

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE CREATIVE? A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION
OF THE CREATIVE EXPERIENCE IN KINETIC PLACES

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How does it feel to be creative? Such a question, when approached from a phenomenological perspective, reveals new understandings about the embodied experience of creativity, and how it feels as it is being lived. This investigation begins with a provocative contrast of two environments where creativity is thought to manifest itself: school art classrooms, where creativity is often legislated from an authority figure, and New Orleans Second Line parades, where creativity is organically and kinetically expressed. A thorough review of the literature on creativity focuses on education, arts education, creative economies, psychology, and critical theorists, collectively revealing a cognitive bias and striking lack of consideration for community, freedom, and the lived experience of being creative. Further discussions in the literature also neglect sites of creativity, and the impact that place (such as a school classroom) can have upon creativity. The phenomenological perspectives of Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, Bachelard, and Trigg support a methodological lens to grasp embodied knowledge, perceptions of placedness on creativity, and the interdependent frictions between freedom, authenticity, movement and belonging. The research method includes investigations in New Orleans in archives, examination of visual and material culture, participation in cultural practice, and formal and informal interviews. Further, the phenomena of walking and wandering became a methodology for embodied data collection that clarified the emerging rich experiences and descriptions of how it feels to be creative, especially how it feels to be creative in a creative place. What is also revealed are intense frictions, such as the tension between perceptions of personal freedom and a high demand for authenticity in terms of New Orleans traditions, that

opens the space and fuels the inspiration for the abundance of creativity found in New Orleans culture.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTION.....	1
A Phenomenological Examination of “Creativity”	2
Phenomenological Description 1: In the Classroom.....	2
Phenomenological Description 2: The Second Line Parade.....	4
Reflection.....	10
FEATHERS AND DRUMS: A BRIEF HISTORY	12
LITERATURE REVIEW	20
Legislated Creativity in Education.....	21
Critical Literature on Legislated Creativity	25
Legislated Creativity in Art Classrooms.....	32
Creative Economies--Creative Education as a Means to Economic Gain	40
Psychological/Social-Scientific Views of Creativity.....	43
Critical Theory applied to the Creativity Problem.....	48
METHODOLOGY: RESEARCH METHODS	53
Phenomenology as a Theoretical Lens: The Body, Placedness, Aura and Movement.....	53
Creative Bodies.....	54
Community Embeddedness	55
Dwelling, Being, Moving	56
The Aura of Creativity	58
Toward Placedness.....	60
Placedness in Motion: Kinetic Places	62
Unplaces.....	63
Summary.....	65
PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	66
Interview Questions and Approaches	70
Data Analysis Plan.....	73
Veracity and Integrity	76
A Wandering Pilgrimage	80

Super Sunday Downtown: A Kinetic Feast	92
Arrival	93
Hanging Out.....	95
Milling Around	98
Procession- The Kinetic Place Arrives	100
Poesis for French Jazz.....	108
THE AMBIGUITIES OF CREATIVITY.....	110
CONCLUSION.....	145
Discussion of the Findings.....	146
Limitations and Challenges.....	150
Implications for the Practice: Pedagogical and Methodological Potentials.....	152
Methodological Potentials	158
Closing	162
APPENDIX: RESEARCH RECORDS	163
REFERENCES	165

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTION

There is no shortage of cries for creativity from the neoliberal, knowledge economy. Educational think tanks, legislative bodies, and even parents are calling for a more creative education, although they often have little understanding of what that truly means or what outcomes they are expecting. Nonetheless, they are all looking towards educators to step forward and meet the demand. My belief is that phenomenological research methods will yield a unique understanding of creativity by focusing on a simple yet profound question: “How does it feel to be creative?” Such a question circumvents what creativity *is* (which is often approached from a psychological perspective) and what creativity is supposed to *do* (which is often approached from an economic, product centered perspective) and instead asks us to focus on the embodied *experience* of creativity, how it feels, as it is being lived.

To discover and generate rich descriptions of creativity as a lived experience, I will begin this proposal with phenomenological descriptions of two locations where creativity is often thought to manifest itself: in art classrooms where creativity is often legislated and in a New Orleans Second Line parade where creativity organically emerges through collective practices. Comparing and contrasting these two loci of creativity will bring into focus a secondary question: “How is creativity experienced differently when it is legislated from above (by school reform, assignments, programs) versus when it emerges through historically specific and culturally embedded practices (as in New Orleans)?” And in turn, “How can studying organic creativity that emerges from collective, embodied experiences tied to significant places inform how creativity is taught in schools?” Through my phenomenological research into the question of creativity as a lived experience, I seek to offer a pedagogy that cultivates and inspires organic creativity.

A Phenomenological Examination of “Creativity”

Here I would like to offer two phenomenological descriptions (referenced above) that provide a vivid examination of creativity in two very different settings. It is this juxtaposition, this conspicuous contrast in experience, which opens the research question to me and compels me towards this investigation.

Phenomenological Description 1: In the Classroom

“You have ten minutes. When I come back, you had better have ideas!”

These words were shouted at a sixth-grade student by an art teacher in Fort Worth in my presence recently. Through two decades of experience teaching in public and private schools, as a mother of two energetic boys, and supervisor for student art teachers in fifty-eight different schools, I have been immersed in the school system from each of these very different perspectives. I am of the largest demographic in education: White, middle class and female. In our schools, I frequently see a formulaic, product-centered approach to art instruction that is amplified by the clinical, homogenized atmosphere of most school systems. Particularly in elementary schools, the atmospheres I often observe appear contradictory to beneficial practices suggested by recent research (Csikszentmihalyi, Gardner and others) about creativity.

Two months ago, I entered that art classroom in Fort Worth to observe a student teacher. His lesson was delivered fairly effectively, and the students had been working on the project for nearly twenty minutes when the mentor teacher returned to her classroom. She stopped at two desks, showing friendly interest in one and frowning as she spoke at the next. When she turned to the third table, she immediately began to chastise the boy in front of her for not having much

on his drawing paper. He looked up at her nervously as he began to say he had been absent the day before. The teacher cut him off mid-sentence to insist that wasn't true, and soon they were both angrily arguing. Another student joined in to support his friend while the surrounding students looked nervous and the classroom grew uncomfortably silent. Students at other tables worked soundlessly. Nearby, two girls exchanged nervous looks as they mutely passed scissors between them. My student teacher was on the far side of the room. His expression was anxious, eyes wide with concern and uncertainty. Everyone seemed frozen, embarrassed, and afraid to move and make the situation worse. Suddenly then the teacher dropped the subject, perhaps as she grew aware of my presence and the paralyzing tension in the room. "You have ten minutes. When I come back, you'd better have ideas!" She barked out the command, still angry, then turned on her heel and disappeared into a storeroom.

I was stunned, frozen to the small, hard student chair where I had positioned myself to observe my student teacher. Those ten minutes opened up like the deafening silence that follows an explosion.

Within seconds of entering the room, she created a combative mood that filled the space like the fumes from a locomotive. Why engage in an argument about something so easily verified? Why argue with a child at all? And how is this boy supposed to 'feel creative' with this vague threat and the specter of another ugly scene oppressing him? How can anyone in that classroom feel creative? I felt an anxious knot in my stomach; my back was tense and I sat upright and alert during the scene. In the minutes following that teacher's departure, I felt sadness for her students washing over me. I looked around and saw them quietly at their work, a few were staring blankly out the window, and soon my own shoulders were slumped over, discouraged.

Phenomenological Description 2: The Second Line Parade

Standing with my back to the shimmering Mississippi River, I face the iconic St. Louis Cathedral, pale and elegant in the morning sunlight. A trio of pointed spires, capped with the dark grey slate so widely used in the 1700s when Jackson Square was constructed as a civic and commercial center for New Orleans' French and Creole population. Today, a long row of hefty donkeys is lined up with brightly painted carriages waiting to schlep tourists through the remaining cobblestones of the French Quarter.

I walk down a few steps and cross Decatur Street, passing these and other street vendors as I veer towards the left side of the square in the shade of the Lower Pontalba buildings, elegant despite centuries of heavy wear. Three stories of red brick tower above, the street level sheltered by the underside of balconies graced with ornate black wrought iron lacework. On the corner of Jackson Square a brass band plays an old tune, "I'll Fly Away," in a jaunty but distracted manner. The tuba player checks his cell phone without missing a beat. The lure of ever-streaming music performed in the streets is one of the reasons I return, again and again.

I turn right onto the wide slate plaza in front of the cathedral and adjust my sunglasses into the glare of the sun. Cardinal directions are lost to me in this city that bends itself—has always bent itself—around the curve of the river. I weave my way through the Quarter, stumbling over uneven cobblestones and slate paving as I can't resist gazing upward at the wrought iron balconies, some filled with verdant ferns and flowers while others are tilted and doomed to fall. Today I have a goal in my wandering, which is to find the second line parade celebrating Louis Armstrong's 114th birthday.

Just before the cathedral I turn left into Pirate's Alley and stop at a slightly seedy bar next to the house where William Faulkner lived and wrote his first novels. Tradition holds that the

pirate Jean Lafitte owned or at least worked from this very building a century before, so the alleyway bears his name. I step around an acrid pile of leaking trash bags as I leave the bar, go-cup in hand filled with fast melting ice and dark Old New Orleans rum. A left, then a right turn lands me on Royal Street, a pleasant walk past closed art galleries and dusty antique shops. I should hurry, but the heat of the day is already rising. After several pleasant blocks, I turn left on St. Philip Street. A few tourists, freshly arrived and eager to start the day, emerge from a hotel as I slip past. There are few cars here on this sunny Sunday morning, but I hear the lumbering clop-clop of a horse as he pulls a carriage of visitors a block away. Then on a cross street I catch sight of a tall unicycle, the rider dressed in a tweed suit and cap, like a 1940's film character. Atop the unicycle he is at least twelve feet in the air, on the same level as the balconies. Pedaling vigorously, he is gone before I'm even sure I saw him.

At Rampart Street I pause, collecting on the corner with a half-dozen others who are also seeking the parade. Two ladies, pale skin already beginning to show sunburn, are dressed in vivid red and purple costumes, shining purple silk blouses with red feather boas as collars. They hold fluttering feathered umbrellas to match, and speak in the local accent. Finally, we cross the divided boulevard, and the world changes. Rampart is a wide avenue with a grassy median (known here as the "neutral ground"), a clear boundary between the iconic, brightly painted shotgun houses of the French Quarter from the Tremé, America's oldest Black neighborhood. My eyes are drawn to the left towards Louis Armstrong Park, where freshly painted iron fencing protects a newly refurbished civic greenspace. In the distance I can just glimpse the giant oaks that shade Congo Square, the singular site where, more than a century ago, African rhythms collided with American gospel and European instruments, and Jazz was born. A disquieting yet

alluring sensation arises inside, a slight joyous tension in my throat, as I feel the distance between the past and present shrinking to a thin veil, and history tugs at my sleeve.

The sidewalks are full now and we spill out into the street as I walk the final block to Henriette Delille Street—who was she, I wonder? Why is this street named for her? For I have entered the world of the Tremé, also called the Sixth Ward, a place that has historically been ignored and categorically marginalized, yet it is the pulsing heartbeat of this city, the birthplace of Jazz and still overflowing with creative expression. In this move from the worldhood of the familiar into the unknown Tremé, a tangible mood change provokes a slight wave of prickles to my skin. Am I welcome here? Am I lost? Will I, a pale White woman who is clearly an outsider, be resented in this neighborhood embedded with centuries of poverty and racial struggle? I look left and right, attuned to my surroundings, as a cheerful crowd surrounds me.

The houses here are humble, mostly double or single shotgun-style, with a few two-story buildings. Some are colorfully painted and well kept while others have almost no paint over the slowly rotting wood. One house is overgrown with moss and ivy, the roof caved partway in. A faded red X is spray painted on the door, a haunting reminder of the aftermath of hurricanes and floods. The past is ever present.

The cement steps of a local house museum are crowded with people. The pale wooden spire of a church is just ahead, faded and flaking as it towers above enormous walls and a simple white façade. In front of this church the crowd is dense, waiting in the noon sun. I see a gold shining tuba above it all and hear the whomp of a trombone. The parade will begin here.

Many in this crowd have instruments, milling about in matching t-shirts and jeans. There is a little warm-up music, but mostly they talk and greet each other. A few pose for pictures with local fans and family. People are restless with anticipation, and the chatter of the crowd grows

louder. The heat of midday makes itself noticeable now as I feel trickles of sweat slip down my back. I hold the last piece of ice in my mouth and lift my hair from my neck in an effort to fan away a degree or two. I push through the cheerful crowd and find a shady spot as I perch on the twisted roots of an ancient oak tree that pushes back against civilization with the slow tenacity of nature. The sidewalks are a jumbled mess; the roots rise up in a dozen places, while the old oak branches scoff at the slow march of time.

Suddenly the doors of the church swing open, and a woman dressed in a bright blue dress emerges, blue tulle supporting a bouncing lace skirt. Several strings of white pearls spill from her neck to her waist, and atop her smiling face is a sparkling blue headband with a spray of feathers over her left ear. She is holding a matching blue-feathered umbrella high above her head, a huge feathery fan in the other. Standing at the top of the stairs, she waves the umbrella and bows low to her audience. The crowd cheers and presses in even closer, cell phones and cameras in the air. A whistle blows, I know not from where, and the Tremé Brass Band emerges behind her playing a gospel tune in a swinging, festive style.

Men in peach and brown suits, Black men of all ages and sizes, are suddenly present, hands extended outward as they gesture to the crowd to step back and make way. Gradually space is made for the band to enter the street and finish the song. A pause then as the first line begins to get organized. Several bands are here, with teams of costumed dancers and others carrying banners on long poles. They will be led by the parade lady in her vibrant blue dress and umbrella, and a tall man in a beautiful black pinstripe suit wearing a stinky brim fedora, a shining gold banner across his chest.

Looking across the crowd from my perch on the tree roots, I see dozens of decorated umbrellas, homemade creations that match the outfits or personalities of those who carry them.

The festive banners feature Louis Armstrong's face, and a few picture other beloved musicians who passed away this year.

Anxious shouts of surprise rise up from another street, and I look over to see a character lurching high above the crowd. They open a passage before him, and he moves forward on spindly legs that are higher than the tallest men, wearing long striped pants and a boldly patterned red print shirt. The head appears to be straw—long strands of straw that wave in all directions, topped with a pointed yellow and black hat. The face is a terrifying mask, wooden with large blank eyes and a grimacing mouth. The hands are gloved, pointing menacingly at the audience, and then suddenly waving as if friendly. *What is this creature?*

Another whistle cries out, and the band forms a loose rectangle of players and begins to play. They press into the crowd, who reluctantly make room so that the parade may truly begin. Leaving the church behind, we morph into the next street as the bands and costumed dancers add their groups to the parade proper. The crowd follows as the second line: walking, dancing, taking photos and video, talking, drinking, and more dancing.

From that moment I cease to be in the audience; I am no longer watching it, I join it. I am organically swept into the living, breathing moment of song and movement, time and space, and I become ephemeral.

Here moves a grand cacophony.

Brass instruments holler out the melody, counter melody and harmonies, often all at once.

A tuba and bass drum drive the beat, never ceasing even as they slide from one song to another.

A cowbell clangs a rhythm, syncopated, like an echo from the tropics far away, a primordial call embedded deeply in human history.

Shouting, greeting, singing (sometimes the wrong song).

Cries of “Who Dat!”

Always chatter.

A whistle sounds, but I never see where it comes from.

At last the trumpet blasts the four-note call, and cries of “Yeah” and “Hey” rise up around me. I raise my right arm as I holler; I don’t know why, but my arm flies up.

Sometimes it seems like it will fall apart, but then the others catch the new tune, and they surge back in.

Small white towels are waved in the air, dropping occasionally to wipe tropical sweat from a face even as our feet never stop moving.

A swaying, left and right with arms, or body or legs or head or any combination.

Their footwork is so effortless, but I can’t do it.

I see a tall man, young with long dreadlocks over broad shoulders. He wears a black and gold team jersey, loose jeans and large white sneakers. A tiny boy is with him. In the moment, I see them as father and son. On the sidewalk he positions the child in front of him, and I realize they both hold trumpets. But now they are dancing. The man points to his feet and shuffles, gesturing for the child to copy him. The boy’s hair is short, shaved close, and he wears tan shorts with his smaller black and gold football jersey. They match in clothes, and now they match in step. A shuffle forward, yet the gesture is cut short and met immediately with a shuffle for the other foot. I stare from across the way and copy the lesson given to the child. Suddenly, my feet are doing it!

The band moves forward, the crowd with it, and I find I can follow with my new shuffle in a step going forward. Perfect for a party that doesn’t stop moving.

People press forward and back, they come towards each other then back away. Strangers meet for a moment and dance together, smiling and waving handkerchiefs, umbrellas, props, then move apart. Cheerfully conspiring in pleasure, then passing on into the next place, the next song, the next vivid moment.

There are no barriers. Someone waves a colorful stick, trying to guide the second line away from the center of the street, making way for the band. I think I hear “two-way pak-e way” shouted out, and space finally opens up for the band to step forward. Dancers are elbow to jostling elbow with drummers, trombones lifted high to keep from whacking people on the head.

Reflection

The contrast between the classroom and the Second Line is conspicuous, and although the settings differ the expectation of creativity is clear in both places. What is it about the Second Line that inspires the feeling of an organic and free creativity, and what is it about the classroom—even the art classroom—that leads to the opposite feeling? Our schools so often seem highly structured, with rigid bell schedules and strict dress codes. While most strive to be nurturing and of course educational, the strictures seem to reduce autonomy. In my experience of the second line, they appear to embody a radically different sensibility: one that is characterized by kinetic creativity, where identity is crafted through costume and movement is interactive, spontaneous, joyous.

The following study was an attempt to understand my intuitive distinction by returning to the second line in order to better understand what kinds of creativity exists there. In particular, I focused on the following questions: What does creativity feel like, especially what does

creativity feel like in kinetic places, and how can those insights inform education for and through creative practice?

FEATHERS AND DRUMS: A BRIEF HISTORY

At this juncture, it is appropriate to present a brief historical overview of New Orleans, the Mardi Gras Indian community and the Second Line processional tradition. In addition to informing readers about these unique traditions, this information justifies the selection of New Orleans as a suitable place for studying creativity. The city has long been a home to creative productivity, including innovations in music, literature, theater, culinary, material culture and visual arts. This overview also opens the gateway for developing the phenomenological study of creativity as embedded in a community, embodied as it is publicly enacted, and rooted in both conflicts and freedom.

As Lafcadio Hearn observed in 1877, New Orleans “resembles no other city upon the face of the earth, yet it recalls vague memoires of a hundred cities. It owns suggestions of towns in Italy, and in Spain, of cities in England and in Germany, of seaports in the Mediterranean, and of seaports in the tropics” (Hearn, 2001, p. 7). When the French settled into the region we now called the Mississippi Delta, they established New Orleans in 1718 as a shipping port (Burns, 2005, p. 4). It was later ceded to the Spanish, reclaimed by France, and sold to the United States in the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 (Burns, 2005, p. 4). Over these early decades, as both a port city and as a resting point of global immigration, New Orleans would see (and become home to) people from France and Spain, Acadians (French speaking Canadians), self-emancipated slaves from revolutions in Haiti and San Domingo, Protestant Americans from the East coast, Greeks, Albanians, Filipinos, Chinese, Germans, Irish and Italians (Burns, 2005, p. 4-6). Africans were brought in from the earliest days, many of whom arrived via the Caribbean and were in the Americas for generations before their descendants came to New Orleans (Burns, 2005, p. 4-6). These newcomers were slowly invading the regional homeland of Choctaw and Natchez Indians

(Burns, 2005, p. 6), some of whom were drawn to the city as a trade center (Johnson, 2000, p. 1 and 5). Unique to New Orleans during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a community of *gens du colour libre*—free people of color, who as citizens of the city owned businesses and property:

The Spanish period in New Orleans was crucial to the creation of Afro-Louisiana culture...Slaves were treated badly, but enslaved people had some liberties—most important, they had the right to purchase their freedom. That was more than black New Orleanians had before and more than enslaved people in the United States would have. (Sublette, 2008, p. 5)

Ken Burns' research, published through books, articles and the well-known documentary, *Jazz*, provides this overview of the global influx of people into New Orleans as setting the stage for the eruption of Jazz music as the first new art form of the United States, a creative shift in music-making that has its heritage in the performance of many different Africans in Congo Square (Burns, 2005, p. 9-10).

Public processions and parades also have a multi-continental history that was brought to New Orleans along with the global infusion of language, music, food, and religion. The cultural practice that is the focus of this investigation, the Second Line parade, is not tied to a holiday. Second Lines are planned annual events that are usually sponsored by 'social aid and pleasure clubs'—organizations that arose at the turn of the last century to help neighbors with medical and funeral expenses (Branley, 2013, p. 1). Today, the term 'Second Line' is both a noun and a verb, (Solnit, 2013, p. 107); to Second Line is to join a parade to dance or walk along and follow it through the streets for as long as you choose. The first line is the planned sponsoring participants, usually costumed in the same colors or identical clothes with matching umbrellas and other props, as a brass band brings the festivities to a higher level. The Second Line is everyone else who joins in to dance and follow the band through the neighborhood (Sakakeeny,

2013, p. x). As the audience regularly becomes participants they often bring props like a sign or umbrella as they join the parade (Sakakeeny, 2013, p. x).

