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CO-COMPOSING an ENDARKENED ACOUSTEMOLOGY:

Sonic approaches toward breaking hierarchical hegemony through ethnography and
distributed authorship

by

Elizabeth Lassiter

A Dissertation and Portfolio of Creative Works submitted for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

City, University of London
Department of Music

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PORTFOLIO SUMMARY

A Progeny for Perpetual Independence (2020-2021) – Full Score (including piano reduction)

Commissioned by Washington National Opera for Kennedy Center Cartography Project

Librettist: Junauda Petrus-Nasah

Co-Composed by Liz Gre and members of the Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN community: Kevin, Dameun, Joi, Miko, Tyrai, Adriana, and Jameria

Orchestration: Double Bass, Cello, Violin, Piano, Soprano

A Progeny for Perpetual Independence (2021) – Filmed performance

Directed by: T.L. Benton, Mecca Filmworks Released – 3 Feb 2022

Length: 14' 25"

More Powerful than the Sun (2020-2021) – Graphic Score

Graphic Score by: Liz Gre Interpretations:

Angharad Davies (B): 21' 05"

Shukura Huggins (C): one-page, written Liz Gre (D): 1' 58"

Combined Interpretation by Gre and Davies (E) Sound Installation Total Run Time: 21' 32" looped.

Three Gold Threads (2023) - Film

Film Directed by: Liz Gre

Co-Composed by: Liz Gre, Welcome Here Mixing by: Jonathan Hucks

Installation TRT: 6'00 looped

We Invoke the Black. To Rest. (2020) - Film

Commissioned by Tate Britain for a collaborative performance with Enam Gbewonyo in response to Lynette Yiadom-Boakye's Fly In League With the Night

Co-composed by Liz Gre and Tate Collective Producers as participants Afeni, Jasmine, Emem and Haris.

Live performance: 11 December 2020, TRT 20' Clip attached 9'.

formed from water - 35mm film, digitised.

weaved through - 35mm film, digitised.

inside outside - 35mm film, digitised.

the soil was our first language - 35mm film, digitised.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge, first, the Divine Creator and those who have guided my path from the spiritual realm through the material realm. I name Pearline Green Govain, Will Govain, Ivory Govain, Ethel Lassiter, Rev. Wright Lassiter, Sr., Dr. Wright L. Lassiter, Jr., Louis L. Lassiter, Ethel (Sis) Lassiter, Scott “Bud” Franklin, Jr. Josephine Myles Franklin, Lula Pugh, and all my Egun before them.

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ABSTRACT

Sonically suspended in familiarity, memory, reflexivity and imagination the interwoven fields and methods of study in sound, listening, and ethnography have laid a vast environment ahead for contemporary composers. One that is rich for new meaning and new material. Further to novelty, I press into this in-between-space to offer a methodology to create work that interrogates structures of hierarchy, and histories of hegemonic practice. In this text, I suggest a path marked and signposted by radical (as in, intentionally against established structure) shifts in thinking around ethnographic art practice that turn away from western, hegemonic and Eurocentric standards of research, consumption, listening, and sounding.

I offer endarkened co-composition as such a methodology, and as an experience and experiment of presence. I present theory-through-practice: collaborative and participatory composition methods that rely on innate forms of Black and Indigenous storytelling as qualitative research methods. In dialogue with reflexive autoethnography, collaborative practice and storytelling, such a critical and anticolonial listening practice grounds endarkened co-composition as a generative method. An endarkened co-composition methodology considers a version of listening and composing that generates new thought, relationships, and at the furthest extent – new worlds.

The research is presented with a portfolio of five multi-media works under the subtitles endarkened acoustemologies, notation, and performance. This includes: three co-composed pieces (A Progeny of Perpetual Independence written for Piano, Viola, Cello, Double Bass and Soprano performed live, Three Gold Threads, written for electronics, piano and voice, composed for and presented as a short film, We Invoke the Black. To Rest, written for electronics and voice presented in a collaborative livestream performance) graphic score (More Powerful Than the Sun, and four iterations of interpretations) and photographs taken

on 35mm film, digitised.

INTRODUCTION

When I think about my mother's humming, I hear familiarity. I also see a furrowed brow of concentration and smell the echo of her perfume. This sonic memory evokes such a rich audio landscape that is comprised by all senses. Let my mother tell her memory of her own mother's humming and yet another time, another life, another imaginary emerges interweaved with my own. Together, my mother and I traverse time and space through recollection and yet suspend memory as if we could grasp it.

The interwoven fields and methods of study in sound, listening, and ethnography, have laid a vast environment ahead for contemporary composers. What follows, suggests a path marked and signposted by radical (as in, intentionally against established structure) shifts in thinking around ethnographic art practice that turn away from Eurocentric standards of research, consumption, listening, and sounding. It is in this suspension, that I offer a place for rich composition. One that is rich for new meaning and new material.

Below, I offer a methodology - endarkened co-composition - to create work that interrogates structures of hierarchy and histories of hegemonic practice. Derived from S.R Tolliver's considerations of recovering Black storytelling with qualitative research and collaborative compositional processes, endarkened co-composition exists as an experience of presence.

This is an exploration of the theory-through-practice that shapes endarkened co-composition - a collaborative and participatory method of composition as research, that relies on innate forms of Black and Indigenous storytelling, as qualitative research methods. Remaining in dialogue with reflexive autoethnography, collaborative practice, and endarkened storywork, such a critical and anticolonial listening practice grounds endarkened co-composition as a generative method. Endarkened co-composition methodology considers

version of listening and composing that generate new thought, relationship, and at the furthest extent - new worlds.

The foundation of endarkened co-composition is firmly rooted in the evocative power of memory and the interplay of sensory experiences. Just as the recollection of my mother's humming conjures a multisensory landscape, the methodology of endarkened co-composition seeks to harness these intricate layers of perception to create a new realm of artistic expression. By immersing oneself in the suspension of memory, the composer can cultivate a space ripe for rich composition. This space, informed by the interwoven fields of sound, listening, and ethnography, presents contemporary composers with a fertile ground for innovative exploration. The methodology offers a pathway that transcends established structures, embracing radical shifts in thinking to interrogate hierarchical systems and challenge hegemonic practices.

In a departure from Eurocentric norms, endarkened co-composition emerges as a method that amplifies underrepresented narratives and voices. Building upon the principles of endarkened storywork and reflexive autoethnography, this methodology intertwines qualitative research with collaborative compositional processes. By centring the innate forms of storytelling found within Black and Indigenous cultures, endarkened co-composition becomes a conduit for presence - a way of experiencing and sharing stories that defies traditional boundaries. This approach embraces collaboration, participation, and critical listening, serving as a catalyst for generating new realms of thought and relationships.

The essence of endarkened co-composition is deeply entwined with decolonization, offering a framework for qualitative research that challenges hegemony and dismantles colonial structures. An endarkened co-composition methodology exists within a frame of decolonized qualitative research. This methodology encompasses interconnected yet distinct phases: a mode of working that draws from endarkened storywork, the act of collaborative

composition informed by endarkened co-composition, and the unique outputs that emerge from this process. In practice, considered in Chapter 3, distinctions between endarkened co-composition as a way of working and endarkened co-composition as a type of output have emerged. Not quite phases or steps, the distinction serves to aid in the consideration of first, how a work is made within a group or community, second, the act of composing collaboratively and making musical and sonic decisions from endarkened co-composition, and thirdly then, how the creative work made from this process stands distinct from works made with other modalities and methodologies. While I have named these steps numerically, it is vital to insist that this format is not meant to provide an immovable order of steps for creation, but rather to clarify the three areas to be considered in subsequence.

Chapter 1 delves into the collaborative and egalitarian nature of endarkened co-composition, employing endarkened storywork methodologies. This exploration underscores the significance of weaving narratives and experiences within a communal context, highlighting the importance of co-presence and shared agency. In Chapter 2, the focus shifts to the sonic, aesthetic, and musical considerations that arise from endarkened co-composition. As the methodology intersects with radical sonic theory, we navigate uncharted territory, allowing the interplay of diverse perspectives and experiences to shape the creative process. Finally, Chapter 3 contemplates the tangible outcomes of endarkened co-composition – endarkened acoustemologies and performances. Here, the studio transforms from a confined space into a dynamic environment that engages with the world at large.

The portfolio works reflect a tapestry of voices and narratives gathered through ethnographic methods. Each piece stands as a testament to the power of collaborative authorship, embracing the ethos of co-composition and distributed agency. Where scholars have created similes ‘artist as...’ to expand artistic production beyond the studio, I consider endarkened co-composition as a way of expanding the studio itself. Disrupting and

deconstructing the physical and psychological walls that separate the composer's studio from the world around them. The notion that familiarity and the act of centring the narratives of women of the African diaspora can disrupt hegemonic hierarchies in cultural anthropology has framed my portfolio, presented in chapter three. I share five works entitled We Invoke the Black. To Rest., A Progeny for Perpetual Independence, More Powerful Than the Sun, Three Gold Threads and an untitled series of photographs. In these pieces, I creatively explore aspects of distributed authorship and co-composition, through ethnographic methods of research and data gathering such as interview, storytelling, field recording, process-based workshops within community, observation, autoethnography, and reflexive analysis.

Endarkened co-composition is not solely a method of artistic creation; it is a philosophy that challenges dominant paradigms, embraces diverse perspectives, and redefines the boundaries of qualitative research and artistic practice. As the portfolio unfolds, it unveils a transformational journey that echoes the multi-sensory evocation of memory, ultimately weaving a narrative of presence, collaboration, and the reclaiming of voices silenced by hegemony.

CHAPTER 1: Co-Presence and Creative Synergy Within the Unintended

A photograph of two bronzed Black women with arms interlinked, fingers delicately connected. Metallic green eyeliner that kisses black mascara on eyelids, squinting from a gentle smile. Red Ghanaian dirt below a lime green bed sheet. The image I describe isn't the story and yet it holds one. I was the photographer who recorded this moment. When I developed the photographs I, perhaps naively, expected to see a story that I curated in my mind's eye reflected on film. A story of contrived connection -based on romanticized images of Africa as some sort of 'Motherland' by birth right. As a place where a connection that travels time lies in waiting for my Diasporic hands to sink into. When I received the images, however, what emerged were double-exposed images because of an unknown malfunction with my camera. Nothing clear, nothing engineered, nothing mirrored. Rather, what emerged from the accidental superimposing were memory triggers. I recalled the stories shared over

dinner, the trips to market, the downpour rainy nights. There, in Kumasi Ghana for perforcraZe International Artist Residency. But those photos and the unplanned double exposure also made evident the presence of what I could not, what I could never understand. The unknown. The vague. What I could have imagined was never what resulted.

I recall these photographs, to be explored - contextually and aesthetically - again in Chapter 3, to orient our thought to where ethnography and reflexive autoethnography framing, intentionally informs an artmaking practice. In the exploration of these evocative photographs, their contextual and aesthetic dimensions are revisited, aiming to align our perceptions with the convergence of ethnography and reflexive autoethnography within an intentional artistic framework. Through a practice that orbits around composition, drawing inspiration from visual media such as photography, installation art, and graphic notation, this chapter establishes a dynamic terrain from which endarkened co-composition emerges. This methodology interlaces with the work of scholars who have scrutinized the intersection of ethnography and art, destabilizing hegemonic structures through their creative endeavors.

1.1 Shaking the ground we move from

While endarkened co-composition methodology is presented from within in the academy, it is also permission to tum away from the constraints of hegemonic epistemologies within the academy. The shift is seismic, as we depart from the status quo. Endarkened co-composition methodology is not just a scholarly construct; it's a liberating journey away from the confines of entrenched epistemological hierarchies. It acknowledges refuge by way of opacity. That the epistemologies of Black and Indigenous cultures that have been considered unclear or further - invalid in the eyes of Western and neoliberal epistemologies compose a protective layer of opacity that defends the complexities of Black of Indigenous epistemologies when confronted by colonial paradigms. Traditionally, the study of people and cultures has operated within an 'us versus them' paradigm, serving to elucidate the 'othered them' for the dominant Western, European, Christian, heterosexual, male 'us.' These

approaches reach far beyond the identities and positionalities of the person conducting the research; rejecting institutionalized dogma that remains unquestioned. Rather, they are systemised and enforced as undoubtedly right and inconsequentially (un)challengeable.

Endarkened co-composition looks at the history of qualitative research and declines it, instead centring the epistememes that have guided people of the global majority from before time. Endarkened co-composition diverges from this legacy, delving into epistemic foundations that have guided global majority communities since time immemorial. It is a grounding in the overlooked, the already-critiqued, the already-shaped - an exploration of the familiar terrain from which endarkened co-composition blossoms. It sprouts from what already exists but has not been considered valid; ways of working that have already been critiqued and analysed; considerations that have already shaped practice. This positioning transforms endarkened co-composition from being solely a fresh method of composition into a sound practice that resonates with qualitative research. I propose that it is this rich mix of familiar ground from which endarkened co-composition sprouts. Further, this mix positions endarkened co-composition as not only a novel mode of composition, but also as a sound practice as qualitative research methodology.

S.R. Toliver introduces an intricate reconfiguration through the concept of endarkened storywork. As Toliver defines it, endarkened storywork methodology re-centres Black epistemologies, which have not only survived generations of trauma and violence but have also defied the legacy of disenfranchisement. Toliver's scholarship lays the groundwork for a complete reframing of the academy of qualitative research. This radical recentring reframes the landscape of qualitative research within academia. It's not just about making room for Black narratives; it's about attributing sovereignty and significance to Black storytelling. Endarkened storywork positions Black storytelling as a legitimate form of qualitative ethnographic research, untangling it from the Eurocentric standards that seek to 'enlighten'

cultures by rendering them more comprehensible, more consumable. Instead, it becomes a method and an act of audacious recall - one that preserves the opacity of ephemera, safeguarding it from facile appropriation or dilution.

Within this paradigm of ethnographic inquiry, storytelling takes centre stage, infusing the process with its artistic essence while honouring the opaqueness of subtleties. In Toliver's approach, one embarking upon an endarkened research methodology sees themselves as a collector of stories as well as an active agent in the experience of sharing. The dialogue doesn't merely entail the passive reception of someone's experiences; it's a reciprocal exchange where the artist-researcher's voice intertwines with the narrative. Rather than just receive the data of someone's experience through interview, for example, the artist-researcher lends their voice to the dialogue. Within this exchange, threads of connection weave through, memories of past lives and epigenetic imprints resonate, and the present finds its harmony. Yet, these intangible elements materialize through an alchemical fusion of interconnectedness, emerging through the untrammelled act of storytelling - a stark contrast to the confines of Eurocentric qualitative research, where experiences are harvested like raw data for the creation of the 'next masterpiece.'

Endarkened co-composition echoes the spirit of endarkened storywork methodology, converging to fashion an ethnographically informed composition practice that staunchly opposes the Eurocentric framework, which has left a wake of trauma and dominance. This transformative fusion breathes life into a new methodology - one that reverberates with the symphony of voices, narratives, and histories that have long remained obscured.

1.2 An Ethnographically Informed Art Practice

From the confluence of art and ethnography arises a dynamic space where the interplay of cultural encounters and creative expressions becomes a fertile ground for exploration. From within the realm of artistic practice, the exploration of ethnography

illuminates art as a profound social and cultural encounter, as articulated by Hjorth and Sharp (2014) in their observation that ethnography ‘foregrounds art as a social/cultural encounter’ (Hjorth and Sharp 128). Igniting a quest for a methodology capable of disrupting the conventional, fleeting, and transitory essence often associated with encounters. This notion of art as an ‘encounter’ introduces a compelling tension that drives both theoretical and practical exploration, Yet, in delving deeper, one is confronted with the stark history of classical anthropology, with its trail of undeniable trauma, intellectual violence, and erasure. This paradigm shift propels us into a realm where art becomes a nexus for dialogue, exchange, and reflection, beckoning us to delve deeper into the nuances of this encounter. The very notion of art as an ‘encounter’ serves as a catalyst, prompting both theoretical contemplation and practical investigation. This idea, rich with complexity, sparks a quest to decipher and redefine the contours of what an encounter truly signifies. A call resounds for a methodology capable of disrupting the transient and fleeting nature often associated with encounters, demanding a fresh perspective that can breathe enduring meaning into the artist's engagement with their subject matter. Often, but certainly not always, in stark contrast, the ethos of socially responsive, collaborative, and participatory artistic practices emerges. This offers a potential avenue for reframing, reclaiming, and restructuring socio-political engagements that have been influenced and made into epistemes due in large part to the impact of hegemonic anthropological and ethnographic study.

