what it means to create a bridge through the use of metaphor. The intersectional space goes beyond the dichotomies, polarities and contrast to begin to see the relationship that sustains these entities. This is the conceptual third space where metaphor emerges.*

## **4.0 Introduction**

The Place of Emergence is the space generated between the Place of Worry and the Place of Possibility; it is within this space that a generative emergence of resonance is found. In the Place of Worry, the ailments of my womb emerged as a concept and were found to be a Place of Possibility in diffractive and figurative speculation. In the Place of Emergence we unpack the opportunities and learning that has emerged from this space.

The womb shifted from a physical space located within my body and expanded into a conceptual space that offers wisdom for ecological citizenship. In this next section we will explore how alternative teachers and communities have brought wisdom that aids in ecological citizenship and public pedagogical innovation, often leaning on metaphorical concepts to create these bridges of meaning-making. I first expand on what the 'third space' is and share the many third spaces that emerge between various concepts discussed in this thesis; such as the third space identity and social connection, the third space of networks and communities and lastly, the third space between diffraction and research creation. I then go on to explain how permaculture has become a diffractive space that has appeared on the pathway towards ecological citizenship, while also being a pedagogy that has aided in healing of my womb, both physically and conceptually.

### **4.1 The third space**

The 'third space' was first coined by Homi Bhabha, a post-colonial activist who spoke of opening the third space to aid generative action and go beyond dominant discourses and binaries in educational research (Kulundu-Bolus, 2020). It has come to signify "a space which generates new possibilities by questioning entrenched categorisations of knowledge systems and cultures and opens up new avenues with (and this is important to underline) a counter hegemonic strategy" (Braidlid, 2013, p. 626). Bayo Akmolafe has warned that our response can contribute to the crisis and the third space offers us an alternative route. In occupying the learning space between the problem and response, we may find a new regenerative opportunity for learning.

The third space arose in my field of understanding when I noticed that life cycles have three categorisations (producers, consumers and decomposers) and the least attention is placed on the decomposers with our capitalistic tendencies to produce, consume and throw away. These decomposers have become a 'hot topic' among educational researchers, most notably post-humanist thinkers such as Donna Haraway and Anna Tsing, who have noted their importance in symbiotic relationships and how microbial species are aiding this link within the ecological world of meaning. The concept of composting and digesting done by small creatures has also become a figurative device for creating new theories of being and doing in times of ecological crises, as Donna Haraway (2016, p. 2) explained:

Chthonic ones are beings of the earth, both ancient and up-to-the-minute. I imagine chthonic ones as replete with tentacles, feelers, digits, cords, whiptails, spider legs, and very unruly hair.

Therefore, I lean on metaphors such as compost and myelinated understanding of movement to aid in a physical representation of what is happening within social dynamics within my study. This also brings into focus the networked way in which our nervous systems work enabling a multifaceted awareness of our senses, aiding in a tentacular perspective which one could lean into enabling a pluriversal way of being and doing (McGarry et al., 2021).

My womb(an)hood had taught me that the space of true alchemy lies in the death and the rebirth phase of a cycle (ultimately the third space). It has also led me to generate more metaphors within the transgressive learning spaces I have been examining, as a means to start reconnecting our understanding to generative learning and social process. It is through creative practices and research-creation that I have come to these understandings and therefore this third space is an aspect of my imagination that can aid in regenerative action to be more widely understood in a transdisciplinary way.

The (re)generative approach to environmental education builds a perspective that embodies the third space as an important and transformative teacher. Opening to engaging continuously with the field of environmental education from various angles

and perspectives, particularly through embodied practice, stimulates the calling and responding of our beings. Iterating this research calls for other researchers, educators and scientists to recognise the third space or cracks that appear (those which defy polarities) in which they can then generate their research. It is important to create a third space in the learning process where there is movement and freedom of collaborators to reflect, to connect to an inner wisdom and source of creation, to allow the emergence of data, of insights and knowing to emerge – to notice that their research is entangled with other fields of thinking/being/feeling/doing/bleeding too and to realise that they too will never reach a destination. Instead, the value gained from the contestation of ideas is connected to the consciousness of a bigger whole.

Otto Scharmer used the concept of the 'third space' in his Theory U framework. Here, the third space is a space of generative dialogue and collective creativity that emerges from a process of deep listening and collective sense-making. According to Scharmer (2009), the first space in his theory is the space of habitual thinking and action, while the second space is the space of reflective observation and analysis. The third space, in contrast, is a space of generative dialogue and co-creation, where individuals and groups can come together to co-create new possibilities and innovations.

The third space in Theory U is characterised by a shift in consciousness and awareness, from a state of narrow self-interest to a state of open and empathic listening to others (Scharmer, 2009). In this space, individuals and groups can transcend their own limiting beliefs and assumptions, and tap into a collective intelligence that emerges from their shared sense-making and creativity (ibid.). Overall, the third space in Theory U is a space of transformative learning and innovation, where individuals and groups can come together to co-create new futures that are more sustainable, just, and inclusive.

#### **4.1.1 The third space of identity and social connection**

Our values help to guide in how we make decisions about how we relate to our environment and circumstances (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020).

Specifically, environmental values represent personal and societal beliefs about nature's significance and how humans should treat it. These include self-expressive values such as biocentrism (valuing living things), altruism (valuing other people), and egocentrism (valuing oneself). (Kunchambo et al., 2021, p. 485)

Our identity therefore becomes an important aspect in creating our worldview; when we see ourselves a part of a larger system that energy flows through, we have the potential to lean towards more biocentric framings of self. Indigenous knowledge is often more representative of biocentric values as indigenous peoples are usually more reliant on their surrounding ecologies, often describing certain forces of nature as gods or spirits that are essential to life (Kimmerer, 2013). "Self-transcendence values (valuing others and nature), as opposed to self-enhancement values (valuing oneself above others), support a pro-environmental worldview" (Kunchambo et al., 2021, p. 485) while also showing a deeper connection to the sentient life and its interconnection to all life forms. There is an increasing amount of scientific knowledge that creates fields of understanding, yet the rich knowledge of one field is not often transferred to other fields of knowledge. Establishing communities of practice and networks where individuals express similar values and worldviews, creates a space where rich information transfers can occur, filling in gaps to knowledge as well as rendering a deeper understanding (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020).

#### **4.1.2 The third space between networks and communities**

I have come to recognise that through convivial and public pedagogies, a network that begins to form between entities which is different to that of a community.

Both networks and communities can be generative and creatively conducive for social learning, and they are suited for different types of learning environments and goals. Networks may be more appropriate for learning that requires diverse perspectives and experiences, while communities may be more effective for learning that requires a shared understanding and agreement on certain principles or practices. Li and Li (2016) stated how networks are better suited for exploratory learning, while communities of practice are more effective for focused learning. Networks are usually

less structured and have looser connections between members, while communities have a more defined structure and closer connections between members (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020). Networks are often centred around a specific individual or topic, while communities are centred around a shared interest or purpose.

Networks may have more diverse members and a broader range of interests, while communities tend to be more focused and homogeneous in their interests and goals. This journey has been nomadic and while initially seeking to create community, I noticed the potential in networking and how many of my interactions fell into the category of networking. It felt as if a third space emerged between networking and community where one is able to convivially interact and share in particular interests of net(working). Thus I suggest a different kind of language that demonstrates through convivial activities we are able to net(play), net(cook), net(dance), net(sing) and net(walk) which aids in building a community.

#### **4.1.3 The space between diffraction and research-creation**

Returning to one of my research questions, “What forms of individual and collective transformation and learning occurs in these alternative social learning practices?”, I feel there is a need to generate or at least work in a third space for pedagogical innovation that we can hold the following ideas in tandem:

Who we are as an individual and what we perceive as our bodies

How we are in relation to other people and the more-than-human world (collective).

The third space maps out the idea of ‘ecology’ or ‘relationship with’ as it shows how two things connect together. The third space speaks to the ability to sense a relationship between these two senses of self, and problematises the idea of ‘individual’. We can speak of the self that is within the past, and we can think of the self we imagine in the future – yet we only have the ability to act now, in the present (Scharmer, 2009). Thus three spaces are created when comparing the two - the *vesica piscis*, or middle section is our actionable, contextualised selves in the present and the past and future are the two intersecting circles (see image 4 at the start of this chapter).

To be an ecological citizen and practising embodiment, one might come to recognise how our environments have shaped our sense of self both from within as well as how they appear and show up within the world as social and cultural constructs.

For Barad (2003), matter and meaning do not pre-exist as individual entities. Rather the world is composed of intra-acting phenomena which “are the ontological inseparability of agentially intra-acting components” (p. 815), meaning that they become determinate, material, and meaningful through relations. My gut community and womb are agentially entangled and through the health of the one, I have experienced the health of the other.

Barad (2010) suggested that taking responsibility involves risking one's self, but this self is never a single entity or individual. Instead, the self is always entangled with other entities and relationships, and is shaped by historical and cultural inheritances. The present moment is also not a neutral or isolated point in time, but is always connected to past and future events, being in relationship with the past self and the future Self. In other words, according to Barad, taking responsibility involves recognising that our individual selves and actions are not isolated, but are always shaped by the relationships and historical contexts in which we exist. We must be aware of these entangled relationalities and non-contemporality in order to take true responsibility for our actions.

This ethical understanding of intra-action calls for diffractive processes of meaning-making (Barad 2010; Haraway 2016; Murriss & Bozalek, 2019). In the context of my meaning-making, it was through utilising my womb as a diffractive organ, convivial experiencing and intra-acting within eco-communities and villages as well as participating in the perma-leadership project, I was able to diffract as a means to make meaning which expanded the research creation and t-learning project.

Barad (2007) argued that diffractive thinking recognises the entangled and co-constitutive nature of matter and meaning. In terms of the womb, Barad (2007) discussed how it is diffractively constituted by the material, biological, and social factors that shape it. This means that the womb is not simply a biological entity, but also a site of cultural, political, and historical meaning-making. "The womb is a

materially and discursively heterogeneous phenomenon, diffractively constituted through multiple intra-actions with the environment and multiple discursive practices" (Barad, 2007, p. 267). In the context of social learning, the concept of diffractivity can be applied to understanding how knowledge is produced and shared through social interactions. Social learning is not a passive process of transmitting information from one individual to another, but rather an active, co-creative process that involves multiple actors and perspectives.

By recognising the diffractive qualities of social learning, we can appreciate the complex entanglements between individuals, communities, and the larger social and cultural contexts in which learning takes place. We can also better understand how different ways of knowing and understanding are produced and how they interact with one another. This can lead to more inclusive and collaborative approaches to learning and knowledge production.

The concept of diffractivity and the recognition of the complex entanglements between material, biological, and social factors can inform research creation techniques by encouraging a more collaborative and multidisciplinary approach to knowledge production.

In research creation, which is a form of interdisciplinary research that combines artistic practices with academic inquiry (Manning, 2016), diffractivity can be used to explore the ways in which different forms of knowledge and expertise interact and co-constitute one another. By adopting a diffractive approach, researchers and artists can engage in a process of mutual learning and discovery that takes into account the multiple perspectives and practices that shape the creation and dissemination of knowledge. By recognising the diffractive nature of the womb, this research has sought to uncover new insights into how we understand this phenomenon and the various practices and beliefs that contribute to its meaning-making, such as the death and rebirth phase of a cycle. These forms of knowledge creation enable a space for both the worry and the possibilities to exist simultaneously thereby creating an emergence for both to exist.

Top of Form

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Bottom of Form

### **4.3 The emergence of permaculture**

Permaculture emerged repeatedly as a concept in my journey towards completing this thesis. There were a number of interactions which compounded in my understanding of the system and the metaphorical benefits it brings towards a pedagogical approach of embodied ecological citizenship. I gravitated towards permaculture as it offered a space to heal my womb, as I came to learn about the interconnectivity of this organ with the gut's digestive and absorbing abilities.

Permaculture is a system design approach that also has a strong ethical framework. I became aware of this system when I began exploring alternative communities within this research project and it has offered a framework to see the interconnectedness of our natural environment and how we socially interweave our own patterns, systems and operations. This system is also later referred to in the Place of Process, as one of my case studies. Perma-leadership seeks to bridge permaculture with leadership.

'Permaculture' is derived from two words: permanent agriculture. Permaculture seeks to provide environments that are holistic and inspired by nature's processes. It is a "worldview based on three core values: care of the earth, care of the people and sharing the surplus" (Mollison, 1988). It was first conceived by Bill Mollison and Scott Pittman in 1997 to establish a new framework that is holistic in its design, influenced by indigenous teachings of working with the land (Beckie & Berezan, 2016). Permaculture offers a worldview that promotes relationality of living things by inducting a framework that accounts for the life cycle and the continuum in which life cycles through. The framework of permaculture encompasses a system-based design that centres around the principles of ecology, often translating to diversity equates to resilience in an ecosystem (Beckie & Berezan, 2016). Permaculture is a lens through which to observe and interact with the world holistically. Permaculture usually involves embodied learning processes that explore holistic social, emotional, relational, embodied, practical forms of learning. "The pedagogy of permaculture is compatible with a transformative learning framework, since it emphasises a holistic learning approach that incorporates both instrumental (technical, i.e., what and how) and communicative (understanding experiences, i.e. why) learning, or what is referred to as 'engaging the head, heart and hands'" (Beckie & Berezan, 2016, p. 204).

Permaculture is a form of constructivist learning as individuals engage with others who are located in different situations while reflecting on their experiences. The constructivist approach to learning is an active process that accounts for both personal and collective experience which aims to raise critical consciousness (Beckie & Berezan, 2016). Constructivist approaches to education have been shown to have longer term transformative change in both learning and behavioural sciences (ibid.).

My experience of permaculture showed me the art of regeneration and importance of ensuring that no waste is created, alluding again to the concept of honouring the death and rebirth cycle of regeneration.

### **12 Principles of permaculture:**

1. Observe and interact
2. Catch and store energy
3. Obtain a yield
4. Apply self-regulation and accept feedback
5. Use and value renewable resources and services
6. Produce no waste
7. Design from patterns to details
8. Integrate rather than segregate
9. Use small and slow systems
10. Use and value diversity
11. Use the edges and value the marginal
12. Creatively use and respond to change

In Field Site 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 16 (discussed in chapter 5) I speak from contexts where I was embedded within permaculture settings such as eco-villages, community gardens and festivals that promote the ethos within a variety of workshops and convivial interactions. Its emergence aided a meaning-making intervention and I reflected upon how each context added something different to the emergence; it crystalised into a form in which an array of diffraction could occur, thereby enabling an embodied experience through the experience of both what it is and what it is not.

## 4.4 Summary

The Place of Process explains how the third space is generated between two points, whereby the *vesica piscis* generates a third space through the relational dynamic created between them. This chapter has discussed the third space between identity and social connection, as well as networks and communities and lastly, the difference between diffraction and research creation. Finally, permaculture was described as another metaphor with diffraction enabling deeper insight into regenerative action.

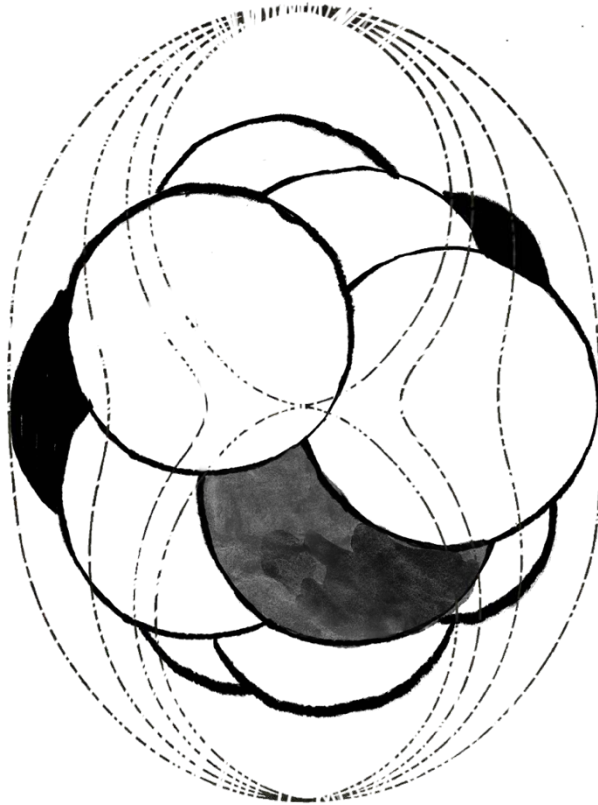
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## CHAPTER FIVE: PLACE OF PROCESS

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The leaves drift down in a process  
As the days grow shorter and colder it's time to process  
The air is crisp, the animal's nest in their own process  
As autumn winds blow in process

Written on 17 October 2022, Kenton-on-Sea



*Image 5: Vesica piscis taken a step further into a 'torus' to show the cyclical and reiterative nature of the third space. Conceptually this is a space that allows for ongoing iterative movement of input, conversation, dialogue, convivial praxis and meaning-making. It is in the middle space that the third space operates, using the polarity to stimulate a deeper connection and understanding. A torus*

*has come to illustrate the generative and iteratively constituted field, such as the electromagnetic torus that protects the Earth from harsh radioactivity polar winds which can be found to exist on a variety of scales within the universe. This image becomes a figuration (Haraway, 2016; Haran, 2019) which I work with through this research process.*

## **5.0 Introduction**

The Place of Process is narrated and characterised in this thesis by the t-learning stories that have emerged through the research creation process. Haraway (2016) explained: “It matters what stories, story stories” and in this section I attempt to explain the processes that unfolded through the unveiling of insights which contribute to pedagogical innovation and perceptiveness of ecological citizenship, and why they matter.