Matt Sakakeeny's book, *Roll with it; Brass bands in the streets of New Orleans*, is an exploration of the lives and practices of brass band musicians who are carrying on the traditions of street music into the 21st century. It offers a starkly different discussion of creativity than those outlined above. Sakakeeny's work is in many ways an exemplar for examining the traditions of this city. His theoretical framework overlaps with my interest in movement and artistry: "the central themes of this book—agency, subjectivity, mobility—by way of another: voice." Particularly, Sakakeeny utilizes the device of "voice as a metaphor for agency...the sound of instruments in a ritual procession that symbolizes a communal voice" (Sakakeeny, 2013, p. 6). Our voices are both internal and external, originating from the throat and often giving forth word and song at a speed that seems to surpass even our thoughts. Spontaneous, resonant with emotion, the voice articulates our needs, desires, thoughts and inspirations. The vibrancy of this phenomenon is worthy of examination on its own merit; indeed, an exploration of the material culture of the Crescent City cannot be a silent endeavor, as the visual object is nearly always accompanied by music: brass bands, traditional and original songs, call and response chants, shouted threats and booming laughter.

The resonance of drums beats, in particular the taa-taa-taa...ti ta ta that opens traditional songs like 'Lil Liza Jane and Tippitina's, resonate with the human heartbeat—the internal metronome that generates our simultaneous experience of hearing and feeling rhythm, from before birth until our last breath. Where memories fade, the pace of our heartbeats continues. Furthermore, the sonic resonance of external rhythms impacts our bodies fully, deeply, so that our internal heartbeats adjust to the external pace (Anderson, 2009, p. 1) dissolving the separation

of inside and outside. Bachelard invokes the power of the imagination to affect the human awareness of our interior and exterior dwellings,

In any case, inside and outside, as experienced by the imagination, can no longer be taken in their simple reciprocity; consequently, by omitting geometrical references when we speak of the first expressions of being, by choosing more concrete, more phenomenologically exact inceptions, we shall come to realize that the dialects of inside and outside multiply with countless diversified nuances. (Bachelard, 1994, p. 216)

The simple call of the drum, received through sound waves striking the body, is answered by the internal rhythm-maker, and thus *dematerializes* the separation of the individual from the music, from others dancing, singing or listening, even the body and the instrument. While one could observe that this happens, to some degree, any time we hear or are exposed to music, the participatory nature of the Second Line parades, dancing, and particularly the call-and-response element of jazz music, reveals a synchrony between sound, movement and body that dissolves typical notions of inside and outside.

New Orleans culture is truly characterized by events, moments, and interactions between performers, music, visuality and audience. The body of Sakakeeny's work is divided into numbered episodes, unique events that happened on particular days for particular parades where the author was present. These events colorfully exemplify typical brass band practices or describe challenges and obstacles they face, such as abusive police and violence, or commercial potential and exploitation. In New Orleans, parades occur with remarkable frequency and for a wide variety of purposes. Most famous are the Mardi Gras parades with enormous floats, costumes and a complex network of celebrations, balls and ceremonies. Funeral processions are also well known for the somber journey to the cemetery followed by a celebratory exodus. Aside from holidays and personal events, New Orleanians also have parades purely for celebration. Often organized by the Social Aide and Pleasure Clubs and supported by their own

band or a combination of a few bands, these parades typically occur on a Sunday afternoon and last several hours.

These parades and music are different every time, and interactions with other musicians and the audience are spontaneous, creative, and unique to each event. Sakakeeny's examination of street culture overlaps significantly with my focus on the Second Line practice of carrying a decorated umbrella. Most parades include the band and a group of planned performers in addition to a Second Line of audience-participants, many of whom carry an umbrella as a prop but also as a practicality. In this tropic city, the heat of the afternoon can be sweltering. The relief of shade from the sun is needed, and with an umbrella you can take your shade with you.

Sakakeeny also reveals some difficulties for outside observers and researchers. He became known to this community of musicians through working for WWOZ, the local radio station. He interviewed many of these musicians on the air, and later became a fixture at their parades. Through this avenue, as he formalized his research he had a working relationship with his participants. I, too, seek a connection with the community that will be acceptable to them as a supporter and admirer of their practices. "Human agency and subjectivity are measurable in voices material and metaphorical, musical and verbal," (Sakakeeny, 2013, p. 7). I would add visual and material culture to his list.

Mardi Gras Indians likewise have a cultural practice expressed on the streets of New Orleans only a few days of each year. Their history reaches back approximately 250 years, when self-emancipated African slaves disbursed into forests and bayous of the Mississippi Delta and blended with native peoples in the region (Smith, 2007, p. 13). Some historians propose that the mingling of Black and Native populations happened even earlier, as Natives were also enslaved and pressed into service (Johnson, 2000, p. 11). From the descendants of these people,

particularly after the full abolition of slavery, come the communities of today's generations of Black Indians (as they call themselves) that are a synthesis of family, friendship, spiritual secret society, social club and mutual aid organization (Sublette, 2008, p. 295).

Among the private cultural practices of the Black Indians is the gathering of gang or tribe members to play music and reach out to a spiritual world. Michael P. Smith is a photographer who earned the trust of the Black Indians through years of friendship, and was allowed into these private gatherings. He describes:

a heightened, otherworldly consciousness and an alternative experience of power. After hours of increasingly intense drumming, dance, and mesmerizing call-and-response “sermons” (a complex pattern of interweaving rhythms and consciousness)...I would find myself merging with the energy and spirit of an amazing urban underworld, with roots deep in the collective experience of the African diaspora. (Smith, 2007, p. 17)

Mardi Gras Indians, or Black Indians, took on a more visible role in New Orleans culture early in the Twentieth century. Embedded in the micro-community of small neighborhood collectives, the Indians are deeply attached to their families and neighbors. The feathered suits—the iconic and most recognizable facet of visual culture—are made by hand each year by the person who wears them. Beaded panels are designed with personal, symbolic meaning and sewn with needle and thread through painstaking and time-consuming labor. Colors for each year's suit are a secret, as is the overall design, and such is the competition between Black Indians that they hide their suits from the public (and often each other) until the moment of the reveal (Wyckoff, 2017). Each Mardi Gras day, when they ‘come out’ and debut the new feathered suit, they emerge from a home or tavern that is personal and local to invited family, neighbors and the tribal community. As Big Chief Delco of the Creole Osceola Mardi Gras Indian gang explains: “I come from the old school of it; I come from the old culture of it...That's where you came from so you don't forget it. You do it for the neighborhood people” (Wyckoff, 2017). In

addition to Mardi Gras events, the Black Indians have semi-public traditions for St. Joseph's Day and Super Sunday that take place on the streets of New Orleans. Very occasionally they will also appear on stage for a musical performance or events such as JazzFest or the Congo Square festival as a representation of the culture to visitors. Such is the rarity of the appearance of the Mardi Gras Indians in their suits (Sublette, 2008, p. 295-6).

The question of cultural appropriation regarding the appearance and practice of Mardi Gras Indians is a natural concern at this juncture. Although this unique, small cultural community has been in place for over a century, they were relatively unknown until they 'came out,' so to speak, at the Jazz and Heritage Festival in 1970 (Smith, 1988, p. 1). From that time forward, as the Black Indians cultural practices became more widely known, there has been both scrutiny and backlash from some facets of the Native American community. The creation of the elaborate feathered suits, while distinctive, has been criticized as a twisted depiction of authentic ceremonial headdresses, despite claims by New Orleans' Black Indian community of genetic and cultural descent from native peoples. A particularly interesting editorial from Dr. Adrienne Keene describes the crux of the objection:

Inherent in the concept of cultural appropriation is the notion of power...These Mardi Gras Indians are African American, and arguably at the lowest economic strata of society...They are by no means in a position of power over Native communities in Louisiana or elsewhere. The Mardi Gras Indian culture does not appear to come out of a desire to "play Indian," and in many ways has moved outside the realm of cultural appropriation into a distinct culture and community of its own. But above all, it seems the history comes not out of a relationship of power, but out of a shared position of marginality and discrimination. (Keene, 2010, p. 1)

Certainly my interaction with Mardi Gras Indians has been consistently respectful of indigenous peoples and traditions, acknowledging that Native American tribes saved the lives of their ancestors and through which their contemporary practices came into existence. Yet even Dr. Keene reveals, "I find it hard to write my usual rant on an insensitive appropriation of Native

culture, but, on the other hand, it still makes me uncomfortable” (Keene, 2010, p. 1). Dr. Keene’s position certainly does not speak wholesale for an indistinct conglomerate of ‘all native’ communities, but she articulates a key concern that remains an ongoing source of conflict.

New Orleans’ Black Indians see their cultural practice as unique and separate from any particular native tribe, even as they acknowledge the heritage. Michael Smith advocates for the Mardi Gras Indians as preservers and practitioners of distinctly African practices as well, that have blended with Native practices but that still express African visual culture and music:

The "Mardi Gras Indian" tribes of New Orleans are, in fact, the oldest cultural organizations surviving from the original African tribes which were brought into New Orleans during slavery days. The tribes are particularly noted for preserving African "dress art" and musical heritage in the New World. The sewing and beadwork incorporated in Mardi Gras Indian suits, which are destroyed and redesigned each year, are widely considered to be the finest example of traditional African-American folk art in North America. (Smith, 1988, p. 1)

Smith’s position elevates the conflict as a tension between marginalized communities and their efforts to enact agency through cultural autonomy.

New Orleans as a research destination offers a wealth of compelling visual and material culture in addition to unique practices embedded in complex communities with historical depth. For the phenomenological researcher, a wealth of embodied experiences are visually expressed on the streets, generating the kinetic places where movement and traditions, freedom and constraints, invention and appropriation collide.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review of the literature on creativity particularly focuses on education, arts education, creative economies, and psychology, with support from critical theorists, to present a broad yet thorough scope of research and perspectives about creativity. Here I will assert that there are four overlapping gaps in the literature. First, there is a striking lack of consideration for creativity's embodiment, the *lived experience of being creative*. Second, discussions in the literature often neglect aspects of place, sites of creativity, and the impact that place (such as a school classroom) can have upon creativity. Third, while some authors acknowledge and even emphasize the role of community in creativity, vivid descriptions of that experience are not presented by any of these authors. Finally, the freedom to be creative is an idea that is avoided, especially in the field of education, although some authors signal the contradictions they find in the expectation of creativity amid our schools' highly restrictive environments.

The insight into organic creative experiences that phenomenology can provide is essential for understanding both the experiences of our students and for crafting pedagogies of creativity, community, and effective twenty-first century curricula. The importance and necessity of phenomenology's conceptual interest in the holistic relationship between body and place, and the worldly encounters of being-with others, as well as phenomenology's methodological emphasis on rich descriptions for understanding how creativity is lived, will become increasingly apparent as I review the existing literature. My hypothesis is simple and direct: Without *beginning* from rich descriptions of what creativity feels like, creativity theorists risk forming ideas of how creativity functions that are either (a) too abstract to be useful or (b) miss the phenomenon entirely. Through this literature review, I will highlight how legislators, critics and social

psychologists have failed to provide teachers with adequate theories of creativity because they do not start from this basic, primordial question: what does it feel like to be creative?

Legislated Creativity in Education

The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE) in 1999 generated a report that has been highly influential on school programming in the United Kingdom. This report begins with a definition of creativity as “imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value” (NACCCE, 1999, p. 4). They further assert that creativity is a “basic capacity of human intelligence,” something all people, and therefore all students, are able to do on some level (NACCCE, 1999, p. 4). Likewise, the NACCCE reinforces the call for greater creative skills in economic terms: “Creative abilities are being seen as fundamental in meeting the challenges of economic development. This process should begin in school” (NACCCE, 1999, p. 3). This report presents a cognitive view of creativity as it challenges educators to think creatively in their own teaching as well as equip their students for creative thinking: “Teaching creatively involves teachers using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting, exciting and effective. Teaching for creativity means teachers developing young people’s own creative thinking or behavior, and includes teaching creatively” (NACCCE, 1999, p. 6).

Education theorists are responding to this pressure by adding creativity to local and international curriculum expectations. While the emphasis on creativity appears to be a welcome sight, an antidote to rote learning in clinical environments, the way in which creativity is framed in documents such as these is problematic in several ways. First, there is a strictly *cognitive* emphasis on creativity as a mental skill or aptitude. Second, there is no sensitivity to creativity

as embodied or embedded in specific places. As such, the resulting definition of creativity is vague, abstract, and contradictory with other theorists, thus presenting teachers with an unhelpful list of principles and no tools with which to implement them.

The field of art education has an ally and advocate in the National Art Education Association. The private organization supplies professional education, publication, conferences, local and online communities, webinars, and legislative advocacy. They support the National Core Arts Standards produced by the National Coalition for Core Arts and offer workshops and lesson plans for art educators that support these curricular goals. A review of these standards reveals that creativity is prominently featured at the top of the standards. Expectations are elaborated with specific age-appropriate skills for K-12 students. Cognitive creativity is emphasized: “Creativity and innovative thinking are essential life skills that can be developed” (NCCAS (a), 2014, p 1), a democratic view of creative abilities shared by Gude, Craft, and Florida. The NCCAS document dedicates the vast majority of attention to promoting what the Arts *do*, such as develop personal satisfaction, art production, teach history, and facilitate community engagement (NCCAS (b), 2014, p. 10). There is a distinct emphasis on collaboration and experimentation, which we will see aligns with the theoretical proposals of Czychetmehayli and Gardner. NCCAS asserts that creativity can generate outcomes such “as flexible thinking, creative problem-solving, inquisitiveness, and perseverance. Creative and innovative strategies build students ability in problem formulation, research, interpretation, communication, precision and accuracy” (NCCAS(b), 2014, p. 21).

The large public school district where I taught visual arts for many years had a similar chart (printed at poster-size and required to be hung in each classroom) that did not contain the word creativity or the expectation that we overtly teach creative strategies or perspectives. In

fact, many of my colleagues believed that creativity could not be taught, saying, ‘either you have it or you don’t.’ Contrast this with the NCCAS expectations that were published in 2014:

Creativity and innovation are essential for the development of the necessary skills to flourish in the 21st century, as well as to promote essential skills for successful student and workplace achievement. The goal of fostering creativity and innovation through arts education is included in numerous initiatives inside and outside education across all subjects and disciplines. Specifically, it is described in a variety of state arts standards and frameworks across the United States and is diversely applied in classrooms across the nation as an inherent aspect of teaching and learning in the arts. Widely held definitions of these aspects include:

- Creativity is the capability or act of conceiving something original/unusual.
- Innovation is the implementation of something new.
- Invention is the creation of something that has never been made before and is recognized as the product of some unique insight. (NCCAS(b), 2014, p. 20)

Although this is encouraging theory, I have not seen evidence that art educators are overtly teaching these ideals or that they have been equipped by universities or school districts to do so. These new expectations are product-centered, with no regard for the atmosphere, the environment or places that might enhance or degrade creativity in students. Further, the *experience* of being creative is ignored entirely. Finally, creativity is represented as a purely cognitive, mental aptitude—a mental event that is subsequently expressed through creative action. Yet this raises the question: Is this how creativity is predominantly experienced?

The International Baccalaureate Organization’s mission statement states their intent “to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect” (IBO, 2013, Learner Profile). This mission is expanded in the IB Learner Profile, an elaboration of meanings and goals behind the learner attributes they strive to instill in their students. These goals include building students who are: Inquirers, Knowledgeable, Thinkers, Communicators, Principled, Open-Minded,

Caring, Risk-Takers, Balanced and Reflective. Of note is their description of a *Thinker* as someone who utilizes “critical and creative thinking skills” (IBO Learner Profile, 2013).

Beyond the learner profile, the Arts courses for the International Baccalaureate programs all include a major creative component in the curriculum. Students in courses such as Film, Visual Arts, and Music are all expected to generate creative products, which are assessed by rigorous international standards, just as all subject categories (IBO, 2013). However, the call for creativity as described above is generating a change in the goal structure of the IB program.

Whereas “in the past, it appeared that creative thinking was considered to only be the purview of the Arts, now the dialogue is changing. There is a definite desire to incorporate creative thinking into all areas of the IB curriculum” (Bindon, M., Curriculum Manager for Visual Arts, Film and Theater, personal communication, November 7, 2013). The IB is only one of many educational programs seeking to increase the creative potential of their students. Although there is much to be praised here, the assumption of creativity as a strictly cognitive skill is never clearly articulated or supported by any evidence. Furthermore, the strict connections between creativity and identifiable economic skills is also potentially limiting for understanding the scope of creativity as it is lived by children in the classroom. This opens the question: Is there freedom in our classrooms to be creative that is not directly supportive of economic ends?

In summary, there is unanimity in education in general—and in arts education in particular—that creativity is important and is invaluable to student success in schools and in the world. This may well be true, but what is revealed is a consistent *cognitive bias* in the legislated creativity literature that might limit how we approach research into the field of creativity and therefore how we conceptualize curricular and pedagogical models for cultivating creativity.

Critical Literature on Legislated Creativity

Despite the legislated expectation that creativity become embedded in school curricula, there is a disparity that is long entrenched. In this section I move from an overview of official, institutional statements to critical, pragmatic, and humanist voices in education that emphasize creativity as something that cannot be legislated but must be lived.

Maxine Greene's book *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts and social change* (1995) provides some historical backdrop for this discussion. Greene opens with a passage revealing the implications of legislated creativity in education (i.e. NACCCE and NCCAS), specifically that the visual and performative arts will offer the solution: "I also begin to seek out ways in which the arts, in particular, can release imagination to open new perspectives, to identify alternatives" (Greene, 1995, p. 17-18). Greene's hope that the arts will unlock creativity is at least expressed in terms of lived experience: "The vistas that might open, the connections that might be made, are experiential phenomena; our encounters with the world become newly informed" (Greene, 1995, p. 18). Greene describes a restructuring of education, acknowledging the challenge of overcoming inertia in education systems and the standardized uniformity of most pedagogy. She calls for a new focus on the communities within our schools and describes a pedagogy of empathy which resonates strongly with me. "Community cannot be produced simply through rational formulation nor through edict. Like freedom, it has to be achieved by persons offered the space in which to discover what they recognize together and appreciate in common" (Greene, 1995, p. 39).

Citing an array of historical and literary figures from John Dewey to Virginia Woolf, Greene calls for increasing the presence of 'the arts' in education in a rather vague way, despite the academic nature of the book. Although it never offers any concrete strategies, Greene's

theory is inspiring: “Our classrooms ought to be nurturing and thoughtful and just all at once; they ought to pulsate with multiple conceptions of what it is to be human and alive. They ought to resound with the voices of articulate young people in dialogues always incomplete because there is always more to be discovered and more to be said” (Greene, 1995, p. 43). Unlike the documents cited above, Greene is a strong advocate for creativity as freedom, and thus strives to reach beyond economic demands. Yet Greene remains within the theoretical purview of creativity without delving into the phenomenology of how creativity is lived by students. As such, her critical theory of creativity is important, but could be seen as limited because it is missing a vivid, descriptive sense of embodiment.

Elliot Eisner’s book, *The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs* (1994), in particular the chapter on explicit, implicit and null curricula, critiques how we teach both overtly and covertly. That is, the elements of education that are left out of curricula have at least an equally profound impact on students as what we teach intentionally: “The absence of a set of considerations or perspectives or the inability to use certain processes for appraising a context biases the evidence one is able to take into account.” (Eisner, 1994, p. 97). Eisner’s criticisms speak to the programming we impart into students both through behavior and instructional practices (implicit curricula) while leaving out lessons, practices and even the values of creativity and collaboration.

In Eisner’s article, “Alternative approaches to curriculum development in art education,” (1984) he again asserts the value of arts education for its ability to stimulate creativity from the cognitive bias identified above: “The aim of education in general, and especially art education, is to foster the creative and mental growth of the child” (Eisner, 1984, p. 260). Although Eisner here identifies artmaking for children as a personal, even intimate, experience that primes them

for developing creative potential, and he consistently promotes instructional strategies that are open-ended and allow for a multiplicity of solutions, he justifies these strategies by reviewing the many ways in which art education will prepare the students for dealing with the world or improving performance in other areas (Eisner, 1984, p. 260-262). The emphasis on what creativity can do devalues the essence of the embodied creative experience.

The idea of creative teaching has its own charismatic aura, although academia has a much deeper consideration than film and television would offer its casual audience. David T. Hansen's article, "Creativity in teaching and building a meaningful life as a teacher" (2005), focuses on teacher-centered creativity, which is certainly vital as a daily practice for effective educators. Hanson considers creativity to be an open responsiveness to the fluid events of the classroom (Hanson, 2005, p. 58). He observes that "creativity in teaching often emerges in the unexpected, the unanticipated, and the unscripted" (p. 59), and poetically encourages educators to contemplate "moments of being, when the sheer fact of being alive vibrates with the feeling," (p. 61) as the essence of teaching. This phenomenological nod is reflected again towards the end of the article as a description of student creativity is offered through an activity at an art museum. Here Hanson opens the door for students discover and describe unique reactions to artwork, to interact with each other in an open discussion that encourages them to be 'open and attuned' to many possible reactions and meanings to the work.

Overall, this is an inspiring piece, but it treats creativity as a noun, an object to be utilized, and 'creative teaching' is objectified as the result of attentiveness and responsiveness. This overlaps with phenomenological methodology but is geared towards encouraging teachers to be highly sensitive to the students around them, their emotional as well as educational needs, rather than savoring the vivid embodied experience of teaching.

In *The Trouble with Play*, authors Grieshaber & McArdle (2010) confront accepted perceptions of play in early childhood education philosophies and practice. In particular, they address the assumptions that the types of play encountered by children (second grade and younger) will be “natural, normal, innocent, fun, solely about development and learning, beneficial to all children, and a universal right for all children” (Grieshaber & McArdle, 2010, p. 1). The focus of the book is on problematic social and educational outcomes of standardized play centers. Such ‘play’ opportunities are allocated and compartmentalized into specific skills or locations (centers that mimic grocery store, home, kitchen) with costumes and objects presented to fulfill only one (highly standardized) purpose. The assumption is that creativity can be pre-designed, and does not ask what could be missing when we legislate creative action without taking into account how the child feels during organic moments of creative expression.