While recognizing that not all anthropological research has been injurious, it's evident that the very structures underpinning the standards and validity of such research have been rooted in heteronormative, colonial, eugenic, and racially biased representations of Black and global Indigenous cultures. Yet, as we navigate this juncture, we confront the historical specters of classical anthropology, whose legacy is etched with the scars of trauma, intellectual violence, and cultural erasure. In a potentially stark relief, the concept of socially

responsive, collaborative, and participatory artistic practices emerges, heralding a departure from the oppressive echoes of the past.

In what ways might artists reframe, respond to, reclaim, and restructure the socio-political engagements made into epistemes, due in large part to the impact of hegemonic anthropological and ethnographic study? Noted first by art critic and historian Hal Foster (1996) as the ‘turn’ towards ethnography, artists work through wide-ranging mediums to address the personal and social impact of damaging anthropological and ethnographic research. Examples abound, however, works like Kameelah Janan Rasheed’s SmooOOoOooooOooth Operator: the eternal outlays ennoble and rekindle an unlikely savior (2023)¹, and Tavares’ Strachan’s The Awakening (2022)² are two works that offer a reimagined terrain where art can reclaim its agency, reframing and reshaping the socio-political discourse that has been shaped, at times detrimentally, by hegemonic anthropological and ethnographic inquiries.

The seismic shift away from the colonial legacies of anthropology necessitates a method informed by the deconstruction of the very framework that has perpetuated these power imbalances. However, this transformation necessitates a critical examination of the foundational constructs that have historically underpinned anthropological practices. The need to transcend the confines of traditional anthropological frameworks becomes evident, inspiring the search for methodologies that subvert established norms and challenge the power dynamics embedded within them.

Collaborative art, born from the lineage of relational art, carries forth the torch, striving for egalitarian processes within an ethnographically informed creative framework. Yet, as important as these methods are, they still function within the confines of the

¹ <https://kameelahr.substack.com/p/march-2023-one-work-pt-1-smoooooooooth>

² <https://www.mariangoodman.com/exhibitions/tavares-strachan-the-awakening-new-york/>

framework itself. To truly transcend the colonial shadows of anthropology's past, a methodology that challenges the framework itself is imperative. Collaborative art emerges as a natural progression from the legacy of relational art, propelling ideals of egalitarian process into the realm of ethnographically informed artistic creation. It's a fusion of art and ethnography that not only reflects upon the positions of the artist and the audience but also repositions participation as a central tenet. Ethnographically informed art making has the capacity to serve as a powerful lens through which artists and curators can examine cultural contexts, inviting nuanced reflections from both creators and spectators.

Critiques that tie ethnography to art, based on the historical legacy of trauma and the reinforcement of 'otherness,' risk dismissing the potential contributions of anthropologists and thinkers informed by anthropology. It's crucial to recognize that classic anthropological research has often marginalized the insights of Black and Global Majority anthropologists, relegating them to the periphery. It is within the foundation of classic anthropological research to stratify the contributions of Black and Global Majority anthropologists as periphery. Irma McLaurin, poet and anthropologist, carefully considers source of those contributions as due to the wide intellectual reception and embrace of 'the critiques, ideas, metaphors, wisdom, and grounded theories of organic intellectuals in the form of preachers, community activists, street-corner philosophers, and beauty shop therapists alike, who are eloquent about the way in which scholarship has rendered them victims, symbols of poverty, or people without histories' (McLaurin 3).

The embrace that McLaurin references is the same lens that thinkers such as Zora Neale Hurston, Nikki Giovanni, and Octavia Butler, who blur the lines between self, identity, and the global 'body politic,' utilize. Toliver's concept of endarkened storywork resurfaces the spirituality, opacity, and agency of the storytelling self within the domain of qualitative research, aligning with the ongoing ethnographic turn that intertwines the worlds of art and

anthropology.

While the intersection of art and ethnography has been a topic of academic and artistic discourse, the intricate interplay between the two disciplines continues to be a fertile ground for exploration. The conceptual fault lines and overlaps between art and anthropology provoke questions that drive this investigation forward: How can art and anthropology find common ground? How can they enrich one another's theoretical concerns? As a research-based practitioner, this becomes the nexus where a desire to delve into the entanglement of anthropology and art takes shape.

The motivation behind an artist's engagement with ethnographic methods within their practice is as diverse as the artistic realm itself. Just as there's no singular reason for artists to pursue their craft, there's no single answer to this question. However, the evidence suggests a growing trend of artists turning towards ethnographic methods to shape their creative vision. Guided by the understanding that ethnography holds a distinct place within the artistic methodology (Hjorth and Sharp 2014), artists find themselves increasingly entwined with anthropological thought. Ethnographically informed art creation offers the ability to critically examine the positions of both the artist and the audience, repositioning participation as a core element. By embedding ethnography into the creative process, a space is carved for participants to assume a meaningful role in the act of creation. In my research, I am guided by critical artists and practitioners who attend to contextual aims driven by anthropology, and who centre ethnography as a major contributor to aesthetic. Further, as a matter of method in specific affront to the dehumanizing history of anthropological practice, those who step outside of hegemony and against 'the bourgeois institution of autonomous art, its exclusionary definitions of art, audience, [and] identity' (Foster 1996).

In this context, co-presence emerges as a nuanced phenomenon, transcending mere physical presence to embrace a shared beingness among all entities involved -artists,

participants, places, and encounters alike. The emergence of co-presence within this dialogue creates a palpable shift in dynamics. No longer are artists and participants separate entities; instead, a sense of shared presence permeates the creative sphere. The amalgamation of temporal dimensions - past, present, and future - gives rise to what Hjorth and Sharp aptly describe as ‘multiple modes of presence.’ In this profound intermingling, an ethnographically informed practice takes on an embodied essence, moving beyond mere aesthetic impact to become an integral facet of social and creative engagement. Co-presence establishes a domain where both art ethnographies and ethnographically informed works find a harmonious abode. Within the site of co-presence, a proximity is forged between participants and creators.

Within this framework, the notion of endarkened co-presence takes on significance. It becomes a haven for qualitative research, enveloped in the intimacy of storytelling epistemology. By validating Black and Indigenous historical, intuitive, and spiritual modes of meaning-making, a profound connection emerges. This connection challenges entrenched hierarchies by de-centering hegemonic narratives, fostering an environment from which endarkened co-composition can organically flourish. Amidst this exploration, the concept of endarkened co-presence assumes a unique significance. It emerges as a sanctuary for qualitative research, enveloped in the richness of storytelling as an epistemological vehicle. By acknowledging and validating the historical and spiritual dimensions of Black and Indigenous modes of meaning-making, a profound sense of connection is fostered, challenging dominant narratives and reclaiming agency in the process.

The interplay between art and ethnography not only engenders a space of creative inquiry but also a realm where past injustices are confronted and reimagined, where narratives are reclaimed and repositioned. The evolving dialogue between these disciplines unravels new dimensions of artistic expression and scholarly exploration, fostering a

profound synergy that empowers both creators and participants to transcend the confines of conventional encounters and delve into the richness of shared experience. The interconnectedness between art and ethnography gives rise to a transformative synergy, reshaping the contours of creative expression and scholarly inquiry alike. This interplay not only bridges disciplines but also bridges history and present, past and future, inviting artists and researchers to transcend conventional boundaries and immerse themselves in a realm where encounters are no longer fleeting but enduring, no longer disconnected but deeply co-presential. As we navigate this evolving discourse, the tapestry of art and ethnography is rewoven, inviting us to chart new pathways of understanding, representation, and collaboration.

*1.3 A reflection on the site of co-presence in making *A Progeny of Perpetual Independence**

I knew that I wanted to offer a space for contextual contribution by the musicians who would bring ‘A Progeny of Perpetual Independence’ to realization. The commissioning mentor had valid concerns about my score requiring Washington National Opera to play approximately 12 bars of graphic notation and open scoring. These world-class, Musician’s Union members almost exclusively played traditionally notated scores. A piece reflecting on the far-reaching impact of the broadcasted murder of Mr. George Floyd, it was their life’s context that was required to realise ‘Progeny...’, not just their accomplishments within the orchestra. I wanted to invite them into the process, into a site of endarkened co-presence of their own, where they could contribute their stories and experiences by way of interpretation, articulation and melodic phrasing. At the beginning of our three-day workshopping process, hesitation accompanied their acceptance of the challenge. By the time the pieces were ready for recording, the hesitation dissipated, and the site of co-presence developed throughout resulted in a smooth performance and recording. What marked this process as successful was

not the quality of recording, but rather the reflections from the members of the ensemble. The pianist - who was presented with a hybridized score of graphic notation and intentionally enharmonic chord progressions – expressed both confidence in her interpretation and a connection to her own memory of state-sanctioned violence. The violinist, presented with open bar lines and timecodes to encourage a personalised approach to phrasing, reflected on how despite the challenge of stepping outside the comfort of traditionally notated scores, she was able to speak through her instrument in a way that was deeply personal, offering a connection to the piece that was uniquely hers.

1.4 Collaborative Artmaking at the site of co-presence

In their 2013 anthology, *Ways of Working*, social anthropologist Arnd Schneider and visual anthropologist Christopher Wright further consider how interdisciplinary interaction influences creativity, collaboration, and outcomes, whether they manifest as tangible artworks or anthropological representations like photographs, drawings, and creative writings. Here, it is 'the work' that is in focus. This is not only the dialogues that emerge during the ethnographically informed creative process but also the intricate interplay and collaborative synergy that is unveiled within the aesthetic output. It's within the realm of ethnographically informed art practices that a robust framework takes shape, enabling 'the work' to traverse the spectrum of social realities and lived experiences. This approach prompts an intriguing contemplation: Could the integration of ethnographic methods into artistic practices represent a conscious decision undertaken by artists as they craft their own distinctive creative journeys? Perhaps. Ethnographically informed art practices lend to a framework where 'the work' - both the process of creating, and the materialised artwork can critically deal with social realities and experiences.

However, the significance deepens as we centre our attention on the pre-colonial

epistemologies of Black and Indigenous communities worldwide. In this context, endarkened storywork methodology emerges as a powerful rebuttal to the notion that the exploration of cultural textures and intricacies within research serves solely an aesthetic end. The reframing instigated by endarkened storywork disrupts this perspective, challenging the conventional narrative of choice as a trajectory solely for commercial artistic development. But it's crucial to approach this from a balanced standpoint - endarkened co-composition doesn't position itself as an absolutist sanctuary, nor does it adopt a sanctimonious stance that purports to sanctify all aspects of creative ethnographic research. Instead, endarkened co-composition opens a gateway to embrace the complexities, to inhabit the dilemmas, and to accord a place for all emergent facets within the realm of the aesthetic.

The site of endarkened co-presence emerges as a nexus of interdisciplinary interaction, a melting pot where creativity, collaboration, and outcomes converge to give birth to transformative artistic expressions. To fully appreciate the nuances at play, it's essential to explore the key contributors that imbue the process of artmaking with the rich tapestry of co-presence. Let us embark on this journey by unravelling the threads of participation and collaboration, as well as delving into the profound dimension of reflexivity. Moreover, the concept of the artistic device surfaces - a conduit through which the 'flow of productive energies' weaves a collective narrative that resonates beyond the individual artist (Holmes, 2006).

Within the fabric of co-presence, participation and collaboration stand as essential cornerstones. The artist's engagement with diverse voices, perspectives, and experiences intertwines to create a chorus of narratives, each contributing to a broader dialogue that enriches the creative process. The artist's ability to curate this convergence and channel it into a harmonious expression is akin to orchestrating a symphony of ideas and emotions, a symphony that encapsulates the very essence of co-presence.

Reflexivity, another crucial facet, imbues the artistic endeavour with a sense of self-awareness and critical inquiry. It involves a continual dialogue between the artist and the evolving work, a dialogue that echoes the echoes of interdisciplinary interactions and interweaves them into the artistic fabric. This interplay of self-reflection and engagement with external influences enhances the authenticity and depth of the creative output, grounding it in a layered understanding of the socio-cultural context.

The artistic device, akin to a conduit for energies both collective and individual, acts as a bridge that enables the flow of ideas, emotions, and cultural resonances to converge into a cohesive narrative. This device, often subtle and unassuming, carries the power to shape the trajectory of the artwork, allowing it to transcend the boundaries of individual subjectivity and connect with broader societal narratives.

In this intricate web of interdisciplinary interactions and co-presence, the essence of ethnographically informed art practices unfolds. The boundaries between artist, participant, and audience blur, giving rise to a dynamic ecosystem where creativity is nurtured, collaboration thrives, and outcomes resound with the echoes of collective experiences. Through participation, reflexivity, and the artistic device, the artist traverses a labyrinth of co-presence, redefining the contours of artistic expression and unveiling the transformative potential that lies at the intersection of art and ethnography.

1.5 Participation and Collaboration

The concept of an invitation serves as a compelling anacrusis, a musical pickup that sets the tone for the work of artistic creation. Like a pickup, an invitation hints at the forthcoming artistic endeavour, laying the foundation for what lies ahead. However, when we navigate the realm of endarkened co-presence, the invitation becomes more than a mere prelude; it becomes a crucial framing device that encompasses the diverse selves, energies,

and concerns of all who will contribute to the creative process. An invitation extends a beacon of possibility, fostering interactions and exchanges between humans and their contexts, humans and one another, and even humans and non-human entities -a realm of potentialities that stretches beyond the boundaries of our imagination.

To grasp the dimensions of this invitation within the context of artistic creation, we turn to the realm of relational art practices. Rooted in the ethos of interaction and exchange, relational art transcends its own foundation, reaching toward the essence of ‘being together’- a profound encounter between the viewer and the artwork, a collective endeavour that elicits meaning and significance as noted by curator and critic Nicolas Bourriaud (1998). By positioning artistic practice within the framework of relational art, artists extend an invitation that magnifies opportunities for engagement not only with the final artwork but also with the very process of its creation. This invitation becomes a call for audiences, viewers, listeners, and individuals of varying backgrounds to engage, interact, and even interject their influence into the artistic narrative, even as hierarchies may persist.

Yet, as we delve deeper, art curator and critic Claire Bishop's insights offer an added layer of perspective. She highlights that participation within relational art can sometimes be a constructed illusion, where participants are guided towards prescribed actions, rendering them passive observers in the realization of the artwork (Bishop, 2012). In the realm of co-presence, these considerations amplify the importance of the invitation. It prompts us to ponder the very purpose of the invitation in the context of relinquishing control and embracing collaboration.

Positioning this discourse within the lens of endarkened co-presence, we encounter an intricate interplay between the invitation and the core tenets of artistic practice. The invitation serves as an embodiment of the diverse multitudes that converge at the site -an amalgamation of backgrounds, languages, experiences, opinions, identities, and positionalities that

collectively shape the artistic endeavour. Here, the synergy between endarkened co-composition and the site of co-presence becomes evident, harnessing the power of collaboration and participation through the channels of dialogue and storytelling.

In this unfolding narrative, the invitation becomes a conduit for the fictional, the recollected, the imagined, and the remembered. It paves the way for a flow of energy, a dynamic exchange between inquiring artists and the narratives woven by participants. The invitation extends beyond a mere call for input; it invites inquiries, questions, and perspectives that fundamentally reshape the artistic journey and the aesthetic output. The absence of a rigid demand for clarity liberates contributions, allowing them to flourish in their raw, unfiltered form. Where relational art may still thrive within a hierarchical power structure, collaborative art finds alternative points of entry. In collaborative art, artists invite participants to arrive at a point of entry where the participant's interests, social contexts, positioning, and relationship to the social experience may still affect the aesthetic output – a key distinction that can be traced to the relinquishing of power at the root as noted by art historian Grant Kester (2017).

Crucially, this unencumbered approach empowers participants, dismantling any vestiges of a power dynamic that may have once been rooted in the artist's aesthetic supremacy. The invitation, in its generosity, transfers agency to participants, becoming a force that challenges and transcends hierarchical norms. It forges a new paradigm where the art becomes a collective endeavour, a convergence of voices, energies, and narratives that coalesce into a harmonious whole.