I firstly explain how the iterative nature of the Place of Process (the torus) has aided in the development of t-learning stories. I then go on to produce these t-learning narratives which create field sites in which pedagogical insight emerged from and became more embodied phenomena.

### **5.1 We are relationships, not things: Explorations into iterative t-learning**

Through the ongoing t-learning within this study, i.e. the development of my ontological rendering in relation to my body and entangled relationship with the world, I have become spiritually literate, recognising that I am a part of nature, that my bodily vessel is not where my thinking ‘I’ ends or begins. There is an intersection (and intra-action) between what I classify as ‘my body’ and the Earth. Where I begin and the rest of the world ends is not as clear cut as I previously imagined. This may be the most significant ontological shift in my ecological citizen learning. The torus shape is a great example of this in action: this shape found in various aspects of reality i.e. electro-magnetism. What I began to see in the torus is that there are two polarities, in ‘a negative’ and ‘positive’ charge, yet the current of energy is never stagnant. In electromagnetism, a torus refers to a geometric shape that often arises in discussions

about magnetic fields and their behaviour. A torus is a three-dimensional surface that resembles a doughnut shape. With the middle of the doughnut becoming like 'the eye of the storm' and the movement around it as the energy projected from this space. Our bodies also resemble this electro-magnetic field as our nervous system has electric impulses

Clearcut boundaries could be said for my research too. I have come across a comment this journey: "This is a masters, not your life work" which, while true, has been limiting. While I understand where this sentiment comes from, from those wanting to enculture me into the academy and the norms and procedures of research, it has often felt restricting – an attempt to keep me in a western academic box instead of igniting the passion that is so clearly burning within me, to explore alternative and generative approaches to research that meet the times we are in, and to cross boundaries and intra-act with(in) public pedagogical praxis. While it can be valuable to have containment or boundaries, the seeds that have been planted, do not all sprout within the same season. There are often seeds that get banked within the soil and emerge much later when the opportunity and the space arise, much like a woman's ovaries are also filled with all of her eggs from when she is developing within her mother's womb; only when the time is right do these bloom into being.

I believe, however, that it is so important for our creative fires to be handled with care and mentors, teachers and facilitators play an important role to encourage creation and ignite curiosity when it is present. Generating momentum when the energy is present is of vital importance; I learnt this idea of generated power in field site 3 and have been cautious to not squander my energy, but instead continuously follow my curiosities.

Approaching my research through an embodied, co-created and co-defined praxis, divorcing my own personal and embodied life and self from the development of innovative pedagogies for ecological citizenship would have been counterproductive. Indeed, working in the space of my own ontological growth, in relation to others is precisely the field of my inquiry.

I have sought mentorship in the diversity of microorganisms within the ecosystem of my own body, which enable its functionality and is part of the many things that make me who I am. Fox (2022) also explained how these microorganisms have their own agency in our education and social systems, moving through our external and internal worlds, requiring specific nutrients and hosts along the way. This cannot be underestimated with our experience of Covid 19 shutting down the world's economy and society for months in 2020.

My own health journey required balancing my internal gut health, allowing for the agency of the micro-organisms within my body to establish a healthy menstrual cycle, which later established a figurative speculation (Haraway, 2016) that led me to my research questions, and generative exploratory praxis and pedagogical innovation. I recognise that I am not 'one' thing; instead I am a collection of a trillion things expressing myself through a constant emergence, regenerating my cells and creating cycles of learning and understanding (Varela et al., 1991). I have come to recognise that my body's ecology consists of microbes that assist the soil in this cycle of death and rebirth and therefore are a part of my emergent identity, a part of the world I occupy, which leaves me connected and entangled in a multispecies rendering (Haraway, 2016). This assemblage of doings and beings requires recognition and attentive focus in how we design and shape ecological citizenship education, and if we are more relationships than we are objects or things or individuals (Akomolafe & Ladha, 2017), it is in the relation of these assemblage powers that vital learning can occur, in the third space, and the processes therein.

There are many iterative cycles within the ecological world. Seasonal weather, phases of the moon, our circadian rhythms and cell regeneration all aid my understanding of ecological ontology. One such significant learning encounter within my body led to the awakening of the generative potential of iterative-cyclical being and doing which has the potential to act as a generative theme (Rugut & Osman, 2013) to expand pathways to diverse perspectives and worldviews within a given community.

With this came a calling to reinvigorate our understanding of our lineages (an embodied cultural and historical analysis) and of our history and to create a bridge to

a potential future with an understanding of what it truly means to live well. I hold this embodied analysis in the place holders of:

- Re-member – A cultural historical analysis – immersion into plural epistemologies in relation to self, noting that we become ‘members’ of a community through unearthing the context in which we seek to reconstitute – to re-member.
- Re-imagine – A creative and generative exploration of incorporating these epistemologies into one’s identity and future imaginings.
- Re-generate – Small actions towards desired re-imaginings in the surrendering and allowing things to change and move.

These place holders also hold the ‘places’ that we have explored in previous chapters:

Re-member – Place of Worry

Re-imagine – Place of Possibility

Re-generate – Place of Emergence

The Place of Process is the space in which all three are dancing through iterative cycles of movement, requiring us to remember, re-imagine and re-generate simultaneously.

These words prompted me and my collaborators in spaces where permaculture and menstruation were occurring, to explore alternative paradigms, practices, cosmologies, theories and apply these into ways of being and doing together.

Through the course of this study, I dance between the world I grew up in and the world of alternative ecological living, and the third place between these two places has become a highly generative and immersive alternative classroom. I am beginning to sense into gaps that call for a regeneration into a healthy Earth and body, for they cannot be disconnected. It is through creating my own story (re-framing my narrative), which has been gestating within my creative womb throughout this journey and perhaps in the wombs of the woman before me, that I present some of my findings and realisations about the interconnection between our bodies and the Earth and how these pedagogies might influence future educational endeavours.

## 5.2 Metaphors

Metaphors are a tool for abductive reasoning (Davies, 2007). I have been utilising metaphors as a means to better integrate what I have been learning and to share this with an audience who may not be familiar with the content I have been learning. Thus I simplified my research title from “emerging public pedagogy for ecological citizenship” to “researching how we can create spaces and methods to reconnect and notice our interconnectivity with nature”. The use of metaphors enables a middle ground and translation protocol through which subjects can be compared and integrated to find meaning. In response to the triple C crisis and the linear thinking that has resulted from these crises, I find it important to highlight the cyclical aspects of nature, illustrating the interconnectedness we share, thereby adopting regenerative mindsets that restore relational understanding within and through our lives.

I have found reprieve through utilising metaphors and symbolism that show the interconnection of our body and the Earth: “Using models and metaphor in science allows one to explore reality by establishing new relations in it (ibid), and thus to engage ontological depth in educational practices” (Davies, 2007, p. 92). While this creation does not fill in the blanks in depth fields of reasoning, it creates an image through which an individual can begin to see the interconnectivity within our systems, which enable them to explore the world through their own sense-making of subjects in a creative manner. “It is argued that the process of abduction is more about viewing the relation between science and the contextual reality than about relating directly to ultimate truths” (Davies, 2007, p. 93). The use of metaphor as abductive reasoning is to highlight our interconnection, not to generate knowledge but instead to create a stimulus for curiosity into knowledge. “Metaphor as an abductive strategy of re-contextualisation, where new phenomena are not discovered, but are rather re-described in such a way that the connections and relations between them are highlighted, allowing for a better understanding of already known occurrences” (Davies, 2007).

In this context, both metaphors and diffraction are used in the t-learning stories and field site reflections below to explore and understand the complexities and contradictions that exist within educational practices, policies and our understanding

of the world. Both metaphors and diffraction offer a way to make meaning that fits into the context of an individual. Metaphors are used to establish new relations between concepts or ideas and enable us to explore reality in different ways. By using metaphors in educational research, we can gain a deeper understanding of the dynamic and complex nature of educational practices and policies. For example, the metaphor of diffraction helps us to understand the ways in which knowledge, ideas, and practices interact with each other, creating new patterns of interference and interaction.

Similarly, diffraction is a metaphorical framework that is used to explore the complex and often contradictory nature of educational practices and policies. It allows us to examine the ways in which different ideas and practices interact with each other, and to consider how these interactions are shaped by social, cultural, and political factors. In this sense, diffraction can be seen as a metaphor that provides us with a lens through which to explore the complexities of educational practices and policies. Diffraction also becomes a methodology in which I am able to explore the interdimensional, interconnected and interdependent ways in which my meaning-making capacities are entangled.

Therefore, both metaphors and diffraction are similar in that they enable us to explore and understand the complexities of educational practices and policies by providing us with new ways of looking at the world. They both allow us to create new connections between concepts and ideas, and to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamic and complex nature of learning and meaning-making practices.

I propose and have come to understand this through the framework of 'places' whereby I notice that the Place of Worry, the Place of Possibility and the Place of Emergence coalesce to generate capacities to deeply connect with knowledge and learning and thereby offer a place of process to iteratively, cyclically and regeneratively move in our understanding and relationality.

## **Critique of methodology**

Upon reflection and completion of this thesis, here are some considerations I'd like to add to future readers or fellow co-conspirators when it comes to the methodological framework. I think it would have helped to have been more concise with the message and the meaning of my stories before I had written them: asking what is my intention in writing these stories. I found myself reflecting and recalling stories of what I had gone through yet if I had a more grounded tree of intentions to peg these stories onto I feel they could have had more of a coherent flow.

I regret not tracking my events well enough, I did not have a set method to recording my data. The inconsistency of mediums also made retracing my steps difficult. I would write in diaries, sometimes having multiple diaries, I would also write in my notes on my computer and overall the organisation of my documentation could have been smoother.

## **5.3 T-learning narratives**

I have been given the opportunity to practise my learnings and to find ways of allowing the callings of my heart to be answered. This journey has been nomadic. I have not always known where the journey would take me but instead have followed the impulses as they arose, collecting insights and shifting through onto-epistemological renderings as I encountered new things and integrated them with ways I had been encultured to know. This unknown destination resonates strongly with the practice of research-creation which keeps focus and attentiveness on the event, and the learning and meaning-making therein (Manning, 2016).

This research journey has shown me that there is a bigger force that enables learning. It called me to follow my instincts and to trust that when I respond to what is calling to me, particularly at the level of the heart, there are beautiful synchronicities, which seem to indicate that something bigger is guiding me and lead to ontological shifts in how I interact and imbue into the world. It called me to start having a conversation with not just humans but also to converse with, rely on and interact with a bigger

understanding of life, resulting in existential and spiritual understanding of how I form part of a bigger organism. It has been through opening to the connection of the natural world that I have generated meaning-making that is not confined to rational boxes that humans attempt to organise logic into and instead I have come to trust the spirals, the Fibonacci-like sequences to how things grow, evolve and shift.

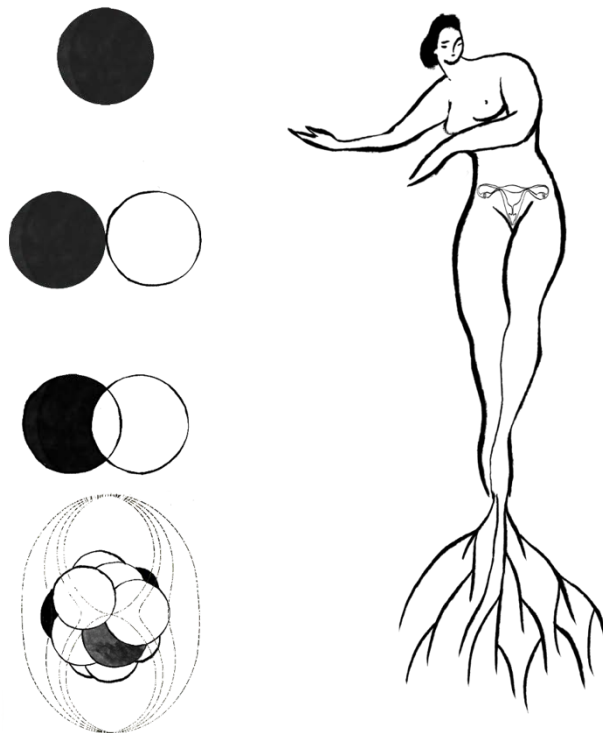
In Indigenous ways of knowing, we learn from our elders and our teachers, from the beings of the natural world around us, and from the stories of our people. We learn that the land is the source of all life – the keeper of the waters, the home of the plants and animals who share their gifts with us. We learn that the land is sacred, that it is our responsibility to care for it, and that when we do, it cares for us in return. We learn to be humble and respectful, to listen carefully and to give thanks for what we receive. These are the biocentric values that are at the heart of Indigenous knowledge. (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 4)

This movement is not always noticeable because time is happening in a way that is not observable in a specific moment but is revealed over a period of time, i.e. evolution.

I have had to move past the confines of my mind, trying to adhere to what western dominated society (including my family and the university) expected of me to trusting instead the wisdom that pulses through my veins enabling this research to unfold. This process of research creation offered me a framework and methodology so that I did not have to be product- and goal-driven and through the process I learned that great insight and learning could occur.

Thus, this story will not be told in a linear fashion but instead will bounce between realisations to show how these seemingly unconnected, yet very connected, fables drove this research to where it is now. I share it in this way, to disrupt expansive linear models of learning, inherent in various paradigms, and rather reveal some of the ways in which my learning was rhizomatic, mycelial and messy. I begin with the stories that got me looking at the world around me differently, beginning with the shifts in my onto-epistemological renderings. I then show how this brought a desire to learn within and through convivial experiences and alternative communities. Through these

experiences I was opened into spaces where I could learn from elemental wisdoms, such as fire and the forests, shifting away from human-centric learning. Lastly, I delve into women's circles and the insights that emerged from becoming a more embodied (womb)an.



*Image 1 (revisited) to showcase again how each of the places build in complexity from each other next to the image of the body, to showcase the embodied insights generated from this research, and the rhizomatic, mycelial and messy steps I took in developing the theoretical and practical wisdoms of the 'places' as pedagogical figurations.*

### **5.3.1 THE WORLD AROUND ME**

In this next section, I begin to share some of the stories that enabled my shifting world-views and begin to expand an understanding of ecological citizenship, shifting through worries, possibilities and emerging and processing them into pedagogical insight.

***(Field site 1: The emerging metaphor of womb can be found in Chapter 3)***

**Field site 2: Start gardening**

When Covid first hit, I was in the final year of my journalism degree and I was sent home during the hard lockdown. I had chosen to specialise in digital media for health journalism. This was the year before I had enrolled for this master's degree. I was intending to research hormonal health as a journalism topic as I began to address my hormonal imbalances resulting in PCOS and this being a growing health concern globally. I had discovered that a hidden hormonal disruptor was the pesticides sprayed on our food (Gerunova et al., 2019). I had a sense and feeling that we needed to start growing our own food and becoming more independent as a family due to the uncertainty of what was to come from the Covid period. I felt worry ride over me; there was so much uncertainty over my parents' jobs and financial income and there was uncertainty over whether the shops would be able to continue to supply our demands. I didn't realise it at the time, but I was immersed in the Place of Worry.

Unable to live in this place constantly, I found refuge in our garden, as I had started gardening with the gardening club at Rhodes that year. I had always wanted to grow vegetables, plants and fruits in our garden; we have ample space and a heap of compost collected from horse manure, enabling a garden that could thrive and the possibility of an abundance of fresh fruit and vegetables. I was at a point in my life where I was tuning into the concept of growing one's own food; this gave me sovereignty and knowing that food was being cultivated to aid me in regeneratively and holistically responding to my PCOS.

The hard lockdown was extremely difficult for me as someone who was extrovert and craved human interaction but it was simultaneously a massive catalyst for me to enter into dialogue with myself (Archer, 2019) and befriend the natural world; it gave the opportunity to become truly still and hear what was communicating to me through my intuitive embodied practice. In spiritual circles, this is often labelled as an awakening; in education it is often called insight, or understanding. I was fortunate to have access to online yoga classes; the person who was co-ordinating free daily yoga sessions

throughout lockdown is now my supervisor. At this part of my journey I had no idea that I was being called to enter the environmental educational space and wasn't even aware of what my yoga teacher did outside of our sessions.