Creativity is addressed in chapter four of this book as desirable, but early childhood art education is criticized for being as restrictive as the play centers. The illusion of creativity is generated through the production of identical products to hang regimentally on the walls, proving only that the children are able to “stick cotton balls on templates of bunnies” (Grieshaber & McArdle, 2010, 42). Grieshaber and McArdle here marginally address the lack of creativity in the type of play opportunities they describe in preschool and primary classroom. True free play would allow these small children the opportunity to move themselves and objects between the pre-scripted centers, adopt roleplay that is inventive and unexpected, and use new or familiar objects for original purposes.

Alexander Means (2013) proposes utilizing imagination as a cognitive space for learning mathematics. He continues to place creativity in the mind, and indeed attempts to utilize creativity as a fully abstracted tool for conveying complex mathematical concepts. While the

author has success with these strategies as an educator, he completely ignores the potential of creativity to generate newness. Likewise, Cordy and Kotsopoulos (2009) present imagination as a cognitive space for learning, and are another example of the view that creativity is fully located in the brain, leaving the rest of the body and the extended environment out entirely.

Anna Craft (2003) takes on legislated creativity, questioning the implications in the UK education systems that have emerged from the NACCE recommendation discussed above. In the UK, creativity is overtly included in school curriculum for early childhood. Craft observes that creativity is seen as beneficial by educators, especially in preparation for social and economic purposes. However, Craft critiques the legislated creativity as specifically valued by Western culture, in particular ways, and may pose pedagogical and ethical problems as a result.

Creativity is becoming a part of a universalized discourse in the Western world. It reflects the globalization of economic activity, which has led to increased competition for markets and which has developed, therefore, an integral fear of obsolescence. As well as reflecting the wider world, creativity is a response to it, as continual innovation and resourcefulness have become necessary to economic survival. (Craft, 2003, p. 113-114)

Craft reviews the emergence of contemporary views of creativity through the last three decades, citing the NACCCE, Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, and others to define and explain creativity from an education perspective. She then observes major problems with UK curriculum, which are arguably also true of US schools, such as rigidly compartmentalized subjects that discourage thematizing or problem solving across varied curricula, and the ever-increasing rigidity of high stakes standardized testing. A lengthy section critiques the wholesale valuing of creativity in education as encouraging 'throw-away' ideas or over-producing nearly useless materials in classrooms, being culturally ethno-centric and potentially unethical, and concludes with the reality that there is little room in the regimented education system for

creativity, and therefore little follow through will ultimately take place. Craft's critique challenges educators to acknowledge these problematic issues.

Ronald A. Beghetto brings to the academic discourse on creativity the concept of a continuum of creativity, wherein all of us exhibit creativity each day, but the impact falls on a scale that he labels. He describes three categories of creativity as Mini C (daily problem solving), Little C (creative acts for an individual) and the Big C (Kaufman, Beghetto, Baer, & Ivcevic, 2010). Big C creativity is reserved for significant breakthroughs, leaps in a field of expertise, or new ideas or solutions that have a far-reaching impact. Beghetto's work is situated within mainstream psychological perspectives that will be discussed in a later section. However, in *Does assessment kill creativity?* (2005), he addresses the affect that assessments have upon student creativity, asking: "Given that all students have the potential to be creative, why do many never fully express their potential?" (Beghetto, 2005, p. 257).

Beghetto outlines many ways that grades and judgmental scrutiny reduces risk taking, collaboration, or inter-curricular synthesis, and recommends several ways to protect student creativity, such as minimizing social comparisons (Beghetto, 2005, p. 259), minimizing the pressure of assessment (p. 260), focusing on informal assessments while recognizing risk taking and creative expression (p. 261). Throughout his work, Beghetto locates creativity in the mind and aspires for the students to demonstrate creativity that can be measured by actions and though the originality and usefulness of the creative product.

Co-author James Kaufman (with Beghetto on the 2010 article) challenges college admissions processes for ignoring creativity as a valuable attribute in their potential student body. Kaufman (2010) reviews the somewhat well-known data about the lack of diversity on college campuses that is at least in part generated by admissions practices that are almost entirely

centered on numeric measures such as GPA, class rank and standardized test scores (SAT, ACT). While colleges want and need a diverse student body that will bring vibrant student life to their campuses, they are not recruiting these students, and, Kaufman asserts, high schools are not generating them (Kaufman, 2010, p. 189-190). Kaufman proposes that universities look for students who demonstrate divergent thinking, problem solving and creative abilities and achievements to balance the numeric qualifiers.

Kaufman's article was published in 2010, and since then the call to re-tool college admissions processes appears to be growing. However, measures for assessing creativity in high school students are essentially nonexistent. Kaufman discusses a number of tests that psychologists use for evaluating creativity that are entirely product based, such as counting the number of uses a person can imagine for a paperclip or unknown object. Although he laments the limitation of these tests, he sites that different ethnicities perform comparably. Implementing these components could reduce racial bias both in testing and in the admissions process (Kaufman, 2010, p. 197-198). However, Kaufman does not address cultivating or even protecting creativity, as the others have, nor does he address what environments might affect creativity in any age student. Embodied creativity is ignored by all of these authors.

There are many themes that unite these critics of legislated creativity, such as protecting students' expressive freedom, restructuring or eliminating assessment, and the segregation of disciplines and curricula in a way that discourages universal creativity. Yet none of the authors reviewed present a holistic picture of what it feels like to be creative in an embodied and embedded way. Thus certain problems arise, including the instrumental use of creativity for particular ends, even if those ends are perceived to be liberating, and as such limits creativity to a thing—a skill, a product, or a tool for producing other more valuable things.

Legislated Creativity in Art Classrooms

The Artworld has long been considered both a haven and an incubator for creativity. Yet even here there are limitations and product-centered expectations. This section examines the literature from the specific field of Visual Arts Education for insight about creativity, teaching creativity, and the lived experiences of students in art classrooms.

Viktor Lowenfield (1947) offers some historical perspective on cultural ideas about creativity, opening his book with the assertion that children are all creative entities which adult interference and education quickly drain away (Lowenfield, 1947, p. 1-3). This psychological position encourages art making as a means for self-expression (p. 4) and self-adjustment (p. 5). While Lowenfield advocates for freedom for children in art class and other arenas of education, he values this for the psychological benefits rather than a valuable innovation, discovery, or technical achievement. Lowenfield also maps out cognitive developmental stages (p. 8-9) that certainly place his work in history, but also emphasizes the longstanding view that creativity happens in the mind, and the physical activity that brings it to fruition is ignored and marginalized.

A study by Kerry Thomas (2009) examines the paradox of both teaching and developing creativity in older high school students as they seek to discover “creative authenticity inside their own psychological and intentional resources in art making” (Thomas, 2009, p. 65). Thomas opens with a declaration that “creativity is again in the spotlight” (p. 65) due to governmental and industry interests in the post-industrial economy. Further, she provides a theoretical background for the psychological view of creativity that she finds in art education practices (p. 66-67). Thomas’s work here refers to a very broad scope of philosophers and educational theorists without ever drilling down on any one concept with depth or significant meaning. The

study provides some interesting perspectives overlaying a narrative about classroom events, but Thomas's emphasis is on the social interactions and educational relationship between the teacher and student with little additional insight about creativity as a taught or lived experience.

Considering the power of place in the art classroom, Bette Schneiderman's article, "Creating a Learning Space That Is Virtual and Experiential," (2008) responds to the need to expand learning outside of traditional classroom limitations. This article describes a website Schneiderman proposes to develop called "The Rembrandt Project" which seeks to expand beyond being a digital textbook to engage students in interactive learning with other students, experts, and the art itself. Schneiderman is the co-chair of the Department of Educational Technology at Long Island University, and has extensive experience with online learning systems.

In 2012 Schneiderman's project was launched as the "Rembrandt Database."¹ The learning objective of the Rembrandt Project is an interesting proposition. Certainly educators want to use technology in the most effective way possible. However, Schneiderman is still talking about the bodied experience of sitting still in front of a computer screen, and not interacting with other live humans in a physical (rather than virtual) environment. This program requires a great deal of cerebral focus, *imaginative* relationships, but leaves aside the experience of the learner—a child, sitting alone in a chair. The "Rembrandt Database" has potential to engage learners, but the limitations are significant.

Sally Gradle's article, "Ecology of place: Art education in a relational world," articulates many of the most compelling problems with school environments. Gradle investigates the phenomenological experience of disconnectedness, placelessness, and a failure to connect to

¹ <http://www.rembrandtdatabase.org/Rembrandt/cms/about>

others (Gradle, 2007, p. 392-393) that many school children experience. She proposes that the isolation of our students can be counteracted in the art room through her research in performance art with a specific group of adult students. In this article Gradle proposes the experience of performance art as a vibrant and meaningful learning experience. Gradle's compassion for students and her explanation of their need for human relationships resonate with me and the social implications of this research.

Gradle again addresses the embodied experiences of art educators in *Performing to be whole: Inquiries in transformation* (2011), where she seeks to “examine what it means to be fully aware through the body rather than housed in a body” (p. 54). She advocates training pre-service art educators to be aware of their bodies as they are present in a classroom, seeking to raise their sensitivity to the needs of their students and enhance their effectiveness and bring significant meaning to their lives and careers. This she again explores through performance art events with the pre-service teachers, adding to her program open-ended poetry to further express the growth and sensitivity of these future educators. Gradle reveals careful narratives about the dramatic events that her students performed that were provocative and challenging, as three Black students enacted experiences of oppression and social strife. Gradle carefully explores the embodied reaction of her students: “The physical responses of tightening, tensing, freezing, and fixed expressions in the class participants suggested to me that the performers were not the only ones who struggled emotionally” (Gradle, 2011, p. 62). The experiences are powerful, and will leave enduring impressions on the pre-service teachers. Gradle seeks to awaken us to care, to rise out of complacency and bring meaning to our classrooms.

Gradle (2006) also examines the preparation of pre-service art educators in her university classes, lifting them from the routine of the Discipline Based Arts Education programming and

offering them real tools to interact with the personal experiences and needs of their future students. Curiously, Gradle's work contains little direct discussion about creativity. In two further articles (2007 and 2008) she continues to write about the needs and qualities of pre-service and practicing art educators and the importance of connecting with the natural environment in art education, but overt discussion of creativity is sidelined.

Gradle's work is rare in that it considers the bodied experience of students as they experience education in the vast majority of U.S. school, and it includes several references to phenomenology in her practice. However, she does not apply the lens of embodied experience specifically to the creative process, or the lived experience of 'being creative.' In this sense, there is an unfulfilled promise in Gradle's work that I perceive as a launching pad for further exploration.

Olivia Gude, a prominent leader in the field of Art Education, is an associate professor at the University of Illinois in Chicago, where she is also the Coordinator of Art Education. Although her publications are numerous and influential, for the purposes of this literature review, let us concentrate first on two articles: "Postmodern principles: In search of a 21st century art education" (2004) and "New school art styles: the project of art education" (2013), and conclude this passage with "Playing, creativity and possibility" (2010). In the first article, Gude examines the dominant curriculum in art education of the Elements and Principles of art (basic skills such as line, shape, color, pattern and rhythm), pointing out that this curriculum has been in place for nearly a century with little change. An example of this approach can be found in Vincent Lanier's work (1984) that promotes art curricula based on building technical skills and awareness of historical and contemporary artists and other media now identified as material culture. Often called Discipline Based Art Education, or DBAE, Gude laments the lack of

change in our practice: “I ponder the piles of exercises on line, shape, or color harmonies left behind by hundreds and hundreds of students each year. I wonder why what is still considered by many to be the appropriate organizing content for the foundations of 21st century art curriculum is but a shadow of what was modern, fresh, and inspirational 100 years ago” (Gude, 2004, p. 6).

Gude provides a thorough examination of the history of art education curriculum, leading to her call for art educators to seek insight on the current needs of our students. She asks: “What do our students need to know to understand the art of many cultures, from the past and the 21st century? Today, what knowledge do students need to stimulate and increase their creative powers?” (Gude, 2004, p. 8). Gude answers with a description of her Spiral Workshops, which are exceptional both for original formatting and in the approach to art making. Set outside the traditional school environment, the workshops flow from experience to art making to experience, calling on students (often comprised of art educators) to interact with one another in unique ways. Gude writes here that the Spiral Workshop has three key instructional goals:

- 1) Curriculum based on generative themes that relate to the lives of students and their communities; 2) studio art projects based on diverse practices of contemporary artmaking and related traditional arts; and 3) art as investigation—understanding the art of others and seeing their own artmaking, not as exercises, but as research that produces new visual and conceptual insights.” (Gude, 2004, p. 8)

Gude’s workshops liberate the experience of art education and art making from traditional categories, facilitating connections across community, culture, art appreciation and art making. It is a truly creative approach from the teacher’s perspective.

Likewise, in “New school art styles; the project of art education” (2013), Gude challenges the long tradition of art instruction that remains unchanged since her article nearly a decade before. She observes, “What’s striking is that whether the dominant or proposed paradigm is Discipline-Based Art Education, creativity enhancement, visual culture, or another

formulation, the range of projects that are actually taught in most schools has remained strikingly similar for several decades” (Gude, 2013, p. 6). Gude challenges the product-and-skill-centered notion of school art projects, advocating for authentic artistic processes, allowing contemporary aesthetics into the art room (i.e. graffiti in addition to Renaissance classicism), and seeking meaningful artmaking practices in all areas of art education. She challenges art educators: “Be willing to re-imagine your teaching in light of your 5, 10, 25 or more years of life experience as a participant in unfolding, contemporary culture! Strength of character means NOT using your considerable creativity to come up with defenses for your past choices” (Gude, 2013, p. 13). This is indeed a bold challenge, given the rigid climate she describes in art education.

In “Playing, creativity, possibility,” Gude challenges art educators to seek overt creative experiences for our students: “Although virtually all contemporary art teachers list ‘enhancing creativity’ as a key desired outcome of their programs, analysis of lesson plans used in schools suggests that in practice very little curriculum is specifically geared to developing creative abilities” (Gude, 2010, p. 31). Gude explores the entirely real challenges that art educators encounter in students who don’t *seem* creative, but who are actually so trained in seeking the one right answer that they have forgotten how to play with ideas; they are so sure that they will be made to look foolish that they will not risk anything (Gude, 2010, p. 32). She proposes that psychological safety and freedom are necessary to the atmosphere of an art classroom before creativity will emerge. Here Gude describes the elements of play in her Spiral Workshops that encourage creativity and open the door for more sophisticated artmaking in the later stages of the program. She provides a safe haven for the anxiety that accompanies risk taking, and a receptive audience for the realized works and a free flow of ideas.

Although she aggressively advocates for change, for the seeking of meaning and the space to pursue creatively the individual inspirations of our students, Gude does not delve far into the nature of creativity here as it is experientially lived and felt. She does not discuss the *experience of being in* the Spiral Workshops from the students' perspective. The question of *what it is like to be creative*, in her workshops or in art classes in general, remains unaddressed.

Marissa McClure (2011) brings a different lens to this discourse as she challenges what she considers to be a myth of creativity. The first passages of this article appear to propose that children do not express creativity in their art classes, and that our notion of their unbounded creativity is romanticized and even foisted upon them by psychology (McClure, 2011, p. 128-130). McClure cites Elliot Eisner as a fellow educator concerned with the false claims of creativity, although she primarily quotes his work (McClure, 2011, p. 130) to better describe authentic creativity. McClure's descriptions reveal a frustration with the DBAE instruction that so concern Olivia Gude and Sally Gradle. The formulaic projects, often copied from a single model, are a poor standard for creativity in our art classes. McClure also aligns with Gradle and Gude in calling for meaningful art curricula that is generated by and with students, relevant to their lives and relationships: living curricula that offers truly open-ended outcomes and individual expression. McClure, as the others, focuses on relationships and meaningful art processes, but does not address the experience of being creative even in her ideal artmaking and classroom environments.

Miraglia and Smilan (2009) identify and detail the marginalization of arts curricula and call upon highly qualified art education professionals to lead the way to both advocate for their field and to develop powerful and authentic pedagogies of integrated curricula. They seek to change the view of arts integration from activities that support the classroom teacher's objectives

(such as coloring maps for social studies) into meaningful experiences for students that generate exploration, experimentation and connections across varied disciplines (Miraglia & Smilan, 2009, p. 44). Yet Miraglia and Smilan include this claim of validation from the economy: “Administrators and policy makers, under pressure from outside agencies of the marketplace who are calling for a creatively skilled workforce, are now, finally looking to the arts to help remediate this vacuous chasm in the education system.” (Miraglia & Smilan, 2009, p. 42).

Likewise, Julia Marshall (2005) encourages a postmodern view to arts integration (p. 227), seeking to enhance creativity by dissolving the segregation of fields of study. Interestingly, Marshall creates a cognitive, empirical path to an idea that resonates with my proposed study, as she states: “the findings of cognitive science ultimately mesh with postmodernism in their challenge to the romantic modernist concept of creativity as a magical process of self-expression carried out by an isolated individual, and suggest that creativity exists in its cultural context, often entailing recycling, appropriation, reframing or adapting existing ideas to new concepts” (Marshall, 2005, p. 228). She also provides some interesting reflections about how cognition may happen, elevating artmaking as generating physical manifestation of the mysteries of mental acrobatics (Marshall, 2005, p. 233-235). Even in this postmodern framework, it is important to note the return to the intellectual bias that continues to perceive and utilize creativity as a form of cognition.

A strong cognitive approach, such as Leslie Cunliffe’s (2011) calls attention to the grammar of creativity. Cunliffe asserts, “both late-modern and postmodern art education forms of art education play down the role of complex voluntary processes for acquiring and using a range of creative grammar” (Cunliffe, 2011, p. 2). What follows then is a psychological view of creativity as systematic spectrum of experiences from simple, daily problem solving to

historically impactful breakthroughs (Cunliffe, 2011, p. 3-6). Cunliffe does provide a nod to phenomenologist Hubert Dreyfus and the concept of “unconscious competence” (Cunliffe, 2011, p. 9) that is embodied purview of the skilled practitioner. The overall emphasis and conclusions assert that creativity requires disciplined thoughts as developed through expertise in a chosen field, a strong cognitive view of creativity as the outcome of many years of dutiful study.

As this review of prominent literature reveals, art educators at all levels value creativity and utilize a range of philosophical and theoretical perspectives to grapple with ways to conceptualize and foster it through art practices. Yet there remains a cognitive bias, a dominant focus on the production of novel objects and ideas as quantifiable tools, and they continue by and large to seek to assess the value of the product/idea for its usefulness. The implication is a disembodied creativity, an instrument rather than a dynamic, interpersonal set of relationships, a producer rather than a sensitive, vibrant, child in relation to their world.

Creative Economies--Creative Education as a Means to Economic Gain

The influence of the neoliberal knowledge economy on views of creativity often emphasizes what creativity can do, or more specifically what economic benefits creativity can generate. In this section, I will consider the democratic ideal that all people could be creative, as presented by Richard Florida, challenged by McCardle & Grieschaber, and followed (in the next section) by an exploration of the educational philosophy related to creative systems in education as outlined by Sir Ken Robinson, Gardner and Csikszetmahalyi.

The newest edition of Richard Florida’s highly influential work, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, (published in 2012, a full decade after the original edition) includes a new concluding chapter titled “Every Single Human Being is Creative.” Most of the chapter is an updated socio-

economic analysis for the need for a creative work force. Florida also adamantly insists that typical U.S. educational systems need an overhaul to meet contemporary needs of the world economy. Florida proposes that the U.S. and other advanced nations must “strive to tap the full creative capabilities of every one of its people” in order to prosper and thrive in the future (Florida, 2012, p. 387). Even low paying, labor-centered jobs should be ‘creatified’ according to Florida, which he believes will lead to a middle class that is larger, better paid and ultimately more satisfied with their lives (Florida, 2012, p. 388). Encouraging all levels of society to be equipped to be innovators, Florida demands that we “extend the definition of innovation beyond technology and R&D to include investment in the arts, in culture, and in every other form of creativity” (Florida, 2012, p. 389).

Florida and others appear to be looking to the arts as the penultimate source for creative instruction. There seems to be a perception that those who are able to generate new visual images and objects must have the code to unlock a creative skill set in other fields as well. This is a tall order for the fine arts, a department that education administrators (especially in public schools) have for decades continuously de-funded and marginalized. As leaders in the business world are turning to the arts as a vital resource for economic salvation and future productivity, arts educators should consider carefully how we will answer that call (Craft, 2003). Simply fueling the throwaway consumerist economy with more frequent gadgets to purchase and quickly cast aside should not become the goal of cultivating the creativity of our students (Craft, 2003).

McCardle and Grieshaber (2012) bring a broad scope of research to identify and critique contemporary views of creativity in education, the economy, and socio-political spheres. Their chapter, “The creativity dis-ease” provides a careful overview of the work (also discussed here) of Gardner, Csikszetmahalyi, Beghetto, Bloom, Craft, Florida, Kaufman, and many more.

Throughout the chapter McCardle and Grieschaber critique product-driven education outcomes and the expectations of the economy for education to generate an increasingly creative work force. The goal of their chapter is to call attention to the contradictions found in these competing theories about creativity as a provocation for teachers to consider as they construct pedagogies of creativity in their classrooms (McCardle & Grieschaber, 2012, p. 153).

Florida's proposal includes building education systems that encourage, not diminish, creativity. He quotes Sir Ken Robinson's lament as follows:

All children start their school careers with sparkling imaginations, fertile minds, and a willingness to take risks with what they think. Most students never get to explore the full range of their abilities and interests...Education is the system that is supposed to develop our natural abilities and enable us to make our way in the world. Instead, it is stifling the individual talents and abilities of too many students and killing their motivation to learn. (Florida, 2012, p. 391)

The journal for the National Council for the Arts (Volume 3, 2015), sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, appears to be a direct answer to Florida's demand from the education system. This twenty-four-page journal is themed 'creativity all around us,' and features an eclectic look at what appears to be artistic and community based activities by students and adults. Upon closer inspection, it is revealed that every article is economically centered on businesses that they present as creative, with one article connecting art to social justice. The notion of creativity as a fully embodied and embedded phenomenon is absent from this publication.