As we navigate the realm of endarkened co-presence, the invitation emerges as a transformative instrument. It amplifies collaboration, it celebrates diversity, and it heralds a departure from traditional artistic hierarchies. Through the lens of relational art and participatory practices, the invitation becomes a vessel that navigates the intricacies of co-

presence, ushering in a space where art becomes a shared tapestry. woven from the threads of myriad perspectives, and embracing the symphony of human, non-human, and contextual interactions. The site of endarkened co-presence, participatory practices and, specifically collaboration, releases participants and collaborators from the need to ascribe to the hegemonic standards of clarity to influence the work and its outputs. With an invitation as foundation at the site of endarkened co-presence, multitudes (of background, language, experience, opinion, identity, positionality) are what the artwork will be constituted of.

Endarkened co-composition and the site of co-presence routes collaboration and participation through dialogue and storytelling. In this case, the invitation is for the fictional stories, recollections, imaginations, and memories of participants to create a flow of energy with an inquiring artist. The invitation is also for the enquiries of participants to fundamentally shift and guide the process and thus the output's aesthetic. Further, without the requirement of clarity, those contributions potentially left un-distilled support the agency of participants, thus challenging any power dynamic that maintains the inviting artist's aesthetic omniscience. While other non-hierarchical collaborative art practices do invite both the processes and the work to be influenced by participants and collaborators, endarkened co-composition is unique in that the contributions do not rely on the standard of clarity.

1.6 Reflexivity

Within the intricate tapestry of endarkened co-presence, the element of reflexivity emerges as a profound guiding force, shaping the contours of artistic creation and collaborative engagement. An artistic process situated within endarkened co-presence guides the aesthetic, holding space for contributions from collaborative participants as well as space for an artist to reflect into the process. As the artistic process unfolds, it becomes a symphony of voices, resonating with the narratives, experiences, and reflections of both the artist and

collaborative participants. At its core, endarkened co-presence nurtures a dual space, one that embraces contributions from diverse perspectives while also inviting the artist to engage in introspection and self-discovery. The concept of reflexivity takes on a pivotal role within the site of endarkened co-presence, acting as a guiding principle that shapes the artistic process and invites critical introspection.

An endarkened storywork methodology, as a counter to Eurocentric frames, empowers artists and practitioners to engage in autoethnographic reflexivity. This reflexivity involves an ongoing dialogue with one's own experiences, fostering a deep awareness of the ways personal history, context, and cultural identity interplay with the creative process. As the artist embraces reflexivity, they inhabit a dynamic space where self-discovery and artistic exploration merge.

The process of endarkened co-composition navigates away from hierarchical epistemologies that have long dominated research and artistic practices. The artist's role transforms from a traditional authority figure to an active participant who brings their own subjectivity to the fore. As sociologist Hertz suggests, the artist becomes a 'situated actor' who constructs interpretations and meaning within the artistic endeavour. This recalibration of authority opens pathways for collaborative engagement, where participants' voices are amplified, and their agency acknowledged. The artist's autoethnographic reflexivity, as an intrinsic part of the process, nurtures an environment of shared inquiry and mutual influence. Endarkened storywork, a methodology that steadfastly resists the imposition of Eurocentric frameworks, serves as a foundational pillar within the realm of endarkened co-presence. It dismantles the notion that the inherent ways of meaning-making within Black and Indigenous cultures require validation through Eurocentric lenses.

This rejection of hierarchical epistemes liberates the artist from the shackles of a legacy steeped in hegemony. Instead, the artist steps into the realm of autoethnographic

reflexivity, embodying the principle of 'being' in the moment while simultaneously engaging in a continuous dialogue with lived experiences. Thus, the hierarchical frame that positions the artist or practitioner engaging endarkened storywork no longer maintains the legacy of a hierarchical episteme. Rather, the artist brings an autoethnographic reflexivity to the process. This is to have an ongoing conversation about an experience while simultaneously living in the moment. 'The reflexive ethnographer does not simply report 'facts' or 'truths' but actively constructs interpretations of his or her experience in the field and then questions how those interpretations came about...by bringing subject and object back into the same space...authors give their audiences the opportunity to evaluate them as "situated actors" (i.e., active participants in the process of meaning creation)' (Hertz viii).

The concept of reflexivity, as articulated by Hertz, takes on a profound resonance within the context of endarkened co-presence. No longer confined to a mere reporting of objective facts, reflexivity transforms into an active construction of interpretations rooted in personal experiences. This dynamic process invites the artist to navigate the intricate interplay between subject and object, dismantling traditional hierarchies and positioning both artist and participants as active agents in the co-creation of meaning.

Here, Hertz highlights the space where artists, or in this case authors, are viewed as key and active participants in making meaning. The site of endarkened co-presence is defined by this space -where the contributions of both collaborators and artists/practitioners are the building blocks. Thus, autoethnography serves as a bridge to presence. At the heart of endarkened co-presence lies the concept of autoethnography-a powerful fusion of autobiography and ethnography. 'Autoethnography lies at the intersection of autobiography and ethnography...[calling] on memory and hindsight to reflect on past experiences; talk with others about the past; examine texts such as photographs, personal journals, and recordings...then [...] write these experiences to assemble a text that uses tenets of

storytelling devices, such as narrative voice, character development, and dramatic tension, to create evocative and specific representations of the culture/cultural experience and to give audiences a sense of how being there in the experience feels like whilst doing work within community can no longer hide behind or try to perpetuate an aura of objectivity and innocence' (Adams, Ellis, Jones 2).

Historically, this is all to create a pathway for familiarity so that others and outsiders can understand. Rejecting the aims of familiarity and representation, employing autoethnography whilst situated in endarkened co-presence engage this device as a route towards presence. By bringing their whole selves to the process as vulnerably and generously as they have invited contributing participants. And in one way, the artist has provided an example of reflexivity for participants to recall as they share their stories, knowings, recollections, and imaginings in dialogue.

In the spirit of endarkened co-presence, artists courageously bring their whole selves to the creative process. This act of vulnerability and generosity extends an invitation (regardless of acceptance) to collaborative participants to do the same – to share their stories, perspectives, and imaginings in a space of authentic dialogue. The artist's embodiment of reflexivity offers an example of self-expression for participants to embrace or reject. Through shared vulnerability, a collective presence emerges, weaving a tapestry of interconnected voices that resound with authenticity and resonant vibration.

Ultimately, the embrace of reflexivity within endarkened co-presence exemplifies a transformative shift in artistic practice. It signifies a departure from the confines of objectivity and a departure from the perpetuation of distance between artist and subject. Instead, it embodies a pathway to presence--a space where lived experiences intersect, narratives intertwine, and diverse perspectives converge. In this co-creative symphony, reflexivity becomes a bridge between individual and collective meaning-making, and

endarkened co-presence flourishes as a testament to the power of authentic engagement.

At this junction, it is necessary to introduce a working definition of authenticity. Interviews and focus groups are not everyday conversations. Thus, I cannot apply everyday conversation as a standard for authenticity. Still, rather than considering authenticity in the final creative output, authenticity is considered in process - at the site of endarkened co-presence. Authenticity is not employed here as a pathway for assessing aesthetic via the perception a facilitating artist, curator, audience member or listener. Rather, authenticity is a lens through which the process is assessed, where data (stories) gathered are free from as much conditioning or impositions of a particular sonic aesthetic by any stakeholder other than the creative participants themselves.

1.7 Endarkened co-composition as collaborative creative research

The exploration of endarkened co-composition as a creative research methodology unveils a profound shift in the dynamics of collaboration, engagement, and meaning making. From here, we can take a step back from the site of endarkened co-presence and view what emerges. Guided by the collaborative methods explored above, endarkened co-composition is presented as a creative research method that recentres those who might be considered research 'subjects' as egalitarian research collaborators and experts. Collaborative composing through egalitarian, story-centred qualitative research practiced at the site of endarkened co-presence is considered, here, as endarkened co-composition - a collaborative creative research methodology. This approach represents a departure from traditional hierarchical research paradigms, aiming to empower participants as active contributors and collaborators rather than passive subjects. Through this lens, the site of endarkened co-presence becomes a crucible for the convergence of diverse perspectives, experiences, and voices, giving rise to an innovative and inclusive approach to artistic creation and knowledge production.

At the heart of endarkened co-composition lies a radical reimagining of the researcher's role. No longer relegated to a distant observer, the artist-researcher becomes an integral part of the process, embracing reflexivity as a guiding principle. This reflexivity allows for a continuous dialogue between lived experience and interpretation, fostering a deeper connection between the artist and the participants. As Hertz elucidates, the reflexive ethnographer actively constructs interpretations of experiences, inviting audiences to evaluate them as 'situated actors' in the process of meaning creation. This ongoing conversation between artist and experience becomes a hallmark of endarkened co-presence, where subject and object coexist in a dynamic interplay of perspectives.

The site of endarkened co-presence encourages and assumes that artists and those who accept the invitation to participate will bring as much of their context as they consider safe to bring. The artist in the conglomeration, potentially considered a socially engaged artist, often working with themes deeply personal to themselves, participants and collaborators. When they take up ethnographic methods in their practice, the level of care, concern, and criticality for the content and communities they are working within must be given appropriate space as to not reify the harm of classical anthropology and ethnography, intentional or unintentional. There still is a grappling to be had with the notion that regardless of whatever ethical considerations are made, any ethnographic interventions can cause harm or reify hierarchy (Murphy 97). As I attend to the development of a method of composition as a means for aesthetic output as well as research, it is necessary to pull back the cover of research methodology, what is perhaps a mechanism to hide, and imbue approaches that disrupt the hierarchies in academia, research, and composition practice. In this criticality, there must be a requirement of care for the people and cultures that are engaged in the making process.

John Wynne, research-led sound artist (2010) recognises the challenge that artists (and anthropologists) face to tell another's story without reinforcing a 'shallow reflection of

the received mythology of the other' (Wynne 52). A shallow mythology driven by biases, privileges, and positions left unchecked and unhindered serves only to reify the hegemonic hierarchies that an artist might be trying to avert. Endarkened co- presence harmonizes with autoethnography by inviting participants into a storytelling dialogue. This invitation extends beyond mere representation; it becomes a bridge that connects past experiences with present interactions. The storytelling epistemology embraced in endarkened co-composition enriches the creative process, offering participants the freedom to contribute their stories, recollections, and imaginings. The artist's own autoethnographic reflections act as a guiding light, inspiring participants to share their narratives and engage authentically. The result is a collective tapestry of voices, each contributing to the unfolding artistic work.

Endarkened co-composition emerges as a powerful response to the limitations of conventional research methodologies, particularly in re-presenting the complexities of marginalized communities. By grounding the process in endarkened storywork, the methodology embraces the richness of diverse cultural practices and narratives, rejecting the imposition of Eurocentric frames. This rejection of homogenizing narratives is particularly crucial in addressing historical injustices perpetuated by anthropological practices that have often exploited or misrepresented indigenous and Black cultures.

Feminist, art critic, activist, and curator Lucy Lippard's observations on artists' engagement with communities further accentuate the need for meaningful and respectful collaboration. The traditional pattern of engagement, which sometimes involves extracting narratives and experiences without genuine immersion, is seen as laden with taking rather than within-the-community dialogue. This resonates deeply with the principles of endarkened co-composition, which strives to create an authentic space for participants to share their stories on their terms, while the artist's reflexivity encourages a reciprocal exchange of narratives. As artists aim to take up the social issues that plague their personal context,

Lippard notices that the pattern of engagement in community is one laden with taking. Where artists seek to enter a dialogue ‘with but not within the community (25). All to create meaningful context for their work it is as if the artists Lippard is referring to, have forced their work to do more than the community has asked for, to satisfy themselves, a prescribed narrative, or as a proof of accomplishment. 'So, what makes anthropology so fascinating to socially concerned artists, even those who have been its historic victims, those who are now turning the tables (23)?' Lippard places before us an interdisciplinary dilemma between the quest for meaningful context, and for meaning itself. I draw on Lippard' s text as a critical guide for the development of practice as research. These pointed questions are critical to my work as a Black Woman researcher. As Lippard states, the very identity I inhabit has often been the historic victim of poor anthropology. I invite this criticality of my proposed methodologies which find foundation in working within a specific community of Black Women, one that I, myself, inhabit.

The transition from traditional research through practice to endarkened co-composition involves a profound reevaluation of power dynamics. Endarkened co-composition methodology engages ethnography in practice through methods of research that disrupt power dynamics between artist/researcher and participants. The artist- researcher's role is no longer that of an authoritative observer, but a collaborative maker who guides, listens, and contributes within a fluid and egalitarian framework. Schneider and Wright's concept of collaborative dialogue in ethnographic artmaking finds resonance in endarkened co- composition, where the dialogue between collaborators shapes and enriches the materialized sound worlds. The very act of co-composition becomes a reflection of the collaborative process, underlining the participatory and generative nature of the methodology. I consider endarkened co-composition in a similar duality - in that it describes both the process of collaborative ethnographic research as composition and the materialised sound

worlds that are gestated through such process.

When referencing the process, I recall research methods that take place long before a note, tone, or rhythm is notated or recorded as well as the process of creating with those sounds in collaboration with creative participants. The act of re-centring the legacy of innate meaning-making methods in qualitative research by endarkened storywork guides, roots, and routes the process of endarkened co-composition.

Endarkened co-composition transcends the confines of traditional artistic practice. Informed by endarkened research and guided by collaborative methods, it evolves into a transformative tool for dismantling hegemonic and hierarchical discourses. From here, we look through endarkened co-composition through the frame of endarkened research as an art practice that can stand as a tool for dismantling hegemonic and hierarchical discourses across disciplines. Eva Marxen, art therapist, psychoanalytical psychotherapist, and anthropologist considers this hegemony as a constraint and sees types of critical art, art therapy, art-based research, and ethnography from art as methods that disrupt such a constraint. The work that Marxen looks to, consists of 'artistic inquiries [...] original material and cultural configurations that are inseparable from collective statements' (39), are considered devices, or artistic dispositifs. This method embodies the fusion of art and society, reimagining the ways in which creativity and knowledge intersect. By embracing a 'flow of productive energies,' endarkened co-composition challenges the normative boundaries of artistic creation, offering a path for artists to engage with complexity and nuance.

Referencing Canclini (2014), Marxen notes that these artistic devices, emerge from processes where 'art and society, aesthetics and sociology, rethink their ways of making and knowing' (39). Marxen highlights the existence of a 'flow of productive energies' which speak to the collective and the wholeness of something, someone, or some idea.

There is no easy way out here. There is no path of an ethnographically informed art

practice that allows for an ethos to be underdeveloped or under-interrogated. This is true for the interdisciplinary practitioners that do not engage within or alongside communities and cultures but is especially true for practitioners that call upon relational and participatory art practices as their particular flavour of ethnographic method. Considering methodology through ethnography can assist artists in inhabiting the complications of making in collaboration, within and alongside participant communities.

Furthermore, the incorporation of autoethnography within endarkened co-composition aligns with a paradigm shift towards presence and vulnerability. Autoethnography becomes a tool for the artist to embody reflexivity, sharing their own experiences and insights to facilitate deeper connections and understanding. This vulnerability resonates with the participants, potentially fostering a climate of openness and trust that transcends the conventional researcher-subject relationship. Psychology researcher Kassan's exploration (2020) of co-created arts-based ethnographic research with newcomers underscores the transformative potential of collaborative methodologies. By privileging the participants' experiences and employing creative tools like cultural probes, endarkened co-composition not only offers a more meaningful representation of communities but also challenges traditional narratives and discourses.

Returning to Bishop's signs of success in participatory art, we are reminded that there need be an active subject that revives connection through collaborative meaning making, through a process of relinquished control. Kassan (2020) argues that traditional methods of research, imbued with power dynamics between researcher and participant, do not offer the most insightful nor interactive process and can fall short in engaging participants in the process. Kassan presents the idea that co-created arts-based ethnographic research with newcomers (immigrants) can provide 1) more meaningful representation of the participants, 2) allow better representation by privileging the researchers to the experiences of the

participants and 3) transform current understandings of newcomers' experiences. They argue that cultural probes (such as cameras, maps, and art supplies), to creatively document their everyday experiences can be used to conduct 'ethical, meaningful, and culturally sensitive research'. One of the primary aims of by endarkened co-composition as method is to create a work of 'de-narration'. This term, as defined by curator Gerardo Mosquera, describes 'works that use a narrative structure, and simultaneously discuss, deconstruct, or even subvert narrative conventions' Kassan's work offers exciting insights into how work made through endarkened co-composition may be viewed as successful. In addition to aesthetic quality as determined subjectively by the composer and relevant critiques, key markers of success relate solely to the process itself. Chapter three will explore these markers and their implications. Kassan's insights on co-created arts-based ethnographic research resonate deeply within the realm of endarkened co-composition. The incorporation of cultural probes and creative documentation, as suggested by Kassan, aligns with the ethos of endarkened co-presence, where participants' experiences are valued and respected. The notion of 'denarration' takes on new dimensions within this context, where narrative conventions are not only discussed and deconstructed but also reconstructed through collaborative storytelling. The success of endarkened co-composition, as viewed through Kassan's lens, extends beyond traditional markers to encompass ethical engagement, meaningful representation, and transformative understanding.