I began planting a vegetable garden, I researched hormones and holistic health more vigorously and devoted myself to each day. Each day I would go to my veggie patch and give it the care and attention it needed. I quickly discovered it returned the care and attention back to me (and eventually my womb) – this regenerative, cycling and iterative relationality further expanded my understanding of regenerative relationality – or Kulundu et al.'s (2020) 'intersectional resonance'. As I was tasked to capture this process for my journalism project, I began to notice and sense how aspects of my vegetable patch were mirroring facets of my internal world, which made me think about our meaning-making processes and how they are linked to our experiences.

As the days passed I began to observe differences and felt this mirroring and diffracting (Haraway, 2016) of my world begin to unfold. The patch of soil began to become my teacher, interacting with my senses on many levels. The three-week lockdown was extended and I began to find a rhythm and flow within this new routine. I started to understand how environmental toxins were a massive contributor to our health crises and became more determined to start dismantling and paving a way forward, researching bio-pesticides and other ecologically minded solutions. I also found myself trying to create educational content so that others could also become aware and find solutions to our interconnected crises. I explored short online videos social media platforms like TikTok offered ways to combine multimedia (photos, videos, audio, emojis and stickers) and grew in popularity during this period where most of us were confined to our homes. For my journalism practice I saw how multimedia provided an opportunity to layer meaning through combining elements that appealed different senses. At this time, this form of education became the most immersive way in which I could experience various life-worlds.

Since I was working in the garden, I also began to connect with how the commons (soil, water, sunshine, air) were something that nobody owned, not the government, corporations or other 'powerful' stakeholders – there was sovereignty in establishing a connection with it. From a few years of researching health and nutrition, I was aware

of gut health and was directed to start seeing the interconnectedness of soil health and gut health through the microbiome. I also started to see how our health is a networked, rhizomatic, mycelial system in its own way; as I learned that the soil microbiome is a networked system and the health of the plants relies on the health of the soil, and the health of our guts relies on the health of the food which we eat.

This intersectional resonance (Kulundu et al., 2020) and figurative speculation (Haraway, 2016) brought me to a widening insight and understanding of social relationality, and potentials for pedagogies for ecological citizenship. Inherent in the process of embodied ecological citizenship is understanding one is part of a whole, and part of an entangled assemblage of relationality.

I started to create a perspective, build narratives and explore conversations with others that examined how people, planet and communities, are interconnected and inherently dependent through relationships, through ecosystems of knowledges and plural onto-epistemological resonances (Barad, 2010). This exploration made me think about how we fracture and silo our departments at the university, not always connecting knowledge between faculties. As a journalism student, in particular, I felt I always had to search for a story, when there are so many stories to be told from the knowledge being generated through the research of the institution. How could students transgress across departments? How could connections and meaning-making deepen within various departments through this interconnected form of creation? I responded by asking questions, meeting new and diverse people, showing interest in their fields of knowledge which led me to this nomadic and network infused research journey.

**Insight:** The beginning of my journey was steeped in worry, but it was through holding this worry, staying with the trouble (Haraway, 2016) that I began to see opportunities and possibilities in responding differently resulting in an emergence of public pedagogies. It was also in these moments of worry, discontinued 'normalcy', that a space opened up for me to reconvene with a more interconnected understanding of our food system and soils. I noticed that many of our worries could be responded to in a more holistic and integrated way. This invited me into a deeper fascination with networks, socially, bio-physically, mentally and technologically.

### **Field site 3: She's a witch**

My wild journey and my womb journey speak to one another as it was my PCOS that led me to start gardening and becoming more connected to our natural world. It was through tuning into my menstrual flow and the wisdom it offered each month that propelled me onto this path of establishing a more interconnected understanding of my worlds. My menstrual flow was simultaneously syncing with the flow of the moon, calling me into an iterative understanding of the Earth's cycles following these patterns of birth, life and death with each moon cycle.

It was through listening to my womb that I was able to cleanse out old stagnant cycles and recreate pathways towards what I truly longed for. These cycles made me reconnect to the abundance of life inherent and flowing in all aspects of the natural world, calling me into a deeper embodied knowing of regeneration and life as a way of becoming an environmental educator. It felt comforting to know that my womb was in conversation and in connection with these external earthly rhythms that are guided by the waxing and waning of the moon, and that language, thinking and rationalising was not required but rather being open to listening to the more biophysical and emotional intelligence of this communication.

My mother does not know much about her lineage, so I've had to feel into what resides within me, knowing that I was an egg developing inside the womb of my mother while she was developing inside the womb of her mother. My grandmother passed when I was still a young girl but I feel a strong connection to the feminine aspects of my genealogy reaching even further back into my lineage. In hindsight and spiralling through many iterative turns of womb work, I sense into a wounding that did not emerge in my lifetime yet I have been called to heal this patterning so deeply entrenched within my womb.

I started experiencing a strange sensation in the lower left part of my back. I would be sitting in meditation, not moving yet suddenly felt a very intense pain in my lower back through to my pelvis. If I had to give it a colour and a texture it would be a heavy black substance, that was sticky and clingy. This sensation was similar to a simmering rage, a burning fury of frustration and anger in me. The more I felt into this sensation and

questioned its origin and the more I tried to understand the sensation and how I had possibly injured myself, the clearer images began to appear. I closed my eyes one day and dropped deep into the insides of my body, becoming aware of this space and feeling so many emotions wrapping their tendrils around my pelvis that I winced in agony. This pain felt connected to something else, far beyond what I could truly comprehend. I remember having a dream that transported me to some place in Europe, with old buildings. I was in a village square. There was a crowd of people below me and women in dresses that stretched all the way down to the floor, they also had unusual head wear that wrapped around their ears. I remember their sniggers and the heat boiling all up and through me as I felt a growing sensation of rage. The next moment I was being impaled. A dagger speared me, entering the front of my womb and exiting my back. There I hung, in front of a crowd, left as victim of a bloody, gruesome murder.

I still have not fully digested this experience but I have begun to understand what this sensation might be linked to. I have perhaps claimed it as a subconscious figuration of past life trauma linked to the witch trials (Zwissler, 2016). I have noticed how when walking in a space or coming into conversation with someone, I sometimes feel a pain shoot through my body; it feels as if my body is picking up on dangers and responding from an ancient wound. I share this speculation as a means to show the deeper meaning-making processes I am attempting to unravel not through facts but rather via an active inquiry into my body and its cues, using imaginal thought and narrative-led meaning-making. This wound has been one I have spiralled back to through many months, many moons and many different moments – I am wary of labelling it and attaching a story to it; instead to heal this wound, I remain open to having a conversation and connecting into what it might be signalling to me at different moments of my journey. I take a moment here to check I have not lost you, dear reader. You may be wondering if this is true or not, or real or not. Was the pain related to me being a witch in a past life, or a subconscious imaginal rendering of processing womb wisdom, or an epi-genetic memory with lineage and descendants? Overall, there is a sense of knowing that extends past my rational conception, and towards a re-framing of myself in relation to my ancestry, my body and my ability to think, feel do and be beyond who I thought I was or could be.

My initial construct of a witch was an old woman who most probably lived in the woods – on her own and was filled with evil – brewing up spells to avenge and create disharmony in society. This was an image that had been constructed from cartoons and fairy-tales (Zwissler, 2016). The construct that I now have is very different: to me, a witch is a woman who is deeply connected to nature and is cognisant of the ‘spelling’ inherent within each word, choosing them wisely and having faith that one can both create and destroy with one’s words. A witch is a woman who is adept in knowing her plant allies, what ailments she might heal and the beneficial compounds she can extract. To me, a witch is also a healer, offering support and counsel to worlds not immediately accessible to most, and she learns her healing from becoming apprentice to her own wounding, in my case, being apprenticed to my wounded womb. By exploring this inner sight and enquiry I have somewhat immersed myself in the history of the witch hunts and trials, which are deeply linked to the shift in western medical science and a silencing of midwives and midwifery pedagogies and practices (Ehrenreich & English, 2010), and which resonates with my womb wisdom research far beyond the scope of this thesis.

What I do know is that witches were hunted down, burnt, hung and brutally murdered and tortured (James & Piekarek, 2020). They were not all evil and they were not the ugly characters that we see flying on broomsticks in cartoons. The witch trials were a form of genocide of many powerful women in society, those who did not adhere to the status quo and tyranny of the church, and who had ways of knowing and being beyond the reified confines of a growing positivistic tradition. There was very little evidence of wrongdoing or proof of witchcraft, rather the witch trials can be seen as an act of power over women, to inflict fear and hierarchy within society.

Witches were herbalists, midwives and were deeply connected to the seasons and cycles of nature – they were healers (Ehrenreich & English, 2010). The way I responded to my womb worries was to connect to the wisdom of nature – nourishing my gut with fibrous probiotic and prebiotic rich foods, and through syncing with and observing the moon cycles and becoming more attentive to the emotional and mental chatter that surrounded my womb and her phases. With my new understanding of witches, this probably makes me a witch.

Within my womb I was sensing into a trauma that had been buried for many years. I feel this trauma has leached into my life in many other ways too. A gynaecological scan showed more cysts on my left ovary and the left side of me has often felt more repressed. The left is thought of as the more 'feminine' side to our bodies and is governed by our right hemisphere of the brain. This has propelled a desire to connect to my more feminine attributes. I felt called to bring this side of my body into greater balance by allowing more of my feminine to flow. This involved creating time to be still in nature, to be more inconsistent with my workflow and routines, to dance, cry and most importantly, to create and be creative.

I have also begun to notice a connection between my womb and my throat. I have felt repressed in fully expressing my most true and authentic nature. Having been nurtured to develop mental capacity to rationalise and critically think to suit the hegemonic narrative of 'rational thought', I knew it wasn't safe for me to have more esoteric opinions. I had noticed how fields such as astrology, herbalism and mystical experiences were not accepted among my peer groups and family. Yet, there was something inside me that was drawn to this kind of knowledge and the freedom therein. I carried a deep fear of being outcast from 'the group' if I carried opinions that did not fit the norm; this led to further suppression of my spirit which longs to share intuitive insights. Along this journey into pedagogical innovation I became aware of the power of social media videos as the most accessible form of communication, yet an overly critical side to me stopped me from using this form of communication. I have tried to heal my relationship with myself, reclaiming parts of me that have felt afraid to share in these fears of being outcast, rooting into the idea of fear that arose during the witch trials in a kind of meaning-making dance I have with(in) myself.

**Insight:** Our bodies are connected to a long lineage of experiences and even if we do not experience trauma in this lifetime, there may still be trauma stored in the body. I feel it is valuable that we become aware of how we are feeling from the inside, so that healing can occur from the root of our patterns and wounds and this directly corresponds to our capacity to learn and create. This has also been a space to see how mental and emotional blockages are often linked to physical ailments.

## Field site 4: Regenerative pedagogical praxis

A buzzword among many fields of research is the concept of **regeneration**. I came to a profound understanding when I was prompted to create an artwork by my supervisor, to move out of my head and into a more fluid and generative space of meaning-making. It called me to remember my ability and to reimagine how I could regenerate a lesson I already intuitively knew. I was prompted to paint; I did not have paint at home but felt excited at the opportunity. How could I make this artwork? I pulled out my menstrual cup which was filled with rich red pigment, my blood. I found myself abstractly expressing myself, feeling the warmth of my insides now communing with the outside world in such bright possibilities. As I filled the page with my fingerprints, I thought that perhaps I was done, with no more 'paint' left in the cup as I poured out the last in a passionate streak. As I lifted the paper and moved it to a sunnier spot so it could dry, some of the pooled blood began to run across the page unexpectedly. Just before it quite literally bled off the page, I caught it with a swirling movement of my hand, creating a circle and I thought "Ohhh, perhaps this painting isn't done – I can bring a new technique by moving the page to move the liquid". I tried to create more shapes but a worn-down path had been developed and the blood had begun to lessen. I was only able to move the leftover pool of blood along the same already imprinted patterning; even with vigorous movement of the paper, the blood would not leave its path. It seemed that there was not enough liquid to generate a new pathway. As I observed this, I considered how within the space of generation, if there are not enough power and resources, then one does not have the capacity to generate anything new and instead the system/mechanism/pattern already generated is the one that holds.

After I completed the painting, I wrote freely for ten minutes on what I had done and experienced from this activity. I then chose ten words that stuck out and constructed a poem:

Patterns stick, cycles flow  
The firing is led by the wiring  
The curling + unfurling shows fluidity

The clots + knots show rigidity  
The connection between is something to be seen  
Blood, heat and transformation



*Images 6 and 7 are pictures of the artwork created using menstrual blood. In image 6 at the top of the page, towards the right, there is a circle that branches off from the thicker stream – this was the space in which the new cycle was created. The blood began to be entrenched in this path, creating a circular pattern.*

This lesson is one that I have iteratively spiralled back to within many contexts because it personified the idea of regeneration within a tangible space in my hands. With each iterative return, a layer upon layer of meaning was established. This pulled me in a spiral of questioning, with regard to power and systems of oppression raising the question of who has power in generating these patterns? How might I entice change through solidarity to aid in a more powerful generative force? What patterns exist within my own neural networks and how can my ‘firing’ of thoughts lead to a new ‘wiring’?

Daniel (a pseudonym for a participant who wanted to remain anonymous along my research journey) gave me a definition of regeneration: “It’s all about the surplus not going to waste and finding a way to redistribute that surplus in efficient ways. It is also about us distinguishing between our needs and our wants.” Regeneration speaks to the distribution of energy and if everything is energy – a term/concept that spreads across a variety of fields and disciplines – it is a process that can be observed within every interaction. Yet, how many understand what it means to regenerate? Particularly with a linear mindset of produce, consume and throw away? Is there a possibility that there is actually no concept of waste? Absolutely everything could require a way to find its way back into the incessant regenerative agency of movement.

I therefore use t-learning theory and practice (praxis/phronesis/practical wisdom) as a theoretical framing and social learning methodology to bridge the binaries that lead to ecological apartheid, and encourage rather a transgressing of these boundaries towards new approaches to ecological citizenship. While it may seem that I am only ‘cultivating’ a master’s thesis, this work is my life work thus far, because it cannot be disconnected from who I am as a being and the perspectives I have generated in its making. It is embodied. It draws on my own ontological journey towards ecological citizenship through my womb health, which led me to embodied public pedagogical practices in ecological citizenship learning.

As indicated in my research questions, I aimed to explore pathways and practices (and practical wisdoms) that emerge in alternative eco-communities and courses, life worlds, and examine what forms of transgressive social learning are taking place, and how these can be applied to co-construction of new public pedagogies for ecological citizenship. It is through the embedding of my own perspectives that I have come to find ways to generate information to support the transformation of education and our environmental interconnectedness to it.

These insights begin to answer the questions posed at the beginning of this research, particularly

- What value does t-learning bring to innovation in public pedagogies for ecological citizenship?

Arts-based research, such as research creation as a transgressive research instrument, offers a rich embodied experience of learning. The experimental artwork and working with menstrual blood in the early part of my enquiry demonstrate the generative learning that can unfold from such a t-learning process, aspects of which are described below:

- Firstly, the innovation to experiment with new materials, such as menstrual blood. At first, I was slightly apprehensive to share this artwork, worrying about what others might think of me. However, I saw the possibility to inspire others. Our menstrual blood should not be something we shy away from and instead we can learn to embrace it and its wisdom. Through my onto-epistemological shifts and using my menstrual blood as a teacher, I have felt a deeper connection to my ancestral roots and the wisdom that can be embraced through embracing this rich elixir of nutrients.
- Secondly, I would not have had the same learning experience if I was told what to do and how to do it. The learning happened in the experimenting and experiencing of what might emerge through transgressing and appropriating materials. It felt like a big, bold leap for me to play with my menstrual blood –I intuited it to be a generative activity, not knowing the end result but instead feeling into the possibility.

- Thirdly, art-based research is generative as it does not contain the lessons for only one life-world, meaning or insight but instead with the use of diffractive thinking, can stretch into various disciplines and concepts within society in a t-learning (transgressive, transformative, togetherness) process.

Transgressive implies that something is in movement: “researchers write or type (or draw or paint or photograph or dance) and discover new meanings even as we move across the page, stage, canvas or screen” (Ellingson, 2017, p. 1). In my case, the painting practice opened up an entirely different pathway to practise my enquiry. It is with this movement in mind that this research is evolving with the triple C crisis. As life unfolds, we can capture the emergence of metaphors that are connected to these crises through finding alternative ways of collecting and relating to data.

While policy plays an important role in creating change, divergent problems like the climate crisis need to be solved with higher-levels of self-awareness (Krempel, 2014, p 171). Transgressive learning helps to cross the borders and boundaries of knowledge so that individuals can begin to connect the need for action with their own abilities and desires, giving agency to individuals to express themselves in ways that are representative of their identity (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2015) Crossing boundaries enables an opening to learning to be more relational, in-movement and emancipatory (ibid.)