The demand from the economy and neoliberalism is clear, widespread, and has only increased over the last decade. Many art educators see this interest in our field as validation of art's intrinsic value, but we should indeed be mindful of potential dangers to free expression, limitations to collective manifestations of creativity, the freedom to take risks and the ability to

express meaningful and challenging ideas through art. Such important aspects of art making are not likely to generate profitable products, but may indeed challenge the economic status quo.

Psychological/Social-Scientific Views of Creativity

Psychologists have long sought to understand how creativity works, a pragmatic approach to quantifying a sublime and elusive concept. Our ancestors in Western European thought invented the Muses to explain the mystery of creative inspiration. Modern psychologists have measured creativity through carefully-constructed definitions, practices and systems. Yet psychologists and social scientists that specialize in creativity (Robinson, Eisner, Csikszentmihalyi and others) ultimately place the mind as the generator, the location of creativity, largely ignoring the experiences of the supporting body and its entanglement with situated places.

In *Five Minds for the Future*, education authority Howard Gardner endorses the position of Florida and the complaints of McCardle and Grieshaber. He believes that “the world of the future will demand [creative] capacities that until now have been mere options. To meet this new world on its own terms, we should begin to cultivate these capacities now” (Gardner, 2008, p. 2). In the twenty-first century, global communications are the new standard for virtually any aspect of life, and the economy is no exception. Gardner points out that “virtually all innovation can be communicated almost instantly the world over, available to be built upon by anyone with the requisite disciplinary skills, understanding and motivation” (Gardner, 2008, p. 78). Indeed, companies that do not embrace innovation will soon become obsolete (Gardner, 2008, p. 78).

To fulfill this urgent need for creative production and innovations, Gardner investigates and presents five types of mental perspective that he believes are vital for forward, global

progress. Of these, there are two that stand out as particularly relevant to this study of creative educational environments. These are the Creative Mind and the Synthesizing Mind. He proposes these types of minds *not* as strict products of biology, but as lifestyles of thinking that can be intentionally cultivated: “My concern is to convince you of the need to cultivate these minds and illustrate the best ways to do so, rather than to delineate specific perceptual and cognitive capacities that undergird the minds” (Gardner, 2008, p. 4-5).

The idea of cultivation suggests more than merely sprinkling seeds upon any dirt that happens to be nearby. Rather, the foundation must be intentionally laid and tended over time. “The creating mind breaks new ground. It puts forth new ideas, poses unfamiliar questions, conjures up fresh ways of thinking, arrives at unexpected answers. Ultimately, these creations must find acceptance among knowledgeable consumers” (Gardner, 20008, p. 3). As educators and stakeholders in the crafting of a creative environment for our learners, we must provide the soil, seeds and safe haven of acceptance for the successes as well as the failures--the varied outcomes of the risks our students are willing to take while in our care.

Such cultivation is equally valuable for our students. The cognitive process for the ‘synthesizing mind’ involves the creative application of any number of bits of information and ideas, from unrelated sources, into a unique new whole. “The synthesizing mind takes information from disparate sources, understands and evaluates that information objectively, and puts it together in ways that make sense to the synthesizer and also to other persons. Valuable in the past, the capacity to synthesize becomes ever more crucial as information continues to mount at dizzying rates” (Gardner, 2008, p. 3). Here again the cognitive bias is strong, yet Gardner acknowledges the importance of belonging and embeddedness for students.

Sir Ken Robinson's book *Creative schools: The grassroots revolution that's transforming education* (2015) examines both the demand and the answer for greater creativity in our school systems. Robinson discusses the roots of our current education system in the U.S. as based on systems that were designed as training for industrial jobs in mass production, which are "inherently unsuited to the wholly different circumstances of the twenty-first century" (Robinson, 2015, xxiii). Robinson advocates, with rich examples and thorough research, both the need to transform education and methods to do so that will yield "limitless opportunities to engage young people's imaginations and to provide forms of teaching and learning that are highly customized to them" (Robinson, 2015, xxiii). Robinson's claims are well supported by the work of other scholars and education theorists, such as Gardner and Csikszentmihalyi.

World-renowned scholar of psychology Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has developed a 'systems' approach for identifying creativity that is defined by three key elements: the *Individual*, who has mastered a discipline or domain of practice and is generating possibly creative innovations; the *Domain*, a category of expertise in which the individual is working; and the *Field*, the fellow experts in the domain who are knowledgeable enough to judge when in fact a domain-changing creative leap has occurred (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 & Gardner, 2008). The need for a *community* to appreciate the creative production is often forgotten in the romanticized ideal of the deviant genius/creative giant (da Vinci, Galileo...the list of cinquecento Florentine geniuses is long). In fact, it seems to be surprisingly more common for field-altering creative leaps to occur within a *community* of experts, whether the group gets credit or only the star genius, such as Alexander Graham Bell's glory and Watson's relative obscurity (Gardner, 2011). Gardner's observations dovetail with Csikszentmihalyi's position that creativity by definition can

only be achieved when it is possible for the relevant field to observe and recognize that an innovation has taken place (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988).

Reaching past the economic benefits of creativity, there are other significant advantages that come from cultivating creativity. Csikszentmihalyi and Gardner have both conducted extensive research on the nature of highly creative personalities (Gardner's *Creating Minds* and Csikszentmihalyi's *Flow*). Csikszentmihalyi describes the joy that creative persons gain from their creative activities—the inherent joy in the work (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Creative persons are driven first by a passion for the experience of discovery and creation, and to lesser degrees appreciation from their field of peers and other rewards (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). This level of fulfillment in the 'living of life' is perhaps what all of us strive to achieve and hope our educational systems will provide for future generations (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008, & IBO, 2013, Learner Profile).

Howard Becker's book *Art worlds* (1982) reveals some psychological background perspective for currently practicing art educators. Becker discusses creativity in terms of sociology, and proposes that artists working in isolation are hindered, while those who work in communities with like practitioners (communities he calls 'art worlds'), are more productive and creative.

He gives several examples from art history and current artists to support his art worlds idea all focused on the products these art worlds will produce with no attention given to the creative lived experiences of these artists or communities.

Eckhoff & Urbach (2008) assert: "Understanding imagination as both a cognitive and affective endeavor is crucial in order for educators to promote creative and imaginative thinking in informal and formal learning environments" (Eckhoff & Urbach, 2008, p. 179). Further, they

propose that “imagination is critical to education” (p180) because it is critical to cognition, to the very synoptic firings of thinking itself. Eckhoff & Urbach focus on early childhood stages as they examine education’s ancestor Vygotsky’s view of creativity purely as a cognitive function. They provide a theoretical review and then a study of first graders’ storytelling experiences as examples of imagination. Following Vygotsky’s perspective, the authors examined the children’s stories for elements that were either repetitious (from life or other stories) or inventive. While Eckhoff & Urbach value the impact that environments (schools, homes, other sites where children operate) will have on creativity, positively or negatively, the body—in this case, the active and curious 3-5 year-old body-- is entirely overlooked.

Another example of the limitation of this approach from a phenomenological perspective is found in this quote: “The role of mental processes during art-viewing and art-making experiences goes beyond merely allowing us to see a work of art. We also have the capacity to create understandings and interpretations of works of art” (Eckhoff & Urbach, 2008, p. 183). Of course the mind is involved in aesthetic experiences, but the mind is housed in a living, breathing body, and the mind experiences (sees, hears, feels, smells and tastes) the world via the apparatus of the body. Encounters with art are inherently influenced by the body in the gallery space, sometimes primed to enhance the aesthetic experience while at other times too distracted or fatigued to fully engage with information the eyes receive.

The literature generated about creativity in psychological fields uses the word ‘experiences’ numerous times, yet the essence of that experience is ignored. There are gestures towards experiential flow, affectivity, the living of life and the collective nature of creativity, yet such themes are presented as subservient to the mind and its intellectual and imaginative function. Rare, essentially nonexistent, is the educationalist who slows down to empathize with

the student, to observe carefully the child's creative encounter, to use their own imagination to understand the creative moment, to discover *how it feels to be creative*. This question begins with the embodied and embedded nature of experience itself rather than the intellectual processes (reflection and imagination), which depend upon a more basic, intuitive and precognitive connection between body and place.

Critical Theory applied to the Creativity Problem

Bearing in mind the reality that researching among living people will affect both the participants and the researcher, the lens of critical theory provides a rigorous additional framework for this inquiry, particularly in regard to schools. Horkheimer, a prominent member of the Frankfurt school, proposes a straightforward use of critical theory "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them" (Horkheimer, 1982, p. 244). Critical Theorists, especially in research practices, seek to "combine rather than separate the poles of philosophy and the social sciences: explanation and understanding, structure and agency" (Bohman, 2013, para. 2). Thus, the goal of the research endeavor is not to "merely seek to provide the means to achieve some independent goal, but rather [to] seek "human emancipation" in circumstances of domination and oppression" (Bohman, 2013, para. 2).

Although elementary schools are not typically equated with oppression, critical theory emphasizes a powerful level of oppression operating in even the most banal classroom rituals: as youngsters are trained to walk silently down hallways, sit still at their desks, and otherwise conform to a narrow scope of behaviors, they are being ideologically indoctrinated to accept authority, productivity, and efficiency as measures of their being. Critical theorists therefore underscore the need for a transformation in education practices as well as the need for concrete

strategies that may be implemented to enhance creativity in our students so as to subvert forms of marginalization, subordination and oppression.

In the critical theory tradition, Lofgren (2001) focuses on cultural creativity and the trend through the last few decades wherein social groups value handmade items as personally creative and culturally significant (such a handmade Christmas ornaments and gifts) (Lofgren, 2001, p. 71-73). He makes some use of Marx and Gramsci to support an assertion that cultural creativity in 1980's contemporary art challenged political and societal norms (Lofgren, 2001, p. 73-74). Here, Lofgren challenges academia to acknowledge current interpretations of creativity (i.e. located in the arena of the high arts) and suggests ethnologists and anthropologists ought to expand their definitions of creativity to include a much broader range of cultural practices. (Lofgren, 2001, p. 78-79).

Product-centered theory also encompasses the 'knowledge economy' as described and analyzed by the work of education theorists such as Michael A. Peters. In *Creativity and the global knowledge economy* (Peters, Marginson, & Murphy, 2009), knowledge is treated as another commodity that is manufactured through ideation (p. 4), in which immaterial information begins a transition from thoughts into transferable data that is subject to the laws of supply and demand (p. 5-6), just like any other commodity. From this perspective, creativity is an ancillary necessity. Peters presents creativity exclusively as a tool for entrepreneurship: "The role of the arts, humanities and the social sciences becomes re-profiled as crucial in the generation of new ideas within the creative economy" (Peters, Marginson, & Murphy, 2009, p. 15). Likewise, higher education is necessary for optimal idea generation, and suggestions for the management of 'creative employees' (chapter nine) reveals a desire to both nurture and exploit their idea-generating potential. Richard Florida's theories about the creative economy are analyzed in

terms of corporate development. Monetizing thoughts, ideas and knowledge sheds a somewhat sinister light on recent interest in education from the knowledge economy.

Joris Vlegh (2015) examines the crisis in education and arts education through creativity's "capacity to bring newness into being." Vlegh considers the work of educators to facilitate just such a creative environment as they open society, knowledge and the world to their students. He also brings to light the difference between *creation*, actions that make something that did not previously exist, and *creativity*, an "individual and highly private characteristic" (Vlegh, 2015, p. 55). Throughout the chapter Vlegh touches on the concept that making a thing that did not previously exist (a fence, a story, a batch of cookies) is not necessarily a sign of originality or creativity. As such, Vlegh astutely identifies our education systems as focused on "creation without creativity" (Vlegh, 2015, p. 60), underscoring the practice of generating superficial, product-centered and measurable outcomes "due to certain contemporary evolutions which demand that education should invest in the creative potential, originality and uniqueness of each and every learner, but which actually suffocate the sense for true newness" (Vlegh, 2015, p. 60). Losing the 'sense for newness' resonates with the heart of this examination. As discussed above, Robinson, Craft and Gradle lament education practices that train our students to ignore the sensory experiences of the school day while significant relationships and meaningful learning dwindle.

Vlegh then reveals the phenomenological core of what is missing: the essential experience of creativity, the joy of "bringing something new into reality, and the rapture and frenzy that go along with it" (Vlegh, 2015, p. 61). In this heightened state of being, the creator is able to envision life beyond common societal structures as new possibilities are opened (Vlegh, 2015, p. 62), a state that may easily disrupt the norms and classifications our school

systems currently depend upon for orderly behavior and easily measured skills. Vleigh then discusses the emergence of Cubism as a creative process and event as Picasso and Braque moved to negotiate differences of representation. The idea of newness is considered in light of Dadaist Readymades, which were intentionally organized from mass-produced objects, arranged in a new way to effectively challenges to societal and artistic norms. In conclusion, Vleigh reviews the field of education's perceptions of creativity as a means to produce measurable products without moving from a practice of autocratic uniformity (Vleigh, 2015, p. 75-76). Yet there is a call for something greater: "Precisely because it transcends the individual level, aesthetic experience has a community-building and a community-transformative force" (Vleigh, 2015, p. 78).

Critical theories of creativity bring much of value to the discussion and formation of educational practices. Their emphases on transformation, on community and collectivity, and on the critique of instrumental approaches to creativity, are all vital themes. Yet like the other authors in this literature review, emphases on the body, on precognitive knowledge, and on embeddedness in place are inconsistent or ignored. While some (Vleigh in particular) touch upon these topics, rich and detailed encounters and descriptions of what it feels like to be creative remain absent from the texts.

In sum, throughout this review of policy, art education research and philosophies, creative economies, social psychology and critical theory, there is a persistent trend toward an intellectual and cognitive bias. This bias can take a strong form, wherein creativity is a private, internal and purely mental set of skills and aptitudes, or a weakened form where intellect, imagination, and reflection are presented with some marginal relation to collective action or place-based pedagogy. Yet, in the last instance, it is the intellectual event that is privileged as the site of creativity. The danger here is that without starting from actual descriptions from the

first-person perspective of what it is like to be creative, there might very well be distortions of the phenomenon under investigation. At the very least, the perspective is severely limited. This is not to say that the mind and the intellect are unimportant or absent in the creative process. Rather, my goal is to pose the question: What will we find if we do not start from the intellectualist position, and instead give ourselves over to actual descriptions of the experience of creativity, opening our inquiry to those living in communities of practice? My intuition suggests that a very different picture will emerge, one that is rich with moments of kinetic bodily encounters, intuitive, preconscious knowledge, and place-based specifics that are both unique and powerful. To transform these intuitions into educational research, I will now turn to phenomenology as my theoretical lens, methodological principle, and research method. Phenomenology is the ideal tool for this examination as it privileges precisely the themes that the above literature has failed to holistically investigate: the entanglement of body, self and world.

METHODOLOGY: RESEARCH METHODS

Phenomenology as a Theoretical Lens: The Body, Placedness, Aura and Movement

Idioms such as ‘to put down roots,’ ‘my neck of the woods,’ and ‘home is where the heart is’ reveal our sense of placedness through notions of place and community that are distinctly personal, individual, embodied experiences. So many people experience these notions that the idioms emerge and endure, not as memories but as living language. Phenomenology gives us the means to examine and discover the essence of the lived experience suggested by such idioms-- non-literal expressions hinting at something deeply known that we all understand, even if this knowledge is attained through its absence. Phenomenology is uniquely poised to ascertain this knowledge as it reveals implicit understanding contained within the body. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose profound text *The World of Perception* remains highly influential in the field of phenomenology, elevated the ontology of phenomenology with the observation: “rather than a mind and a body, man is a mind *with* a body, a being who can only get to the truth of a thing because its body is, as it were, embedded in those things” (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 43). Reaching beyond psychology and many facets of philosophy, this concept is foundational for phenomenology and phenomenological research methods. This study utilizes such a phenomenological lens to reveal our embodied knowledge of the places we inhabit, where we belong, how we *are* in our worlds, and the aura that embeds us *within* our worlds. These themes of embodiment, placedness, belonging, embeddedness and aura are all phenomenological precepts which fills the gap in the literature on creativity as described in the introduction. Further, the notion of dwelling is expanded here to include kinetic places, ephemeral places constructed by the actions of the body and the objects that collectively generate meaning, and the phenomena of such a place in motion. This section outlines my initial phenomenological

intuitions guiding the literature review and outline how these ideas and instincts guided my specific choice of methodologies and methods for the proposed research. Such intuitions are fundamental in phenomenological research (Vagle, 2015) as they orient the researcher toward nuanced aspects of the phenomenon that might otherwise be overlooked. This is particularly true in the subtle, embodied yet ephemeral nature of creativity and its relationship to basic phenomenological themes of dwelling, moving and being.

Creative Bodies

The literature review reveals the prominence of a cognitive bias, qualifying creativity as a mental event. While eminent authors such as Csikszentmihalyi, Craft, and Gardner offer significant insights about creativity, the body is consistently left out of most discussions of creativity. Yet without the creating body, creativity cannot happen.

“I hold my body as an indivisible possession and I know the position of each of my limbs through a body schema that envelops them all” (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 100). Such body knowledge is a phenomenon that Merleau-Ponty asserts is the primordial entry point for every person into their world. For “through pursuing a phenomenology of place via the primacy of the body, all accounts of cognitive and rational experience will reveal themselves as second-order judgements, fragmented in light of the wilderness that is raw phenomena” (Trigg, 2012, p. 128). Whether creativity begins with a flicker of an abstracted idea or through the hands of the sculptor, writer or musician within the act of performing—nuanced gestures graced with confidence and experience—the body remains an essential element. Merleau-Ponty (2012) describes body schema as more than the collection of body knowledge, “associations established in the course of experience” (p. 102) but rather as a Gestalt of the holistic, pre-linguistic

understanding of our body's complex location and sensations. It is, "in the end, a manner of expressing that my body is in and toward the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 103).

This is far more than a passive positionality; the body is not merely the receiver of information and the robotic tool of the mind. We know the world through the sensations absorbed by the body, and we operate in our worlds with the same body. As Solnit observes: "making and working [have] that crucial element of engagement of the body and the mind with the world, of knowing the world through the body and the body through the world" (Solnit, 2000, p. 29). To ignore the body and its movements in a study of creativity is to ignore the very generator of the created thing, whether it be a song, a story, a painting, a dance, or a solution.

Community Embeddedness

Heidegger identifies the opening towards the community as powerful and primordial, our most basic, pre-linguistic quality of *care* (Heidegger, 2008, p. 131). He discusses many nuances of care, from our relationships to objects to our concern for Others. Indeed, he proposes that we can only know ourselves through our knowledge and interaction with Others: "This understanding, like any understanding, is not an acquaintance derived from knowledge about them, but a primordially existential kind of Being, which, more than anything else, makes such knowledge and acquaintance possible. Knowing oneself is grounded in Being-with" (Heidegger, 2008, p. 124). Through interactions with Others, our sense of self is invented and strengthened. In this sense, community (being with Others in a world) comes before any sense of individualism can emerge. The assumption that we begin life as autonomous beings is therefore to miss how we are always already bound up with Others through relations of care.

Relationships, creativity and care share another vital element: freedom. Heidegger asserts that the authentic relationships that build a community cannot be forced, nor can authentic care exist without freedom:

When they [people] devote themselves to the same affair in common, their doing so is determined by the manner in which their Dasein, each in its own way, has been taken hold of. They thus become authentically bound together, and this makes possible the right kind of objectivity which frees the other in his freedom for himself. Everyday Being-with-one-another maintains itself between the two extremes of positive solicitude—that which leaps in and dominates, and that which leaps forth and liberates. (Heidegger, 2008, p. 159)

This sharing of a common activity can be applied to creative activities of all kinds, from the visual arts to writing to composing music. When creative acts are shared, a strong connective bond is formed that connects the heart without restricting the body.

The literature on creativity offers essentially no insight on the notions of relationships, embeddedness, care and belonging. Indeed, the underlying ontological assumption of much of the literature outlined previously asserts that we are isolated individuals who have the mental capacity for creative potentials. Yet from a phenomenological perspective, this assumption starts too late, missing how creativity is relational and wrapped up with caring relations with Others, objects and our own being. Thus the phenomenological lens has the potential to reveal a deeper understanding of the foundational role of community inter-relationships in the formation of a sense of the self.

Dwelling, Being, Moving

Heidegger opens the door on the phenomenology of place in his 1927 treatise *Being and Time*, where he seeks “to bring into relief phenomenally the unitary primordial structure” of existence (Heidegger, 2008, p. 131). For Heidegger, such a structure concerns the basic sense of

dwelling in a world, the essence of being situated in a meaningful place, surrounded by practices, traditions and behaviors that make sense and give unity to experience—a synthesis of sensations that conjure the phenomenon. It is not difficult to understand that we live within our bodies, but how we experience worldhood is where phenomenologist Dylan Trigg expands upon Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty’s essential observation: “We are forever in the *here*, and it is from that *here* that our experiences take place” (Trigg, 2012, p. 4). Such existential realities make up every moment of our being, and yet are so profoundly primordial in nature that we cease to hold them a conscious awareness. In other words, we are never, or extremely rarely, aware of our “here” or of our “dwelling.” Phenomenology shines a light on the symbiotic relationship we have with our bodies and their surroundings, for “the body is the vehicle of expression for a relation with the world” (Trigg, 2012, p. 5), thus revealing the nature and importance of the body and of the world in our sense of dwelling.

Heidegger delves into notions of here-ness and place in the article, *Building Dwelling Thinking*, which explores the essence of being as dwelling, and dwelling as intrinsically geographically located (Heidegger, 1971, p. 145). Written some forty years after the groundbreaking *Being and Time*, Heidegger articulates the essence of Being with a nuanced variation in his own literary lens: “The way in which you and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *Buan*, dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell” (Heidegger, 1971, p. 147). A thorough discussion of building is presented in this article, with a consideration of literal structures built by humans but also aspects of soil, geography and even language as constructors of culture (p. 146-151) and therefore builders of places. What is important for me is that an intuitive sense of dwelling in a place precedes any particular building. In this sense, building is a superficial expression of the

phenomenological sense that we are always already somewhere in a world, in a body, moving, and involved in a sense of place. Building simply acts as a marker to designate the place in which we phenomenologically already dwell. Movement between, into, and among our built structures is an inherent aspect of dwelling, for humans do not remain still as rocks or mountains. The kinetic aspect of being amplifies Heidegger's profound notions of dwelling.