Endarkened co-composition stands as a dynamic and socially conscious methodology that redefines the boundaries of artistic research and collaboration. It upholds the principles of reflexivity, reciprocity, and vulnerability, while embracing diverse cultural narratives and disrupting hegemonic power dynamics through epistemologies that are innate to those who collaborate and contribute. This innovative approach has the potential to dismantle hierarchical discourses and empower marginalized communities to reclaim their stories and

perspectives, fostering a space where co-presence is not only acknowledged but celebrated as a transformative force in the creation of art and knowledge. There is an intricate interplay between reflexivity, autoethnography, collaborative engagement, and ethical research practices within the framework of endarkened co-composition. This method emerges as a potent means to disrupt hierarchical structures, foster inclusive narratives, and engage in creative processes that honour the multiplicities of voices and experiences. As artists navigate the complexities of making within and alongside participant communities, endarkened co-composition offers a compelling path to redefine artistic practice and contribute to a more inclusive and just creative landscape.

CHAPTER 2: Sonic Engagement and Post-Humanist Subjectivity: Endarkened Co-composition as a transformative practice

2.1 The world we are to be in: wholeness and immersion.

The musical work as world creates a post-humanist environment, whose shape is not anthropocentric but formless. I am within this formlessness, not at its centre, but centered, decentered, and recentered within it, enjoying not privilege but equivalence with all there is, and acknowledging the responsibility rather than the power of my position as a post-humanist subject (Voegelin, 2014, 155.)

This quote, from Salome Voegelin's 2014 monograph *Sonic Possible Worlds*, considers the sound world as a place in which one might enter, perhaps unintentionally, but nonetheless fully. Exploring this immersive space where sound attaches like dust to glass – to memory, imagination, fiction, and sensation, requests a type of thinking that holistically considers it all. Voegelin's evocative description of the sound world as a realm one might enter, fully and perhaps unintentionally, conjures an immersive environment where sound becomes more than mere auditory stimuli. This immersive quality extends beyond the auditory sense, blurring the boundaries between perception and experience. Where immersive sound experiences are not a novelty, Voegelin articulates a theorization of this and thus,

crucially evokes thought around what potentialities and possibilities are found in immersive sound experiences. The quote suggests that this transformative space requires a unique form of thinking - a holistic approach that views sound as a multidimensional entity with countless facets, much like dust particles clinging to a glass surface.

I begin here, aiming to situate endarkened co-composition and its outputs within such a holistic space for engaging with sound. Within this, the concept of endarkened co-composition emerges as a powerful method of engagement. The approach, rooted in non-hierarchical collaboration, positions sound as a medium that transcends traditional modes of communication and storytelling. This chapter will first investigate sonic thinking, an orientation that is a pivotal component of endarkened co-composition as it not only shapes the artist's relationship with sound material but also extends to the very essence of knowledge creation. It is at the site of endarkened co-presence – where, sonic thinking shapes how an artist or practitioner can best be present with the sound material shared through non-hierarchical collaboration. Where Chapter 1 illuminated cultivating qualitative data through collaboration - endarkened co-composition, the method; this chapter will explore the transformation of that data into sound works - endarkened co-composition, the matter.

As we revisit the site of endarkened co-presence – that space of duality and wholeness fostered through collaboration and storytelling and protected by opacity - let us now consider an orientation of thought. Endarkened co-composition is developed by thinking with and through sound. It is a methodology employed against what writer, editor, philosopher, and music scholar Robin James outlines as the established ‘sound-based rules that qualitatively structure social practices in much the same way that neoliberalism ...employs a politics of exception to maintain hegemonic neoliberal and biopolitical projects’ (James 5). My concern here, lies with the ways that these sound-based rules have framed the perception of cultures, communities, and peoples through their sound and story and further ‘take acoustic resonance

as the base unit of society and create the same relations of domination and subordination in that society that neoliberalism and biopolitics use statistics to create and maintain' (James 55).

To take a step back, episteme is a term coined by philosopher Michel Foucault to describe society's core practices - intellectual, political, and economic, that are embedded in society and upheld by common behind-the-scenes methods, logics and values. These values are left unquestioned, considered tradition, or simply 'right'. What is particularly key here is that, according to Foucault, practitioners across disciplines and epistemes use these rules, values, and traditions to form concepts and build theories from which further conclusions are drawn. These rules have far-reaching consequences, framing perceptions of cultures, communities, and people through their sonic narratives. The neoliberal episteme has been constructed by the uncontested individualistic and white supremacist approaches to 'methods of abstraction, parameters for translating or compressing rich sensory data into words, numbers, images, and other kinds of information' and further contribute to definitions of knowledge, conceptualisations, and theories (James 3). The sonic episteme is the 'neoliberal episteme's complementary qualitative episteme' (James 5) and reflect the same rules and constraints that feed the neoliberal episteme. And the rules that construct the two, are constraints much akin to those that Tolliver rejected in development of endarkened storywork. But, when awakened to the existence of the sonic episteme, what then? Here, I turn to the work of musicologist and sound studies scholar Holger Schulze and sonic thinking. Thinking with, though, and beyond sound is such a sensorial human and more-than-human encounter that it can guide experience without force. Transcending any supposed need for qualification or academic validation to be one's epistemological centre, sonic thinking is an embodied engagement with the world, the past and future, memory and imagination. Schulze (2020) writes, 'sonic thinking starts right here: where knowledge is not mainly

gained by academic reading, by discussing, falsifying or confirming, by rejecting or redefining propositions on some object called sound' (19). Positioning oneself as sonic thinker means bracing oneself to awaken to and notice the negative impacts of the sonic episteme in engaging with sound and refusing to allow opinions driven by an unchecked episteme to guide how knowledge and meaning are contextualised. Engaging sonic thinking does not dismiss the sonic episteme, but instead keeps it and its neoliberal counterpart in view and questioned. James confirms this and writes,

The sonic episteme is dangerous, but thankfully it's not the only way to think with and through sound -i.e., to use sound to define concepts and other objects of knowledge, build theories, and abstract from sensory reality to human expressions. Sound, and even resonance, can be a productive model for theorizing if and only if it models intellectual and social practices that are designed to avoid and/or oppose the systemic relations of domination that classical liberalism and neoliberalism create (James 5, 2019).

Endarkened co-composition, both the matter and the method remain conscious of and yet reject the sonic episteme in collaborative art-making processes (as previously discussed in chapter 1) and in approaches to composing with the context of the works made. Endarkened co-composition – the egalitarian, collaborative art-making method, exists to create a site of endarkened co-presence where novel endarkened co-compositions can emerge, rejecting the narratives and conclusions that reify neoliberal epistemes.

The remit of endarkened co-composition has thus far been grounded by a sort of non-denominational approach to discipline. Simply considering the legacy of ethnographically informed, collaborative art making. Without any specificity for sound practice or composition, what is the call for sound in this instance? Voegelin further suggests that musical work can offer a 'comparative framework and historical re- evaluation, not based on dates and chronology nor hindered by disciplinary boundaries and discursive givens, but

enabled by a critical centering, decentring, and recentring' (Voegelin 120). Voegelin names the practice of listening to musical work in this way, hearing the continuum of sound. Thus, I will begin with considering the experience of hearing and listening whilst situated within endarkened co-presence. Endarkened co-composition, the matter, is composed of aural practices and experiences that are created within the site of endarkened co-presence. It is an approach to sound composition that is rooted in listening and understanding the perspectives and stories shared through the collaboration. Endarkened co-composition allows for a sonic space to be cultivated where collective music making can bring together diverse participants, representing multiple perspectives, and allowing them to learn from each other and work together to create something new. This sonic space allows for a sort of generative process of 'listening-in' to the contextual information that is shared by those involved in the collaboration. These aural experiences become material that can be developed, manipulated and shaped into musical works. The first step in creating these musical works is to identify and document the sounds and stories that are shared through the collaborative process. This documentation takes the form of field recordings or improvisations, which can then be used as source material for further development of compositions and sound-based works. Through this process, a more detailed representation of the experience of being in the endarkened co-presence can be explored.

2.2 Navigating through anticolonial listening

To recap, the site of endarkened co-presence is one which holds space for the wholeness of story, particularly those carried by Black and Indigenous folks along with the knowledge and meaning that comes with it. Uninhibited by a drive to compress the stories, knowledge or meaning to fit the frame of a hierarchical neoliberal episteme, endarkened co-compositions sonically re-present (rather than represent) small bits of our worlds in their

wholeness. As endarkened co-composition seeks not to overly clarify or mistranslate the vast meaning that emerges in process, might there remain a veil of opacity? In the realm of anticolonial listening practice, the emphasis lies not only on the act of hearing but on understanding, respecting, and coexisting with the richness of soundscapes. This practice inherently acknowledges the multiplicity of stories and experiences carried within each sound, especially within the context of endarkened co-composition. By rejecting the consumption-driven hunger associated with colonialist ideologies, anticolonial listening creates a space where the stories of Black and Indigenous communities can be fully embraced in their entirety.

This approach champions the idea that sound is not an isolated entity, but a vessel carrying layers of meaning, history, and cultural significance. Just as the land and waters that sustain Indigenous communities are revered as sacred, soundscapes can be considered and revered as repositories of wisdom and heritage. Endarkened co-composition, guided by anticolonial listening, understands that a sound, a melody, or a rhythm is more than a mere note – it is an invitation into a realm of interconnectedness.

Within the realm of anticolonial listening, questions arise about the role of silence, pauses, and the spaces between sounds. These moments carry their own narratives, waiting to be interpreted and understood. Anticolonial listening considers, too, the weight of these silences and spaces but does not define them nor ignore them. There in the silence and the space and the pause is awareness. In a conversation via Instagram direct messages with Venessa German - sculptor, and performance artist - we considered that in the space and silence is the awareness of being aware. ‘You are aware of yourself always. You are, as a being, aware of being aware. Walk into the room of your own eyes and see yourself seeing the room that you are in. You are both in the room, seeing the room and aware of this. So, I wonder. In the listening of spirit, to the sound of itself in the shape of a song, symphony, or

what does spirit catch in its own reflection?’ (German 2023). This is the weight of silence, pause, and space – the weight of the listener’s Self/Spirit making its awareness apparent in the process of listening without the desire for enlightenment.

The presence of a veil of opacity becomes less a limitation and more an opportunity for reflection and introspection. This opacity invites listeners and composers alike to step away from the impulse to neatly categorize and define, and instead inhabit and explore the unknown, creating work driven by nuance. Previous literature and method approach vastness, difference and opacity in ethnographic sound practice with a type of voracity for understanding. This practice, coined hungry listening by Dylan Robinson, xwelmeḡw (Sto:lo) writer and composer, has been driven by settler colonialism, socio-political whiteness, and consumption. Robinson derives his notion of hungry listening specific to and through reflections of 'sonic encounters' of settler composers, musicologists, and ethnomusicologists within Indigenous communities.

From two Halq’emeylem words: shxwelitemelh ‘(the adjective for settler or white person's methods/things) which emerged from the word xwelitem (starving person) and xwelala:m (the word for listening)’ Robinson positions these two words together: shxwelitemelh xwlala:m ‘hungry listening’ to name settler colonial forms of perception, a ‘starving orientation’ towards Indigenous peoples and experiences.

As to not misrepresent this core idea, it is necessary to relay the process of defining 'settler' undertaken by Robinson, as needed to build a framework for endarkened co-composition. Historically, Robinson notes that the term ‘settler’ describes 'those who first came to the United States and Canada with the intention to stay and make new lives' (p.38). In a contemporary context, identifying oneself as a settler acknowledges a particular relationship to Indigenous peoples and an understanding of the histories and ‘ongoing inequities faced by Indigenous peoples’.

Crucially, Robinson engages with the idea that using it as a fixed identity can also make distant from discourse the multiplicity of overlapping identities, relationships, and histories (Robinson 39). The hungry listening practices discussed by Dylan Robinson serve as a stark reminder of the pervasive impact of settler colonialism on the perception of Indigenous cultures. This unquenchable hunger to consume and commodify, driven by whiteness and supremacy, reduces cultures to fragments, devoid of their holistic essence. The colonial mindset seeks to extract, possess, and assimilate, leaving behind a trail of distorted narratives and erasure.

It is a settler positionality that drives a hungry listening practice. This approach to listening ‘consumes without awareness of how the consumption acts in relationship with those people. The lands, the waters who provide sustenance’ (Robinson 53). These are the practices that have guided ethnographic researchers throughout history - colonial America's empirical colonization of Puerto Rico, Guam, Philippines, the Virgin Islands, and more.

Derived from settler positionality perception, hungry listening practices are considered unmarked normative practices, uncategorizable by race, but driven by whiteness and supremacy regardless of the potential for trauma and epistemic damage. Hungry listening is characterised by a ‘feverish’ drive to capture or record the auditory worlds of Indigenous peoples (Robinson 10). It positions the settler listener as the standard and filter for value or knowledge and positions sound as something able to be known according to the settler listener's standard. Western methods of musicality - time signatures, notation, and performability - become a means of consumption. Hungry listening perpetuates a power dynamic where settler listeners assume the role of arbiters of value and knowledge. The act of listening becomes an act of extraction, robbing sounds of their original context and meaning. Within the context of Indigenous communities, where stories and sounds are intricately woven into the fabric of identity, this practice is an affront to the sanctity of cultural heritage.

To deconstruct a hungry listening practice, it is necessary to consider what sounds are heard and what sounds are not -by choice or otherwise. Consider, how might a difference in language, timbre, sound quality, or contextual understanding bewilder a listener? What about an inability to comprehend the full breadth of a sound's epistemological legacy? Does this reduce the sound itself? Western theory and practice assume that proper consideration of socio-sonic auditory landscapes requires an endeavour to understand, potentially through reducing what is heard to what is knowable.

Endarkened co-composition emerges as a conscious rejection of this exploitative listening practice. By engaging in collaborative artmaking, it dismantles the power dynamics inherent in hungry listening. Instead of consuming, it co-creates, respects, and acknowledges the agency of the storytellers and sound creators. This shift in approach fosters a genuine sharing of perspectives and experiences, allowing for a more authentic representation of cultural soundscapes.

Where hungry listening practice consumes without discrimination, endarkened co-composition methodology relies on an anticolonial listening practice grounded in ‘wonder disoriented from antirelational and nonsituated settler colonial positions of certainty’ (Robinson 53). Developing an anticolonial listening practice provides a foundation for endarkened co-composition as it provides a type of guidance for a composer listening in collaboration with community. Moving away from a display-based practice, which could promote a distillation of sonic culture, anticolonial listening honours the sacredness of sounds within their context, even if such a context remains abstract or opaque. Critical, anticolonial listening begs for the works composed to deny display culture of people. Rather, by composing with the people who are sharing their own experiences, there is space held for all the other senses to belong. The works explored in chapter three consider this.

I begin the exploration of radical sound practice as it roots towards endarkened co-

composition methodology within Voegelin's discussion of continuums to remind readers of the vastness of sound context. As introduced in Chapter 1, endarkened co-composition method emerges from the interweaving of endarkened, autoethnographic, and collaborative artmaking approaches with sound and listening practices operating in radical disagreement with socio-political hierarchy. As the theoretical threads weave into a tapestry, an approach to listening and that can truly engage with, rather than hold in captivity, the most abstract elements of a culture in movement emerges. Through listening, elements like joy, speculation, pain, utopic thinking, revival, and conflict remain within their opaque and abstracted environments as the listener or listener-composer engages.