### **Field site 5: Moon magic**

Circling back to the concept of the moon and how it helped me heal my relationship with my ebbing and flowing nature of menstruation, it also taught me the polarities of light and dark through observing how the moon changes in phases and how this can also be sensed with those without a womb. I was led to enquire how the moon might affect our psyches, particularly the subconscious world. The full moon heralds a period of heightened energy; animals, plants and critters also respond to this increase of light with many of them syncing to its cycle for particular processes.

What I am most intrigued about is that the moon affects each of us, yet we still have not discovered in what ways – we see how the moon pulls the oceans to create tides

yet how might it affect our bodies at a subtle level? I have noticed how my dreams are more vivid during the full moon.

I have been pondering how I might materialise the knowledge I have acquired, along with my skills and dreams and visualise a job or a career that aligns with the vision of regenerating the energy of the Earth into its healthy abundant state. What continually emerges is that these 'energies' are moving through a giving and receiving type of exchange which is also a form of call and response learning. In terms of the crises that are looming over us, how can we learn to respond instead of react? I feel that when we react we re-enact the past and repeat the patterns and cycles that have kept us bound. When a new cycle begins (such as moon cycles, within the seasons, within the year, the start of menstruation and other cyclical transitions within our body involving circadian rhythms, cell regeneration etc.), we can begin to change how we respond. On my nomadic journey I had opportunities to create and curate spaces for transformative learning in more convivial settings.

During the new moon I usually host intention-setting rituals whereby individuals are prompted to set intentions for what they would like to envision and manifest into their life worlds. During an intention-setting evening at Wild Spirit Eco-Backpackers, I collected flat pebbles from a river and each person chose a rock and was asked to add a word, draw a picture or symbol that would remind them of their intention. Expressing intentions onto the stones made them somehow more concrete and acted as a reminder to continuously connect with this intention to see it into fruition. The stones were small enough to hold which I did while meditating, and they acted as a reminder to consistently place attention into this intended desire. The new moon is also a good time to plant seeds, offering a space for them to emerge into seedlings by full moon.

During the full moon, I usually host movement practices or burn-and-release ceremonies wherein individuals are prompted to write what is no longer serving them and then release these pieces of paper into a fire, signalling the transformation and closure of these habits and thoughts. The full moon is also a time to celebrate; I feel my inner witch come alive during this time when I take opportunities to howl at the moon. The moon is fully illuminated at this time, signalling the idea that shadows are

also illuminated and offering a time for us to celebrate all that we are, both shadow and light as well as everything in between.

At first glance the moon can be seen to have a light and dark side and seems ‘binary’ as it moves from new moon to full moon phases, but what happens in between these phases matters: if a seed is planted during the new moon, and is nourished and watered, it will have changed and grown by the full moon – the same with our intentions and learning if we put them into practice and embody them. Through gifting our attention to the moon, and working through and noticing the phases of the moon, we see transition and transformation between these phases – so too, with learning. The moon is not simply black or white/ light or dark – but many movements and iterations, from light to dark, over time, are significant. It is this understanding that has become a powerful signifier of ongoing meaning-making. In the same way, my menstrual cycle and the many cycles I have observed and stayed with have helped me to notice phases and shifts in iterative meaning-making.

**Insight:** The moon offers an environmental awareness of the shifts occurring within and around us and could be used as an anchor into the shifts and transformations within a space to honour those. The moon is cyclical and therefore offers a chance to remember and reconnect to its cyclical wisdom.

### **Field Site 6: YoXhosa Immersion**

At the end of 2021 I attended a Xhosa Retreat in the Eastern Cape. A group of 20 gathered at Bulungula Lodge on the Wild Coast to learn isiXhosa through conversation and cultural immersion. At this retreat, I learnt the word for moon is *inyanga* and the word for healer is *inyangi*. This further affirmed my attentiveness to the moon as a teacher and guide in understanding the healing that is inherent in observing phases, and actively going through different phases for true transformation. The moon’s ability to heal through time is held in language. When I asked Xhosa speaking people living in the area about this, they didn’t seem to make any fuss of the connection – yet for me it was a subconscious and symbolic moment of intersectional resonance (Kulundu-Bolus et al., 2020). There are many other examples of how language can support

concepts in an ancient and symbolic thread of how our beingness is innate, but for now I focus on intimately profound encounters with the moon as healer.

**Insight:** Different languages and the idiomatic memory and reasoning they hold, offer us and support new ways of meaning-making.

### **Field site 7: Longing for convivial meaning-making**

My first experience of Wild Spirit Eco-Backpackers kept me coming back for more – it was not an overnight transformation to wild. This was the unfurling of experiencing what life is and could be, the possibility shone at me from a variety of directions from both nature herself as well as the various beings that were also attracted to this space. On my first visit to Wild Spirit, I was intending to contextualise my research with journalism students as I was a teacher's assistant for the digital media course that year. I had only just graduated this course the year before, and so I was therefore in touch with the journalism student experience, particularly the post-covid version. On this trip I met so many different kinds of people leading lives that were not conventional with 9 to 5 jobs, which had been disrupted through the new order created through Covid.

An eclectic mix of people found their way to the eco-backpackers – people who were comfortable in their knowing, able to express their esoteric and other knowledge, their ancient stories and ideas about life. I sat on the jungle-inspired deck during the day and was surrounded by other individuals working on their laptops, editing videos, taking photos, writing, emailing, listening to lectures. It felt like paradise – the opportunity to be nestled within nature, working on my own thing within a sense of community. Covid had isolated me into a space where I had to operate in my own little bubble, even though I craved interaction and community. In the evenings there would be a gathering around the firepits and sharing of stories, songs and cosmologies. In these moments I saw the opportunity to extend this experience of transgressive learning and share it with other emerging storytellers, journalists and creators in my journalism class. With new ways of working, particularly in the journalism and creative expression field, it is so important to be exposed to these opportunities before one confines oneself into what one's been told work life should look like. This moment left

me with a strong impulse to question who was benefiting from the knowledge and artefacts we create with our work. In the most selfish, yet Earth-aligned way, I have come to notice that the things I created, the work I wrapped myself into should not just be serving the other, but also needs to serve my own well-being including my spirit. When the eros of passion runs dry it is not so easy to reignite, particularly when one is lodged into a ‘modern’<sup>1</sup> way of thinking; I was reminded of this in the lesson I learnt in field site 4, where my blood lessened and I could no longer create a new path.

I felt like I finally had space to start subtly evaluating what kind of ways of being and doing I really wanted, to see that with the crumbling of the old order, there was a new emergence and it didn’t have to look like working from home or in sterilised, mandatory masked spaces. It could be working in the open fresh air, digging my hands in soil, forgetting about shoes and being inspired by the abundant, regenerative power that flows through this universe.

These encounters and being within community were convivial and also transformative; they added a sense of hope and possibility that things can and are changing. I was able to still be who I needed to be, complete my work but I did not have to feel so isolated and alone.

**Insight:** There is space to foster environments for convivial interaction and these naturally stimulate conversation. Indeed it is within open-end convivial dialogue that an informative and educational praxis can be developed. This can be done with the agency of participants. This moved me to inquire into the possibilities of what convivial experiences and warmth work (McGarry, 2022) could do for ecological citizens.

### **5.3.2 SHIFTING INTO COMMUNITY CONSCIOUSNESS**

In the previous section, I share how my worldviews began to shift, which often resulted in changes both igniting worries and possibilities along the way. It was through following the impulses that I found my way into learning with others whom I could share

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<sup>1</sup> Modern encompasses the capitalist mindset, which focusses on the production and consumption of materials – this can be reviewed in the Place of Worry in Chapter 2 where I expand on this ‘modern’ perspective.

intersectional resonances (Kulundu-Bolus et al., 2020) and therefore expand my pedagogical practices for ecological citizenship.

### **Field Site 8: Auroville**

When I first began this journey of exploring ecological landscapes I became drawn to eco-villages and to communities that had chosen to lead a life more in harmony with nature yet who still managed to connect to a community of people. I first discovered the idea of an eco-village during the Covid period of lockdown. I watched a documentary, *The Experimental township: Auroville*. Online resources, while not as immersive as an actual experience have enhanced and shaped my perception of ecological citizenship. This online documentary allowed me to explore imaginative capacities as to what might be possible in recreating and regenerating a community that is collectively engaging in ecological citizenship, moving away from capitalistic tendencies, actively restoring landscapes and promoting health and well-being through a more holistic approach.

**Insight:** This exploration showed me what might be possible and set me off exploring these spaces within a South African context. In t-learning theory, these are seen as germ cell events, which trigger and open up expanded and transgressive imagination and thinking, and even new experimental practices (Macintyre et al., 2020).

### **Field Site 9: Khula Dharma**

While completing my journalism degree I met a woman, Angela Chapel, who invited me to visit the eco-village where she lived outside East London, called Khula Dharma. I was intrigued by the concept of an eco-village in real life, as I had only seen the documentary about Auroville, based in India and discussed above. Eco-villages are aligned with the concept of regenerative action that affects people and the planet and works to bridge a new economic model for communities that is sovereign and establishes a deeper connection to the commons. As mentioned in the introduction, ecovillages can be defined as “planetary knowledge community grounded in holistic ontology and seeking to construct viable living systems as an alternative to the unsustainable legacy of modernity” (Chaves, 2016, cited Litfin, 2009, p. 125), and it

was this alternative to the legacy of modernity that I so wanted to understand and move towards.

That next year I came across a 'Reconnecting to Nature' course, founded on the principles of permaculture, which would be funded as part of my research; unfortunately it was fully booked but Tim Wiggly, who was leading the course, invited me to visit his homestead, also at Khula Dharma.

I decided to visit and immerse myself in this alternative way of living and learn from the people living there. The experience was so enriching and filled with many opportunities to learn in conviviality. When I arrived, I was warmly greeted by two women who were preparing dinner and was shown my room in a traditional rondavel, a round thatched building made from mud and wattle branches collected from the farm. The sun was setting and the almost-full moon radiated possibility, making me feel I was in the right place and that the coming days were going to be fruitful. After the first meal I retreated to a comfortable bean-bag noticing a sensation of warmth around the upper parts of my back, which I have learned to associate with my heart chakra. I felt so accepted, welcomed and at peace in this moment next to a fire place where I imagine many evenings of boardgames, laughs and togetherness had previously unfolded. I connected with one of the women who had prepared dinner and we realised we had attended the same school, although seven years apart – I felt a sense of acceptance and connection into the space as we had grown up with the same socio-cultural background yet she was now a resident at the eco-village which was so different. I felt there was space and room for me too to transition and be a part of an eco-community and become more conscious and earth-aligned in how I regenerate energy and resources.

The next day I helped in the kitchen. We were cooking for 21 people and I experienced how "many hands make light work". While three of us cooked, others were busy with farm duties like working in the garden and building a new communal space called the Pixie Palace. I noticed that being regenerative and ecological is not always the easiest life; there is a lot of labour and maintenance required to ensure the returning of materials into the cycle, yet once there are systems in place – which mostly emerge from the permaculture framework, they become easier to maintain. I was so inspired

by the abundance of food that was being generated and how the garden became a (farm)acy, right outside the kitchen; where a variety of herbs like artemisia, calendula, chamomile, mint and many others filled with beneficial compounds, were regularly used in cooking or to make fresh and medicinal teas.

The meals that are communally shared at Khula Dharma are mostly produced with ingredients from the garden and I had come to understand the value of fresh organic produce, knowing that it was contributing to the health of my microbiome and womb. It also felt good knowing that the soil and its microbiome was being cared for – this is an example of embodied and relational learning within these alternative communities. Each meal that we shared as a community was infused with the hands and deeds of many, creating a sense of conviviality that aided in the overall flavour and connection to the land and its many established communities of microbes. It also exemplified the principles of permaculture and equipped volunteers with embodied experience of regeneration and whole systems design.

On this excursion I was also introduced to tarot and oracle cards which have since become part of my meaning-making practices. There are 78 different cards in the deck which represent different facets of life and the more one plays with them, the greater connection is established with what they begin to represent. Tarot readings involve drawing these cards from the deck and interpreting their meaning based on their position in the spread and the question or issue at hand. Tarot readers use their intuition, knowledge of the cards, and knowledge of symbolism and archetypes to provide guidance and insight to a situation. I had grown up in a household that was sceptical of these kinds of practices.

I had two readings on that trip. The first one was by a volunteer who was still learning to read for others – I chose nine cards and as we worked through their meaning and symbolism, I could start to sense how I was attempting to make meaning based on my own circumstances and what showed up in the cards. On the last day I went to one of the more established residents who was more experienced in reading the cards. I chose ten cards from the pack of 78 cards, also known as a Celtic Cross reading, three of which were the same cards in the previous reading. I found it interesting that I had chosen the same three cards twice and was able to generate more meaning as to

what was being reflected within my life. After that experience I got my own cards and have been learning and playing more with this meaning-making tool.

**Insight:** Visiting an eco-village showed me ways of taking the possibilities and finding the emergent wisdom within these spaces to begin processing how I might start embodying these ecological insights further. I learnt how resonances with others through past life experiences can aid in a feeling of connection and acceptance into a space. I was able to find affirmation around the power of convivial living, cooking and growing food together. I also learnt other meaning-making modalities such as tarot and expanded pedagogical instruments to broaden my understanding of meaning-making working with images and symbology within the cards.

### **Field site 10: Living in community and communing with the land**

The concept of community living explored in field sites 8 and 9 was new to me and felt exciting and generative. Other kinds of dynamics like human conflict and issues arise in eco-communities and need to be dealt with (Chaves, 2016). I realised I had idealised the concept of farm living in the documentary about Auroville, and therefore have had to continuously re-evaluate my morals and values. According to Laura Ellingson (2009), as explored in her approach to embodied quantitative research ethics, “no innocent position exists” (p.234) and we need to “be cautious to not romanticise people’s lives and perspectives” (p.234). I learnt these lessons through a process of embodied learning; through facing the discomforts and difficulties within these spaces in reality I learned not to romanticise people’s lives.

My nomadic journey had me floating between worlds which, at times, has been very confusing, conflicting and raised many existential and difficult questions which reflect a conversation between soul and ego. My ego is greatly influenced by my privileged upbringing, which felt comfortable – I have always had my needs met, used what I wanted and did not have to worry about returning materials into the cycle. Now I needed to be response(able) in unlearning and relearning new ways.

My soul longs to make a difference and to contribute to a regenerative world instead of merely leaching its resources. While I found myself having the financial means to

stay in accommodation with toilet systems that work with water, running water for showers that didn't require a fire for heating and many other useful inventions that are commonly used within a modern setting, I felt an even greater calling to 'stay with the trouble' (Haraway 2016) and learn from ecological systems. For here too lies an opportunity to dance in the third space. How might these insights lead to innovations and solutions that bridge modern luxuries and ecological solutions in the future? Could my worries and possibilities enable new inventions to arise that appease both life-worlds? I also felt increasingly compelled to stay within these spaces as they brought a different kind of value to my life, one which does not have a price attached to it. The commons (Water, air, plant life and the sun) are not owned by anyone and so herein lies solutions that can be sculpted and moulded to fit a variety of socio-economic backgrounds.

'Staying with the trouble' (Haraway, 2016) opened me up to a greater connection to the natural world, aiding in my ability to co-create spaces in which I respect the 'work' these beings do. I noticed, for example, how quickly faeces gets converted to fertile matter aiding in the growth of plants, and considered how this might be better than it being washed away into a sewerage system hundreds of kilometres away from its source, requiring additional resources such as power and water to reconstitute this into something which can later make its way back into the loop. And the loop can be disrupted – friends who had been paddling down the Fish River experienced raw sewage making its way straight into our river systems which ultimately causes huge ecosystem collapses. In this learning journey of my thesis, I have come to learn that 'staying with the trouble' which is often found in the Place of Worry is simultaneously a generative space to move into the Place of Possibility, particularly when I was able to dance between the worries and possibilities to allow an emergence to occur (Chaves et al., 2015), and highlighting how the Place of Process holds the inherent power to transform and actualise social change within various aspects of society. While I may not be able to transform the system directly, I believe the transformation of consciousness and understanding, which often happens through conviviality, compounds collectively in order for the Place of Process to become richer in its ability to transform the bigger collective aspects of society. Macintire et al. (2020, p.9) explained this process:

Acting as ‘germ cells’ emergent in our processes, we can see how context contributed to the importance of practices embodying transformation, as well as providing motivation for other participants to partake in transformational processes.

These experimental and convivial experiences have equipped me with insights and lessons which have incrementally shifted who I am and how I emerge into the world, to propel change and transformation in the space of ecological citizenship and environmental education in South Africa.