In sum, dwelling is a way of being; it is how we exist. Many of the authors discussed in the previous literature review identify creativity through the production of something (building) while ignoring the deeper, more fundamental instinct towards creatively generating ideas that precede producing and building. This primordial movement is where creativity, body, and place unify into the experience of dwelling in which *creativity is a way of being* in the world.

The Aura of Creativity

What makes a place creative? I have been contemplating this question for many years and in many forms. Especially while walking through the most vivid historic streets of Florence, New Orleans or Montmartre, I have wondered about the singular moments in creative history that changed the world with revolutionary innovation. An aura of creativity is evident to me, vividly brought to life through my own imagination: the construction of the Duomo under Brunelleschi's ambitious direction, van Gogh's liberation of color while Dali liberates time, or Louis Armstrong's improvised coronet solos reverberating across wrought-iron balconies.

Creative places are abundant with stimulation and inspiration, and while this is a very flexible description it is my intuitive sense that some places seem to glow with an aura of creativity that affects many people. This stands in contrast to my experiences in many schools, where the focus is on mental skills and homogenized student populations, as discussed above.

Even Robinson and Gardner are focused on the cognitive benefits of creativity rather than the aura that might be generated through creative freedoms and practices.

For Heidegger in *Being and Time*, aura (also ‘mood’) is not merely internal (purely psychological), nor external (a measurable feature of space). Aura exists as a facet of places, where ‘place’ means a dynamic, intersubjective world. Aura is the feel of a place that is absolutely present yet eludes scientific and objective measure. What is important here is revealing the unique auras of specific places and times, in our case the aura of creativity in a creative place.

My own creativity is inspired in places abundant with sensory stimulation through sights, sounds, aromas and tastes—all of which fuse together into a holistic aura. Further, a strong sense of history, the tangible traces of those who came before us, and especially knowledge of past creative events or achievements add to the aura. Places emerge in stark contrast to Un-places (Trigg, 2012), which lack a sense of history, community, tradition, aura or deeply embodied connectivity.

It is my intuition that creative places have a nuanced and evocative aura that feature making, acts and products of creativity, that are both unique in geography yet share some qualities with other creative times and places. For Trigg, “places have the power to disarm our memories and electrify our imaginations” (Trigg, 2012, p. 6). Here, the placedness of aura and the aura of place are symbiotic with imagination and creativity. Likewise, our personal experiences with creativity in a given place can also enhance the aura of creativity. The artist’s studio has long been regarded as a peculiar shrine, especially places where significant artworks came into existence. The French village of Arles attracts pilgrims of Vincent van Gogh, who seek to stand along the Rhone or walk the gardens of the hospital where he painted some of his

most iconic works. His bold acts of creativity and his poignant personal suffering generate a potent aura of place. “A mood assails us. It comes neither from ‘outside’ nor from ‘inside’, but arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such Being...Being-in-the-world as a whole...makes it possible to direct oneself towards something” (Heidegger, 2008, p. 175). In this important passage, Heidegger emphasizes how mood (or aura) is not something personal and internal but rather external and atmospheric. It “assails us” and seems to come upon us from the outside. Thus, the mood/aura of a particular place increases or decreases opportunities for ways of being in the world, including creative ways of being.

The authors introduced in my literature review bring some illumination to the nature of collaboration and competition, as well as the communities of experts who would understand the innovations and perhaps champion them to the world. But these authors ignore the aura of creativity embedded in creative places, and this is where Merleau-Ponty, Trigg, Heidegger, and Solnit can offer insights that are otherwise ignored.

Toward Placedness

Our bodies learn to maneuver through the places we inhabit with a knowledge that is first and foremost pre-linguistic. The confident gesture of a hand reaching for a light switch in the dark and finding it without fumbling, the easy avoidance of a squeaky stair, the slight gestures needed to turn your key in the lock, the rotation of the faucet that will yield the perfect temperature for a shower. “Thus, we experience place in an *affective* way. Our bodies orient us in place, and in doing so become the primary source of how we apprehend a given environment” (Trigg, 2012, p. 6). Embodied knowledge also includes sounds, an experience we typically consider limited to the ear when in truth sound waves reverberate upon our whole bodies. The

voices of your home are numerous: the hum of appliances, settling creaks at night, the steady breathing of a sleeping child, a lover's tread upon the stairs. These things we come to know primordially—intuitively, and without thinking—and when a false sound strikes us the body responds with a burst of adrenaline, fear, and frantic movement to investigate and protect. Knowledge of place comes to us through intimate, sensual engagement with our surroundings, and it is this aesthetic sense of place that phenomenology helps us to explore and understand.

Merleau-Ponty explores his own embeddedness in the city of Paris, including an intuitive knowledge of the unique landmarks and physical elements that make the urban space into a uniquely personalized *place* for him, and contrasts this with the effect of its absence.

Our body and our perception always solicit us to take the landscape they offer as the center of the world. But this landscape is not necessarily the landscape of our life. I can “be elsewhere” while remaining here, and if I am kept far from what I love, I feel far from the center of real life. (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 299)

This passage is rich with significant meaning for this research. Our bodies perceive a landscape and move about within it, but if that landscape fails to provide meaning (belonging, community, history, irreproducibility, visual stimulation) then our bodies do not engage. Perhaps first with our eyes, we turn our attention to other matters and tune out meaningless surroundings. (How often does this happen for our students in a sterile school environment?) Places of significance emerge, call to us, and we tune in to the places of meaning, sites of ‘real life,’ and we experience authentic dwelling.

This importance of placedness--our places of belonging, dwelling and practice--surpass mere global coordinates. “Spaces open up by the fact that they are let into the dwelling of man. To say that mortals *are* is to say that *in dwelling* they persist through spaces by virtue of their stay among things and locations” (Heidegger, 1971, p. 157). Space, for Heidegger, is an abstraction from a more basic sense of placedness. Whereas place is intuitively familiar, unique,

singular and irreproducible, space is homogenous and devoid of meaning. For phenomenology, our origin is embedded in an intuitive sense of place, and it is only through a reduction—an erasure--of the richness of a place that we can discover the concept of space. Through this lens of pure space, the phenomenon of being is reified or leveled down to a meaningless neutrality.

If we think of creativity merely in spatial terms, it becomes generic and homogenous, and thus an empty concept divorced from the particular places it arises from and is dependent upon. Including dwelling in a study of creativity thus enables us to focus upon the creating body in relation to how it dwells. This move then opens up the way for place to be an active participant in creativity.

Placedness in Motion: Kinetic Places

There remains another stone as yet unturned in this discussion, which is the notion of temporality. Dwelling and being are necessarily embedded in time, just as the human experience upon the earth is framed by the cosmic rotations of birth and death, day and night. To dwell in a particular place infers that such dwelling for people is temporal. Further, authentic dwelling in a meaningful place does not render people into statues; we move as we dwell, and through the daily goings ‘to and fro’ meaning and placedness are built.

Acknowledging that dwelling is temporal suggests that physical places have permanence as well as impermanence, an idea that deserves critical attention. Certainly there are cities and monuments around us that have endured for centuries and even millennia. These seem permanent, yet we know that even great cities can be abandoned or destroyed and slide away from the historic record. It is truly remarkable that even a few creative places endure over time and generate an aura of creativity centuries later, retaining a specific and powerful sense of

placedness that is encountered anew by future generations of dwellers. In our long human history, this planet has been host to countless millions of family homes, dwellings rich with personal meaning and belonging, that have long since disintegrated and leave no visible trace. While our feet tread familiar ground, and our perceptions “solicit us to take the landscape they offer as the center of the world,” (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 299), intuitively we understand that our bodies are as temporal as our dwellings, and our ways of being in the world are inextricably tied to time.

This research offers the opportunity to examine the phenomena of temporality, place, movement and creativity that collide in *kinetic places*: the unique intertwining of imagination and place that is ephemeral and meaningful; *dwelling in motion*. A kinetic place is in constant kinesis, both internally as people embody and enact a cultural practice, and as it moves through space as a holistic entity. Kinetic places are also host to many objects, things of material culture that shimmer with meaning and are utilized by the bodies engaged in the cultural practice. The entity that moves through a cultural landscape is thus recognizable for the transformation of the ordinary with the identity of the temporal place-in-motion while it remains present. It is the ordinary intersection of these elements (movement, people, landscape and objects) that produces the cultural practice that generates the places in which we dwell as humans upon the earth. The kinetic place challenges the daily encounters of dwelling with a temporal opportunity to creatively transform the essence of dwelling and place. This phenomenon of simultaneously reimagining and transforming is worthy of discovery.

Unplaces

Unlike the densely meaningful nature of places, Dylan Trigg examines un-places, spaces

in the world that are devoid of meaning and where belonging is neither present nor desirable. As un-places are perpetually constructed in our world, as monotonous reproduction overtakes the uniqueness of nature, and homogenous spaces flatten our experiences, we are reminded of Heidegger's fundamental warning to modern society. He reflects:

The real plight of dwelling is indeed older than the world wars and their destruction, older also than the increase of the earth's population and the condition of the industrial workers. The real dwelling plight lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that they must ever learn to dwell. (Heidegger, 1971, p. 161)

We are born into a world and (hopefully) are shown how to dwell first by our families, then neighborhoods, schools and a broader community. Often, we endow these beginning points—the first places in our lives—with intense importance, a pre-linguistic connection to ‘the house where I grew up’ or the site of our first memory. What happens to our sense of embeddedness when confronted with places that are devoid of meaning?

Trigg explores the concept of un-places through comparisons with places of meaning, but also through the temporal strata of the economic landscape of retail commerce (pages XXV, and 135-148) as dehumanizing in its monotonous reproducibility. Locations such as gas stations and fast food chain stores reveal his own intrinsic desire to flee such environments that are “the encroachment of homogenization” (Trigg, 2012, p. 120). We move into those spaces with some reluctance and quickly seek to remove ourselves from the void and propel our bodies back into places of our authentic dwelling. For me, the quintessential un-place is the confinement of a crowded airplane seat on an overseas flight. Wedged into one uncomfortable position for nine hours or more, surrounded by people who will endlessly push or pull on my chair, and the surety of a tasteless meal challenge my imagination to minimize that experience in exchange for the delicious sensory delights that I believe await my arrival at the destination. Another idiom, ‘time flies when you are having fun,’ reveals the phenomenological experience we share in the

fluidity of time. Survival means submersing our unpleasant hours while savoring enjoyable encounters—all of which challenge the limits of our “triadic relationship between body, time and world” (Trigg, 2012, p. 120).

A clear problem with research on creativity is that it detaches itself from place, as if creativity were another homogenous event that could happen anywhere with equal veracity and potential outcome. The implication that creativity will take place in un-places, as if manufactured on an assembly line, appears to be the expectation of authors like Richard Florida who seeks to ‘creatify’ even the most mundane jobs. Clearly this perspective leaves many gaps for the setting and stimulation of authentic creativity.

As we have established that our creating bodies are located in a world--a geographical coordinate at worst, an inspiring, creative and embedded place at best--then the next step is to discover just *how it feels to be creative in a creative—and often kinetic—place.*

Summary

Turning from spaces/un-places to places, individuals to communities, and building to dwelling, phenomenological research provides the tools through which we discover the essence of what it is like to be creative in a creative place, and the phenomena of *kinesis* as a way of being. The terrible reality that now presents itself to me is that schools are often un-places, monotonous experiences that our students seek to suppress in their lives, and the urgent need that threads through this proposal to offer students meaningful education, attunement, belonging and community. Capturing the vibrancy of placedness will harness “the peculiar power of place to seize time in its tracks” (Trigg, 2012, XVII), and bring an aura of creativity to our schools and to our lives.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Building upon the phenomenological intuitions described above, I will now outline a methodology and method of research that empowers my descriptions of the deep layers of placedness, embodiment, movement, and aura that are essential for understanding how creativity is lived within kinetic places. This section outlines the methodological structure of empirically grounded phenomenology as well as the particular methods used in the research.

Before the research begins, before even the first research question is posed, phenomenology researcher Max Van Manen presents two critical interrelated conditions for research. First is crafting a proper phenomenological question (Van Manen, 2014, p. 297). This question, or more often a set of questions, should provide an opening for the participants—researchers, interviewees, and less formal informants—to express “pre-reflexive experiential material” (p. 299). The data, hopefully in the form of opulent narratives, rich with thick descriptions, should offer experiential details, (p. 297-99) the concrete vividness that is evidence of “lived-through” gritty and visceral personal *life* (p. 298).

This approach towards the research centers on recognizable, lived experiences to which other people can readily relate. Discovering the extraordinary in the ordinary and invoking a sense of wonder will reveal the nuances of the experience itself (Van Manen, 2014, p. 223). Van Manen’s LED’s, Lived Experience Descriptions, generate the raw data from which phenomenological research gains its materiality (p. 298). According to Van Manen, a proper phenomenological research question asks sparingly: “What is given in an immediate experience? How is it given, experienced? How does it appear? What is a possible human experience like?” (p. 314). For this study, the essential research question enabled me to focus attention on creativity as a lived experience: *How does it feel to be creative?*

During a phenomenological investigation, the researcher must resist passing judgement, quantifying, defining and explaining the phenomenon, and guard against accidentally defining for the participant the nature of their experience. Phenomenological intuitions are starting points that direct intentionality toward particular phenomena. Such springboards can be adapted or even abandoned in the field if needed. Mark Vagle's book, *Crafting Phenomenological Research* offers a range of research methods as well as the literature for the supporting methodology. The method that offers the best insight for this examination is the 'Descriptive Empirical Phenomenology' approach (Vagle, 2014, p. 51), which seeks to tease out vivid descriptions of lived experiences free of interpretation or imposed meanings. It is the difficult task of the researcher to resist asking for interpretations, meanings, views or beliefs, and to steer the conversation towards the visceral, the lived experience in its most raw, bodily expression. This is a powerful challenge, and one that I approached with humility and care. To facilitate such open sharing, I began the investigation by using a single object as a catalyst for revelation.

The visual and material culture of New Orleans is rich and diverse, a diamond with a million glittering facets. For this research, the enormous array of created objects was narrowed to the Second Line Umbrella. Now an iconic object regularly seen in street parades throughout the year, the use of these decorated umbrellas appears to have emerged in the twentieth century to compliment centuries-old parade and masking traditions of the Crescent City. Yet it is not merely the umbrella that unlocked the question of how it feels to be creative. Embedded in the significance of the object is the *use* of the object as tied intrinsically to the cultural practice of Second Line parades, kinetic places of cultural significance that are temporal dwelling places in motion.

The first stage of research involved searching photographic and written archives for information about the earliest traces of the decorated umbrella in street culture (see the appendix). Sites included the Historic New Orleans Collection, the online photography collection of the New Orleans Public Library, the Hogan Jazz Archives at Tulane University, the Backstreet Cultural Museum, and photographic archives at the Old U.S. Mint Museum. Archival research was utilized to establish a timeline for the emergence of the decorated umbrella and to describe the development of this practice, the investigation of which serves to open discussions about the phenomenological experiences of creativity. While engaged in this research, I was able to broaden connections with individuals in the community who were knowledgeable cultural advocates and who served as key informants for interviews. This was crucial to the deeper investigation into lived experiences of creativity in this kinetic and highly creative space. As part of my IRB restrictions, I have pledged to keep names and personally identifying information out of the text. The individual participants were cultural experts as well as practitioners, deeply embedded in creative living and production in a wide array of forms that are unique to New Orleans. Their expertise was indeed rich with phenomenological evidence.

The second phase of the research was the phenomenological interviews with participants who are personally connected with the time, place and community of New Orleans visual culture, in particular practitioners of Second Line parades. I sought a personal narrative from these interviews, the story of the creative lives and notable events that brought their creative practices into being, from which the rich descriptions of their embodied creativity emerged.

This inquiry specifically endeavored to discover organic creative practices that would be generative for art education. Themes of inquiry included the process of creating objects such as the Second Line Umbrellas, who gathers to work on them, how the materials are acquired, and

the symbolism and meaning that may be attached to the elements that are selected and added to an umbrella or costume. Music, dance and writing were also important creative practices for participants. Through discussion of their creative practice, they offered vivid, rich descriptions of the experiences of making and being, and articulated stories wherein creativity emerged as a powerful form of Being, with Others, in a Place, and moving through space in the unique community of Kinetic Places. Ritualized times and places are a powerful influence in our lives, and this is especially true of traditional creative practices. Research participants were encouraged to share memories and observations about the places where they may gather to be creative, discussing material cultural objects as well as the neighborhoods and communities of New Orleans as a unique influence over the objects they create and the activities and rituals that are enacted through the movement of those objects.

The creation of costumes for a street parade in New Orleans is meant for a public audience: people you pass by, those who follow along with the parade (the Second Line), for your friends at a party or festive event, and now for posting on social media. Indeed, the audience is part of the cultural landscape through which kinetic places move and transform. This audience is positively receptive and entirely unlikely to critique the creator's use of the 'Elements and Principals of Art,' or take off points if the back is unfinished. How does the expectation of a non-critical audience inspire or affect creative expressions and products? Furthermore, material culture objects and costumes provide an open opportunity to express oneself, make social commentary and push back against oppression and frustration. These are the very objects that transform the ordinary into the kinetic place—the objects that are put into motion by the moving bodies. How does this generate creative energy, and are there elements of this type of inspiration that could be translated to an art classroom?

The significance of kinesis grew rapidly throughout this investigation, from the development of a phenomenology of kinetic places to a deeper understanding of the necessity of movement in the creative process. Indeed, kinesis took on such a vital role in the research process, as my own kinetic experiences in New Orleans became highly significant as data collection, that a ‘wandering methodology’ emerged.

Interview Questions and Approaches

These phrases simplify what Van Manen suggests is the heart of the research: What are the Lived Experiential Descriptions for individuals in a given situation? This phrase was expanded to include questions such as: *How does it feel to be creative? How do you see others express their creativity, such as through body language, talking and showing what they have made? Can you describe a moment or event where you felt most creative?* These extensions of the formal research question brought out the nuances of the participants’ experiences, as observed by participants and by myself.

Bringing the conversation from the embodied experience of being creative towards the place of New Orleans, and individual neighborhoods, yielded significant data for this investigation. As Van Manen suggests, the questions enticed the participants towards an “element of wonder, discovering the extraordinary in the ordinary.” (Van Manen, 2014, p. 298). Emphasis on place and the experience of place were the focus of some questions, such as. *What is it like to live in New Orleans? Can you describe a particular moment that embodies what it feels like to live here—a true New Orleans moment?*

The goal the interviews was to evoke descriptions of the processes and places which would open the door to discussing how it feels to be creative for the pleasure of themselves and

their immediate community. Claire Petitmengin has developed strategies for the phenomenological interview that include: stabilizing the attention of the participant, turning descriptions from ‘what’ to ‘how,’ moving from a general representation to a singular experience, and retrospectively accessing the lived experience (Petitmengin, 2006, p. 239-246). Just as our own memories are often slow to come into focus, revealing minute details in slow motion, so are the nuanced experiences of interview participants’ embodied creative moments. Indeed, they may never have considered or articulated their creative experiences before, and thus the responsibility fell to me to glean the phenomenological descriptions.

Petitmengin has developed a path for bringing participants closer to their lived experiences and away from formulaic categories or judgements, seeking “to prevent the subject from escaping from a description of the experience into comments, assessments and judgments about the experience, or digressions relating to his concerns of the moment, which are increasingly distant from the experience explored” (Petitmengin, 2006, p. 239). Guiding questions must be crafted, both through pre-planning and in natural response to the comments of the participant, to direct their reflections back to the moment, back to the body, back to the vivid experience.

In the context of an interview, to guide the interviewee towards a concrete evocation of a past situation or a situation that has just occurred, the interviewer helps him to rediscover the spatio-temporal context of the experience (when, where, with whom?), and then with precision the visual, auditive, tactile and kinesthetic, olfactory and possibly gustatory sensations associated with the experience, until the past situation is ‘re-lived’, to the point that it is more present than the interview situation. (Petitmengin, 2006, p. 244-5)

Through this model, the participants were well able to describe observable characteristics of creativity and enthusiasm, and nuanced details.

Using this lens, the following research questions were prepared to engage participants in a candid discussion, from which four participants offered particularly fruitful LEDs.² I used copious field notes from personal observation and casual conversation, obtained permission for interviews, and made audio, photo or video recordings of formal phenomenological interviews. The essential questions are simple yet profound: How does it feel to be creative? What is it like to be creative in New Orleans? The interview dialogue thus is organized, but is not limited to, the following.

- How long have you been going to Second Line parades? (Your whole life, number of years?) Do you remember going to parades as a child? What was that like?
- Describe one of your favorite parade costumes. How did you feel when you got the idea?
- How do you get ideas for a parade costume? Do you keep your ideas inside, a secret? (look for processes, such as sketchbooks or models; note facial expressions, body language throughout)
- Describe the place/s where you create the costumes or props for parades.
- How does it feel to work with groups/alone?
- How does your body feel while you are working? (look for embodied responses, such as getting tired, losing track of time)
- How does it feel when you show these things to others?
- How do you go about planning a (Mardi Gras Indian) suit? What kind of ideas inspire the design, color choices?
- What is it like to make the suits, to plan and then to sew? What is the impact on the body, especially on the days close to Mardi Gras?
- Describe what it feels like to you when you go out on the street and everyone sees your suit?
- Do you organize your costume or props with other people (an organized group, friends or family?)

² Included here are questions submitted to and approved by the IRB review board for UNT for a pilot study.