The most common approaches to researching co-composition are focused on the most generative aspects of composition -the composition itself, the performance, the installation, and the interaction with audiences. What has been made clear, however, is that modes and methods of generative listening construct a fertile ground from which any sense of an endarkened method for co-composition is rooted.

2.3 Inseparable Sound

How might we develop a sonic understanding of our socio-political existence, and what does it mean to do so? To begin, it is imperative to establish that I am writing from the perspective that sound cannot be separated from the political. Developing a sonic understanding of our socio-political existence entails delving into the intricate relationship between sound, listening, and the broader political landscape. This perspective challenges the notion that sound is merely a passive, aesthetic phenomenon and instead positions it as a dynamic force that interacts with and reflects the complexities of the socio-political realm. To embrace this perspective is to acknowledge that every sound is laden with histories, power dynamics, and cultural meanings.

In this worldview, the political includes interconnected histories, systems of impact, socio-states of being, ecosystem, and the human and non-human interactions with it all. How does the listening self exist in its geographic and cultural context? Sound studies discourse immediately brings forth the idea of a relationship - one with tension, balance, creation, and cultivation between the individual and the act of listening (LaBelle 2010). It is made clear that there is an active and embodied exchange that occurs when one listens (Findley-Walsh 2017). Sound, in this worldview, is entangled with interconnected histories, systemic impacts, and the experiences of both human and non-human entities. It is a medium through which relationships are forged, narratives are constructed, and identities are expressed. The act of listening becomes an active engagement, a way of positioning oneself within the sonic environment and acknowledging the agency of the soundscape.

The listening self is not a detached observer; rather, it exists in a reciprocal relationship with its geographic and cultural context. Sound is not a passive backdrop but a living, breathing entity that holds within it the echoes of social histories, systems of impact, and the interactions between human and non-human entities. The act of listening, rather than a passive reception, emerges as a participatory engagement - a reciprocal relationship between the individual and their sonic environment. This nuanced understanding of listening underscores the idea that sound is not detached from the socio-political realm but is, in fact, an essential conduit through which socio-political forces manifest.

2.4 Active Stillness and the Practice of Regard

Salome Voegelin's proposition that 'sound and listening are generative and innovative intensities in the space of the political' (Voegelin 17) underscores the agency inherent in the act of listening. This perspective challenges the passive consumption of sound and encourages active engagement through a practice of regard. Regard, in this context, entails an

intentional and respectful approach to listening that centres the experiences and voices of those sharing their narratives.

Active stillness becomes a crucial component of this practice, emphasizing the deliberate choice to listen without manipulation or imposition. Active stillness is a deliberate choice to engage with sound without imposing one's own biases, desires, or preconceptions onto the narrative being shared. I suggest that active stillness requires a practice of regard, where the experiences and voices of those sharing their stories are central and respected. In the context of endarkened co-composition, this practice entails centering the narratives of marginalized communities while decentring dominant perspectives. This intentional shift allows for the co-creation of an auditory landscape that amplifies voices that have historically been silenced or overlooked.

By embracing active stillness and practicing regard, endarkened co-composition becomes a space of ethical collaboration, where the composer and co-composer engage in a reciprocal and respectful exchange. This practice extends beyond the act of listening to encompass the entire creative process, from narrative sharing to composition. By prioritizing active stillness, endarkened co-composition acknowledges the socio-political implications of sound and challenges the normative power dynamics that often shape artistic endeavours.

Endarkened co-composition, as a practice rooted in regard, invites all participants to honour their positionality while decentring dominant perspectives. This practice acknowledges the multiplicities of experience and seeks to create a space where narratives are shared and amplified without distortion. Within this framework, the composer and co-composer engage in a reciprocal exchange that is characterized by mutual respect and collaborative creation. By recognizing their positionality and embracing active stillness, they navigate the intricacies of socio-political relationships and contribute to the creation of an auditory landscape that reflects the diverse tapestry of experiences. To operate within the

ideal that, first, sound and listening are action-oriented experiences, rather than a passive form of consumption, is to operate within a space of regard for the experiences as they are shared. It is to honour the speaker and recentre their voice.

With regard, comes a practice towards active stillness - a choice against unconsidered manipulation or prioritisation. Endarkened co-composition invites all who engage with the process to honour their own positionality in convening and sharing experiences, while decentring whiteness, colonial method, and settler perspectives. Voegelin draws on ideas by philosopher Etienne Balibar around the 'horizon of politics' to connect sound and an auditory imagination to the political. To this end, sound (and listening) is generative; they create, rather than remain in passive states in response to an environment. Voegelin aims to connect sound and listening to the political act. And in so doing, mapping an auditory imagination. A transformative act occurs in the experience of Voegelin's version of listening. The political possibility of sound does not resemble a trivial fantasy, easily dismissed, but can move from the understanding of norms and normativity, their instigation as actual and real, into real possibilities that are transformative and radical. Voegelin implies that sound can create a radical world. One that is built through 'acknowledgement of socio-historical norms, as the conditions and conditioning of actuality' (p.19).

The figurative auditory landscapes built through the lifting of memory and imagination in endarkened co-composition is derived from the knowledge and understandings deemed meaningful by those who contribute. This inclusion of the auditory in this study of knowledge, I employ acoustemology (Feld, 1990). According to ethnomusicologist Steven Feld, acoustemology sits in relation to acoustics and epistemology, defined as a sonic way of knowing and being in the world. Feld offers this term to describe the way people exist in relation to the sounds that form their environment and, further, how they employ that relationship to their knowledge of the environment itself.

I am interested in how I can both use acoustemologies of the participants in our work together, (specifically, unedited narrative recordings and transcriptions) and how the work creates a type of acoustemology itself. Further – what does such an acoustemological understanding contribute towards the disruption of hegemonic practice? Through the lens of acoustemology, the practice of endarkened co-composition disrupts hegemonic narratives by highlighting the diverse ways in which sound shapes and reflects socio-political existence. It becomes a method of knowledge production that honours the experiential richness of individuals and communities while offering a transformative and radical approach to understanding the world.

By evoking memory in the work within community, we re-create old worlds and, by invoking imagination, we create new worlds with its own acoustemology. By engaging with the sonic narratives of marginalized communities, this practice becomes a means of resurfacing stories that have been suppressed or obscured by dominant narratives. These auditory reconstructions allow for a nuanced understanding of the socio-political forces that have shaped individuals' lived experiences, highlighting the intricate web of power dynamics and systemic impacts. It is however, the unique way memory and imagination operate in a singular composition that drives my current practice and research. The act of evoking memory within the collaborative process allows for the re-creation of old worlds, resurfacing narratives and experiences that may have been marginalized or forgotten.

Conversely, the invocation of imagination creates new worlds with their own unique acoustemological landscapes. The creative tension between memory and imagination drives the composition process, giving rise to auditory narratives that challenge dominant paradigms and offer alternative perspectives. This imaginative process becomes a means of envisioning alternative narratives and challenging established power structures. By embracing both memory and imagination, endarkened co-composition becomes a potent tool for disrupting

hegemonic narratives and fostering a deeper awareness of the socio-political dimensions of sound.

Hungry listening, characterized by its extractive approach, involves the consumption of cultural elements for artistic inspiration without due regard for their socio-political context. Hungry listening is an active, consumption-based approach to engaging with Indigenous experiences. In response, endarkened co-composition offers an alternative path through embodied listening, wherein the act of listening is rooted in respect, empathy, and an understanding of one's own positionality. A still form of listening, almost as a meditation with. An act of allowing, rather than clarifying. Here, there is movement towards embodied listening as a compositional method within endarkened compositional practice. Where hungry listening works to remove Indigenous song and material culture from its unknowable context, my practice through endarkened co-composition centres African diasporic song, story, and culture. I seek to invoke endarkened co-composition to work against mining experience. Embodied listening acknowledges that sound is not divorced from the socio-political realities of its origin. It encourages composers and co-composers to approach narratives with an awareness of their own biases and privileges, avoiding the pitfalls of misrepresentation or distortion. This approach recognizes that the act of listening is an embodied experience that carries socio-political weight and necessitates a heightened level of sensitivity.

This method holds, navigates, and examines the interconnected relationship between me as listener and creative participants. It also holds a space for me to teeter between listener and participant in my own work. In this space, I examine the need to protect the voice of the creative participant - a protection from misuse and the same from my own biases. Within endarkened co-composition, the practice of protecting the voice of the creative participant becomes a guiding principle. This protection goes beyond the surface level and delves into

the ethical responsibility of preserving the integrity of narratives. It involves creating a safe space for individuals to share their stories, free from manipulation or misuse, and acknowledges the potential for biases to creep into the creative process. In endarkened co-composition, the act of protecting the voice of the creative participant becomes paramount. This protection involves not only honouring the narrative shared but also acknowledging the potential for misuse and distortion. By adopting an approach of active regard and embodied listening, composers uphold the integrity of the narratives while creating a space for meaningful exchange and collaboration.

The development of a sonic understanding of our socio-political existence is a multi-faceted endeavour that encompasses active listening, regard, acoustemology, and embodied engagement. It is a journey that requires active engagement, intentional stillness, and a commitment to protecting marginalized voices. By embracing sound as a generative force within the political sphere, endarkened co-composition offers a transformative approach to knowledge production and narrative sharing. It challenges hegemonic practices, centres marginalized voices, and paves the way for a more just and equitable representation of the socio-political landscape through the power of sound.

2.5 The Composer. the Co-Composer. and the Audience

*All that you touch
You change. All that you change
Changes you. The only lasting truth is change.*

- Octavia Butler, The Parable of the Sower

In building a methodology for endarkened co-composition, I am guided by the work of Robinson, explored above, to engage anticolonial listening practices within composition. An endarkened co-composition framework calls for a composer to first understand their

position within an auditory reality and socio-sonic political sphere.

At this stage, it is necessary to examine the distinct, yet impermanent, approaches and responsibilities of the composer and the co-composer within an endarkened co-composition practice. In this practice, the position of composer and co-composer aim to be distinct yet non-hierarchical. In the realm of endarkened co-composition, the positions of composer and co-composer are intentionally designed to be distinct yet non-hierarchical. The composer embarks on a journey of auto-reflexive listening, immersing themselves within both familiar and unfamiliar communities. This process involves a delicate interplay of listening, responding, and inviting broader community engagement. However, the composer's role is not to clarify, simplify, or over-articulate experiences; instead, it is to honour the wholeness and complexity of shared stories.

For the composer working through endarkened co-composition. Critical and anticolonial listening practice as explored above becomes foundation. In such a practice, the composer, regardless of supposed, obvious, factual, or fabricated kinship with co-composers, regards themselves as a guest and 'treats the act of listening as entering into a sound territory' (Robinson 53). Central to the composer's practice is the integration of anti-colonial listening principles. Anticolonial listening underscores the notion that the composer, even when granted an invitation into Indigenous sound territories, remains a guest.

This perspective acknowledges that some assertions of Indigenous sovereignty may elude non-members, highlighting the importance of recognition rather than remediation. Robinson further offers that a critical listening positionality 'understands that in entering Indigenous sound territories as guests, those who are not members of the Indigenous community ...may always be unable to hear these specific assertions of Indigenous sovereignty, which is not to be understood as lack that needs to be remedied but merely an incommensurability that needs to be recognized' (Robinson 53).

The composer considers themselves a guest in any sound territory they may enter, reconciles positionality and perspective at play, but also uses autoethnography to examine the relationship between the two. This self-identification as a guest allows for a reconciliation of positionality and perspective. Where chapter one considered an art practice grounded by a reflexive, autoethnographic lens, when tethered to sound study, we see a new application. I suppose that anticolonial listening through an autoethnography considers sounds within their environment, but also amplifies the echo, counterpoint, or harmony of the listener's perspective; validating the experience of those sounds is as unique. The synergy between autoethnography and sound study emerges as a novel application. While autoethnography traditionally focuses on the reflexive analysis of personal experiences, when entwined with sound, it takes on a new dimension. Here, autoethnography not only encompasses the contextual environment of sounds but also amplifies the unique listener's perspective. This enriches the understanding of sounds within their environment and illuminates the echoes, counterpoints, and harmonies of the listener's own vantage point.

In endarkened co-composition, I suggest that while invoking anticolonial listening the composer makes space for not only the auditory imagination that accompanies the stories and experiences shared, but they also hold space for their own autoethnographic reflections with respect to what lies outside their per view of understanding. Through autoethnography, the composer navigates the interplay between their own context and the socio-cultural relationship at play. This process is grounded in an acknowledgment of the multifaceted dimensions of their own identity, including privilege, biases, and socio-political position. By recognising the inability to fully understand the stories and experiences of others, familiar or unfamiliar, composers do two things. First – and akin to the effect of calling oneself “settler”-composers recognise their own positionality within the socio-cultural relationship that is at play. Composers do not create their work from a place of distant isolation or a vantage point

that assumes hierarchy. Composers accept all aspects of their own context (like privilege, the lack thereof, racial identity, biases, positionality, perception, language, spirituality, ability, educational access, economic stability, etc.) that works to impact this space of listening. In this way, composers begin working towards creative output from within the multiple and overlapping socio-political and cultural contexts and the ‘complicated networks that precede, surround, and are brought into being by a song’s performance’ (Daughtry 2014, 16).

Endarkened co-composition compels composers to relinquish assumptions of hierarchy and privilege, fostering a collaborative space that resists the mining of experiences for artistic gain. The composer's engagement becomes a delicate dance, honouring co-composers' experiences while facilitating an open environment for exchange. The collaborative process, marked by the intentional unknowability of the outcome, challenges traditional notions of creative agency and hierarchy.

Anticolonial listening requires that composers "allow positionality to enter into this picture so that this panacoustic politics of listening includes listening as soldiers and civilians, perpetrators and victims, settlers and migrants, displaced people, and across these positionalities that we occupy" (Robinson 60). Endarkened co-composition encourages the composer to disregard, relinquish, and challenge their positions and privileges in the listening relationship. To this end, composers seeking to work within community through endarkened co-composition must identify themselves, must offer only an invitation to community, and once the invitation is accepted, facilitate a generative process with an intentionally unknowable outcome.

The role of the co-composer is yet undefined. While the role of the co-composer remains undefined and continually evolving, it is a role that is both distinct from that of the composer and equitable in contribution. The co-composer exists as an active agent, contributing to the auditory landscape shaped through endarkened co-composition. This

landscape is a testament to the shared experience of exchange between the composer and co-composer, driven by a commitment to creative and sonic exchange. While present practice may shape a definition, it can be guaranteed that each future instance will differ from the last. Further, overly stratifying any distinctions between composer and co-composer work against considerations of an egalitarian practice. However, like the composer, the co-composer in endarkened co-composition moves between positionalities.

Despite what may seem like an invitation into a hierarchical structure of collaboration, co-composers maintain an amount of creative agency that simultaneously aims to flatten such hierarchy. Success of this is still reliant and dependent on somewhat uncontrollable factors such as social dynamics in any given group. The auditory landscape developed from and through endarkened co-composition is specifically and uniquely a result of the experience of exchange with the composer. Rather than the artistic context that is cultivated by lyrics, melodic references, or tonal inspirations, endarkened co-composition prioritise the experience of making. Neither see each other's experiences as rich resources for artistic drive, aesthetic inspiration, or opportunities for guilt-appeasing connection. Thus, in a brief return to the role of the composer, they must traverse softly and intentionally facilitated by the interests and experiences of co-composers while facilitating a responsive environment for exchange. Together, composers and co-composers work against mining each other's experiences.

In short, endarkened co-composition is a practice of anticolonial listening. It provides an opportunity for composers to build meaningful relationships with communities and create art that does not aim to represent the experience of others but instead uses collective sound to amplify the voices of all involved. Endarkened co-composition prioritizes creative and sonic exchange, allowing for the exploration of communal identity through sound. Endarkened co-composition epitomizes an act of anticolonial listening, transcending the traditional bounds of

composition. It empowers composers to foster genuine relationships with communities and amplify the voices of all participants through collective sound. This practice not only challenges the status quo but also empowers composers to engage with the realities of oppression and resistance, generating a space of solidarity and understanding.