Staying in community has shown me how much I had been longing for a social connection that was rooted in biocentric values. I realised how heavily armoured I had been, that my enculturation and education up to that point had desensitised me to environments, to other communities and their epistemologies in an exclusive and inherently detrimental way. The act of living communally and creating space in which one is able to often safely share grievances and worries is immensely healing, and it is helpful to release the guilt and pent-up anxieties of wanting to ‘save the world’ in spaces with others who can resonate with this pain yet also remind me that these causes, although deeply cared about, are not mine to carry alone and that there are other individuals and communities working to transform these spaces in society, thereby creating a space for the compounding of efforts. This kind of support and community building is incredibly empowering and enables one to delicately hold the needs of oneself with the call to act on behalf of the collective. Just as physical material needs to be composted, so do the emotional and mental stories we create (a concept I expand on in field site 16) – this allows us to take on new roles and continually transform ourselves to respond to the ongoing emergence of crises that arise within the world.

**Insight:** Convivial activities such as gardening, cooking in a communal kitchen and sharing meal times together opened a space for engagements that expressed a plethora of worldviews and ideas which enriched my experience and ability to rewrite a story that is different from my past, anchored in biocentric values. I have found that our imaginative capacities can be enhanced when we start to get a taste for what is possible through the stories of others and through the stories we create, and through experiencing different experiences with others. There are also invisible unknown

processes that are taking place beyond immediate perception in this convivial learning, that may also be playing an important, yet not yet fully understood role (Macintire et al., 2020).

### **Field site 11: Wild callings of the heart – Perma-leadership**

In my second year of masters, I was invited to join a new exploration of leadership through a permaculture lens. This invitation, though I did not realise it at the time, was a part of a bigger cycle I was expanding through.

I had been attending ecological festivals and retreats in the Garden Route of South Africa where I learned a great deal about caring for the environment, planting trees, through workshops on topics like biomimicry, mushrooms, moving my body through dance, qi gong, yoga, while also networking and getting insight into what practical projects were aiding a regenerative future. Mark Tabbron (formerly Dodsworth) was the man always stirring the beat and activating a lively connection of rhythms during festival shenanigans. One would find him gathered with company, usually with a drum strapped around his shoulders and his hands thudding in miraculous melodies. Not only did Mark know how to make melodic sounds, he was also a great catalyst in getting others to join in, handing out drums and then vocalising a beat to tap into. This convivial invitation to collaborate through this simple gesture, is something I noted and wondered how to include it in my pedagogical practice. The invitation to learn together is often a first step to learning. I would have never classified myself as musical, there was a kind of block that stopped me from expanding into expressing my rhythm. Then I spent a few nights around a campfire, listening to other rhythms and songs being shared by the souls that gathered. With this immersion, sitting in the Place of Possibility, something began to stir in my confidence and agency. I began to feel a part of something bigger, being sucked into the vortex of the drum-beating vibrations and feeling safe enough to express my own sounds into the mix.

**Insight:** I learned about creating spaces and practices for others to experience in ways that they do not have to be adept or skilled at, to show encouragement and warmth in convivial engagements. The invitation from Mark, showing how to drum by sharing vocalised sounds to repeat within your own mind as one plays the instrument, was

helpful. It was almost non-verbal in that no words with derived meaning were used, yet a common understanding was established.

### **5.3.3 ELEMENTALS**

The previous section describes experiences of how I started to be influenced by the communities established and began to learn from the conviviality of these experiences. In this next section I share how elemental wisdoms begin to play a part in revealing ecological citizenship pedagogies. The term 'elemental' can refer to the fundamental components of the natural world, such as air, water, fire, and earth. These elements are often viewed as the building blocks of the environment and are essential to sustaining life on Earth.

#### **Field site 12: Fire pit**

The fireplace has become an important site in which many transformative experiences, lessons and realisations have unfolded on this journey. It is within the warmth and heat of fire that I feel parts of my identity are called to transform. I noticed the convivial presence of fire attuned me to something primal and ancient; knowing that it was fire that transformed our species millennia ago, and fire that allowed us to cook our food, keep us warm and provided light, fire has become a symbol of safety and comfort for me. McGarry (2022) has described "warmth work" (p. 11) in developing solidarity among a community of change drivers. It is also the fire place where elders would share their stories containing valuable lessons and understandings to be absorbed by the community.

Looking back on my journey, it was the unleashing of the 'Wild Womban Within' that ultimately led to my t-learning experience – this involved breaking boundaries that had been placed around me, unleashing and burning the 'nice girl' who had become accustomed to people-pleasing and feared abandonment, rejection and ostracisation. I have learnt to re-wild the most raw and authentic parts of my nature and with this a fire has ignited within me, allowing me to become part of a convivial site of interaction and transformation with others. With this initiation, there has also been a severing of the old, upheavals in relationships and changes in how I fundamentally relate to the world. To re-wild is to call back, to repopulate and restore what once was. While this

involves the emergence of ecological citizenship, it also involves the unearthing of what has always been, traced through my blood and awaiting to be re-rooted into the coils of my creative womb. Perhaps this is our first experience of the fire, the warmth of our mother's womb, where we are nourished, where we are kept safe, where we transform through the developmental stages of humanhood.

**Insight:** Warmth work (McGarry, 2022) provides possibility for transformation and emergence because worries can be brought to the fire. With the warmth of the fire and attentiveness to worries, people can journey through worry, possibility, emergence and process. For me, the fireplace also became an open space to gather and just 'be' together, without expectation; any dialogue, singing, music or conversation/learning emerged as a convivial act without expectation in a unique unpressured pace that was different to other spaces, and conducive to warmth work.

### **Field site 13: Drumming**

Ongoing experiences of music around a fire cracked me open. As noted earlier, Mark introduced me to drumming and went on to become a constant encouraging and patient guide that swayed me into the melody and created cohesion with a group. A fire is not essential; the music and passion becomes the fire with every synchronised beat of the drum. When one truly begins to sense what this fire is, one sees how it exists in so many aspects of society and is what is being called for to aid us in our crises. The fire is what aided my transformation. It made me wonder about and examine equivalent pedagogical instruments or proxies to a 'fire' in a classroom, in the university or in my family. I wondered whether it was as simple as creating more outdoor spaces in universities and schools for this activity to occur.

My first experience of a fire jam grew from time in eco-communities – this is perhaps the domino that led to the cascading of events in my pedagogical practice, though I am not certain and continue to 'spiral through' (Macintyre et al., 2020). After the Khula Dharma experience, I spent a week at Pachamama, another eco-community in the Knysna forest, living in my tent, operating from an outdoor kitchen, nourished with wholesome grown food and connecting with individuals as we embraced the more wild and innate aspects of our being. I described the drums and bells in the dark forest

night in a blog post that was shared on the Pachamama website and social media pages:

The forests echo more than just noises, they echo the thoughts and feelings you thought you could keep silent to yourself. Coming to a sacred space like Pachamama is balancing, you somehow get swept into a rhythm and flow so deeply connected to nature's natural rhythm. Walking barefoot through the forests just after the rain creates a spongy and intimate connection between your toes; the natural layers of mulch created from the forests hug your feet and swim to your heart. Yet the crispy morning air chills you to your bone, it aches the pains that have been lying dormant within your body. You will meet your demons and be guarded by your angels, if only you open your mind and heart.

Coming to the far neck of the woods, you'll be greeted with smiles and melodies that dance into the night. I had become a more solo wolf traversing the effects of Covid; however, coming to this space has opened me to the diversity of possibility when a community comes together. There is a malleable energy that shifts with the direction of the wind. There is a continuous flow of dynamics: unfolding and emerging, all the while synchronising to the beat of Pachamama. An experience that is best felt and experienced for yourself: language will never unravel the magic and beauty that reverberates through the forest and plucks the strings of one's heart. When I close my eyes, I can still feel the vibrations that create all kinds of patterns in my mind's eye and energy field, the effects are lasting and the message deep. The forests echo more than just noises, they echo the thoughts and feelings you thought you could keep silent to yourself.

I subsequently purchased my first rattle the next day and continuing to jam when I could on any nearby djembe, feeling a part of something bigger. I had left that experience vibrating on a different frequency and this seemed to begin a series of coincidental and ultimately synchronised experiences. The next day I was encouraged to explore the "Wild" – I first went to the Wild Oats Market in Sedgefield and then made my way to Wild Spirit Eco-backpackers. Both these places became spaces that I returned to and which gave me more insights and clues on this path. I had encountered

the wild, which does not remain neat and organised; it is often messy, unwieldy and adventurous and it is within this space that activating education took place. I feel it important for pedagogical innovation to wholly embrace these messy nuanced interactions. I have found that varieties of experience which are seemingly not connected, are still connected at the root. When looking at a forest, one sees entangled and interconnected vines and branches, yet underneath at the root level, there is a far bigger exchange of coherence occurring, from where the true economy of the forest arises.

**Insight:** Sounds, music and expressions of these kinds are transformative, do not require language and call upon a particular kind of resonance that weaves coherence among individuals. They are embodied, somatic, and wake up something in our cognition and meaning-making, that is far from language and other ways of thinking. How might the melodies and interactions with nature also be influencing our ability to learn and communicate in other learning environments? I ask this question for I am certain that they have deeply influenced my abilities to learn and communicate. I am still learning ways to embody ecological citizenship and enrich regenerative practices within my life. This feels connected to this concept of deeply listening to the signs and signals and, as I become less of an observer and more an integrated part of the whole, adding to the symphonies.

### **Field Site 14: Forest as facilitator**

Back at Wild Spirit during New Year celebrations, months after my first experience of the 'wild', I found my way into a group conversation hosted by the forest itself. I was describing the latest iteration of my master's project to a group gathered upon the forest floor. Mark (who I had only known as the man who stirred the beat) explained how he worked with a group called Perma-Leadership (comprised of different experts in the learning and facilitation field) that met weekly to discuss how processes that would enable transformative learning experiences and reconnect people back to nature within a leadership framework. I spoke of the winding, meandering-river shape I had envisioned for my master's process; Mark's group used this shape also to guide their Perma-Leadership process. Synchronicity of the projects we had been imagining into existence somehow meandered to create meaning together.

During a quiet morning walk I asked for some direction and clarity: “Dearest Forest, what am I actually meant to do, which direction do I take, what must I be focussing on for my thesis?” That afternoon I was invited by Mark to meet the Perma-Leadership team. It felt like a nudge from the forest, this invitation to convivially explore regenerative living and bridge these kinds of concepts into a corporate landscape. The Perma-Leadership forum has enabled me to see how successful and influential people from all over the globe are upholding the ethos of living in close relation to our natural world and seeking ways to contribute to the Earth’s flow of regeneration, which also means learning how to regenerate our human systems and bodies. Part of the ethos of permaculture is finding the intersection between people and planet and distributing resources fairly.

A challenge that has continually emerged within this group is finding a way to bridge worlds together, to bridge concepts that seem polarised. This has been a common theme that reflected what I felt inside, what my research aimed to do and now what we were collectively aiming to solve. On one side, the Perma-Leadership team is embedded within the corporate landscape of business, which has little regard for the ecological order, and on the other, we are also individuals who are actively practising, attuning and listening to the ecological world. There is great understanding that change is required fundamentally to ensure the health of people, planet and fair sharing within hierarchical business models. While our group has a good understanding of how the patterns present within our ecological world should be replicated into organisations, there are obstacles which have made this task a leadership concern.

The greatest concern that continually emerges is linked to language. Language, while being a great messenger and conveyor of meaning, has its limitations. While one group of people might agree on particular terms and phrases, another might find this opposes their world views. In adapting language to suit perspectives, an openness to accept other perspectives is important. And, when we unpack the meaning generated by seemingly different terms, there is an underlying meaning inherent in them. The Perma-Leadership group has morphed and changed into a variety of things because there are a variety of personalities coming together. What binds the group is the

intention to seek to remediate the polarities we feel in our own worlds, to find ways to bring people together and share the messages that have enabled our own transformative processes.

I found that defining perma-leadership differs based on who is talking and who is listening. Similarly in my research, part of me needed to choose language to suit the academic world yet when tried to communicate my project in a non-academic world, it began to morph and change to suit those that were listening. The use of metaphor has become helpful in this pursuit.

Perma-leadership recognises that our identity and finding at its core is what anchors our actions to become transformative; our identity is rooted in our ancestry, yet is also influenced by our current environmental conditions, as well as our imaginative capacities of what we would like the future to be. The concept of remembering, reimagining and regenerating is therefore an aspect that enables this kind of thinking. Re-remembering is a process of tracing ourselves back into who and where we have been 'members' of a bigger identity. Re-imagining allows us to visit our desires of what could be and regenerating is what happens at the bridge of connecting these polarities of past and future. This work is ultimately aiming at de-armouring our senses to perceive how we are all interconnected and "one with" the rest of the world. We can only be responsive to what is seeking our attention when we become receptive enough to hear.

**Insight:** Permaculture is a design practice; perma-leadership a co-creative space to regenerate our future – a collaborative space which is self-organised and explores co-defining concerns and co-creating space in which responsible participation is required to enable regenerative action. Natural elements are also very much a part of this process as experienced in the way the forest facilitated my joining the Perma-Leadership group and in the synchronicity of similar design principles.

## **Field site 15: Embodying the soil**

Shortly after I connected with Perma-Leadership group, Mark organised for the South Africans within the group to meet for a day to connect with the soil. This process gave us a space and place to embody the soil.

Our group of 20 met at the Map of Africa in the Wilderness (Western Cape) and made our way to a piece of land beside the Kaaiman River mouth for a day facilitated by Alex Kruger and Kate Curtis, both involved in permaculture training programmes.

We discussed what the soil meant to us, having split into pairs and working through questions, all connecting to our experience, concerns and desires for the natural world. We then spent time in a quiet space alone, reading and going through tasks which guided us to become more aware of the soil, to sense and feel into its role. We then regathered and to make masks from paper plates, leaves and other elements from nature. The mask would represent nature and the soil. At the conclusion of the day we gathered around a tree and had an opportunity to express and embody the soil through wearing the masks and sharing any messages we felt came to us through this process. Each person had a different mask and a different message that came from our own understanding of the soil.

This was an act of deep reverence and respect for the land, the elements and the natural world in the way that each of the participants were present and aware of their surroundings.

This embodiment activity was transformative for me. It was the first time I had been called to embody the soil in this way – it brought me into a deeper relationship so that I could sense into what the soil might say if spoke a human language which opened up a meaning-making opportunity. How did I recognise the soil and how does the soil recognise me? How are we creating society and culture? The embodiment that came through me and what the soil was communicating to me, was the infinite 'I am' presence. I could recognise that the soil is an ancient aspect of the Earth; much of the deep dark soils are unexplored and unknown yet they continuously live on, adapting and changing to the environment. The soil is not just 'one' thing; there are many

different varieties and compositions and it is a living entity which expresses itself and has a right to be heard, particularly when it is providing so much nourishment to all living animals, plants and fungi. This activity made me feel into the deep interconnectivity of all the systems and entities of which we are a part. This activity was a meaning-making opportunity in how I chose to represent the soil through the mask, the voice I used and how I spoke. I remember speaking like a wise and ancient being, as if I had lived on the Earth for millions of years. This activity made me value the soil even more and ignited a feeling that the soil was an ancient ancestor of mine.

**Insight:** Using embodiment practices to speak on behalf of natural elements is a good way to become more cognisant and enables seeing these entities as beings too. Personification of these elements supports them to become self-reflective tools.

### **Field site 16: A co-conspirator – I called and she responded**

Nikki became a mentor and co-conspirator following an Equinox gathering. One evening we were gathered under the stars and I brought out three of my favourite rocks – I have been collecting stones and crystals for the last few years. They have been a great companion in my meditations and bring a level of comfort and inspiration I cannot always describe in words. This particular evening, I brought a big raw piece of malachite, rose quartz and my latest addition, a blue lace agate I had acquired on a river expedition in Zambia. As I brought the three together and began to tell their stories, Nikki noticed that the rose quartz and blue lace agate combined to create a shape that looked like the African continent. I had chosen the malachite as it reminded me of a womb – it is triangular with a womb-like space in the middle of the stone. Nikki placed the womb malachite on top with the Africa shaped continent and commented on the symbolism of the malachite stone birthing an African continent.

As I was speaking about the rocks, it was as if my channel opened and I was transferring a message that did not come from my own mind. I spoke of their held and ancient frequency, how they had been formed over years of pressure, vibration and sediment, that they were holding a particular frequency that captured the space in which they formed.

In another conversation that evening I talked of “a-for-mations” where one asks a question instead of claiming a statement as one would with an affirmation. The subconscious mind seeks to find meaning and answers, so when asked a question in the form of an affirmation, it seeks to find the answer and give confirmation to the conscious mind. For example, instead of ‘I am creative’, one could say ‘Why am I so creative?’