- Do you feel any kind of pressure to make things for parades?
- How would it feel to skip out on making anything?
- Does your neighborhood influence the costumes you make?
- How do other people seem to react to your costumes, umbrellas or parade props?
- How does it feel, how does your body feel, when you show people a new piece?
- How does New Orleans influence your creativity?
- How would/did you feel about taking your creations into other places? Did people understand? What was the experience like?
- How does it feel to be in a parade? What draws you to Second Line?
- What happens when you Second Line? Do you play, dance, drink, dance with strangers, talk to friends, see relatives? What is that like for you?
- Are there any moments in a Second Line that stand out to you? What made the moment significant?
- What happens if the parade is long, do you get tired? Why/why not?
- Does the parade seem to go by quickly? Do you lose track of time during a Second Line?
- How do you feel at the end of a parade?
- Do you think Second Line traditions could exist in other cities? Why/Why not?

Data Analysis Plan

Data was generated through the lived experiential descriptions, observations and interviews described above. In addition, a great deal of recorded information, text, photos and video recordings were collected. As key issues, significant experiences, and patterns emerged, the strands that connect them across each phase of the research process were woven together to develop the fabric of the research findings.

Images collected from the research are supporting evidence for the data and findings I describe rather than components of data in and of themselves. That is, the research question is not focused on the specific appearance of the visual and material culture objects. Rather, the images serve as prompts to indicate moments of what I perceive to be creatively kinetic performances. The images of public performances included in this dissertation serve as emphasis for the uniqueness of New Orleans' cultural practices (as compared to U.S. culture generally) as well as points of contact between myself and these cultural practices. The text from interviews and detailed field notes from observations was typed into a word processing computer program to facilitate organizing ideas, issues, events and reflections. Descriptive Empirical Phenomenology, as a qualitative research method, rarely utilizes extensive coding, but rather analyzes the text through a whole-parts-whole process that gradually reveals a nuanced understanding through repeated focused readings (Vagle, 2014, p. 96-100). In truth, it is not necessarily the number of times a subject uses a term that endows it with importance. From a phenomenological perspective, unique phrases, even afterthoughts, might carry more weight and offer profound insights. Thus it was important that I, as the researcher, be intuitively open and receptive to the nuances of language and gesture as they appeared over time and through repeated readings of the data, free to be tuned in to the emergence of the profound. In addition to such attunement, the use of a word processing program will facilitate developing themes and inter-related ideas and data. The word processing program also has a search capacity that allowed me to easily identify common words, highlight and separate key themes, and organize important data and information in a wide variety of ways. By using a word processing program that is not web-based and that does not require an annual renewal I can maintain access to my work regardless of technology changes or program upgrades.

A continuous stream of writing throughout the research deepened my engagement. Daily observations and reflections were a vital practice in this investigation, and in particular the practice of daily writing before, during and after my research visits to New Orleans were necessary avenues for data collection. Where such daily reflection and writing occur is of a pivotal importance, as the above discussion of place should suggest: “Although not impossible, it is extremely difficult to recreate strong, raw, even devastating emotions and moods within a laboratory setting” (Freeman, 2014, p. 461). To tap into the “robustness of mood” Freeman advocates genuine contexts that offer “ecological validity,” asserting: “Neither emotions nor moods are ever experienced in a vacuum” (Freeman, 2014, p. 461). Writing about my own embodied experiences with creativity in a creative place reveal profound ideas that informed and enhanced the phenomenological interviews.

The practice of daily writing engaged the phenomenological framework described above. Such writings were “used as instruments of self-report to examine the ongoing personal, social, psychological, existential and physiological dimensions of mood within everyday contexts” (Freeman, 2014, p. 466). This long term qualitative practice became a tool for recording my own engagement with “the actual, contextualized, unfolding experiences” (Freeman, 2014, p. 467) of walking and wandering in the Tremé neighborhood, my own responses to the participants’ narratives, and to explore obstacles to the research that were gradually revealed. Phenomenology lends itself to rich language, thick descriptions, and the insights that are inspired by living in the space of observation for extended periods of time. The narrative of each step of the journey provides the depth of insight needed to develop what I learned into material that is usable and valuable to others.

Veracity and Integrity

I am intensely aware of myself as an outsider in this research endeavor, inserting myself into a community of people from whom, through research, I will extract knowledge and attain the benefit of proceeding with my academic career. I felt—and feel—a powerful responsibility to avoid exploitation and to offer respect to people from a unique culture. There are many ways in which I readily present myself as an outsider to the Tremé neighborhood and the practitioners of Second Line parades, primarily Black families whose histories in New Orleans reach back many generations. I live in Texas, having been born and raised in West Virginia, with no familial ties to Louisiana. A middle class White female carrying a camera certainly appears to be a tourist, at best a consumer and fan of the culture. It helps that I know the words for the more obscure songs, and when they call out “Gimme a dime” I am ready to respond with “I only got eight!” But asking to interview people pushes me into another category entirely. Openness and complete veracity about my intentions was absolutely essential. It is my observation that many New Orleanians are accustomed to visitors coming to town for inspiration and to write about their city (among their annual festivals are literary celebrations dedicated to Tennessee Williams and William Faulkner). Bringing honor to the culture is appreciated, but there is a shrewd awareness of exploitation that is also present.

Cherise Harrison-Nelson is a rich source from the cultural legacy in New Orleans. She is co-founder of The Guardians Institute³ dedicated to preserving and educating people about the Mardi Gras Indian traditions and other visual culture from the city. Clyde Woods’ article “Upholding Community Traditions: An Interview with Cherice Harrison-Nelson” (2009) is primarily expository as Harrison-Nelson talks about her family’s heritage with the Mardi Gras

³ <http://www.guardiansinstitute.org/>

Indians across many generations. She is a strong advocate for her culture, and also very perceptive. She specifically criticizes outside researchers and activists who come into her community to initiate programs or offer services, then leave without fulfilling promises or finishing projects. I found her words quite relevant as I proposed to enter her community. Harrison-Nelson motivates me to have always before me the idea that I must not be exploitive in my work, that I should offer something meaningful back to the community.

Validity in phenomenological research requires an openness to the data, to the participants and the nuances of their experiences as they share them. As such validity is “marked primarily by a consideration of the researcher’s sustained engagement with the phenomenon and the participants who have experienced the phenomenon...requiring the researcher to be open and sensitive to the phenomenon under investigation throughout all phases of the study” (Vagle, 2014, p. 66). The practice of reading, reviewing, and writing about the research through the whole-part-whole approach, described above, also demands another level of self-awareness. This perspective and practice is called bracketing or bridling, wherein the researcher restrains their own preconceptions and personal understandings of the phenomenon, setting it aside as much as possible, to “take on a reflective, open stance. We bridle understanding so that we do not understand too quickly or carelessly or that we do not attempt to make definite what is indefinite (Vagle, 2014, p. 67). This is indeed a challenge for any researcher. Not only is our positionality--our lens through which we view the world--rather permanently attached to our eyes, our experiences are embedded in our memories and through a lifetime of bodily encounters, but professionally we do not want to venture into a significant research endeavor with no idea what the outcome will yield. As Vagle confirms: “The ordinary lived experience is the very thing the phenomenological craftsperson should aim to explore and not something to

aim to move beyond” (Vagle, 2014, p. 69). The phenomenological approach requires the researcher to lay down all planned outcomes and expectations in hopes of yielding unanticipated discoveries.

Validation from the participants is also a crucial element in phenomenological research, for it is their lived experiences that are the heart of the research data. The opportunity to review and validate the text relating to each participant prior to public publication will be sought both to affirm my own assertions in the research findings (Vagle, 2014, p. 103) and to offer the participants an opportunity to edit any material they might prefer to keep private (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 227-229).

In phenomenological research, the idea of triangulation appears as a method for establishing validity, which allows for the emergence and convergence of data “across multiple data moments and contextual variation, [providing] deep and rich insights into a particular shape the phenomenon has taken” (Vagle, 2014, p. 97). Triangulation is likely to appear through the methods of data analysis (whole-part-whole, bridling) as themes and commonalities emerge. Readiness to perceive, without prescribing, is essential in this phase. Yet triangulation leaves open the expectation and the possibility that a singular moment can give form to the entire investigation:

When we have multiple data moments such as interviews, writings and observations from a number of participants over a period of time, I do not think one needs to triangulate across these moments in order to say something meaningful. Sometimes a single statement, from one participant, at one moment in time is so powerful that it needs to be amplified. (Vagle, 2014, p. 97)

While some such moments appeared as immediately significant, others rose up over time as singularly meaningful. My goal was to be sensitive and attuned to such significance, as the essence of creativity, of how it feels to *be creative*, was revealed.

Bridling is another important aspect of this research endeavor, as Vagle (2014) asserts in his review of Dahlberg's influence on his own research practice. This includes acknowledging that our own backgrounds and pre-knowledge can never fully be removed from the phenomenological research practice (Vagle, 2014, p. 61). That is, we can never fully un-live our lives to entirely reinstate the *tabula rasa*. Despite dedicated efforts with bridling, acknowledging my own positionality as an outsider who is White, researching a cultural practice that emerges from a predominantly Black community, is unavoidable and will inevitably inform the outcomes of this research.

Although I sought out interviews with creative individuals who participate in Second Line parades in New Orleans, often initiated in the Tremé neighborhood, I did not limit my research to Black participants. I am an outsider in almost every way: I am a descendant of Irish immigrants, raised in the Northeast, who attended college in West Texas. I am a classically trained musician who fell in love with New Orleans long ago, a frequent visitor but not a resident. As such I am "responsible not only for my body but also for my race and my ancestors" (Fanon, 2008, p. 92). I have thus far felt welcome when visiting the Tremé neighborhood, but I have only been a visitor, a customer and a tourist. At best, I am a fan and fellow musician. Veracity will not allow me to adopt an identity other than my own.

Phenomenology as a field has not adequately addressed issues of race and gender as they relate to creativity and cultural practice, although collections such as *Living alterities: Phenomenology, embodiment and race* (Lee, 2014) are leading the way to fill that gap. And while critical White studies scholars have explored race more thoroughly (Frankenberg, Gilmore, Hale, Kohchin, Roediger, Delgado & Stefancic, and Scales-Trent) they have not often recognized the power of phenomenological description to unpack ways that race affects the lived

experiences of creativity and creative places. Utilizing racially attuned phenomenologists like Franz Fanon as a foundation, along with new perspectives on kinetic places, this work brings together these fields of philosophy with fresh perceptions, yielding a fruitful perspective on many creating bodies and kinetic creative places.

A Wandering Pilgrimage

As a direct result of the influences described above, my own bodily motion through the research location emerged as a crucial point of praxis. Therefore, before presenting and discussing the findings yielded by the archive research and interviews, it is important that I offer a phenomenological description of my kinetic and embodied experiences that were simultaneous encounters with the planned research. In this way, the phenomenology of kinetic places is lived, making the implicit (internal) and personal dimension of embodiment into an explicit feature of the research outcomes. Through the next passage, the process of a methodology of wandering is experienced as a source of data collection. I will also highlight different kinds of movements involved in kinetic research: arriving, hanging out, milling about, procession, and dispersal. Each of these movements carries with it a unique aura, a unique sensation, and a singular opportunity to glimpse the relationships between body, dwelling, community and creativity.

The bipedal motion, the sensation of two feet treading, alternating across the earth, is among our most basic experiences. Our vertical resistance to gravity, the first sensation of being upright that separates us from the cradle also generates our first sensations of self and other (Yuan, 2014, p. 20-22). The infant yearns to walk, and, upon doing so, celebrates newly found freedom and mobility with vigorous energy and ecstatic delight. From that moment onward, we experience the world walking, motoring, riding and gliding vertically through space.

Initial encounters with the world on foot, as newly vertical creatures moving slowly through our local world, imprint strong memories. Bachelard writes extensively about the phenomenological impressions our first childhood homes make upon us, the embodied memories powerful and highly detailed. “For our house is our corner of the world...it is our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word” (Bachelard, 1994, p. 4). These early imprints are deeply rooted. The aromas of the kitchen or a dusty attic, the height of the front step, the feel of cold bathroom tile—all of these physical contacts form our understanding of the world and set a foundation for future encounters (Bachelard, 1994, p. 1-10). Indeed, I can recall my first childhood home with vivid clarity, knowledge attained through a child’s body, my limbs and senses collecting data as they moved across and through the territory of dwelling. My feet remember the chill of smooth hardwood floors, long shag carpet squares in the living room, the damp concrete of the basement, and the soft black soil of the path to the backyard. Unkempt forest alongside our little property was my playground, where I also ran barefoot over soft leaves and moss, often stubbing my toes on unexpected rough stones and acquiring scrapes from fallen branches. Strong sonic memories are readily recalled as well. I can still hear my mother’s piano outside my bedroom door each evening, sonatas by Beethoven and Chopin among her favorites, as I drifted to sleep. I recall the slamming of doors as my brother made his busy way through the house, the whistle of the kettle as my father made lemon tea, and the hilarious scramble of my little dog’s feet sliding down the hardwood hallway.

My first encounters with the world are deeply imprinted with detailed sensations—data—that was collected as my tiny body, newly acquired, was my most important research tool for understanding the world. This body, especially through feet and ears, registered how to move about my home, how to locate my family within the home, and even how to know when I had

ventured into unknown territory. Those wild woods stretched on for several acres in an oddly shaped gap between neighborhood, town and university campus. It was my feet that initially sensed the sharp incline the first time I ventured too far from home, my ears registered the unexpected noise of traffic racing along a busy street that was now too close. Turning, scrambling back up the ravine, I was surrounded by thick forest and leafy green as far as I could see. I recognized nothing. I turned in a slow circle. Lost. Utterly alone, I walked a few steps and listened, walked and listened, walked and heard only the rustle of dry leaves under my own feet. As the traffic noise faded, I imagined myself with the ravine and busy road far behind me, trying to sense what could be ahead. I turned to the left, walked and listened. Uphill seemed right, as the soles of my feet sensed the slanting earth. Soon, the unmistakable sound of my own dog barking could just be heard. Now I hurried in that direction. Next was my father's voice, casually calling me to dinner. Home.

Each venture into the woods yielded discovery, knowledge about the earth and the trees, a sense of distance and spatial recognition, and the forest's power to shroud the secrecy of my presence in the wild, verdant space between backyards and businesses. "To be lost is to be fully present, and to be fully present is to be capable of *being* in uncertainty and mystery" (Solnit, 2005, p. 6). My first experience of being lost has imprinted deeply in my memory, laying a foundation for understanding that the state of lost-ness is not a cause for alarm but rather a springboard for adventure, a push into the unknown through which I must move. Wandering unknown terrain on foot is to experience richly a sense of place with childlike wonder. The open attunement of the senses reveals nuanced details that would be missed in a racing vehicle; discoveries would be shrouded by inattention that is the luxury of the familiar. To research kinetic places also requires movement through place and space, fully attuned, on a speed and

scale that can only be provided by one's body, as I seek to construct a phenomenological ontology of creative bodies in motion.

This investigation taps into these initial ideas of home, world and movement through Heidegger's discussion of belonging and care. As discussed in the opening chapter, Heidegger presents our phenomenological understanding of belonging as it was originally experienced through contacts with Others in a shared world. Bachelard casts an opposing tension between inside and outside (1994, p. 211-231), as he observes, "Philosophers, when confronted with outside and inside, think in terms of being and non-being" (p. 212). Throughout this passage he questions this dialectic, exploring the nature of here and there, utilizing poetry to challenge the limitations of psychological and literary notions of the nature of inside and outside. In conclusion, he celebrates the intimacy of interior places where one can withdraw, where "the great stream of simple humility of that room becomes our intimacy. And correlatively, intimate space has become so quiet, so simple, that all the quietude of the room is localized and centralized in it. The room is very deeply our room. It is in us" (p. 226). A symbiotic intimacy; I belong to the room and the room belongs to me. The brilliance of Bachelard's discussion reveals such ways of being while reminding us that the outside is ever present, that inside would not exist without an outside as a source of contrast, embedded in the necessity of freedom and movement: "Is he who opens a door and he who closes it the same being? The gestures that make us conscious of security or freedom are rooted in a profound depth of being" (p. 224).

Walking, likewise, is a phenomenological experience, and is particularly useful as a research tool when the sense of awareness is heightened. An emerging field of walking as research is presented by Truman and Springgay (2016): "Walking, we will argue, is not a habit of movement external to the event of research, nor simply an embodied way to feel in space;

rather, it is the event's becoming" (p. 260). De-familiarization is a theme explored by Truman and Springgay, supported by other researchers who seek to transcend typical movement (i.e. daily routines) with planned ambulatory events that will fuel and inform research goals. As it turns out, this is a shared goal. Although my first walks through New Orleans, my first parade encounter decades ago, was a naïve exploration, I collected data incidentally yet with a heightened sense of awareness and discovery.

In this chapter, I have proposed that this powerful and vital sense of being and belonging often attached to the intimate interior can also be experienced in outdoor places, presenting as an exemplar the kinetic place of the New Orleans second line parade, a cultural communal event that is specifically conducted on foot: walking, marching, leaping, and dancing. My own investigation of the overflowing creativity of this cultural practice cannot avoid this essential element: at its core, the kinetic place of the second line parade is generated by a long, liberating ambulatory movement through a landscape rich with personal significance.

Walking on two feet, moving through the streets, lanes and alleys of New Orleans, became a powerful research tool for investigation, observation, writing and reflecting.

My slow kinetic encounters revealed ideas and insights about the lived creative experience unavailable elsewhere. What has emerged is a methodology of being and wandering as a research practice that proved to be profoundly enlightening.

Let us consider here the range of movements encompassed by the idea of wandering. More than simply walking, which we practice most often with intent, wandering can be hesitant and uncertain, or a purposeful stride seeking to investigate; it can be shuffling and distracted, or the rhythmic step of dance—especially common in New Orleans, where music is so often released into the air. Wandering is kinesis with the freedom to pause, suspending movement to

linger, savor, and be immersed in a moment. Wandering has built-in space for wonder, for joy and surprise, the liberty to dance or listen. Thus my kinetic research oscillates between motion and stillness, between participation and observation, bringing many aspects of research into dialogue that challenges as well as reveals the phenomenological nature of creativity in this kinetic community. In this sense, it is perhaps more accurate to describe my practice less in terms of walking (as Springgay and Truman suggest) but in terms of the phenomenologically rich concept of wandering.

Pulling back the curtain on the creative experience, it was through such personal, ambulatory encounters that I first learned about the Mardi Gras Indians. My intuition urged me to turn the research question towards the Black Indian culture and expand my knowledge about them through personal encounters. As described in the Methodology section, the Mardi Gras Indians have few public events when they wear the full suits and enact spiritual rituals and creative practices in the streets of New Orleans. Until very recently they were intensely private, almost secretive, and allowed few outsiders to photograph them or make connections between their legal and Indian identities. Over the last decade they have gradually opened up, and now there are several well-written accounts of their history (Sublette, Spera, Smith). A search of social media reveals much about the current generation of practitioners, including posts of suits, names and events, and short videos of the ‘coming out’ on Mardi Gras mornings. One of these rare events is Super Sunday, when many tribes in a region of New Orleans will come forth in full costume. What follows is my own bipedal, wandering pilgrimage at two events: Uptown Super Sunday on March 19, 2017 and Downtown Super Sunday on April 2, 2017.

Two way pak-e way!
-Mardi Gras Indian call

My expectations were way off. Written and verbal descriptions suggested that Uptown Super Sunday was an event that would take place in a park, a designated ‘battle ground’ where Mardi Gras Indians would show up and meet, or have some kind of dancing competition. I thought that they would come in through the published parade route, a long rectangle from Davis Park up to Claiborne Avenue and back. I thought they would then gather at the park and have a ceremonial showdown, with all the tribes in full costume. I *thought* that it would last an hour, or maybe two with the parade. This was not at all what I encountered.

I arrived early, but the streets all around the park were already full of people with little room for traffic. I had to drive several blocks away to find a parking place, and realized that soon even those lanes would be full. Walking back to the park, I took in the scene. As far as the eye could see, the streets were lined with vendors. A few of these were regular food trucks, but most were very informal: women and children, families or teams of men, with a vehicle and a smoker and a plastic table offering homemade specialties. Each stand featured colorful posters with food items and prices carefully written in marker. I eagerly looked over the choices as I strolled by, then bought a bowl of Crawfish Monica. Soft fusilli noodles, creamy sauce, chunks of crab and crawfish peppered with creole seasonings slid deliciously down my throat. Absolutely filling. I wanted nothing else that day, although the smoked sausages filled the air with a hypnotic aroma.

About every third stand, along all the streets and side streets, were people selling alcohol. I have become strangely accustomed to the rolling coolers of beer and water at second lines. These are totally non-licensed—people just walking around selling off what they bought at the grocery store for a few bucks per can. I have even seen kids selling beer as well as sodas and

water, which makes me seriously uncomfortable. (That was around Jazzfest, where people set up all along the roads leading into the festival with homemade food, water bottles, even selling the local OffBeat magazines that are free!)



Here at Uptown Super Sunday I didn't see children selling alcohol, but plenty of adults were doing it with no sign of a liquor license. Big bottles of vodka, whiskey, rum, and even larger bottles of bloody mary mix and so forth. One guy set up his bar on the roof of a pickup truck, then he stood in the truck to sell the drinks and bark out his offers to everyone walking by. Cops were *literally* looking the other way—like I saw one look at this pick-up and then turn his head away. *So what is this social contract?* This allowance for breaking the rules? It seems like New Orleans has quite a few events or places where the laws are just not enforced. No one expects it, and no one wants to enforce it, even though everyone also knows that the rug pull could happen at any moment. The tensions between laws and lawlessness are slack, at least here.