Within the broader socio-political landscape characterized by systemic racism, colonialism, and violence against Black Women, centering the marginalized through sound becomes a means of resistance. Revisiting the work of James (2019), the sonic episteme, sprouted from the neoliberal episteme ‘claims that acoustic resonance fixes the conceptual and political problems with traditional methods of philosophical abstraction. However, applying these mathematical principles to a society already organized by centuries of systemic domination doesn’t fix that domination; it updates and intensifies it’ (James 27). Rather than reifying these structures, endarkened co-composition resists the socio-political system of hierarchical organization as well as the principles that built it. Instead, endarkened co-composition affords the co-creation of theoretical texts ‘that let us theorize in ways that traditionally philosophical texts do not accommodate ... and [allow] theorization with and through specific sounds situated in sociohistorically local contexts and avoid idealized models of both sound and society’ (James 17). Further, the immediacy of sound allows listeners to be drawn into a concrete material reality, creating an opportunity for the exploration of communal identity. This type of centering can both uphold the status quo by reinforcing power dynamics or disrupt it by shedding light on these dynamics and providing an alternative narrative.

Sound becomes a potent tool for exploring subjects such as memory, trauma, and healing, offering insights into how oppression shapes individual lived experiences. By honouring the stories of those affected by systemic inequalities, sound becomes a vehicle for dismantling these oppressive structures. In centering experiences of resistance and resilience,

sound paves the way for a more just and equitable future, fostering a world founded on principles of equality and justice. Through endarkened co-composition, the potential for sound to effect transformative change becomes a resounding call to action.

2.6 The work of the work

Sound has the remarkable ability to transcend traditional barriers and communicate emotions and experiences that are often difficult to convey through other means. In the larger socio-political context, where marginalized communities, particularly Black Women, continue to face the insidious effects of racism, colonialism, trauma, and violence, sound emerges as a powerful tool for empowerment and liberation. By centering the experiences and voices of Black Women through endarkened co-composition, we can disrupt the hegemonic narratives that have perpetuated their marginalization.

Endarkened co-composition offers an avenue for Black Women to reclaim their stories and present their lived realities authentically. Through the process of crafting sonic landscapes, composers and co-composers collaborate to create an auditory tapestry that captures the nuances of joy, resilience, pain, and resistance. The act of sharing these experiences - unfiltered and unmediated - invites listeners into a world that is often overlooked or distorted.

By amplifying the narratives of Black Women through sound, endarkened co-composition fosters a sense of agency and ownership over their stories. This agency extends beyond the act of creation; it becomes a powerful assertion of identity, culture, and autonomy. Through sound, Black Women can challenge the prevailing structures of power, disrupt oppressive systems, and articulate a collective vision of liberation.

There are many ways in which disciplines attempt to capture, engage with, and

understand culture. Further examined in the portfolio, as composers and listeners are drawn into the reality of the concrete sound material, the listener can then inhabit the work “not at its center, but centered, decentered, and recentered within it” (Voegelin 2014). Within the larger socio-political context, one that includes racism, colonialism, trauma, and violence against Black Women globally, how does this type of centering (and its iterations) reify or counter the hegemony? In this context, sound offers an opportunity to center experiences of oppression and resistance in ways that challenge the status quo. By actively engaging with sounds that reflect the realities of Black women's lives, we can create a space for understanding and solidarity through shared experience. Through these works, we can honour the voices of those who have been silenced and recognize the unique perspectives of those who are often marginalized. This type of centering can both reify the hegemony by reinforcing the power dynamics at play within the system, but it can also work to counter it by calling attention to these dynamics and providing an alternative narrative.

Sound can also be used to explore topics such as memory, trauma, and healing, which can provide insight into how oppression has shaped individuals' lived experiences. By recognizing and honouring the stories of those affected by racism, colonialism, trauma, and violence against Black Women, we can create a more equitable future and build a new world rooted in justice and equality. In a society where dominant narratives often perpetuate stereotypes and reinforce existing power dynamics, the act of centering Black Women's experiences through sound becomes an act of subversion. By offering an alternative perspective, endarkened co- composition disrupts the status quo and challenges the ways in which stories have been historically controlled and manipulated.

Sonic centering of Black Women's experiences allows for a direct confrontation with systemic oppression. The immersive and visceral nature of sound enables listeners to engage with the complexities of these experiences in a deeply empathetic way. This engagement

encourages reflection, dialogue, and ultimately, the dismantling of preconceived notions. Furthermore, the act of centering in endarkened co-composition extends beyond the auditory realm; it is a call to shift the very foundations of cultural and social paradigms. By placing Black Women's narratives at the forefront, we can challenge the erasure of their voices and reshape the collective consciousness. This subversion of dominant narratives serves as a catalyst for broader societal change and the realization of a more just and equitable world.

Does endarkened co-composition have the potential to catalyse profound social change? Do these sonic narratives act as vehicles for education and advocacy, bridging gaps in understanding and fostering empathy among diverse audiences? The immersive nature of sound allows listeners to engage with the stories on a visceral level creating a powerful emotional connection that transcends traditional boundaries. In this sense, does endarkened co-composition become a form of sonic activism, leveraging the transformative power of sound to ignite conversations, provoke critical thinking, and inspire collective action? These questions, though unanswered, fuel current and future practice as research.

Endarkened co-composition emerges as a ground-breaking approach that harnesses the unique potential of sound to amplify the voices and experiences of Black Women. The principles of anticolonial listening, non-hierarchical collaboration, and sonic centering, composers and co-composers collaborate to create auditory landscapes that challenge hegemonic narratives and spark social change. Such outcomes are explored and considered in chapter 3 and the attached portfolio of creative works. This practice extends beyond the realm of music and sound, transcending artistic boundaries to become a catalyst for broader transformation. By centering Black Women's narratives, endarkened co-composition disrupts systems of oppression, empowers marginalized communities, and paves the way for a more just and equitable future. As the sonic narratives of Black Women are shared and heard, they reverberate through the fabric of society, dismantling old structures and forging new

pathways. Endarkened co-composition stands as a testament to the power of collaboration, sound, and storytelling, offering a profound opportunity to shape the world through the voices that have been silenced for far too long. Through this practice, we embark on a journey of liberation, empowerment, and the creation of a sonic landscape that truly reflects the diverse and interconnected realities of our shared humanity.

CHAPTER 3: Sounds of Memory and Identity: Exploring Endarkened Co-Compositions

3.1 A re-collective memory

My eyes and the eyes of all the Endarkened are different shades of blue, some as piercing as the color of LED lights and others as bright as the sky on a sunny day. I sometimes wonder if the brightness of our eyes is what stops us from dreaming. Darkness is the space of dreams it's the place where imagination can grow; it serves as the backdrop for the magical. But I think the piercing blueness of my eyes punctures the darkness, keeps the darkness at bay. I long for the days when I'll be able to close my eyes and see blackness. But to dream is to imagine something better, to envision a reality that's different from this one. That's why we're not allowed to dream. The Dreamers haven't allowed us to do that for a long time. (Toliver, 2021)

For generations, my family's methods of collecting archival memory have centred around formal and informal storytelling. In my lifetime, it has looked like sitting at the feet of my Great Aunt Elnora to hear stories about my father's time as a boy in school; writing complex plays and musicals with my cousin and performing them for my entire family before opening presents every Christmas Day, handing roles and scripts to unassuming aunts and uncles, demanding their best unrehearsed performances; living in a moment of fantasy with my grandmother at her round dining table whilst sewing a much-needed raincoat for my stuffed teddy bear because, of course, it rained too much in Vicksburg, Mississippi for my bear not to have a coat. It was family-curated and published anthologies of recipes passed

down from my grandmother and great-grandmother, self-published books of sermons readings and devotions of two of the numerous Rev. Lassiters in my family – my grandfather, and my Uncle Wright. It was prints and archives of my Uncle Louis' paintings. It was also weeping with my mother as she recalled the time her mother flew from West Memphis, Arkansas to Omaha, NE while battling cancer, to care for both my mother and me - born three months premature. She passed away 15 months later.

Before I knew what I was doing, the act of collecting these memories, some of them now faint, has shaped what is now a methodology. Without overly romanticising this practice, I now approach these memories and their associated sonic environments with grown and growing eyes. Not just the eyes of nostalgia. As established in the previous chapter, sound possesses a unique ability to transcend boundaries, evoke emotions, and preserve memories. Grounded in the scholarly underpinnings explored in the previous two chapters, this chapter considers endarkened co-compositions as creative research outputs. It explores the multifaceted interplay between sound, memory, identity, and power, challenging conventional notions of artistry and sonic environments. In the endarkened co-compositions presented in the portfolio, personal narratives intersect with collective histories, opacity serves as a shield against the commodification of experiences.

We begin with the recognition that memory is more than recollection; it is an intricate tapestry woven from the threads of familial stories, personal experiences, and the legacies of a people. Within this rich tapestry, the act of collecting and preserving memories shapes methodology and the subsequent creative outputs. As we journey deeper into the practice and presentation of endarkened co-compositions, we uncover how personal experiences - from listening to family stories, to making sonic and visual gestures - serve as the raw materials from which original sonic environments are crafted.

In this exploration, we also traverse the boundaries of composition and research,

witnessing how power and control within hierarchical structures manifest in music notation, and examining graphic score as rebellious notation as a means of reclaiming agency. The journey culminates in the sonic worlds crafted through endarkened co- composition.

As I embark on this exploration, I recognize that the journey is ongoing, and the questions posed may not yield concrete conclusions but rather serve as tools for further exploration - a service to a larger purpose. The power of sound to reshape narratives, to provoke introspection, and ignite change is at the heart of this work. Together, we shall delve into the depths of endarkened co- composition and its transformative potential for memory, identity, and the sonic environment.

As a reflexive, autoethnographic researcher, the writing of other theorists and artists and the lived experiences that have shaped my life before, beyond, and outside of structured research are of equal structural importance. I have not approached the work with these theories available or at front of mind. Rather, I have made the work that called to me, in the way it called -being in service to it and following its lead. The goal being to inhabit, not respond to the challenges as they have arisen - both internal and external.

As I approach the use of sound as an artistic device, or artistic dispositif, this methodology is, too, a political ask. By working through endarkened co-composition within diasporic communities, I am grounded by the following questions: what is the socio-political impact of listening in whole totality to particularly the sounds of Black Women experiencing immigration, expatriation, willing and unwilling movement? How does this experience of being listened to shape the worlds of those who participate in the work? Through the work of endarkened co-composition, how does collective create, and more specifically distributed authorship, lead towards an auditory imagination that is specific to and for Black women throughout the diaspora?

Tullis Rennie, researcher, improviser, and trombonist aptly considers the practice of

distributed authorship through collective creating toward socio- political impact as sociosonic interventions, interacting with sound using socio-sonic engagement (2014). With a field recording practice in tow, Rennie poignantly asks: "Can we take the view that field recording and the gathering of sound materials could be considered as a form of ethnographic study, anthropological fieldwork or journalistic notetaking? What if these sounds arrive in the studio with a weighted context and are treated not only with a composerly conscience but to 'maintain a creative and analytical relationship to both materiality and sociality of sound'?" Could a resulting acousmatic work derived from these materials be similarly considered as an ethnographic document, an anthropological aid or a journalistic account?" (Rennie, 2014).

Inspired by this line of questioning, I ask similar questions through endarkened co-composition, acoustemology, and performance, critical discussion forthcoming. Can we take the view that the exchange of memory-driven narratives and experiences can be considered sound material, or as Voegelin called it, the whole continuum of sound?

Does the sound material gathered via non-hierarchical exchange and distributed authorship offer a compositional and/or socio-political context that drives away from hegemony? Does the resulting work derived from this exchange have any impact on those who co-create it? What lies within the tension between intention and reception of these works? And finally, can the resulting work also be considered, as Rennie does, an 'ethnographic document, anthropological aid or journalistic account' (Voegelin 118).

What is presented here, is an exploration of my creative practice through, drawing on the previous explorations of autoethnography and endarkened storywork, anticolonial sound and listening practices that rebel systemic hierarchy. It looks to concepts of afrofabulation, speculation, time, intention, and reception – all to be defined and explored subsequently. I present my practice as endarkened co- composition, endarkened acoustemology, and endarkened performance.

3.2 Making the work: Endarkened co-composition.

A Progeny of Perpetual Independence

A small group including a composer, an adult community organiser, a youth community organiser, a poet, librettist, and a rapper living in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota gathered over Zoom in December 2020. Each of these people were convened to contribute to this piece, commissioned by the Washington National Opera, in response to the murders of Mr. George Floyd. Mr. Philando Castile, and countless others and their impacts on the individuals and communities in Minnesota. Librettist Junauda Petrus-Nasah and I examined, from a broad perspective the tragedy, its aftermath, and themes that could be centred through the subsequent conversation. Composing the piece began with the libretto being written as derived from the 2.5- hour conversation pillared by enquiry: “What beauty have you found in difficult truth? Blackness is expansive includes wildness and freedom and joy and groove, magic, alchemy, and the blues, etc. This is the fullness of our breath. What does the persistence Black breath teach us about trauma? When is the repetitiveness or persistence of trauma interrupted? When you think of the word origin, what comes to mind? When you think of the word trauma, what comes to mind? What about truth? Beauty? How does the lens of truth, beauty, origins, and trauma impact how you see what happened in the summer 2020 in Minneapolis? What is your new truth? What is your new sweetness?”

Grounded by these questions, the discussion that ensued was recorded and was used to create the co-composed work in various ways - by the librettist, Junauda Petrus-Nasah to ground her text, by myself to inform compositional choices like the key of the piece and the instruments chosen for the ensemble (representing the number of co-composers). The work, titled *A Progeny of Perpetual Independence*, was composed through collaborative enquiry, the storytelling and poetry that occurred naturally in the discussion, and my own reflexive autoethnography. Occurring in the early stages of field work, the process was yet undefined as endarkened co-composition, however, the method employed here was foundational to my

subsequent works. At this stage, I was focused on understanding what would later come to be known as the site of endarkened co-presence. Considerable attention was given to the probes and questions presented to co-composers, my positionality and sonic responses, and the ability for the composed output to effectively and successfully reflect both the stories that were shared, and the process undertaken. Since the work has been presented, analysis of both the process and the output continue to inspire and inform. View the full score and video (an interview preface and recorded performance) within the portfolio (3.2 Endarkened Co- Compositions – A. A Progeny of Perpetual Independence).

We Invoke the Black. To Rest.

In London, one year later, another group of young people, convened (once again over Zoom) to consider the possibility of rest, restfulness, and renewal for Black people against a backdrop of televised state-sanctioned violence across the globe, pandemic, and isolation. We Invoke the Black. To Rest. – a collaborative composition and performance piece, was the resulting work. Lead collaborator, movement and textile artist Enam Gbewonyo and I were challenged to respond to painter Lynette Yiadom Boakye' s exhibition Fly In League with the Night. The considerations contributed to the development of a collaborative composition and performance piece commissioned by Tate Britain.

In approaching both composition and the collaborative performance, Gbewonyo and I drew on and resonated most with Yiadom-Boakye' s words on time and the power of infinity published as wall text for the exhibition. Boakye writes, "But the idea of infinity, of a life and a world of infinite possibilities, where anything is possible for you, unconstrained by the nightmare fantasies of others, to have the presence of mind to walk as wildly as you will ..." (Boakye 2021).

To compose the piece, I again looked first to an egalitarian discussion-based enquiry: "when do you rest? Are there certain conditions required for rest? What does it mean to invite

ourselves to rest? Find a comfortable seated position. One hand on your belly, one hand on your abdomen. Inhale, hold for a count of 4, release. In that holding, what did you feel, see, and think of before the release? What is a lullaby?

What lullabies do you remember from your childhood? Today, what helps put you at rest?" The enquiry continued with an invitation for participants to take a moment for self-reflection. I asked participants to record themselves giving themselves permission to rest through ritual (i.e., yoga, journaling, and drawing), routine (i.e., making tea, cleaning, washing faces and brushing teeth), or self-talk. Those responses, were then weaved as a combined narrative, reflecting all the participant's contributions.

Members of the Tate Collective were invited to listen and edit the composition prior to performance. Placed within the first movement of the composition, for electronics, this section relied heavily on this co-written and co-composed narrative where, again, the key and melodic choices of the piece were informed by the natural speaking voices of the co-composers. This piece evokes questions of the presence extractivism in my sound practice. By making the works within the site of endarkened co-presence, where I, too, not as expert, or omnipotent artist set above the process, bring my experiences, and thus create works that are directly informed, rather than loosely inspired by the experiences of those whom I co-compose alongside.