Inspired by our conversations and realisations, Nikki wrote a poem that evening:

*It was here  
in the smokey, dust-settling chaos of our old lives  
the meeting the our new possibilities of being  
our fullest blooming selves*

*Here in this meeting  
A dark wave hit*

*we all tumbled  
in its fall  
the agonising internal shouting  
“there must be more”*

*The past last  
this is/was me/we  
outcast  
chaos  
of mass loss  
so much  
too much trauma*

*“where are you?”  
“come back to here now”  
The Earth Mother - she calls out  
“breathe - beyond the wave  
a new tide is here now”*

*Now we hear*

*Here in Southern Africa  
from Africa's earth rocks*

*We hear now  
a new way opening*

*It is here  
here in this calming light*

*through fragments of  
solid earth  
years held frequency  
Seen trees and times of many bees  
these sacred gem stones  
speak of doorways*

*doorways to Great Spirit  
in all of our sacred beings.*

*It is here  
here - where the frequency  
sings of future memories to be spelled out*

*Spoken...  
"How did we get to be such a rocking continent?  
Why are we doing so well?"*

*Through our loving cross-pollinating  
care shares  
we became...*

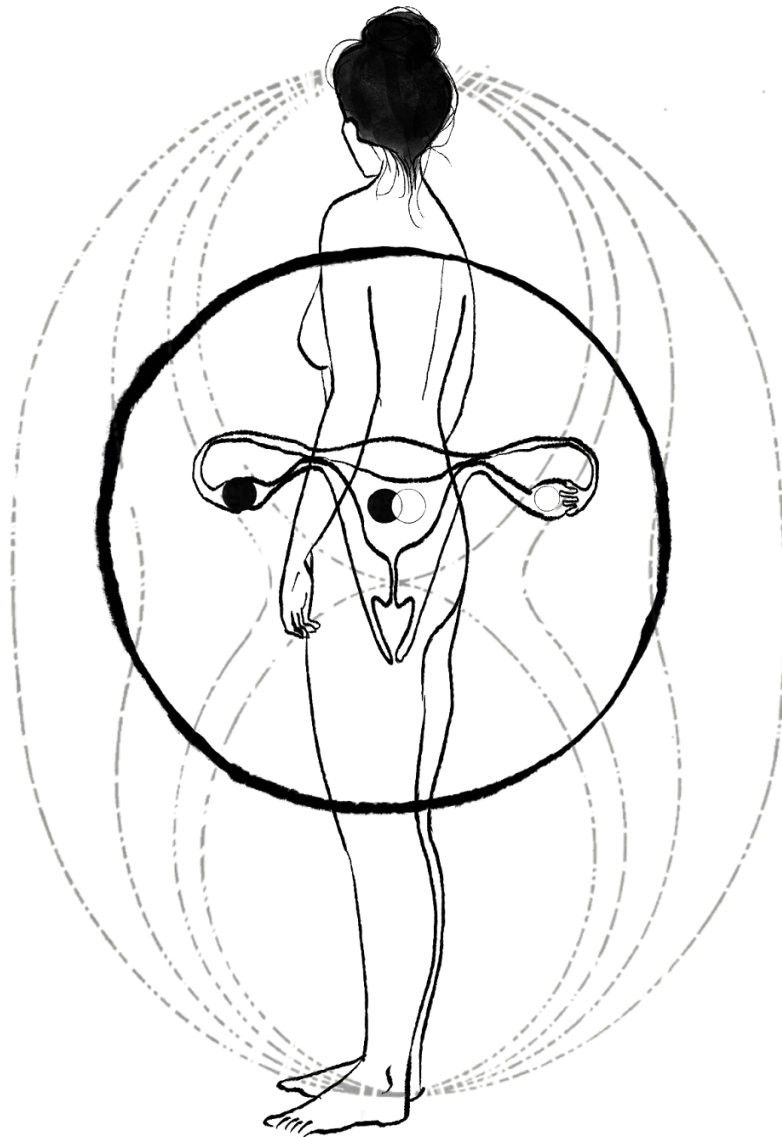
*It's here  
where we all are earthing, soaring, crawling, dancing  
it is here where all feel life being  
The Bee's knees*

*Our blooming Southern African garden  
of thriving possibility*

*all hearts - once closed - open*

*THRIVING & FREE*

This poem was inspiring and a helpful pedagogical tool to aid in feedback with what I had been sharing and to witness how it had transformed into a new cycle of creation. These kinds of engagements showed me tangibly how they are generative and continuously move, evolve and take form in various ways and build new connections, forms of practice and pedagogies and how knowledge is nomadic. We are not always aware of what is resonating within another, if anything at all, yet when one receives a poem like this, encapsulating what one had been communicating in a new form, it feels enriching and one becomes aware of the transformative life in which these concepts live.



*Image 8 shows how the various places are interacting and occurring at the same time within the space and place of a body. The womb is accentuated to remind the actively absent spaces (Kaplan, 2002) that are required to allow new emergences to occur.*

### **5.3.4 CIRCLES**

In the previous section we explored how connecting to the various elements (like the fire, music and embodiment practices that connect us to the soil) enables a different

kind of learning that promotes ecological citizenship; this next section explores menstruation and women's circles which have also led to further pedagogical insights.

### **Field Site 17: Sacred menstruation**

A Sacred Menstruation online course appeared in my sphere the day before it was due to begin. Suskia posted an advertisement of her course, combined with a video explaining and showcasing her ability to communicate the more nuanced layers of being a womban and I resonated with her offering. Since beginning my own womb journey, I started following different social media pages about the menstrual cycle and coming into an embodied feminine sense of being. I had become intrigued by their 'master classes' and 'online transmissions'. Most courses were offered in dollars and were not affordable. But I was curious about how they conducted their courses, their pedagogy, what knowledge and theories they drew on, and whether these emerged intuitively or from other sources. Suskia was South African and her course was more accessible financially and contextually. I decided that it was worth the investment and that this course could offer a space for a different form of education. I would be able to participate in a social learning space where others were also seeking to form a deeper connection to their menstrual cycle and be guided by new principles and practices, which have been utilised for many years in various cultures and beliefs.

The course was organised over five weeks, in 1 ½ hour Zoom sessions, allowing us to delve into a different aspect of the menstrual cycle each week. The four phases of the menstrual cycle (menstruation, follicular, ovulation and luteal phases) have been correlated with the seasons (winter, spring, summer and autumn, respectively) which added insight into how these aspects of the cycle might influence mood, behaviour and overall sensation. I quickly noticed how metaphorically layering seasons over the embodied experience of menstruation offered a means for us to further investigate and understand the cycle in a diffractive way (Murriss & Bozalek 2018). The attributes of the seasons could be read alongside the attributes of the actual embodied menstrual cycle, while also diffracting our own personal experiences, feelings and ideas linked to these periods of our life.

Within the menstrual cycle there are both physical changes and fluctuations in hormones, moods and states of being as well as more subtle emotional, energetic variations during these phases. Combining the physical with the emotional is something that is not accounted for in the scientific method but as mentioned in the Place of Possibility (see Chapter 3), it is the intersections and diffractive meaning-making through the use of metaphor, that can bridge and support richer meaning-making. From my experience in the course, it was within the intersection, the third space and the contestation between differences and the ability to hold nuance while connecting these aspects, that new insights and learning could emerge. It is within this space of holding paradox that we arrive at an awareness. The seasons not only correlated with this course for me, but have continued to be a pattern for understanding cyclical aspects of our being.

Each week we met on Zoom and delved into menstruation from different angles, followed with embodiment practices and weekly exercises so that we could experience our own variations and sensations of these phases. We were guided through the changing energetics of our menstruation to come into a relationship with our cyclical nature and womb spaces. Since menstruation is such a personal, unique aspect to our beings we were taught to practise the art of deep listening to our own bodies and energetics and to see the course as a template.

We were taught to see our own menstruation as unique and suited to each of us. Suskia had compiled a booklet outlining the phases and all meetings were recorded and shared with the group; this allowed us to re-watch and integrate what we had learnt. A WhatsApp group was created to share additional information and any urgent messages, which also became a forum for social learning and call and response meaning-making later into the experience.

I have been particularly interested in how to share these kinds of offerings in a public pedagogy for ecological citizenship to begin to change the current dominant narrative around menstruation (as a curse and burden) and highlight its powerful generative role, its ability to hold potential, and to actively refresh and prepare for that potential each month.

I shared some writing on menstruation from my final year of journalism and received affirming feedback from these written pieces with some women claiming they had helped them to come into a better relationship with their cycles.

**Insight:** Menstruation offers an embodied perspective to females and an opportunity to connect more intimately with various cycles within nature. This course enabled me to become more comfortable talking about menstruation with others and prompted me to share the positive aspects of having a womb and being able to experience menstruation. As I have become more comfortable with speaking about this topic, I have also noticed how it is received better by others who are not yet familiar with these conversations.

### **Field site 18: A circle of women**

Women's circles, both in-person and online, are powerful learning fora. I experienced my first women's circle at the end of an environmental education tree planting festival (Eden Festival of Action at Wild Spirit), where I had a chance to bond with a circle of women after being together for a week.

This experience was profound in the way each person felt open and safe to share some of their most repressed and heavy parts, to not feel judged and to instead be embraced by the nurturing, loving aspects of the divine feminine. This offered a space for affirmative enquiry into how the feminine can be nurturing and transformative. Affirmative inquiry is strength-based language and focusses on what is working well (Wals & Adams, 2013).

To open the circle, the facilitator dug an imaginary hole in the soil, miming the action and placing it in the middle of the circle of woman gathered. This hole was said to be the place in which our emotional attachment of our experiences could be placed and covered once we left. When the circle was finished all that was spoken about would compost and transform through our tears, through our words and through our emanating hearts. This is an example of mirroring (Sterling, 2010), where the experience which we, the women, were going through was mirrored by the processes that nature goes through. While this was all metaphorical, it felt like so much of the

heavy trauma I had been carrying was able to be passed over to Mother Earth and be transmuted. The number one rule in a women's circle is to not comment on someone else's experience, to not try and give them a hug or show any kind of judgement and to instead offer a space to be heard, a space to grieve and feel into parts that have perhaps been repressed. This has been an extremely important for my own journey, as I often feel when I share something difficult, there is someone trying to offer advice and counsel, when all I am truly seeking is empathy. To have the space to be heard without commentary is a powerful way to allow stories to be told, in all their forms and to know that there are others there to listen. The meaning-making offered through this kind of space ensures there is no projection of others' opinions and values. Every woman gets a chance to express themselves and I found that the more sharing that happened, the more I was able to connect to the pain of the women and recognise how these feelings of pain, shame and hurt are so common when we often feel so alone and isolated, carrying these emotions within us. This offers a type of mirroring,

I believe one of the greatest transformational tools for this kind of work is to actively listen to one another and learn from the diversity of wisdom that prevails in this process, and to see how we can express our deepest hurt and still carry on each day. One's listening needs to be actively absent like a womb, empty and ready to receive something new. This experience felt profound. Jade's wisdom and her facilitation and responsible participation within the space created a space in which this journey could unfold for each woman. I enjoyed how the elements and the natural environment became a part of the process and influenced how we could engage with what and where we are.

**Insight:** In the women's circle described in this section, there were examples of mirroring, affirmative enquiry and solidarity - all needed for affective social learning. It is important to create spaces for others to be heard and to deeply listen.

### **Field site 19: The third space between the sacred menstruation course and the circle**

From the first session of the online course it seemed there would not be much room for participants to share their experiences. When Suskia entered the space, it was as

though she was bringing many deep philosophical understandings of tantra that had not landed within the group yet. This first session set a tone of 'we are here to listen, not to share our stories'. I feel a closure within my being when I am taught from a space that upholds a dynamic where students must sit and listen to a teacher - I like to actively participate and interact, even if only through small gestures of checking in and creating space to ask questions along the way. I enjoy hearing multiple wisdoms from various individuals. I was left a little torn: on the one hand, the course allowed the prepared transmission to be expressed from a level of consciousness that respects higher teachings yet on the other, it made me feel inadequate and that my experience was 'wrong' if it did not correlate with these ancient methods, such as tantra. When I had enrolled in the course I felt I was enrolling to be a part of a community. This reminded me of the experience in the woman's circle and reminded me that this open sharing and listening space is transformative for this kind of work.

There is a delicate and difficult balance between sticking to a presented plan and shifting to suit the needs of the group, especially in an online course where the feedback from people's bodies is limited. In week 2, due to load shedding and connection issues, Suskia was removed from the zoom call and all the other women were left in the space. This was the first chance to connect with one another without the teacher, and it opened the space for participants to show they were interested in learning but felt a little behind and unsure. It also enabled conversations for alternative practical and embodied wisdoms to shine through the group. After watching the recording and seeing how we had changed, Suskia was aware that something needed to change in the communication channels. She posted this message on the WhatsApp group the next morning:

I just watched the recording, which by the way I don't know how it kept recording when all my devices went down 😓 and this chat gave me so much joy in spite of how terrible I feel that my connection broke.

I feel so much love for all of you and for all your sharings to one another this evening and perhaps I needed to step out the way so that you could enter those delicate places together.

After this she also opened the WhatsApp group chat so that any of us could contribute; previously it was only Suskia that could send messages to the group. This speaks to a pedagogical innovation through call and response being adopted within teaching, whereby the teacher was able to adjust based on intuitive feedback. It also shows how Suskia had to work through her own discomfort and trouble and **worry**, and see the **possibility** emergent in the participants' struggle, and then create a moment of **emergence** by opening the WhatsApp group, which then in turn created a space for collective **process**.

Suskia re-recorded the content for week 2 in order to keep with the five-week schedule. There was no interaction making transmission a little easier for Suskia as she didn't need to take any questions. This session also ended with an embodied practice, which was very similar to a meditation, guiding us into a deeper awareness of our bodies.

Much intuitive, embodied learning relies on becoming still and tuning into the various parts of the body to hear what might be underlying thoughts and feelings. It is important to start learning how to recognise when one's body is moving into the next phase. When we can sense our bodies shifting through the inner seasons of menstruation we are able to respond and nourish our bodies in the ways it may need. When the body has moved from the ovulation to the luteal phase, one may need to be slower, more intentional and more receptive to intuitive insights whereas during the ovulation period one can be more action orientated.

An exciting and generative social learning conversation stirred in one of our calls where we spoke about menstruation and the work place. It is becoming more common for the work place to accommodate women who are menstruating and needing time off of work, with certain countries even writing this into their laws. One woman said that she and her colleagues spoke about their cycles and how this allowed a bigger sense of empathy and understanding among them – she also mentioned how creating an embodied sense of menstruation and understanding was helpful in their all-women work team.

Suskia also introduced the group to activities to deepen our connection to our menstrual cycle as well as our anatomy, including poem writing, yoni-steaming and yoni-gazing. I was grateful to have had this opportunity to sense into the delicacy of this work, while also rooting into the power of reclaiming these spaces in order to connect with my own divinity and power.

**Insight:** The learning that occurs when we create space to drop into intimacy with our own bodies does not require us to be ‘taught’ but rather appreciative awareness is required, particularly when the dominant narrative around these spaces is shame and guilt.

In this next section, I begin to explore how I started to embody the lessons and insights and began to share my own pedagogical practices, particularly in context with other women.

### **Pedagogical experiment 1: The nomadic journey and building connections and networks**

Towards the end of my journey, to add some contrast to what I had been experiencing of living in community – I lived ‘alone’. I stayed just outside Kenton-on-Sea in the Eastern Cape with two dogs on a wild piece of land overlooking the Bushman’s River. This space became a catalyst in my journey to discovering how connected I could become with the wild and natural elements, offering me a third space to integrate what I had learnt both about myself and a more ecological way to live. Within this space I learnt to expand my attentiveness to my senses (inner, outer and relational), experiment with my voice and sense into the relationship I had been forming with the more-than-human world.

This piece of land was home to many other creatures such as duiker, porcupine, genet, bushbuck and was frequented by birds such as buzzards, owls, loeries and fish eagles. I created an altar with stones, feathers, porcupine quills, leaves and plants from the land inside the home, with a view overlooking the valley. I had noticed that some of my most transformative experiences came when there was an anchoring point

to begin each day, such as an altar – no one ‘taught’ me this but it was something I intuited through my nomadic endeavours. I would start my morning and end my day in this space creating a strong field of intention. I would find myself speaking into the space, calling upon the elements, animals, angels, guides and ancestors. I would burst out into song - often making my own lyrics describing what I might be feeling and other times just practising finding harmony within my own vocal range and the external noises of the birds, rain, wind and other elements that trickled in.