Davis Park turns out to be a place I have seen in pictures and videos. I recognize a big porch with a blue tin roof where cultural programs are held by musicians and Black Indians for kids in the neighborhood. This day it was filled with disorganized people milling around. The sun was warm and the humidity was high, probably about 80 degrees and 80%. Children in strollers were led over to big bounce houses. Two uniformed cops lingered by the gate, and

although there were signs about not bringing in food and drink that was also not enforced. I suppose they were looking for weapons. I personally did not see any fights or weapons all day.

The crowd moved about continuously, like a lake where two strong currents meet and stream past each other, churning a busy eddy between and all around. Several thousand people attend this event, spread out across the park and down the side streets in every direction, wandering and watching, eating, drinking, hanging around, greeting friends and talking on cell phones. The French Quarter felt a million miles away. I got a spot on a slight rise of ground, just near a light pole. I am not tall, and this gave me a better vantage point. Time passed, with no Mardi Gras Indians in sight. The sun was high and I could feel my pale skin burning. I got down, found a shady corner and sat with strangers on someone's front lawn. Thus far, my experience was largely that of a foreigner: I had only a marginal understanding of an anticipated event, and I was impatient for it. What I failed to recognize at first was that Super Sunday included the event already happening all around me. I was witnessing, and inadvertently participating in, a suspended kinesis where movement was constant—walking that did not leave or arrive—and collectively occupied the space of these streets and transformed them into the place of Super Sunday. I was waiting on an isolated fraction. They were hanging out and enjoying the cumulative whole.

Sometime in the early afternoon the noise of the crowd grew, and people began to bunch up on the street in front of me. I stood up, seeking. Then I saw it: the aching array of orange and white feathers high above the heads of the crowd. I heard the drumming and chanting, I saw a huge feathered fan on a stick. The Indians were coming.

I jumped up and got out my phone, eager to photograph or record and capture the sight. They were magnificent. I shoved between people to get close. There were six Indians in full

costume, the Spy Boy coming first to push back the crowd. They were both ferocious and wary, wanting us to move back. But the crowd was pushy, standing in their way to take pictures. I resolved to not be like most of the White people around me who blocked the way while staring at the small screen of their phones, unaware of themselves, immersed in tiny technology.

The chanting and music, voice and tambourine only, filled the space. They called out a familiar cry, but the crowd did not respond. I tried once to reply to the call back but it was lost in the crowd. The Indians were accompanied by the drummers and 15 or so others, including a few children, wearing clothes or t-shirts that put them with this Indian tribe. They passed through the crowd slowly, wary of the pressing of people towards them. Then they were gone. They didn't go into the park, but passed it by and disappeared into the crowd.

My first personal encounter with a whole Indian tribe! I felt exhilarated, like I had been let in on a secret. And surprised to realize that there was no organized parade where all the Indians lined up one behind the other. Instead, they arrived from different streets, unscripted and unscheduled. Maybe 10, 15, or 20 minutes would go by. Then another tribe would appear, and the exciting moment would happen again. Another arc of brilliantly colored feathers would appear high above the heads of the crowd, coming from another direction, and we would all rush over to get a view. Each tribe had several great feathered figures, usually a Spy Boy, the Wild Man, Flag Boy, a Big Chief, sometimes a Big Queen, perhaps another one or two in full regalia. Musicians following—no brass bands here, just drum and tambourine. Then the entourage: kids, people carrying supplies or pulling a cooler, women and men wearing shirts with airbrushed designs. Some of these named and depicted a person who had passed away, such as a beloved Big Chief. Here, dwelling is chaos, unscheduled, seeing and being seen, spontaneous, exciting, crowded yet laid back, and endless hanging out.



This phenomenon of Super Sunday went on all day, the atmosphere like a city-wide block party. Many young people were dressed to the nines, sometimes quite sexy with revealing clothes, jewelry, even high spike heels. They were dressed to be seen, as if going to a club on Saturday night rather than a Sunday afternoon picnic. A few were into the Indian theme, including a Pocahontas costume on a slender girl with thick braids over each ear, a low-cut top revealing a matching bra, long fringe over her legs, and fringed boots. She was strong and lovely and not with an Indian group. Also adopting the style were three White kids whose accents revealed an Eastern European background. They wore headbands with colorful paper feathers like school children made when I was growing up. These were both cultural appropriation, of a kind, in a city that relishes costuming and participation.

Food and drink stands were busy as the afternoon wore on. As the hours slipped by I realized that this event would last all day and into the night. A few times I saw someone call out ‘did you bring your....’ naming a dish. This is a community that knows each other well. Big foil pans held pre-breaded fish and chicken. Hot oil fryers were fueled with propane tanks. Barbecue smokers everywhere, and one truck even had a tag-along truck with firewood.

When the Indians stopped coming through I went into the park and found a seat. Two women were on stage teaching a dance move to a half-dozen children. Only two Indian tribes had made it back into the park. The Wild Magnolias were first. They came through rather

unceremoniously, just walking really. They had a designated area roped off and began to lay out their colorful feathered suits. Bo Dollis Jr. is the Big Chief, but an older man was masking Big Chief that day. They were carefully laying out the suits, the banner, and getting water for everyone. These suits often weigh a hundred pounds or more. I took pictures and spoke only briefly. They were busy, and ready for a break after going all the way up to Claiborne and back.

Another hour went by, and only one other group made it back. I asked a young woman about the remaining events. She was friendly, but gave the vaguest of answers: when they got done on the streets, the Indians would come back to the park. Then after dark, they would put the costumes back on and do 'the St. Joseph's night stuff.' It became clear to me that it would likely be many more hours before anything else might happen. Knowing that Rebirth Brass Band was going to be at Congo Square at 6:00, I decided to leave. There were supposed to be Indians at that event as well. I had every intention of going back, but sunburn and exhaustion got the best of me, and I failed to return.

Later, looking at pictures from the newspaper I discovered that I missed a great deal that night. A brass band brought a second line parade to Davis Park after I left. The Indians put their suits back on after dark. I had failed to understand that usually Super Sunday and St. Joseph's Day are separate events, but an accident of the calendar put them on the same day. After dark, the Indians take to the streets and confront each other in a ferocious ancient ritual. I missed all of that. Angry with myself, I searched online social media for informal videos of the event. What I found was mesmerizing and not a little terrifying. Even on a small screen I could sense a wildness to it, ritual howls coming from these great men, the colorful feathered costumes turned menacing. Then I discovered that a shooting had occurred after midnight, and one of the Indians was shot in the leg. This is a plague on the culture, too, even though most of the violence at their

events is caused not by the second liners or the Indians. For the community, it is self-destructive and self-defeating, and many speak out powerfully against violence and drug use. And yet it goes on. They often say here, “That’s the way it’s always been.” But it doesn’t have to be that way going forward. Does it?

Super Sunday Downtown: A Kinetic Feast

Super Sunday Uptown left me hungry to dig deeper, to stay longer and deepen my understanding. I short-changed my research by leaving too early last time. At Antoine’s urging⁴, I am venturing to another part of town on a quest. This time, I am ready to move wherever the Indians may lead; I am prepared for the long hang out.

There is a liminal quality to hanging out, a way of being in the world that stretches the notions of being from classical ontologies. Heidegger opens his influential tome, *Being and time*, with a nod to ancient efforts (Greek and medieval) to define Being. Building upon their attempts, he acknowledges Hegel as bringing clarity to the question: “Hegel at last defines ‘being’ as the ‘indeterminate immediate’ and makes this definition basic for all the further categorical explications” (Heidegger, 2008, p. 22). This marvelous enigma, the ‘indeterminate immediate,’ swings the door wide open to discuss numerous and nuanced ways of being in the world. This foundation supports Heidegger’s understanding of authenticity and freedom that are integral to this research and the possibility of creativity as a way of being in the world.

Here, in the place where the Super Sunday will occur, hanging out is dwelling, being present, *being there*, yet with a lack of focused occupation. It often occurs in between activities, or perhaps after other activities. The unoccupied mind dwells in a body that is uniquely free.

⁴ Antoine is the director of a local cultural museum. His account is described in the following chapter.

“Everything we talk about, everything we have in view, everything towards which we comport ourselves in any way, is being; what we are is being, and so is how we are” (Heidegger, 2008, p. 26). The body, as it hangs out, might be standing or sitting, moving about or leaning, perhaps, but no particular action is inferred or expected. Hanging out isn’t really about hanging, either. It is a *suspended state* of inaction, purposeless perhaps, yet intrinsically liberated. It is not the same as waiting, although we may experience the two at the same time. If one is waiting, then there is an expected event, action or obligation. One watches the clock or grows impatient with frustrated anticipation. Once that frustration appears, the fullness of hanging out evaporates.

Authentic hanging out is its own event, requiring nothing further than presence and the unattended passage of time, the ‘indeterminate immediate.’ Super Sunday offers a supreme opportunity to hang out, where the neighborhood has become your living room, and thousands of your friends are hanging out with you, moving without leaving. The invitation to Super Sunday is broadly offered; as bodies fill the space they transform ordinary streets, intersections, parks and driveways into a place where significant events may eventually occur.

Conversations, seeing and being seen, greetings, play, eating and drinking, dancing, sitting and fanning oneself, smiling and watching. The long hangout is a way of being in the world, and thus creates a cultural and temporal landscape through which the kinetic place of a parade or Mardi Gras Indian tribe moves.

Arrival

I am too early. An uncertain cab driver leaves me at the corner of Orleans and Broad. I see only a few other people on the sidewalk next to me. The intersection appears entirely ordinary. Pulling a paper from my pocket, I confirm that this is where Super Sunday Downtown will occur.

Downtown. I want to ask a fool's questions like why this is called downtown when it is clearly nowhere near the central business district. Likewise, what is up about Uptown? Life wraps around the twisting path of the Mississippi River here, so perhaps this is down river, or downhill, as compared to something else.

Gray skies, steady breeze. It is supposed to rain later, probably storm. Everyone I speak to has a different weather prediction. Even my weather app and newspaper disagree. So I am out here, predicting only that I will stay until it is over. I spent a fool's money on a purple umbrella that matches the purple and gold dress I bought from a Nigerian fellow in the French Market. I am embracing a liminal state of uncertainty. I am ready for the long hang out.

Lingering on the corner, watching busy traffic as I get my bearings. The neutral ground is higher and offers a better view, so I move into the intersection and step up onto the green space. The grass is tough and thin. I sit with my back to a tree, and immediately wish I had some cardboard to keep the prickly grass from shoving through my dress. It is a very humble state of affairs when you long for a cardboard seat.

I am the only White person in sight. In front of me, on Broad Street, is the Zulu club house. A fine gold façade, palm trees, black trim and a small black wrought-iron balcony, with a proud regal crest adorning the central perch high above the street. The house next door, also two stories, is painted to match. A proud heritage, carefully maintained. They have filled the sidewalk on the whole block with tables, banners and tents. Three big smokers on the street are tended by men wearing different Zulu shirts, black and gold, while others prepare to serve the meaty fruits of their labor. Other tables are offering t-shirts and Zulu gear. Under the tents are nicely stocked bars with top-shelf rum and whisky. I gradually realize that I don't see any women in the Zulu area right now. The men are elegant in gold and black, not suits but otherwise

they seem dressed up despite the heat. They greet each other warmly, cheerfully. Horns honk as friends drive by and wave. The community simultaneously constructs and displays itself.

The air is heavy with humidity, that tropical sense on my skin of swimming through open space as I walk, sit, watch and write. I breathe deeply the sultry air. Contentment.

A family sets up folding chairs nearby. They settle in, prepared for the day with food and drink. They talk cheerfully as they pass sandwiches and chips and cans of soda between them. A car slows down at the stoplight, and a woman calls out to ask what is happening. The dad here tells her this is Super Sunday. He points up Orleans Avenue and says that the Indians are going to come down that way and turn here. Affirmation that I am in the right place. She says something I can't hear, and the dad says 'Yeah, you right,' (a local colloquialism; I enjoy the rhythm of that and repeat it to myself). They wave to each other as she drives away.

Traffic is starting to slow, even stopping at times. I am no longer alone on the neutral ground. People stop to talk, load and unload, beers are sipped, greetings are loud and cheerful. A parade float, resplendent in gold and white, rolls by with no one on it. As I stare, my attention is drawn to the other corner of Orleans Avenue. A colorful pickup arrives, painted Mardi Gras colors of green, gold and purple, pulling a trailer promising smoked sausage and 'ghetto burgers.' A slender teenage boy on the corner, wearing a white t-shirt and gold pants, stares at me. I know I am out of place here, yet I also know that other White outsiders 'visit' these events. I sit alone writing in my small black Moleskine, which perhaps makes me an even stranger stranger.

Hanging Out

More food stands are assembled. Behind me on the neutral ground another grill has been

fired up with dozens of oysters lined up over the smoke. Two men in gold tuxedos appear in the Zulu area, and another man in a black tuxedo. If the Zulu event is part of Super Sunday, then it is a well-kept secret.



The wind is picking up, the sky heavy with dark clouds. The crowd is picking up, too. Tired of the hard ground, I get up and move to the cement closer to the street. Looking back, I can see that there are maybe a dozen White people now, and they have all informally stationed themselves near where I was sitting, while the rest of the neutral ground and the other sidewalks are full of Black individuals and families. Did I start this by just being there with my White body? A taxi pulls up and a group of White kids get out, two wear LSU t-shirts. They huddle together uncertainly as the taxi zips away, then join the small clump of Whiteness on the neutral ground.

I, too, sensed my foreign-ness upon arrival. I was alone, quietly hoping to be an un-intrusive observer, aware of my own oddity. Now as I step from the neutral ground onto the street, then the sidewalk, I move between worlds. A short walk, just a few steps to the other side of the street, serves to reveal a self-segregation of which I was unaware. This peculiar observation startles me, and I see ‘them’ as strange: their body language is nervous, cautious and uncertain. They have clustered near each other as they arrived, choosing to locate their bodies

near to other like bodies. I want to distance myself from ‘them,’ for I do not feel afraid or nervous, just aware. No one is here by accident. Antoine has been inviting everyone who visited the Backstreet Cultural Center, and the Times-Picayune newspaper and OffBeat magazine both featured stories about Super Sunday Downtown this week. Yet it is true that this is an intensely local event. This feels a land quite distant from the French Quarter and the expensive restaurants in the tourist zone. Here, we are all exposed. No car or café table—no things to hide behind. We stand, sit, walk and wait, present only in our bodies, identities on parade.

Music bounces around me. Sometimes I think I hear a brass band but it is a recording of Rebirth blaring from the other corner of the Zulu house. Cars drive by slowly, music pouring out of their speakers. A regal gentleman on a bicycle, wearing a striped blue dress shirt and black pants, rolls by on his bicycle, a speaker strapped to the back with his iPhone taped to the top.

The aroma from the barbecue pits is too much for me, and whatever inhibitions I brought with me are overcome by hunger and curiosity. I venture forth, cross the street and walk into the Zulu territory. I stop to inquire at one of the stands, but before I can even ask a question I’m told: “members only.” He was friendly, but firm and quick. He was so sure that I’m not a member! Disappointed, I walk down the rest of the street to at least see what is (not) on offer. Lots of people are eating, men and women now, while drinks and gift bags are handed out. No money is changing hands, making the festivities even more festive.

I cross the street and buy a drink from the back of a u-haul, then a delicious smoked sausage from the Mardi Gras truck. Family groups run these small, mobile businesses. The mood on this side of the street is welcoming, cheerful. They hand me extra napkins, knowing that the sauce will soon be running down my wrist and chin. I learn that a ghetto burger is a thin hamburger served on wonder bread. From my messy view I can see a few police on motorcycles

stationed at the far corner of the intersection preparing to block off traffic on Broad. Looking back at the Zulu club, I suddenly, finally, realize what is going on over there: Elections! There are five or six sections, each one dedicated to a different candidate. They are literally wining and dining voters!

Roaring engines, rumbling closer. A dozen motorcycles gather behind me at the Shell station across from the Zulu clubhouse. They wear matching big black jackets with a motorcycle club logo. Another all Black male organization; only one fellow has a girl with him. Another roar, and another cycle zooms up. The kinesis of this strikes me; the motorcycles allow swift movement towards and through the crowd, the place of the event, in a way that is not removed from the physicality of presence. Your body, your identity, your presence can be seen on the motorcycle whereas a car masks all of these.

All around the mood is good-natured, chill. The indeterminate immediate continues.

Milling Around

A few Indians came by, but they are not yet performing. They are headed to the starting area, somewhere up Orleans Ave. They carry their headgear, or in one case a child's mother is carrying most of his suit. The neutral ground is crowded now, and litter begins to appear. The crowd has grown and is mixed, in that it is no longer so noticeably self-segregated and includes many different nationalities and languages. A red pickup hauling a hand-made kitchen trailer pauses in front of the Zulu club. A small group of men gather in serious discussion with the driver, persuading him to move on down the road. This is primo viewing, and they don't want the truck to block the road. Cars are starting to give up driving through here, although the police have not yet officially stopped traffic.

The crowd shifts, shuffles, milling around. That expression, milling around, to describe the behavior of a furry moths informally called ‘millers,’ who flutter about bright lights after dark, circling and bumping in the futile effort to get close to a light that will burn them. We are fluttering too, here on the tough turf, kinetic yet not really going anywhere. There is a feeling of swarming, flickering, of hive activity swirling, moving without leaving. Several times people walk by talking into a cell phone, telling their caller where they are, looking for each other in the crowd. Motion is constant. The notion of ‘bumping into’ someone is yet another idiom that reveals the phenomenological nature of milling around. To ‘bump into’ a friend or acquaintance does not suggest that a literal collision occurred, but rather an unexpected meeting where greetings are exchanged, perhaps with a physical contact such as a hug or handshake. Heidegger’s exploration of our sense of self and ‘other’ is expressed here in the bumping between one’s sense of oneself and the unexpected recognition of others, with whom a sense of care rises up in that instantaneous moment (Heidegger, 2008, p. 167). The bump is perhaps a physiological uplift of emotions, cheered (usually) or at least surprised by the encounter. Talking, shouts of laughter, campaigning Zulu-style, looking and being looked at. Our hanging out becomes waiting as we grow eager with anticipation.

Here, as the crowd is milling about, the mood is festive, friendly. Twenty yards away, across Orleans Ave, there is no jittery crowd, no festive mood and almost no people. The evidence of the un-place within the place is starkly displayed. The simple act of crossing the street will either deliver your body into the place, or out of the place, the community, the parade, the ambiance, aura, mood that transforms the ordinary into an extraordinary place. It is that clear, that simple, and exactly that enticing. I play the flaneur here, observing and thinking, not trying to attract attention although I know I do.

Drums. The hint of an ancient rhythm can be heard far up Orleans Avenue. I turn to look, and suddenly the crowd is flowing towards that side of the street, streaming towards the drumbeats. I didn't realize so many people were here. Voices shout out. People surge past three mounted police officers who are opening the procession. The white and gold float is next, filled with young Black women all wearing white. Far away, a curved arch of bright yellow feathers appears above the crowd, moving through the crowd on Orleans. The Indians are here.

Procession- The Kinetic Place Arrives

Movement. The drummer calls out a chant, and a few respond. Shouts of "Two way pak-e way" and "Wild man comin!" Now they are right in front of me. A feathered staff appears, waving into the crowd. They back away, some of them, repeating "Wild man! Wild Man is here." Most of the crowd moves back, but a few stand firm with cell phones out, taking pictures and video. From my perch on the neutral ground I can just barely see over the crowd. Now my camera is out, held high above my head to take pictures with a better view than my own eyes can see.



Before me the wild man crouches down, his staff is feathered but there is a flash of metal at the end. He wears a helmet with bullhorns, a mask hiding his identity. Brown and orange feathers, animal skins, long fringe of raffia, horns and teeth: Ferocious. He bellows a primeval call, un-syllabled, terrifying. He swings the staff, and the crowd backs away. Shouts, menacing lunges, feathers and horns flashing.

Behind him, a figure in bright lime green feathers waits, holding a staff with a shield. Feathers and beads, his face fully covered by a haunting mask. He is protecting, hiding, his stance defensive.

The wild man turns to face him, bows down slightly, and the scene unfolds. The green figure, possibly a Flag Boy or Spy Boy, gestures with his staff to the left and right, shouts out, then steps aside to reveal the Big Chief. Resplendent in orange and black, double layers of long feathers arch high above his head, on front and back panels over his torso, along his legs as he strides forward. He moves quickly, almost too fast to see. He charges into the crowd, followed by two women who carry umbrellas, bottles of water, cameras and cell phones. The rest of his tribe follow, two young children and three adults all fully adorned in bright orange and black, along with three drummers. Breathlessly, I turn to see the next tribe.

Another big chief, in all black, is right behind them, clamoring to move the parade forward. For that is the incredible visual feast before me: a *procession* of Mardi Gras Indians. They fill Orleans Avenue, as my eyes raise up I see at least a dozen more blazes of colorful feathers, I am stunned and my eyes fill with tears. Years of seeking suddenly come to fruition.



Ancient rhythms fill the air, voice and drum, shakers made from beaded shells over dried gourds. The tribes proceed in loose groups, those who are in the full suits accompanied by family and friends, often in matching airbrushed t-shirts. Most move through the crowd with music and singing or chanting. Many children are included, at times as part of a family and one group that were mostly children. This particular cultural tradition is so unique, and is threatened in so many ways, that passing on the tradition has taken on an intense urgency. A family appears in peach and white: the father is the big chief, the mother the big queen. A small child is perched inside a rolling teepee. A police officer takes a picture of this with her cell phone, then leans against her motorcycle munching fries. A cart painted with colorful stripes is pedaled by a man in a red striped jacket, candies for sale.

Another wild man appears, this one in purple feathers with gray wolf-like animal skins. He stops in the intersection, the crowd eagerly filming and watching. His staff has a sharp point that he jabs aggressively at us; most are reluctant to be fearful. He shouts, growls, jumps, playing dangerously with the crowd. His face is hidden beneath long gray fringe topped with a wooden mask in the form of a bird with a carnivorous sharp beak. An evil laugh, magnificent, ends the show as he turns slowly to face his chief, glorious in turquoise, gold and white.