These two pieces are presented as a frame for understanding endarkened co-composition, both matter and method, in practice. As we consider again, endarkened co-composition method is a practice of collaborative music-making arising out of endarkened storywork, collaboration rooted in anticolonial listening, and intentional negotiation of traditional power dynamics upheld by Western traditions of composition and research. By approaching sonic research through endarkened storywork, the sovereignty and validity of meaning-from-story that form the co-compositions is found to be maintained. For both

Progeny... and invoke... we co-composed from a site of endarkened co-presence. This site was found in the Zoom sessions, where stories were shared, questions were asked, answered and interrogated, and composers, co-composers and librettists contributed to the moment of exchange whilst including – even if not yet understanding – positionality in each moment. The stories that were recalled and shared during online sessions were recorded and formed the basis of further sonic material.

Tolliver reminds us that "stories are essential in qualitative research, as scholars consistently gather stories to learn more about the people they are studying" (xv). In practice, co-composition serves as a mode for distributing authorship and creating an ever-evolving feedback loop that invites participants into the compositional process through participant-led dialogue and reflexive inquiry as qualitative research. Given that I invoke this practice primarily amongst, within, and alongside communities of marginalised, over-policed, under-listened to, devalued, brutalised, traumatised (... .) complex, divine, resilient, mundane, joyous (. ..) participants, this inclusion offers a pathway for a socio-sonic intervention at the point of hierarchical maintenance, where the hegemony can either be maintained or questioned, within the realm of composition practice as well as the wider socio-political world.

As explored in the second chapter, endarkened co-composition asks the composer to listen first. The creation of both Progeny... and We Invoke the Black. To Rest began not with an independent exploration of a sonic response in solitude, but through a process of mutually lifting the stories and experiences of creative participants, the librettist, and myself to the surface, the line of demarcation between composition and research was blurred. In this way, anticolonial listening practices were called on to guide enquiry. As composer, both pieces required an examination of my own positionality while working alongside two communities to develop a collaborative creative relationship. Rather than just receive the data of

someone's experience through interview, I also lend my voice to the conversation. As such, it is imperative that I examine the ways my privileges, geography, personal perspective, background, and experiences create a lens through which I engage with the stories of others. In the exchange of stories that occur are threads of connection, memories, and opportunities for resonance. The type of conversation that happens in endarkened co-composition moves like a dance bringing "sharing's" that can only exist within an alchemy of connectedness that bubbles up in recollecting the past and present experiences through Black storytelling. Progeny's libretto was written by weaving verbatim dialogue with new text -a poetic archive of collaborator's experiences. Invoke 's libretto was written without the interpolation of text into the interview recordings. Rather, the co-composers' audio letters-to-self were layered, manipulated, and arranged to form the first of three movements. In both works, it was these story circles - cyphers - that created a space for the knowledge and meanings, defined by the experience-holders themselves, to emerge. Progeny 's libretto in its longest form and the recorded dialogue that preceded it and invoke 's recorded reflections contributed by the co-composers on the project were considered data collected through endarkened qualitative and autoethnographic methods. In both pieces, only once the data was collected and collated did the focus turned to creating a sound world that was in dialogue with the data and my experiences of working through the process of collection.

3.2.1 Endarkened Notation:

At the root, endarkened co-composition confronts hierarchical structures of power and control – centering, de-centering, and re-centering a multitude of voices against hegemony. Running as an undercurrent to the methodological exploration of ethnographic composition is an interrogation of power and control, and an investigation of the ways of being and knowing that inform the context, text, musicality, and vibrancy of each composition. To this end, I also

look to rebellious notation and the nearly 75-year history of graphic notation in the Avant Garde. I ask, what hierarchical structures exist on a page of sheet music? Whose voices are included, silenced, limited, or manipulated when placed within traditional methods of music notation and, how?

These considerations, influenced by scholarship and practice place new ways to share authorship without requirements of a particular shared language to the forefront. Meant to be a real-time tool for reconnecting to making when familiar methods became inaccessible due to the impact of the global pandemic (lack of supplies and materials), subsequent stay-at-home orders (limitations on in-person collaboration), and the emotional impact of watching yet another Black life be taken by the hands of a police officer (an inability to bypass the emotional toll of witnessing violence), graphic notation responded to my need for non-intellectual processing.

Graphic score, *More Powerful than the Sun* is an iterative, experimental, and multi-modal piece that will be in perpetual progress. A reflection of negotiated power and distributed authorship, iterative realisations of the piece cross disciplines and respond to each other creating a unique sonic environment in each performance. On violin, improviser Angharad Davies introduced the first sonic response to the score.

Independently, poet Shukura Huggins responded to the score as well. Without listening to Davies' response, I contributed a third iteration -sonic phrasing in dialogue with Huggins' written word. I then interpolated my response to Huggins and Davies' response to the score to construct a fourth iteration. The next iteration was framed as the exchange between the viewer-listener and the exhibited score and sound installation. To continue this cycle of response, future iterations require a reliance on what has come before. Performers, both solo and ensemble, are invited to play their versions of *More Powerful than the Sun* accompanied by or in response to the previous performances.

The use of graphic score as endarkened notation provides another approach into de-hierarchical collaborative composing. As my musical voice exists in tandem with the voices of those who interpret, re-interpret, and otherwise engage with the work, we craft yet another site of co-presence. Particularly relevant here is the work of composer and artist, Ishmael Wadada Leo Smith who developed his compositional language Ankhration in 1967 to incorporate the internal experiences, the emotions, and references of musicians and performers who interpret his pieces.

Differentiating his graphic scores from those of traditionally notated compositions, Smith elaborates that he”

...employ[s] in my music is to consider each performer as a complete unit with each having his or her own center from which each performs independently of any other, and with this respect of autonomy the independent center of the improvisation is continuously changing depending upon the force created by individual centers at any instance from any of the units. the idea is that each improviser creates as an element of the whole, only responding to that which he is creating within himself instead of responding to the total creative energy of the different units. this attitude frees the sound-rhythm elements in an improvisation from being realized through dependent re-action. this is the fundamental principle underlining my music, in that it extends into all the source- areas of music-making, i.e., each single rhythm-sound, or a series of sound-rhythm is a complete improvisation (Smith, 2023).

Endarkened co-composition calls for participation and collaboration within the site of endarkened co-presence at the earliest stages of composing a new sonic work. *More Powerful than the Sun* considers the space where musician and score meet as a site of co-presence. Each iteration, from the initial score, through Davies’, Huggins, and my interpretations were a contribution to the site of endarkened co-presence as no iteration was offered with or as a clarification of the previous. *More Powerful than the Sun* was made under the influence of a full moon in August 2020. The following is an excerpt from the text that accompanied the

graphic score when presented to Davies and Huggins:

Attempting to render the duality of rebirth, the ritual, and the power of the moon in one series. Hearing harp and bass and the white noise of the dishwasher or washing machine or other electronics colouring the quiet. Feeling the warmth of the Black Woman's cello voice. And the coolness of her whisper. The mirroring and repetition and call and response of it all.

To engage with this work, I invite you to first engage with each iteration in randomised order. Then, I invite you to view the graphic score first (3.2.1 Endarkened Notation > A (Score) More Powerful than the Sun.pdf) and then proceed through the iterations (3.2.1 Endarkened Notation > B (Davies), C (Huggins), D (Gre), and E (Davies, Huggins, Gre)). Despite the distance between methods of interpretation (visual gesture, poetry, live response, and midi response) and the opacity of the notation and context, the iteration of interpretation that included me, Davies, and Huggins found many moments of flow and cohesion. At times, it was as if the work was made in the same space and time. As the work developed throughout time and iterations began building upon each other, the opacity became a vehicle for a sonic nexus across media and geography.

3.3 From method, meaning: Endarkened Acoustemologies

The works described above, made through endarkened co-composition exist through a process that rejects traditional, hegemonic notions of artmaking. Do the outputs of such a process to reject traditional notions of aesthetic and artistic impact? As considered in Chapter 2, 'acoustemology' (Feld 1990) considers how we arrive at ways of being and knowing are through the sonic environment. I ask, can a process of endarkened co-composition and the output of such processes operate and exist as acoustemology? Concurrently, I also consider Voegelin's proposition of sound as a generative intensifier within the space of the political -a medium that when employed as a political act maps the terrain of an auditory imagination which, based in lived experiences,

reconfigures present reality into a radical new world. As both memory and imagination are invoked in endarkened co-composition, I ask, what radical political possibilities and new worlds are created within the composition's sound environment as well as the larger socio-political environment where the work is presented or performed? Instead of attempting to answer these questions from a place of knowing, the portfolio of works included here continue the investigation.

Each composition presented in this portfolio has a sonic environment intentionally developed through endarkened co-composition methodology. Sonically, there so far exists a critical dialogue between at least three categories of interconnected voices - 1) the text directly derived from un-filtered co-composers' experiences, 2) my autoethnographic response via the tone, orchestration, and harmonics of the composition and performance of lyrics as vocalist, and 3) the stories and experiences of the musicians who perform the pieces. Furthermore, the sonic environment of the piece is affected by its construction within the present socio-political environment in which all our voices exist. As described below, instead of attempting to clarify for consumption, represent, over-communicate or make overly explicit the experiences of co-composers Endarkened co-composition considers each voice and makes space for them to autonomously contribute to the finished composition.

Returning to Progeny, development of the sonic environment began with a reflection of and response to the recorded dialogue and unedited text. The tonal home of the composition reflected my own sense of geographic distance that influenced the selection of local community members. A repetitive double bass baseline interrupted by sung congested text phrase existed to sonically replicate the co-composers' experiences of pain and trauma repeated incessantly, then interrupted by restless pleading for justice by community. Phrases like 'this is where my heart breaks', 'cycle circles back', 'you can't subtract me from myself', and 'we so free' existed as calls.

The melodies written for the soprano, cello, viola, double bass, and piano responded throughout the piece. These examples, serve to reflect how the sonic environment was developed through collaboration, rather than in response to or out of inspiration by. Can these sonic environments, crafted through endarkened co-composition be considered an endarkened acoustemology? Three Gold Threads offers a consideration of this possibility.

Three Gold Threads

Commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company to develop a collaborative, community-led workshop process culminating in an artistic response to Shakespeare's First Folio, I employed endarkened co- composition to guide the process. The project took place over 14 months and was envisaged in three phases: 1) relationship building, understanding, and trust, 2) introducing the First Folio, engaging storytelling and 3) making with the stories that were collected. The first workshop took time to explore Shakespeare's First Folio as an art object, a significant piece of literary history, and as a departure point for the stories of now. In collaboration with creative participants from the group Welcome Here who hailed from Syria, Kurdistan, Turkey and Sudan, we engaged with the First Folio and selections of Shakespeare's plays translated in Arabic. Our exploration of the First Folio in the first workshop centred around the following questions: What is in the First Folio? What stories, experiences, points of view could be missing from the First Folio? How might Shakespeare have gathered these stories to inspire his plays? How did your mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmother's gather stories? How do you gather stories? Using this final question as our transition, we constructed a set of guiding questions based in ethnographic research methodology, reflectiveness, and curiosity that drove the creation of the content - lyrical, sonic, visual, and textural - that developed into an Endarkened Acoustemology. Together, we collected our own comedies, histories, dramas to make a new piece of music. Guided by the tenets of collaboration towards negotiating power, using ideals of endarkened storywork to deconstruct hierarchy whilst gathering stories, I conscientiously brought only the grounding questions and an articulation of my role (see Appendix C).

Alongside the women of Welcome Here, we decided together what sort of questions we want to ask to understand the Comedies, Histories, and Dramas of our families and community. The questions collectively developed in the first workshop were:

Comedy:

Tell me about a time you embarrassed yourself. What makes you happy?

What makes you laugh most?

Tell me a story of a nice day at home.

Drama:

How did you come here? Why did you leave?

Tell me about a hard time in your country? Why did I start again?

Where were we taken around the world?

What does it feel like to be apart from your family? How do we make England like a home?

Can we?

History:

Tell me about your mother.

How did your mother show that she loved you? Tell me about who taught you important lessons Who do you want to be like?

Who, in your family, did something for the first time?

Who broke the rules?

Who is leaving a legacy in your family now? What is their legacy?

Who is strong?

In the second workshop, the women spent time speaking with each other using the questions to guide conversations beginning first by thinking of a melody or song that is of importance to them individually. This prompt was particularly key, as it provided a melodic foundation for the sonority of the finished composition. This prompt was offered to sonically root the work as it developed into the finished acoustemological composition and short film.

3.4 Reflected out, reflected back: Endarkened performance.

We speculate because we were objects of speculation bought and sold, killed and quartered, collateralized and scrutinized, used, impregnated, aborted, discarded. Bodies that were speculated in became speculative bodies. The object that shrieks

became the subject who speaks, but her tongue is not for words or discourse so much as it is a tongue of fire, an 'outside art' (Nyong'o 101).

As I consider endarkened co-composition a tool for disrupting hierarchical hegemony, an artistic dispositif; there too must be a critical investigation of the performances and presentations of each work. To this end, I consider performances and presentations of endarkened acoustemologies crafted out of endarkened co-composition, as an endarkened experience. The tension between intention and reception become a starting point. The intention of endarkened co-composition is not to compose sonic representations or to become embodied representation of another being or body, regardless of any kinship connections, but rather to re-present such experiences within a co-composed sonic environment.

I begin with a consideration of afro-fabulation, a theory of Black Queer performance presented by Tavia Nyong'o (2019). Afro-fabulation emerges as a type of practice that exists with the realm of the social. It confronts the reality of anti- Blackness and the Black and queer justice, liberation, and joy considered as fiction. Using performance, afro-fabulation brings into view and archives an alternate version of Black life that is neither a truthful or fictional account of Black and queer timelines. It does not seek to repair, rescue, or bring into close, clear view, Black humanity.

Rather, it seeks to illuminate only what Black people can - what exists beyond representationalist views of Black life. Nyong' o proposes, 'the critical poetics of afro-fabulation are a means of dwelling in the shock of that reality without ever becoming fully of it' (Nyong' o 26). The 'recollection' of story towards a collective memory through endarkened co-composition reconsiders what is past and present and what exists in an alternative concept of time. Nyong' o suggests that as we continuously attempt to collect and recollect the story of the past, we repeatedly lose the plot. 'Such a disjunctive synthesis of past and present, so frequently thematized through the game of loss and salvation,

undermines our ability to take the "life" in live performance as a given' (Nyong'o 99). Speaking specifically to the collective memory of Black life evoked through an endarkened co-composition methodology, in performance I gesture towards a connection between collective memory and radical sonic possibility as considered by Voegelin. The performances I explore are routed through theories of afro-fabulation to further consider what possible worlds emerge from endarkened co-composition.

Illustrated most clearly in *We Invoke the Black. To Rest*, I consider how my role and positionality shifts as I move from composer, working within and alongside community, to an oft-singular performer presenting the stories and experiences shared in composition. Afro-fabulist performance sees performers guiding viewers closer to the opacity of a subject, rather than making the concepts consumable or clear. My role in this, whether it be storyteller, convener, composer, performer, or otherwise is not to be the most prolific truth teller. But instead to redirect towards the power of the false (Nyong'o 51).

As composer and vocalist, I recognise that I have a unique opportunity to include my direct and in-person voice to the narrative in a way that may differ from the typical composer. As a performer in these compositions, and especially *We Invoke the Black ...* I consider my role to be one of vessel or vehicle. Rather than exploit the spotlight to centre my voice, narrative, and experience (solely), I make efforts to perform in a way to allow the stories and narratives of my co-composers to exist alongside and with equal importance. I am still exploring the ways this can be achieved. To accomplish this in *We Invoke the Black. To Rest*. I used minimal lyric other than what was shared in the conversation, or the participants recorded reflections. By using tools like "scatting" and improvisational vocalisation, I allowed the moment of performance to dictate lyrical content. I sung to respond to the manipulated recordings, performance collaborator Enam Gbewonyo's movements, and the paintings within the exhibition. As I continue to develop my performance practice, I remain

cognizant of what the unintended consequences could be in minimizing my own voice while committed to elevating the voice of others'.