I moved to the town not really knowing anyone and left with beautiful blossoming friendships, having been become part of a community and further expanding my network of interactions. I discovered a yoga community that met twice a week on the beach and met other women through interactions at the local coffee shop. Through these interactions and being open to speaking to new people I started hosting Full Moon Movement Meditations. These were experiments in applying what I had learned thus far into a public pedagogical form. These consisted of a meditation at the beginning, coregulating through our breath and sounding together. We would then flow into movement guided by a playlist I had prepared. While the music was playing I would prompt us to become aware and notice sensations in our bodies, invite the women to move in new ways and to change their habitual patterns of movement, to move around the space and embody different elements such as fire, water, air, earth. We would then end with a meditation in the same space we had started. Afterwards I would bring out some oracle guidance cards and place them in a circle in the middle of our circle, inviting each person to choose a card, sharing with the circle and encouraging each woman to share what had emerged for them in the dance and how these cards might represent an aspect of those realisations. I had adapted and created this practice through my own experience of movement meditations and women's circles, sensing into my own strengths how I might best create a space that invited other women to connect with their bodies. I also invited each of the women to bring an item so that we could co-create an altar for the space – this act represents devotion and commitment to the practice as well as an offering for the divine/ spirit/ source.

Through hosting these dances I started to learn to trust my intuition, draw from what I had learned, and be attentive to my senses and response(ability). While I prepared the playlist that we would dance to, I also had to work with many ‘in the moment’

factors, such as the group's energy levels (how fast were they moving, how close were we all to one another, were their eyes closed or open?) and trust my intuition and imaginal reasoning in what to say to continually create a space that would honour each person's process while also creating cohesion for us to experience together. I had come to experience and realise how important this was in field site 17 and this prompted me in facilitating space that ensures connection and that the experience of everyone is included, so as not to exclude anyone and ensure their comfort. I therefore had to be practise proactive call and response, empathetically thinking carefully of the actual embodied experience of the participants before I began, imagining into each aspect of the process they would experience, and how they might react. During the first event, I noticed there were moments where a person was transfixed in their own space and body and other moments where we would collectively use the energy we were cultivating together through making eye contact and matching the movements of others. These kinds of factors could not be pre-planned and so I had to trust my intuition and allow myself to speak intuitively to the group to aid these processes. It was in this attentiveness to their experience, and responding carefully to these, that I noticed another dimension to call and response learning that was not entirely dominated by dialogue: an invisible expansion that occurred similar to what happened around the fire place at Khula Dharma or within the drumming with Mark.

When I first started holding these spaces, I found myself overthinking and judging some of the ideas that popped into my mind. experienced. Following a guided meditation I led at Wild Spirit with a Tibetan singing bowl, a friend shared how she visualised two snakes twirling around one another and how the head of the one was eating the head of the other. This prompted an image for me of how I let my masculine rational mind take over my intuitive, creative side, much like my experience at the beginning of this thesis. As I began to deepen into these practices of guiding meditations, I began to trust my intuition and see how I was a channel for words and ideas. I let the third space of the masculine and feminine snakes dance and twirl up together, allowing their connection to work harmoniously. I felt like I was no longer the one who was consciously speaking each of these words, but instead allowed a bigger essence to move through me – I didn't have to think about what I was going to say, it would simply come if I allowed it.

During my time in Kenton, I had space to be vocal, to come into a deep inner stillness and then practise speaking a meditative journey out into the space, trusting myself, as I did not have to worry about anyone judging me and only about the voices in my head that were judging 'me'. I started to feel more confident in my ability and hosted these movement meditations which made me feel aligned with my higher self as I was trusting the flow of speech. I received positive feedback and so much gratitude from each of the women for creating the space and practice for each of us to move and connect with our bodies emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually. I felt it was successful when it seemed that each women felt safe enough to share their more repressed and heavy emotions.

**Insight:** By actively absencing community, living alone, the value of community and the careful dance of moving between communities became clearer. This was an important opportunity for learning between networking. Networking can be expanded into other activities so playing, doing yoga, gardening, dancing can be considered as net(playing), net(dancing), net(yogaing) if we expand the 'verb' of networking into plural, open-ended convivial arrangements, where learning can occur in new relational forms. I also discovered the power of imaginal proactive 'call-and-response', by attentively imagining the embodied experience of participants when designing a process, and when the process was underway, attentively staying with the participants' experience, to iteratively shift and adjust the pedagogy to support the needs of the group.

### **5.3.6 COMMUNITY GATHERING (SPRING EQUINOX)**

The following stories are from a conscious community gathering I attended in Sedgefield, Western Cape. These gatherings happen each season and celebrate the solstices and equinoxes. It was the summer solstice where I first experienced and met many of the people who are spoken about in the earlier stories. These gatherings are community based mainly along the Garden Route, but also in Cape Town but other parts of the country. This community has established a telegram group (social media site similar to WhatsApp) for sharing workshops and other trading offers. The 'tribe' is heart-centred and many are seeking alternative lifestyles that diverge from typical capitalist and modernity lifestyles.

The spring equinox festival is a self-sufficient camp set-up, whereby participants are expected to cater for their needs and ensure they take all their waste away with them. The land is on the edge of the Swartvlei, providing a tranquil spot home to a plethora of rich diversity of plants and trees. There is also a well-kept food garden for the residents that live on the farm. The gathering is family orientated and community driven. The call is for responsible participation and a space is provided for participants to offer workshops and activities as part of an exchange system that does not use money, but rather a currency called 'talents'. The entire festival requires that the community participates in and contributes to the festivities of the week, from conscious dances, fireside stories, musical jams and other activities infused with biocentric values.

### **Field site 21a: Rainbow meal**

This festival encourages co-creation and the rainbow meal is a big part of that co-creation. This is the highlight on the day of the solstice or equinox being celebrated creating solidarity and community building among the participants. On the morning of the rainbow meal, participants drop their produce at a designated table and some bring pots and pans for cooking. The ingredients are sorted through to group like foods together and anyone can volunteer to help prepare the food. This process calls for responsible participants as there is no set 'leader', and each person is called to exercise responsibility in preparing the food with care and respect. There is creative license by the volunteers to turn the food into what they imagine with the ingredients in front of them. There are usually a few different varieties of the same kind of food – for example salads with different ingredients. As the food gets divided up and ideas emerge for what could be created with the produce, smaller sub-groups begin to work together. By the end of the preparation there is an array of dishes: salads, stews, potjies, breads, spreads and fruit with a vast array of flavours and textures.

While the food is being prepared and transformed, there is co-creation of music close to the food preparing space which adds a sense of conviviality and celebration. The

atmosphere around the food making is filled with excitement, conversation, laughter and creativity.

Once all the food is prepared, a long table is set up with the variety of dishes on display. All the festival participants come together and create a circle around the food and tables holding hands. We sing a song and drop into gratitude for this season's produce and the continual nourishment we receive from the Earth. A group of servers help to dish the food, ensuring that each person gets an equal and fair amount of each dish. Participants receive their food and form small groups to enjoy the meal.

### **Fieldsite 21b: Tree planting ceremony**

A tree planting ceremony follows the meal described above. Holes had been dug for 26 trees. We gathered in a circle and were reminded to be mindful of the process and send the tree good energy – we were encouraged to sing and commemorate this process with any other convivial act. I felt it would be appropriate to give the tree a name and feeling inspired by a fiery energy that spring day we named the Cape Ash tree we were planting, Ashley. Our group of four joined hands, set some intentions for the tree and spoke to it and sang while we planted.



*Image 8: The ending of our tree planting ceremony where we created a circle with our hands*

## **Pedagogical experiment 2: Festival offering**

Each morning during the festival, participants meet and in 30 seconds share what they would like to offer. The information is then posted onto a board. I decided to facilitate an offering based around my research thus far. What I had originally planned, a four-day process, was ultimately impractical as people wanted to participate in a variety of events, but I received practical insight and wisdom through practices such as the Rainbow Meal and tree planting ceremony described above. I therefore adapted my original plan in the way described below.

I have a sun mural that is yellow for the sun with blue as the contrasting background colour. This sun symbolises so much of my journey. It is an item that I usually take on my adventurous outdoor days and it carries many different smells and memories. This was hung between two trees just above the dancefloor and below the fire pit area. Below the sun, I marked a circle on the ground which would become the hole where conversations, intentions, meaningful objects and public pedagogies would be unearthed. After the process I would plant a geranium plant, a South African shrub that has medicinal compounds as well as strongly aromatic foliage.

My idea was to unearth and co-create: What would the new pedagogies and processes I had been learning about and reflecting on and experiencing with others look and feel like if I was to guide them as responsible participant? How could this aid ecological citizenship pedagogies in South Africa?

I decided to dig a hole, inspired by the one in the women's circle (field site 16) and invited the co-creative capacities of the Earth as the mothering womb to hold the space for something new to be created and help us transmute the old through a creative process of meaning-making. The hole could represent many things for participants, but mainly it was the space, the impression in the Earth where the place of worry could be given attention. It was a literal expression of 'active absence'. Each day, new objects, predominately debris from the Earth which symbolised worries, possibilities, emergences and processes, were placed intentionally in the hole. There were also many other conversations and other spontaneous, convivial gatherings that unfolded around this hole.

Those encountering the space, and the connective aesthetic of the hole as the 'Place of Worry' were able, I observed, to co-define concerns (McGarry, 2013) and there was an opportunity for various questions, concerns and agendas to enter the field, and to be literally embodied in the debris, being placed in the physical earthen hole. We reflected on the Earth representing this alchemical space, as a womb can be seen to absent absences (McGarry, 2013). It felt as if this nourishment energy was needed to facilitate this process. If the hole was to represent the womb, the Place of Worry, and the beginning of my pedagogical journey to becoming an ecological citizen, what would be the umbilical cord and placenta, to nourish and transform the collective worries and concerns? Nourishment came in the form of meditation, shifting focus and attention into that which has been placed in the hole and connecting this to the hearts of those involved. Nourishment also came in the form of tea one evening when one my fellow co-conspirators, an embodiment facilitator and fire dancer, who has inspired me throughout this thesis joined me in planting intentions to work together. We celebrated submitting a joint proposal for a project that would aid in creative youth empowerment processes with a cup of tea made from herbs like cardamom, rooibos and cinnamon. I also filled the hole each evening with water.

I ended up not 'leading' all the processes I had planned; each day welcomed in a new leader with their own flair, embodying the concept of decentralised knowledge and power dynamics (Pellow, 2016). The intention was to support participative parity (Bozalek, 2017; Ferrarese, 2014; Fraser, 2001) in the ways in which people could contribute. This aligns with the social sculpture practice led by a 'responsible participant' as opposed to a facilitator (McGarry, 2014), which ensures greater participative parity and builds trust and confidence of the group (McGarry, 2013). The group that gathered was not the same each day but this contributed to opening a space that was diverse with a multitude of perspectives.

### **Field site 21d: Acapella performance**

The convivial joy of a gathering is often contributed to by the co-creation of music and jamming. As mentioned in field site 11, I had begun sharing my voice into the melodies of musicians that tend to gather around fire places. My confidence grew over time with

more opportunities such as the drum circle and fires at Wild Spirit. I began to notice how even if I didn't hit the perfect 'note' or made a mistake with the words, there was opportunity and space for my voice to be within the mix and that there were no negative consequences for trying. This learning transpired over time and spiralled in me as I became increasingly more confident to participate in these kinds of activities; I had many skins to shed to truly allow my voice a place and it has been through this research and the nomadic and research creation perspectives that I have come to embrace these changing and evolving parts of my identity.

A spontaneous jam broke out at the equinox festival, close to the communiTEA cafe, where the music performance had enlivened the Rainbow Meal process the day before. This was a space where I felt I could listen and harmonise. A group of four of us gathered in a circle and we started humming and tuning into the various tones and pitches we collectively made. This led to an acapella performance with each of us chiming different melodies, rhythms and beats. While each of us was bringing a different noise into the mix, it remained in sync with the overall noise we were making, thereby creating a tune and a song. This process was an experience where no words or explanations were required, a space where we all could collectively contribute and attentively/empathetically listen while simultaneously making this an efficient social learning process. Once we had closed our performance we huddled into a circle and one of the members asked us all to pick up an object, to describe this object and its unique qualities – we all listened to one another and she further prompted us to take somebody else's emblem and reflect on what they had chosen and how it related to them. This process, although simple, became an important meaning-making and thus learning process and a situated solidarity grew between us. Once we had finished the exercise and singing we placed these items into the hole mentioned in field site 16c.

I had envisioned a similar activity to unfold in the four-day process I had planned, but because this had shifted, I also shifted and opened up to a more co-creative process. In the past I would have felt a need to control events and control the things I was creating, but in this research journey I have continually been reminded that I am not in control, that there is something bigger guiding me – both the social entanglement and collaborative intelligence of the group, the more-than-human world assembled with me, and something bigger and even more mysterious than that. I have learned that I

can be a responsible participant, and become a conduit to allow for the learning to expand and move as it needs to, and in some cases to trust the energy of the group to move through the process in ways that feel right to them collectively. Learning from these lessons, I stepped back and allowed the journey to unfold and reveal itself to me.

The idea of control is an important theme in my understanding of responsible participation and its role in suitable pedagogies for embodied ecological citizenship learning. It was also important in my own individuation. I was encultured and raised to try and control all outcomes in my life, but I have realised we don't have as much control as we would want or believe we have. Instead, I came to learn that my intention is often more important than my preconceived idea of what I think something should be. It was through participating in other workshops and offerings that I found a rhythm and a flow and learnt to harmonise. Perhaps this is the most vital finding of this research.

This idea of harmony between participants and the balance between planning and intuition seems in my experience in this study to be a profound principle in ecological citizenship as it opens us to both call and response simultaneously, to learning to listen (being sensually attentive) while also having an opportunity to contribute, to knowing when to let go, and to supporting participative parity. I have also noticed how if each of us talk at the same time, it creates disruption and becomes incoherent, yet when we sing collectively there can be harmony and coherence in the group. Words can sometimes be disruptive in a learning process; using our voices without rational linguistic reasoning, and rather in humming or singing or other equivalents can often be more generative in learning.

**Insights:** Convivial experiences offer a multitude of opportunities for the personalities of participants to shine through as various forms of doing and being are encouraged, for example sharing talents in fields of cooking, musical talents, planting trees and offering workshops. Through these experimental spaces there is an opportunity to find resonance with one another that extends beyond words and instead creates solidarity through these activities. This kind of learning requires a flexibility that embraces

spontaneity, which could also be guided by a bigger influence of shared, collective consciousness – it requires a trust in participative parity and responsible participation.

## **5.4 Fields of diffraction**

After experiencing these t-learning short narratives and spending time in each of the field sites and pedagogical experiments with me, I am sure you are wondering, as I have been, how I might string this all together?

I begin this stringing together by surfacing a gap in the field of environmental education research, one that I can see is there in practice and in people, but which is not often written about or systematically inquired into. This recognises that environmental education holds a sacred energy that does not need to be formulated into teaching as such, or into a normative pedagogy, but rather the nature of life, lived convivially with others (human and more-than-human) in the everyday, becomes the teacher and the teaching. The teaching becomes the ability to receive the signals and the signs and to tune into what is being communicated on various layers and levels. This is a practice of being attentive to our worries, empathetic to the ways in which we navigate them, supportive of an imagination that can explore new possibilities, with a sense of bravery to share these worries with others. It involves patiently letting new responses emerge, engaging in call-and-response activities (both verbal and non-verbal, collective and solitary), experimenting with new activities and reflecting through the cycles and periods in one's life on how one has shifted and changed and celebrating these transformations.

If we are to understand environmental education, I also believe it is important to be connected to the spiritual aspects of life. In essence, for me, nature is spirit; there is an inherent creative intelligence within nature and so when we start to see our interconnectedness to this organisational pattern, we sync to the cycle and flow with the path of evolution. This research project highlights that spirituality is the essence to sustainability. With the rise of modernity, Eurocentric epistemology and the colonisation of the global south, there has been a descent from the grounded understanding of the symbiotic relationships found within all ecosystems, as well as an erasure of indigenous thought and practices that account for other organisms. A

rise of greed and capitalistic/ linear understanding has therefore emerged and become dominant in the space of regenerative action.

To transform these spaces, we need to heed a call to "stay with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016) and to become cognisant of what has accumulated through these shifts inflicted through colonisation. This is something I have actively practised and experimented with others. I did not take on a thesis to solve these troubles, but rather to stay with them. There is a level of discomfort experienced when it comes to matters of death and decay – instead of honouring this aspect of the cycle, it is often hidden, pushed away and deliberately ignored. This seems like a grave mistake to me. When we do not decompose, digest and allow the shift between death and rebirth, we end up with pockets of refuge, of 'waste' and artefacts that seem misplaced. Yet, when we look into nature there is no such thing as 'waste' – everything gets utilised, transformed and regenerated. A tree is able to release its leaves as the seasons and cycles change so that its leaves become part of protecting the soil it grows in. These leaves have a purpose in the life cycle of the tree, even if when they appear to not be used by the tree. I have come to understand that everything has a purpose, including humans. The more we can enquire about our own existence and role in an ecosystem, the more we are able to sustain this symbiotic relationship we form with the universe.

When speaking of spirituality, there is often denial from those stern in their approach to logic and reasoning; in many ways I have had to quieten this conversation within the thesis to meet the 'academic conventions' placed on a master's candidate.