This section opened with a consideration for the motivation for speculation through endarkened performances. Towards considering the tangible ways in which sonic possible worlds emerge from endarkened co-composition, I investigate how speculative thought contributes to the ideas of utopia contributed to the works by participants. The memories of early lives, dissonances of present-day joys and challenges arrive in concurrence with speculations of a utopic future. It is that utopic future that creates a possible world rooted in 'tactical fiction' -a description of why and how a story that we can categorize as untrue can nonetheless inspire belief, emotion, or attachment. Voegelin's work on sonic possibilities leaves room for methodology. I posit that endarkened co-composition, acoustemology, and performance, considered as socio-sonic intervention, crafts such a methodology.

The alternative versions of Black life brought to view through endarkened performance routed through considerations of afro-fabulations are intentionally left opaque. This occurs as the experiences and stories -intricacies and intimacies- shared through endarkened co-composition remain uninterrupted. As a tool to challenge the socio-political systems of hierarchy and hegemony, what risks arise when making visible these intimacies? Is it through the attempts to simplify stories of Black life to make them appropriate consumption what leads to a dimming and alteration of Black existence?

It has been secrecy, protection, and veiling perhaps through the vernacular, that has protected the vulnerabilities of Black life in and out of the diaspora. Where representationalist performances of these intimacies risk 'communicating and rendering overly explicit that which ought more tactically remain camouflaged' (Nyong'o 5). as Nyong'o supposes, afro-fabulation in performance stands as a protection. As endarkened co-composition seeks not to clarify or oversimplify the opacity that contributes to the sovereignty of story within the

realm of sonic environment, afro-fabulationist performance protects that same opacity as it expands into the socio-political world. As both a composer and performer working through endarkened co-composition, I lean on methods of afro-fabulation to guide negotiations between intention and reception. To this end, returning to Three Gold Threads (located in the portfolio at 3.3 From method, meaning) all lyrics in Three Gold Threads were kept in Arabic as recorded, without on-screen translations in the film. Thus, the film and composition maintained a sense of 'tactical camouflage', presenting the stories shared under the protection of unfiltered language.

Primarily, I consider the inclination for audiences to position themselves to 'emotionally rescue' subjects as they perceive trauma (Nyong'o 57). Instead of an invitation for rescue, I intend for viewers and listeners to engage with the opacity that is before them as they are brought closer to it and perhaps therefore, closer to the opacity within themselves.

Even as the co-compositions are intentionally made through non-prescriptive collaboration, allowing each participant to shape the final sonic output, the intention to maintain opacity in performance shapes and guides the treatment of participant's contributions. By removing any drive to distil, clarify, or make consumable what is shared, the words spoken, sung, and sonically responded to remain within the context in which they were spoken. Simply, I intend viewers and audiences to receive the opacity as it is presented.

3.4.1 Crushed Untitled Series of Photographs

The opacity, as I consider the portfolio works, is a representation of memory. As memories are invoked through co-composition, without an attempt to clarify, they remain 'suspended in the flow of the present (Nyong'o 100). In what is perhaps a disconnected turn, I, led by Nyong'o, reference the concept of 'crushed blacks' as an allegory to the opacity of memory. In film, to crush blacks is to take what is already dark grey or black and make them darker by increasing contrast. This occurs due to underexposure and increases opacity, abstraction, while decreasing texture. No amount of advanced

theory or clear eyes can remove the opacity nor repair the subject in an image with crushed blacks. In practice, I too look at the crushed blacks that emerge as I consider the sound world crafted through endarkened co-composition. It has been necessary to confront the ways in which I hold onto power and control over the process and outcomes in ways that are antithetical to the methodology.

I spent May 2020 in Ghana, splitting time between Kumasi and Accra through the perforCraze International Artist Residency (PIAR). I saw my time in Ghana as a place in which I could approach my own experiences of movement; story, memory, and utopia creating an opportunity for reflexivity. Whilst there I remained present with my own voice through autoethnography providing the same space for myself that I attempt to do through endarkened co-composition. A journal entry dated 9 May 2020:

Belonging is in the mind. But it wasn't always there for me. When I first arrived (?) Maybe shocked isn't the best word I was rocked. I came with a big imagination. Too many ideas for what I could do. A belief that I must earn mv place. See myself in Ghanaian women & be someone adored. I almost left Kumasi. I figured if I can't settle in -don't even know how to flush, can't get around. Can't speak Twi. Can't work. Can't help. There's no point in me even being here. But I'm so glad I stayed. And existed in that tension. Because in staying I have found joys and ritualized ways of being -bucket baths, weekly cleaning...walks in the forests, national parks, and waterways...I needed to stay. This is my last week in Kumasi and from now forward I'm working towards making some sort of music. Staying present.

I look to the set of photographs contained in section 3.4.1 of my portfolio. The four works, formed from water, weaved through, inside outside, and the soil was our first language illuminate the concepts of crushed blacks and structural negotiation illuminated through endarkened co-compositional practices. As I reflect on my experience in Ghana I am reminded of a sort of internal conflict between imagination, reality, and speculation. Influenced, without my consent, by Western concepts of Africa and Ghana, I had an image of beauty, reflection, and connection formed in my mind. That image was made without any real experiences and therefore became a lens through which I imagined. I imagined this feeling of reconnection and spiritual attunement.

But this idea of connection that I had formed before even considering setting foot in Ghana was unearned. Where I might find an unspoken connection materialized in real time. This naïve, romanticized version of Africa, of Ghana, is one set out from the sometimes-

grave realities that a legacy of colonialism and imperialism have left on this place and its diasporic descendants. From this perspective and position, I sought to reflect to myself memories of my own experience in Ghana. Having made friendships with the staff of PIAR, who noticed my interest in photography, we decided to collaborate on some photographs.

Like the imagined reality of Ghana that I first arrived with; I held in my mind romanticized images that I aimed to recreate on film. Unbeknownst to me, my camera was malfunctioning, and the click of the shutter did not properly advance the roll of 35mm film. So, instead of the clear staged images that were meant to tell the story I wanted, the developed images revealed a series of multiple exposures. The visual story that emerged was composed of overlapped narratives, about the place and the people in it, relationships to technology, and new considerations of connection across the diaspora. These photographs, and the crushed blacks embedded in them, preserve the opacities of the subject's stories as well as my own. Endarkened co- composition provides a methodological container to consider the collaboration, negotiations of control, speculation and storytelling (here, through image).

3.5 Within the walls, real and figment: a brief note on location

The theoretical underpinnings that guide this work also contribute to a critical investigation of the formal and informal institutions that contain the work. The work has thus far most often been presented in historically exclusionary spaces like museums, galleries, and classical music halls. Future performances and presentations consider the impact of such locations on those who participate in making it and those who participate as viewer or listener. As previously raised, endarkened co- compositions do not attempt to resolve the issues that arise when considering location, but instead, inhabit such issues. Progeny (performed at The Reach at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.), Invoke (performed at Tate Britain in London, UK), and More Powerful than the Sun (installed at Lisson Gallery in London, UK) offer case studies in which to consider such impact. Thus far, these works have been performed and presented within institutions that were built for 'The White Gaze'. The

White Gaze emerges beyond an institutions history of exclusion and can retraumatize, contributing to the representationalist nature of art that considers identity. Further, it can re-contextualise the work, re-prioritising whiteness without intention. Supported by autoethnographic, collaborative, and anticolonial sound and listening practices, endarkened co-composition forms a methodology by which systems of hierarchy at all levels and iterations are challenged. By invoking the concept of sound as generative in this practice of deliberate interrogation and interruption, endarkened co-composition and its outputs - endarkened acoustemologies and performance- presents a viable path toward new realities.

CONCLUSION

All around us, there exists a cacophonous landscape of layered, overlapping and deeply rooted stories. Despite connotations of discord and dissonance, this cacophony contains the sonic vastness of life itself. Endarkened co-composition provides new possibilities for composers and sound practitioners seek to engage with such beautiful raucousness through composition. Taking root in storywork traditions that have evolved within Black and Indigenous cultures, endarkened co-composition rejects hierarchical and hegemonic traditions of research. Where the latter traditions aim for a sense of "enlightenment" for both researcher and 'subject', qualified by Eurocentrism and whiteness, endarkened co-composition is concerned with the knowledge and meaning that arrives through anticolonial methodology. Endarkened co-composition has the potential to consider an auditory environment in its present whole, as well as what is yet to be imagined.

Departing from theoretical underpinnings of ethnography in art practice, collaboration, and endarkened storywork established in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 relays endarkened co- composition to its subsequent mode - endarkened acoustemology. To move away from unquestioned methods driven by 'hungry listening', endarkened acoustemology

practices a pedagogical approach that is grounded in collaboration and mutual exchange. Chapter 3 offers case studies of both and introduces considerations of performance and presentation as developed through the methodology of endarkened co- composition. This practice allows for critical engagements with sound, not only as a thing to be consumed or documented, but as a medium for engaging in knowledge sharing. Such an approach seeks to understand sound-contexts within their wholeness, complexity, and richness, rather than seeking to break them down into discrete elements. An endarkened acoustemology honours the inherent 'opacity' of sound, allowing for sonic environments to remain unresolved, suspended in their liminality between abstraction and articulation. Endarkened acoustemology considers the role of sound in the development of relationships and examines how these relationships shape and are shaped by sound. In this way, it is positioned as a practice of ethical listening, one which understands the complexities of sound and is open to exploration without the need for resolution. Engaging in endarkened acoustemology creates space for emergent conversations to take place, allowing for multiple interpretations of soundscapes and furthering our understanding of the world around us.

The concept of anticolonial listening practice resonates as a profound response to the historical and ongoing marginalization of Black and Indigenous communities. By emphasizing understanding and respect over consumption, this approach seeks to honour the intricate tapestry of stories woven into every sound. Within the realm of endarkened co- composition, anticolonial listening becomes not only a practice but a philosophy that informs the entire creative process.

In further consideration of anticolonial listening, it becomes clear that this approach offers a poignant alternative to the voracious hunger associated with colonialist ideologies. While colonialism sought to assimilate and dominate, anticolonial listening serves as an act of resistance, a reclaiming of agency over narratives, and a celebration of cultural

sovereignty. This practice rejects the notion that sounds can be harvested, stripped of their context, and distilled into commodities; instead, it cherishes the intricate interplay of sound with memory, emotion, and heritage.

Anticolonial listening invites practitioners to engage with soundscapes as multidimensional landscapes, where every sonic element is a thread intricately woven into the fabric of a larger story. The wholeness of these stories encompasses not only the sounds themselves but also the experiences, emotions, and histories that give them life. The embrace of opacity becomes an invitation to engage with the unknown, to find beauty in the moments of uncertainty and to challenge the impulse to neatly categorize or define.

In the context of endarkened co-composition, where the goal is to authentically convey the experiences of marginalized communities, anticolonial listening becomes the compass guiding the artistic journey. It compels composers to transcend their own assumptions, biases, and preconceptions, and to embark on a collaborative exploration where humility and empathy are the guiding stars. This approach fosters an environment where the contributors' stories and perspectives are given space to breathe, resonate, and reverberate.

With a focus of anticolonial listening in the realm of sound, endarkened co-composition becomes a catalyst for cultural healing, empowerment, and reclamation. It becomes an act of solidarity, a bridge connecting diverse voices, and a testament to the resilience of communities that have been historically silenced. The richness of anticolonial listening lies not only in the sounds themselves but in the transformative potential they hold when approached with reverence and openness.

As composers engage in this practice, they become stewards of sound, entrusted with the task of conveying the wholeness of stories that have been silenced for far too long. Through the act of listening, they become conduits for the transmission of culture, memory, and identity. In a world where colonial legacies still cast shadows, anticolonial listening

stands as a beacon of hope, offering a path towards authentic representation, cultural preservation, and a harmonious coexistence with the sonic world.

In the socio-sonic exploration above, through theory and practice, I have proposed endarkened co-composition as practice-based qualitative research and further, as an artistic device for dismantling the current and historical rungs of our societal cacophony that silence, invalidate, and cause epistemological damage to those whose experiences are most often mined – Black women.

Supported by autoethnographic, collaborative, and anticolonial sound and listening practices, endarkened co-composition forms a methodology by which systems of hierarchy at all levels and iterations are challenged. By invoking the concept of sound as generative in this practice of deliberate interrogation and interruption, endarkened co-composition and its outputs – endarkened acoustemologies and performance- presents a viable path toward new realities. Our collective auditory landscape, marked by memory, imagination, and speculation is a product of dissonance. Rather than ease our listening experience, endarkened co-composition provides a vehicle for composers, co-composers, and listeners to inhabit the variance, honour its opacity, and reverberate beyond boundaries.

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APPENDIX A: DETAILED PORTFOLIO INFORMATION

Endarkened Co-Compositions

A Progeny for Perpetual Independence (2020-2021) – Full Score

Commissioned by Washington National Opera for Kennedy Center Cartography Project Librettist:
Junauda Petrus-Nasah

Co-Composed by Liz Gre and members of the Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN community: Kevin,
Dameun, Joi, Miko, Tyrai, Adriana, and Jameria

Orchestration: Double Bass, Cello, Violin, Piano, Soprano

A Progeny for Perpetual Independence (2021) – Filmed performance Directed by: T.L. Benton,
Mecca Filmworks

Released – 3 Feb 2022

Length: 14' 25"

Endarkened Notation

More Powerful than the Sun (2020-2021) – Graphic Score Graphic Score by: Liz Gre

Interpretations:

Angharad Davies (B): 21' 05"

Shukura Huggins (C): one-page, written Liz Gre (D): 1' 58"

Combined Interpretation by Gre and Davies (E) Sound Installation Total Run Time: 21' 32" looped.

From method, meaning.

Three Gold Threads (2023) - Film Directed by: Liz Gre

Co-Composed by: Liz Gre, Welcome Here Mixing by: Jonathan Hucks

Installation TRT: 6'00 looped

Reflected out, reflected back.

We Invoke the Black. To Rest. (2020) - Film

Commissioned by Tate Britain for a collaborative performance with Enam Gbewonyo in response to
Lynette Yiadom-Boakye's Fly In League With the Night

Co-composed by Liz Gre and Tate Collective Producers as participants Afeni, Jasmine, Emem and
Haris.

Live performance: 11 December 2020, TRT 20' Clip attached 9'.

Crushed

formed from water May 2023, 35mm film weaved through

May 2023, 35mm film

inside outside

May 2023, 35mm film

the soil was our first language

May 2023, 35mm film

APPENDIX B: PERFORMANCES, PRESENTATIONS, EXHIBITIONS OF PORTFOLIO CONTENTS

We Invoke The Black. To Rest

Tate Britain, livestreamed performance 11 December 2020, London, UK Curator: Peju Oshin

A Progeny for Perpetual Independence

Online Release: 3 February 2022

Live Premiere: 15 March 2022

More Powerful than the Sun

Lisson Gallery, An Infinity of Traces (group show) 13 April – 5 June 2021, London, UK Curator: Ekow Eshun

Royal College of Music, The Fly, 9 May 2022, London, UK Curator: Claudia Molitor

Three Gold Threads

The Swan Theatre at Royal Shakespeare Centre- 22 April 2023 – 1 April 2024 Stratford-upon- Avon, UK

APPENDIX C: CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION SHARED WITH WELCOME HERE PARTICIPANTS DURING THE FIRST SESSION

By participating in the project, you are considered a co-composer! Don't worry if you have never made up your own music before. The way you will contribute is through storytelling: Having conversations with your families, reflecting upon your lives, and sharing your stories. With permission, you will record your dialogues - of course you get to keep these recordings. You might consider it a part of your family history or your archive. You will also record yourself as you reflect on what you might be feeling, learning, and experiencing while you gather stories. Then, I'll work with these recorded stories as lyrics - putting your recordings together without changing any words and composing new music that accompanies and responds to your stories.

As I mentioned earlier, our music will be made from the stories we gather and your reflections of the process. Our music will be like an old tree - with many branches and leaves (stories) that make up something big, beautiful, and connected. But I don't make the music until we have an idea of what the seeds will be! Your interviews and reflections will tell me how to respond with music. Your recordings may even become a part of the music! So, what we need to do now is develop the seeds- our questions. The seeds are the questions that you will ask your friends, family, children and neighbours. We want to develop three sets of questions that will help us with making new or re-telling our own comedies, tragedies, and histories. This is a hard job; we want to be curious and ask questions that will invite our community to share with us. But we won't ask questions that influence their answers. We want to have a conversation. What we want is to develop open questions, not questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no answer. There is a lot of space for answers to be detailed, like stories, and even complicated. If your friends and family respond with short answers, we'll want to encourage them to dig a little deeper.