My challenge, and even I would argue, the challenge for environmental education, therefore is that it requires us as educators to enable experiences that begin to indicate these lessons within the context and understanding of learner and their entangled relationality in a complex assemblage of ecosystems. Because we each have our own meaning-making processes, it is difficult to express the essence of spirituality in tangible, physical and material ways.

Spirituality is often expressed through narratives, art and dance as these are what allow lessons to become tangible, and these artistic artefacts have specific kinds of agency, which anthropologist Alfred Gell (1998) called "indicies of agency". Yet,

because we each have our own way of creating meaning, there might be resistance to the perspective of another, and resistance to how they may come to that perspective. As I begin to illustrate my own experiences and the sacred essence found within them, I hope to ignite a curiosity in others so that they too feel compelled to experiment with their experience. “Knowledge is not rooted in facts, it’s rooted in curiosity...” (Chopra & Tanzi, 2013). I have found that it is my own curiosity that has led me to deeper understanding and while I am able to express this understanding, it is not translated through words; rather the combination of feelings and thoughts, artefacts of agency, etc. may land within another. The framework in which I propose a structure for a pedagogical innovation for pathways towards ecological citizenship learning is one that moves through the Place of Worry, Possibility, Emergence and Process to encompass this bigger knowing, being, and doing together, and can be applied to a variety of contexts. This framework has demonstrated to me how this process can happen within various time frames – shifting away from product and goal oriented outcomes to instead becoming perceptive to shifts within perception.

Diffractive processes mean there are a multitude of ways for individuals to experience and understand the world and when we are able to hold them in tandem, connections and relationality of social, cultural and historical factors can further influence our human identities (Thiele, 2014).

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## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND BODYBOOK

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In conclusion, or perhaps see this rather as an active pause, or a contraction towards birthing something from my research journey and the ‘womb wisdom’ it contains, I offer a multiple genre diffractive text that speaks to, calls for, and nudges us towards an embodied pedagogical praxis for ecological citizenship. It cycles back and into the insights that each of the places offer for a more regenerative approach to education and learning. In the beginning of this thesis I introduced four key concepts which appeared in the research questions (pedagogy, embodiment, alternative teachers and communities, and t-learning); these concepts correlate to each of the places summarised below to reveal insights gained from this body of work.

### **Place of Worry – Pedagogy**

The Place of Worry can seem disembodied and disconnected from the ecological world and therefore our own bodies, limiting our meaning-making capacities. Through this disconnection, it can perpetuate binary and dichotomy thinking – good or bad, science or art, western knowledge or indigenous knowledge. Pedagogy that does not consider the ecological continuum may be perpetuated in education by focusing solely on academic content and skills, without addressing the broader context in which learning takes place. In such an approach, the natural environment may be treated as a separate and disconnected entity from the classroom or school; this is a kind of ecological apartheid (McGarry, 2013) and students may not be taught to value or appreciate the interconnectedness of all living things.

To counter this ‘apartheid’, allowing ourselves to dwell in the Place of Worry, can offer a pedagogical turn that can be characterised by ‘staying with the trouble’ (Haraway, 2016). It is within these crises that we bring healing and we come to notice the places in which we are being called to heal and regenerate. Indeed, it was my own crisis within my womb, which has been a pedagogy, teacher and guide into becoming more embodied, more response(able) and more aware of these interconnected crises. This impulse to stay with the trouble of my wounded womb, led me on an embodied learning process in which I found myself becoming an ecological citizen; indeed, I was able to

find collaborative pedagogies to support this learning through that journey. The Place of Worry is not a dead end, but a way through, a way towards an embodied learning.

### **Place of Possibility – Embodiment**

The Place of Possibility is characterised by the shifting, moving and evolving dynamic of regeneration and life; it emphasises embodying and accepting the changing dynamics of birth, life and death. The womb has become a figuration and diffractive instrument for meaning-making in my learning, and in others who have accompanied me. It has offered ways to see/feel the opportunity in the death and rebirth phase as a means to absent absences (Bhaskar, 2016). The Place of Possibility is rooted in trusting the intuitive insights of our bodies, of our collaborative intelligence, and in affirming our desires as a part of our evolving identity and relational assembling, and subsequent meaning-making.

### **Place of Emergence – Alternative Teachers and Communities**

The Place of Emergence is characterised by the *vesica piscis* used here to show the relational partnership that emerges between two entities, known as the third space. It is within the third space that an emergence arises, bringing with it an opportunity to connect to the wisdoms not always expressed through words and language but sometimes through metaphors and symbols. The third space is very important within the entire learning process; it is the middle ground between known/unknown, between personal/relational and many other contrasting qualities in the Place of Worry can exist in and be worked with in this third space of emergence. Just as the womb cannot anticipate the child that will emerge, in terms of personality and their way of being and doing in the world, so too, in the third space we cannot anticipate what might emerge in response to being in the Place of Worry and Possibility.

### **Place of Process – T-learning**

The Place of Process is characterised by the iterative and diffractive meaning-making process that forms through the telling of stories and sharing in conviviality. What is highlighted through the t-learning stories in this thesis is the importance of interconnectedness, embodied praxis, conviviality and transformative praxis.

The interconnectedness and relational intelligence of people, planet, and communities through ecosystems of knowledge highlight the importance of breaking down silos to promote cross-disciplinary learning, and the importance of having the courage to cross boundaries with care and empathy.

In t-learning, the processes of embodiment, conviviality and transformation are key.

**Embodiment:** The field site stories emphasise the importance of becoming aware of and working with the body in order to heal from trauma and emotional blockages, and describe how arts-based research (such as research creation praxis, which stays with the creation event, as a site for worry, possibility and emergence) can be a powerful tool for embodied learning towards ecological citizenship.

**Conviviality:** The stories explored the potential of convivial experiences, such as communal gardening, cooking, and storytelling, to enrich our imaginative capacities, foster biocentric values, and promote ecological citizenship. In this way, 'net-working' in communities of practice can be re-framed as public pedagogies that emerge in net-gardening, net-cooking, net-storylistening, etc.

**Transformation:** The stories also highlighted the transformative potential of warmth work, sound, music, and non-verbal communication in promoting personal and collective emergence and creating spaces for processing worries, exploring possibilities, and embodying ecological insights.

This is an active research process that is iteratively stimulated through the cycles we are part of, yet it also requires space in which to hear the echoes of movement. We need to find spaces of stillness and drop into deep listening practices as Macintyre et al., (2020) pointed out: "The ontological dimensions of learning relations are shown by 'invisible processes', which represent transformations that take place but appear hidden or not immediately visible" (p.4).

I do not claim to offer a research framework, curricula or even clearly articulated pedagogy in this thesis, but rather a kind of cartography, a kind of hand-drawn map,

of how I learned to become a more embodied ecological citizen. What I offer in this study is a thickly described multi-genre text that comes with this 'map' and allows those who use it, to flow through the 'places', as a means to orient ourselves in an embodied way, removing any unnecessary angst or existential dread, to navigate and keep track of a learning journey. This journey can start in a Place of Worry, opening into a Place of Possibility, assimilating the two into a Place of Emergence and moving through the Place of Process into a regenerative force.

Reiterating cycles and flowing between spaces is the work in the Place of Process. Our minds and meaning-making capacities are relentless, restless and also regenerative. This work spirals one into spaces to re-encounter, re-cycle, re-introduce and to remember, re-imagine and re-generate our educational capacities (Macintyre et al., 2020).

I end this thesis with a conceptual image and reflection, named the Bodybook. This consists of a final image, with symbols and short pieces of text, that link each of the concepts developed through this journey into a simple refrain. It is an 'anti-handbook', not limited to one 'hand' that holds a book on what we must do to be 'good ecological citizens' but rather challenges the normative traditions of method (Manning, 2016) and 'best-practice'. It does not claim to be an 'idiot's guide to ecological citizenship'; rather it calls for us to develop 'bodybooks', something embodied that carries all the complexities of inner/outer entanglements. The bodybook here is simply an image and short explanation of the four phases presented in the framework I collaboratively developed on this journey. As I have argued, the triple C crisis requires not a single methodology or way of being but rather an acceptance of the myriad and plurality of ways of being and doing to aid learning and transformation. Transformation is an in-movement process which is best conceptualised through the cyclical understanding of birth, life and death and is a part of creation, creativity and research-creation. Death becomes an important space and place in which new things may emerge by providing an actively absent space. The death space is also metaphorically rich and connected to the decomposers within natural spaces – showing that learning and assimilation of knowledge happens through practical networks found in mycelium and rhizomatic methods, allowing curiosity to lead to processes of actualisation. This kind of learning is iterative and cyclical, showing that over time and through multiple explorations there

is an opportunity to learn in a way that is congruent with the natural rhythms of the Earth, identity and therefore ecological citizenship.

This kind of ecological citizenship also gives attention to reciprocity and symbiosis, creating third spaces of phenomena and calling for 'co-development' such as co-defining concerns and co-creating pathways through finding resonances of understanding. These kinds of collaborations can be formed through spoken language but also through embodied actions of dancing, cooking, storytelling, gardening and many more activities in which one can explore in relation to other beings. It is through conviviality that opportunity arises to express and to be mirrored in ways which stimulate learning and understanding.

The humble 'hand-drawn map' that follows explores what kind of learning embodies within your own understanding. It begins with dwelling on the thoughts, feelings and beliefs which feel difficult, painful and worrying for both the trajectory of one's human life as well as for the continuation of the planet. It is important to approach them with compassion and openness to learn from them, whether that be in a space co-created with others or experienced in an ecological community.

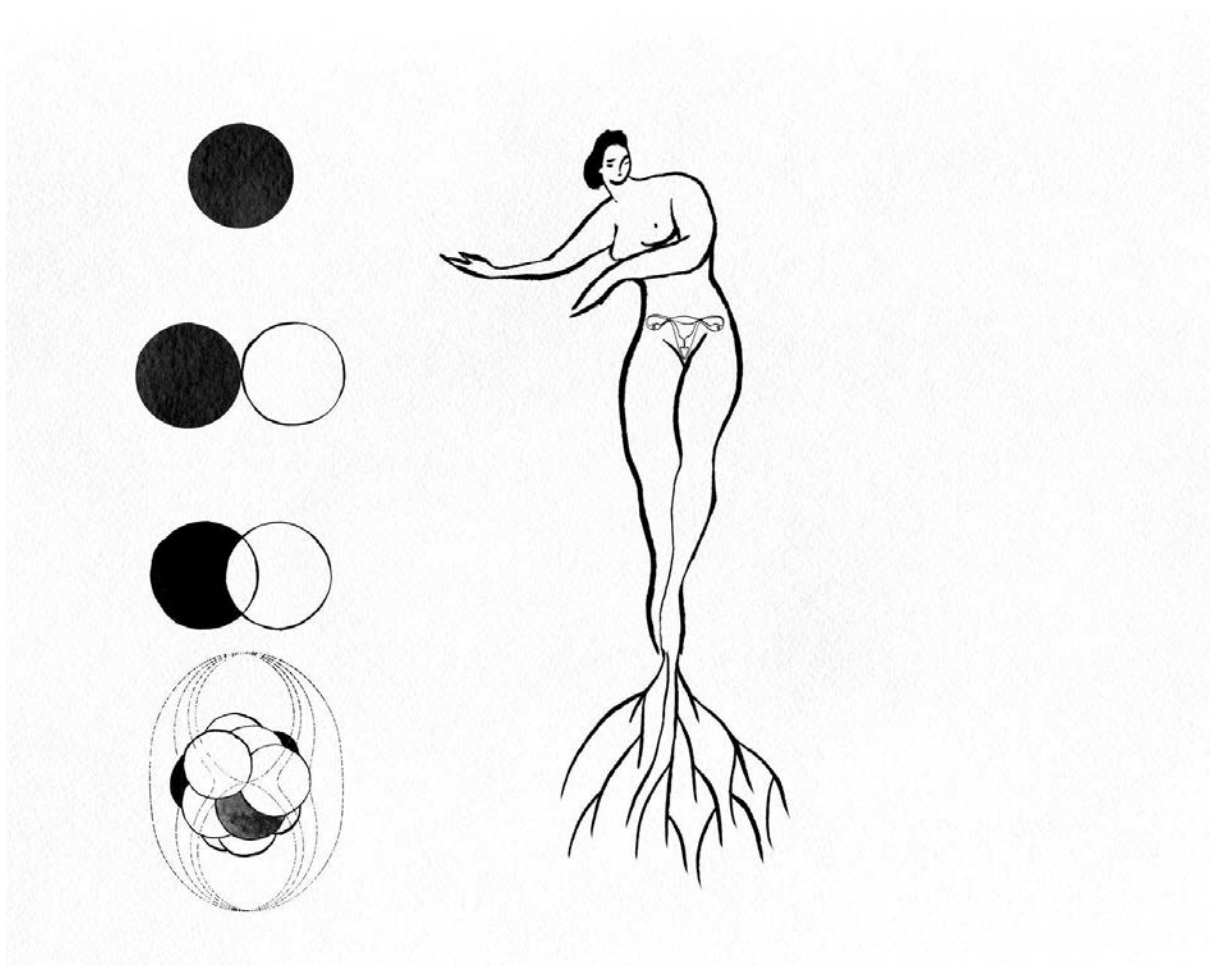
Secondly, through creating a space for all to be present, possibilities can be reinforced through politics of affirmation, trusting that what is currently present can change through cyclical notions. Giving attention and focusing on affirmation seeds possibilities for perceptivity transformation.

Thirdly, it is important to allow the third space to exist (the merging of polarities) and not be attached to one way of seeing or remaining attached to a particular way to move forward. Instead we need to allow the coagulation of contestation to occur which creates an emergence of insight; this insight may take some time and be iteratively felt. This is also a space to experiment with new ideas and to creatively explore new relations of being and doing – this can look like t-learning, research creation, arts-based research and or any form of creation (cooking, gardening, painting, dancing, singing, drumming).

Lastly, we need to allow things to be observed over time, to notice signs, symbols and cues which consistently emerge – through creative experiments and storytelling, one may begin to unpack sentiments and ontological shifts which lead to continuous learning and interacting with others, offering a rich web of meaning-making.

The human body is highly intelligent and through opening to its perceptivity, to remaining open to one's curiosities and trusting in its intelligence, healing, learning, growing and evolving occurs. The body can provide its own pedagogy of embodiment to learn from the alternative teachers and communities and transgressing/transforming into an ecological citizen. Below I present my Bodybook and invite you to explore...

## Bodybook



*Image 1 revisited: The bodybook flow*

The Place of Worry can often be felt in (but is not limited to) the head, the space where we rationalise and compartmentalise as a means to define and make meaning – this is often the space where dichotomy and binary thinking exist. As we shift further into our bodies, to become embodied, we move through our hearts, feeling into the possibility of our greatest desires and shifting away from the rational. We allow what feels most exciting to live within us, utilising politics of affirmation to affirm what is calling to be soothed. Within the body we open into tentacular forms of knowing, feeling and sensing – this often requires us to listen not only through the ears but through every pump of blood from the heart and sensing into organs all around the body. Dropping into a deeper awareness towards our bellies, we can sense into the gut where the emergence of wisdom is felt – within the gut we house our microbiome which is interacting with our immune system along our gut lining. Through our gut we have digesting capacity which enables an assimilation of our worries and possibilities, calling on the communities of microorganisms and their pluriversal knowledge. Lastly, we move into a Place of Process opening up our creative capacities and anchoring into our genitalia; within this space we allow a creative flow into the mycelial roots for paths to be created. As one begins to take inspired action from these places, we come to learn and lean into perceptivity and develop agency in how we respond. This process emphasises that we need to respond with our whole bodies and move away from re-enacting and reacting patterns that already exist within our neural networks, instead leaning into the unknown through convivial pedagogies. These convivial pedagogies stem out of our bodies into our roots, making new connections with other bodies and life worlds along the way.

Through these convivial pedagogies we create pathways that shift from our bodies and extend into the spaces around us, creating communicative networks that do not rely on strategies such as words and language but instead work through more subtle forms felt within the body, through chemical signals of hormones, through interactions of microbial species and their host cells, opening us up to a multi-species rendering of knowing, being and doing. The mycelial roots feed an interactive web of connections that cross borders and demarcated ‘knowings’, becoming porous and entangled. In activities such as dancing, cooking, gardening or storytelling, we open ourselves up to regeneratively move through these places again, where more thoughts arise causing

worries and concerns. By anchoring deeply into their wisdom that illuminates through these cracks, possibilities open for emergence and insight.

This bodybook is a representation of how learning is happening throughout our bodies, and while I have named particular spaces to bring attention to, these spaces are not bounded, but rather porous, entangled and interconnected – the aim is to bring awareness to all the sensations within the body, to be present with the worries that arise and to seek their opportunity to heal in various layers with possibilities and emergences of wisdom that arise through this process of feeling.

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