Bright blue, blood red, bright purple, turquoise, hunter green, black. The colorful display is magnificent, breathtaking. A brass band brings the party, the invitation for participation, dressed in turquoise, green and white. They are playing ‘Roll with it,’ as they come through, stopping to finish the song in front of the Zulu clubhouse. The baby dolls shake their short, ruffled skirts, lifting feathered umbrellas into the air in time with the beat. The Zulu club answers the call. Dancing. Shuffle steps, leaps, shoulders roll; a smiling community is engaged, filling the street with colorful jubilation.

A tribe of Indians grows impatient with the brass band. Bypassing the party, they walk right into the oncoming traffic in the other lane. What a magnificent shock that would be, to be driving along and suddenly be surrounded by these giant feathered wonders.

I am exhausted by beauty.



The exquisite river of Indians eventually comes to an end. A small group of drummers close the procession. They wear African style clothing, small cloth hats and brightly colored tunics, bringing the whole tradition back to the homeland. A costumed skeleton on stilts teases the crowd, dancing and lunging, then stopping to take pictures with some children.

There is still a second line scheduled to start after Super Sunday with the Indians. So we wait. Food is purchased and consumed. The sidewalk at the Zulu club is packed with members as they eat, drink and talk. Police offered a loose sort of structure, but now they are gone. These events have some reputation for crime. I have not felt uncomfortable—that prickling feeling that I'm not safe—all too familiar to women who dare to step out alone. Drinking has been going on for hours now, and I have seen and smelt pot several times. Will this festive scene unravel at some point? Will the kinesis become dangerous?

A woman in a purple blouse has been standing near-ish to me for a while. She gets a phone call now, walks as she talks. She says that her son is in the second line, that it is still coming. "They're rolling. They're rolling," she calls out cheerfully. The family that first joined me on the neutral ground is still here, happy with this news. The great hang-out continues.

Much later, the woman in the purple shirt walks by, and she appears to be talking to her son again. She is facetimeing, and barks out: "Why are you in a car?" I can't hear his response.

She hangs up and says they were re-routed to Ursuline by the cops. The collection of us on this part of the neutral ground has dropped the veneer of strangers as we exchange what little information we have, a community eagerly awaiting the parade.

Dispersal

As the afternoon wanes, the collective hive mind decides that the second line is not going to come through here after all, but will be going down Ursuline. I begin to walk. It is four blocks away from the intersection where I stand. The families that have been set up here all day with me begin to pack up. Police have taken down the barricade, but only a few cars attempt to drive through the crowd.

The skies are still gray, but the silvery clouds have been stingy with raindrops. I walk along broken sidewalks tilting in all directions, down Broad Street towards Ursuline, a cross street that extends nearly two miles all the way to the French Quarter and the Seventeenth Century Ursuline convent. Here it belongs to a humble neighborhood of small, two-story brick homes, many covered with aluminum siding. The side streets are wide, without medians, and comparatively empty. All along Broad the old houses have been remade for businesses: nail salons, barbershops, a catfish place, a daycare, even a dental clinic.

I reach Ursuline, loosely accompanied by twenty or so others. A young couple headed towards Orleans stops to talk, and we share the sketchy information we have about the second line. The slender young man, his arm draped over his date's shoulders, says he can't wait for the second line. He says that it's usually the Indians that are hard to see, but this time it's the second line that's missing. He tells us that they were all down at the park, pronounced pok, but he stayed away because "I don't want no drama. I heard there was some drama. It's always some little thing that makes people start running, and you don't know what you're running from." He

stretches out the word draaaa-ma. He smiles, and then turns a shuffle step, saying “Me, I just want to get my drink on, second line, and have a good time today, cause I have to work tomorrow.” A few steps away three girls are sitting on the steps in front of their porch. One calls out, “They came through here awhile ago. They already came through.”

A small pickup rolls by, a full Indian suit carefully spread out on it. They pause at the corner and drive away. The young couple walks on, towards Orleans. Looking around, I have a sinking sensation of movement that goes nowhere: futility. A tall, gangly White man with thick gray hair rolls up on his bicycle. A happy little tan dog looks on from a padded basket on the handlebars. Like me, they have been hanging around most of the day.

“They didn’t come up Ursuline,” he says, “It’s too clean. There hasn’t been a second line here.” I can’t resist looking, and certainly the street is utterly free of litter. Dog-guy circles his bicycle a couple times, repeats his observation, and then wanders away. We are all disappointed. Others begin to leave, and the last shred of the community of watchers dissipates.

I am uncomfortably aware that I haven’t seen a taxi in hours. I don’t have the Uber app, and I don’t want to stand alone with my phone to look up a taxi company number, then wait for it to show up. Esplanade should be just ahead a few more blocks. That’s a major road, so surely a taxi will appear when I get there.

It doesn’t.

So I walk, my feet carrying me briskly down the wide and well-traveled boulevard. I vaguely recognize this area. I walked further than this from the Quarter to Jazzfest once, so I know I can do it again. Most of the houses are officially historic, three or four stories tall with interesting façades, balconies, and lacy wooden eaves. I remember the summer after Katrina, driving along these streets where every single house was marked with the haunting spray-painted

X, ominous numbers scrawled into each section. Now they are mostly repaired. Some are comfortably frumpy, with overgrown ambitions pushing through an unpainted fence. Others are rather perfectly restored, pristinely painted. I literally saw a hipster couple sitting on a front porch made entirely of unpainted plywood, remodeling supplies stacked neatly in the driveway. They stared at me without speaking, and did not stop their oversize hound from barking at me, as if I am the strange one in this scene.

What is strange? What is exotic?

Thinking of how to define exoticism, I wonder if I am ‘othering’ the Black community in the second line universe through my awareness of my Whiteness. To what degree is critical self-reflection the cause of exoticism? For to consider myself and my body in this research endeavor, I disengage from the subject of the research, separating myself from it with a lens of my own construction. Perhaps the presence of a White female researcher in this place cannot avoid exoticism, and awareness of it is the best hope for clarity. My identity is a fact that is embedded and embodied in my understanding of place, movement, others and self. Is it a coincidence that I have these thoughts while passing the Degas House, where painter Edgar Degas lived briefly with his cousins one and a half centuries ago? Degas was the foreign visitor from Paris, even as his Creole family was exotic to him. Here he painted several haunting portraits of his blind sister-in-law, who was also ostracized from society.

As the crowd dispersed, the community on the neutral ground also dissolved. I felt connected to that loose group hanging out together. On Esplanade, every step took me away from that belonging towards isolation, where these questions of community, intimacy and strangeness, familiarity and exoticism suddenly came into the foreground of my consciousness. Aware of myself, aware of the details of the architecture, the sweeping ancient oaks who have

witnessed the centuries, the temporality of myself, a pale figure walking briskly to hide uncertainty, a flicker in history.

Finally, I see Rampart ahead, marking the edge of the French Quarter. I stand at the corner to wait for the light, and *now* a taxi slows down for me. I wave it on. I've already walked the longest part of the trail. I don't need a ride for the last few blocks.

I am thirsty, and hungry for music. The Three Muses are calling me. I tread the shady neutral ground as I finish the last few blocks of Esplanade, turning left at Chartres towards Frenchman Street. When I arrive, seconds before the doors open, I am the first in line. At last I enter Three Muses café, the cool ambiance of a speakeasy washes over me, as enticing as the chilled air. I choose a small table near the stage, order white wine and ice water, and settle in for a set of French Gypsy Jazz with Raphael Bas and Pascal.

Poesis for French Jazz

The ambiance is welcoming, cozy yet metaphorically cool
Chic red velvet drapes, a carved oak bar
Bold red and black paintings of musicians wielding guitar, bass and voice
Delicious food, refreshing drink, not optional

Raphael and Pascal enter, speaking French quietly to each other.
Pascal puts out a small cigarette, sits down and lifts his accordion onto his lap.
The soft light, the cool a/c, the smoking hot musicianship
My weariness and wary-ness are soothed

Cheerful, spare yet resonant
Even the melancholy tunes
Offer hope
In the form of beauty

All day I was the outsider, a peculiar watcher
Wandering, discovering, marveling, moving
Here, in familiar surroundings, I rest
A peaceable hang out.
Alone in a multi-lingual crowd

Yet I am un-strange in this global gathering

Unconsciously, my notebook comes out
I begin to sketch, words and image flow
The indeterminate immediate has opened
The creative fountain gushes forth.

THE AMBIGUITIES OF CREATIVITY

The magic of the street is the mingling of the errand and the epiphany.

-Rebecca Solnit

Creative activities occur in an enormous range of locations, from despairing prison cells to breathtaking mountaintops. This examination is focused not on a long list of isolated experiences, but rather on the nature of shared creativity concentrated in specific places, where creative inspirations are notably frequent. The research question, ‘How does it feel to be creative?’ was expanded through the early research to also ask ‘How does it feel to be creative in a creative place, among a community of creatives?’ This inquiry is uniquely positioned to discover and distill the essence of the lived creative experience in such places, through which we learn new facets about the role of collective, embodied kinesis on enhancing creativity.

Phenomenology proves to be an ideal methodology for capturing embodied, emotional, and visceral experiences, revealing tensions that are the generative essence of being creative in a creative place. Throughout the interviews, my participants described a significant friction between authenticity and artifice, revealing that personal freedom and creative expression was evaluated through a lens of conformity to tradition and local standards. Far from disabling, these tensions proved to be a generator of creativity, and at times an amplifier for creative achievement. Indeed, my study demonstrates how such tensions (consciously acknowledged or not) produce a certain kind of creative movement in thought, action, and motivation within a specific place. For instance, the local expectation of authenticity accepts certain traditions as a framework within which innovation occurs and is valued, yet these limitations challenge common conceptual notions of personal freedom (which rejects the conventions of tradition). The creative movement that is generated in and through this tension, at its best, produces a sense

of freedom and belonging to a welcoming and knowledgeable community. What is compelling, then, is the pressure to live both authentically and with freedom *in order to be accepted*, especially when the qualifications for acceptance narrow sharply.

New Orleans is a highly kinetic place, busy with active cultural expressions. The participants discussed movement in cultural terms that continuously intersect with freedom, authenticity, acceptance, and place. Neighborhoods are described with great passion and intimate knowledge, where belonging is tied to familiar streets and profound unease is experienced when those places are lost. Thus kinesthetic, embodied encounters, the sensations of moving freely in and through places of personal significance, intersect with the fixed infrastructure of the network of boulevards, lanes and alleys that help amplify the motions of creativity in New Orleans. Therefore, this examination asserts that these tensions are intertwined in New Orleans, and it is the synergy of these vital elements, the kinetic push and pull, that generates an aura of abundant creativity.

In this chapter key examples from the Lived Experiential Descriptions of my research participants are presented, with some in-depth discussion, revealing sets of intertwining tensions that define the creative place of New Orleans. From the raw data, I chose to present selected quotes that at times are somewhat lengthy as I believe they are more powerful testimony and emotionally expressive than a list of short quips or phrases. As described in the previous chapter, my long walks through New Orleans have yielded unexpected fruit. The nature of research, interviews, observations, reflection and writing also intersected with wandering and pilgrimage, movement that was simultaneously meandering and purposeful. I discovered through writing and drawing that these experiences, my LED's, were another pathway towards

understanding how the feelings of freedom, authenticity, community and kinesis synthesize to inspire creative output -- the nugget of gold sought in this study.

Creativity breeds creativity.

-Syd, musician

The most significant resources for data collection were personal encounters, including conversations at cultural centers and museums, informal music events and formal interviews. The tensions that emerged and indeed dominated these meetings are supported by my academic studies in archives and in print media. For the purposes of this synopsis of the findings, I will be referencing the comments of four participants: Syd, a musician, Patricia, a writer and music magazine editor, Antoine, a museum creator and director, and Black Hawk, a Mardi Gras Indian. The concept of freedom was described to me in many ways, often without using that exact word, embedded in ideas that also hinge on acceptance. As Patricia describes: “It’s okay to be weird here,” that New Orleans is “a city that tolerates eccentricity very well. People are not demonized for being quirky or odd, which a lot of creative people are. It’s a live and let live kind of a mentality. . Patricia emphasizes the connections between dance, freedom, costuming and creativity:

Definitely the dancing is an important part, because it’s a freedom of expression, *and* the costuming. That’s a big deal, and it’s a big deal all year round. This window is real good for seeing parades. One day I was working here on a Saturday afternoon and the naked parade came by. We just laugh. I’m thinking, I cannot believe these people. I mean I it didn’t bother me, I couldn’t care less, but I kept thinking how uncomfortable it probably was to ride those bikes.

Although the naked parade does not utilize costumes, they are exercising personal freedom as they flip the performative practice of costuming. For Syd, “this goes directly back to the creativity of the city and its love of satire, parody, and general foolishness.” Freedom here

has a powerful symbiotic relationship with kinesis. Kinesis requires freedom of movement, freedom to choose direction and action, often at the whim of a creative impulse.

A dancer who frequently appears at second lines and brass band performances described New Orleans to me simply as “a place where you can be you.” Patricia inverted this idea while thinking about people who often are not free to live an authentic life: “Homosexuality has been accepted here for a long time, and interracial dating and marriage. Probably not as prevalent as it is now, obviously, but I think it was much more accepted here—even though it was the Deep South—it was always more accepted here.” She names Tennessee Williams as an example of a creative person who struggled elsewhere but was accepted and flourished in New Orleans. “People [here] don’t really care,” she explains, “and obviously that contributes to a creative mindset. Because you can’t be constipated and be creative.”

Several interviewees expressed ideas of freedom using terms like “weird,” “eccentricity,” and “foolishness.” While personal freedom (i.e. ‘you being you’) is encouraged and exercised, this freedom is simultaneously limited by an insistence on authenticity. The identification of some people, actions or events being ‘real’ or ‘not real’ was a surprising and intriguing development. When I asked Syd about his experiences with second lines, he immediately designated the for-hire parades for conventions and weddings as something false and artificial. He explained: “The real second lines are out in the neighborhoods. The places I lived (Garden District, Uptown, Quarter, Marigny, Mid City) did not have the same kinds as the lower 9th and the 7th wards.” A thorough examination of the many different styles of New Orleans parades is outside the purview of this writing. However, I can attest to personally witnessing a variety of parade events that were called second lines but were vastly different in mood, purpose and composition. This year, a flourishing business is organizing wedding parties that begin by

bringing the bridal party in horse drawn carriages to one of the churches in the French Quarter, and following the ceremony a second line, comprised of over-dressed guests and a small, slightly bored, brass band, celebrate by walking and dancing through the French Quarter to the reception. On a Saturday afternoon in April while I sat in a flagstone courtyard writing, the gentle murmur of the fountain was interrupted five times by such wedding parades.



This is in stark contrast to the second line parades organized for cultural events, such as the celebration of Louis Armstrong's birthday for SatchmoFest, for a brass band contest sponsored by a local distillery, or other holidays. A sense of place is identifiable, yet distorted in some of these examples, becoming a kind of un-place through the fabrication of a place that serves economic functions rather than emerging as part of the fabric of the neighborhoods and their cultural worlds. Place can become an un-place. For locals, un-place is identified and experienced when the authentic is commercialized. The corporate procession rings false, even in the very real historic place of the French Quarter.

The 'real' second lines that Syd values most highly, those of the 9th and 7th wards, have earned the distinction of authenticity in part because of the places they will pass through, as well as the kinetic place that the parade itself generates while it occurs. Many of these are annual

events sponsored by a social aid and pleasure club. These are carefully planned, as I have described above, and an expensive permit is acquired from the city in advance. Occasionally there are still rogue events that are not prescheduled, the spontaneous expression of exuberance and cultural celebration that draws the community together. Sometimes a band just wants to get out in the street to practice and play for an audience, perhaps gather a crowd to lead back to their show in a club, or some other personal reason for playing music out in the neighborhood. Here again freedom, personal agency, and the community are brought together through a kinesthetic experience in the streets.

All of these are separate from funeral processions, which may at times function like a second line but are presented differently and cherished within the community. The lyrics of a historic hymn, "I'll fly away," have been rewritten in New Orleans to admonish all: "When I die, you'd better second line!" Evidently, the watchful eye of local cultural practitioners discerns a clear difference between the hired performance for outsiders and the genuine expression of New Orleans culture, despite the fact that the bands are paid for the funeral procession. Yet the freedom to practice and participate even in the most blatantly manufactured parades was never questioned by the participants. Not one word or eye roll suggested that these events should be stopped, or that visitors should be discouraged from participating. Perhaps my own positionality as a visitor reined in the more stringent views on these commercialized practices.

The second line umbrella is an object of personal creativity through which we can distill such conflicting tensions between the community's demands to remain authentic (which limits personal expression) and the individuals' desire for freedom ("it's okay to be weird here"). These decorated umbrellas are a common sight today in New Orleans, featured on commercial media, manufactured for tourist shops, and regularly seen at all kinds of parades. Today's

festooned parasol evolved quickly over the last 70 years, especially between the late 1950's and the early 1970's. Through research and conversations at the Hogan Jazz Archives, the Old Mint Jazz Museum and the Historic New Orleans Collection, a history of this object of visual and material culture came into focus. The most exciting discovery was of the second line umbrellas belonging to Danny Barker (1909-1994) and his wife, Blu Lu, now carefully preserved in an enormous archival box at the Hogan Jazz Archives on Tulane University campus. The director brought out the box and opened it slowly, then lifted an old red umbrella with a carved bamboo handle. Beads spilled out like memories.

Along the hem of an aging pink and gray umbrella brightly colored beads hang from unraveled thread, now yellow with age, safety-pinned to the frayed hem. The tiny wood and plastic beads are every color: blue, pink, yellow, red, purple, orange, turquoise, with no restrictive visual design. This object speaks of an age of poverty and simple solutions, resourcefulness and repurpose-ness. I can picture Danny Barker, a prominent Jazz banjo player and guitarist, holding this lively umbrella with pride, festooned with colorful beads that will shine and shake with his every dancing step.



Other umbrellas in the box are newer, from the 1970s, and show the evolution of decorated second line umbrellas through the addition of glitter, words, painted images, fringe and feathers. They were rescued from Danny Barker's house after the flooding and hurricane Katrina in the fall of 2005. The director tells me about going to Danny Barker's home to help with the clean-up. Although Barker died two decades ago, his legend lives on in the community. The director says Barker's family asked him why he wanted 'these old things.' He said, "Someone may want to look at them someday." I answered, "And here I am!" He tells me that Barker was eager to share his culture, and would get extra decorated umbrellas made to hand out at the parades, inviting the audience to join in and dance, welcoming them into the kinetic place of the parade, transforming observers into participants.

The umbrellas have become objects of creativity, both in the design and production of each unique parasol and in their use as a prop for dancing and second lining. Furthermore, these objects also exemplify the tension between authenticity and artifice, for the commercially produced umbrellas are easily identified and therefore reveal the 'faker' status of tourists and commercial events. Likewise, the absolutely unique and flamboyant umbrellas readily designate authentic practices. Such parasols are created as part of an individual or group costume, set aside only for certain events, or express an individual's personality. Danny Barker's flamboyant red and black umbrella has his name and the date of the parade spelled out in gold glitter. No one else could ever carry this object, or a copy of it, and be considered authentic. Thus the umbrellas serve as a powerful exemplar of the tension between veracity and mendacity.

Archives preserve the objects, images, writings and recordings of creative productivity; a warehouse to memorialize the fruits of the imagination (see the appendix). My first archival visit for this investigation was to the Williams Research Center at the Historic New Orleans

Collection on June 20, 2016, through which I also learned about online access to the Hogan Crawford Images Collection. The Hogan Jazz Archives on Tulane University campus was the site of my research on June 21, 2016. My research at the Jazz Museum in the U.S. Mint included visits to the museum exhibits in 2015 and 2016, with a focused visit to research the archives and (attempted) interviews on April 3, 2017. Other events not already cited include the Congo Square Rhythm festival on March 18, 2017 and Satchmo Summer Fest (first week in August, 2014, 2015, and 2016).

The oft-unwritten history of personal agency, striving for liberty or social justice, and the passionate resistance to forgetting cultural legacies can also be found there. I find heroes at every turn. Through conversations with those archivists, the keepers of cultural memory, I was introduced to such ideas and I began to sense the subtle textures of creativity here. It dawns on me that the practice of the second line parade endures beyond the physical limitations of the built landscape. Hurricanes, politics, poverty and wealth, war and peace—all of these are temporary. The second line lives on both despite these impediments and perhaps because of them.

*The city is the city and when you arrive, you become a part of it.
You are subsumed into something that is much bigger than you and
you honor it by being authentic in your art.*

-Syd, musician

Authenticity as a criterion for acceptance within the community is the most prominent theme from the interviews and data collection, surpassing all other topics for frequency and specificity. Every participant described a feeling of kinship, returning often to the idea of knowing other people and having a network of supportive people who offer acceptance, material or musical support, instruction and encouragement throughout their lives.

A writer who has been born in New Orleans and has lived for many decades in the city,

Patricia describes this network of creative people who care for one another without hesitation:

There is a creative community here, where everybody supports everybody else, and knows everybody. And that's especially prevalent in music. If you're having a hard time, or if somebody is sick, there's a real tradition of supporting your fellow man. I don't know where that came from; personally, I think it has something to do with the Black community here, because the Black community is that way.

She goes on to talk about the social aid and pleasure clubs, the unique neighborhood societies that began a century ago as organizations to help with funerals, medical expenses, and other civic needs that the White-dominated governmental infrastructure ignored. The community of musicians is not formally organized, but is somewhat like a village that spans neighborhoods, drawn together through a shared artistry.

Syd lived in New Orleans for thirteen years, and returns so often that he hopes to soon make New Orleans his home once again. The music community Syd found here is exciting, experimental and spontaneously interactive. He says:

What I found in New Orleans was that the intersection of creative ideas wasn't limited to one avenue. Musicians bounced off of artists who bounced off of theater folks who bounced off of chefs who bounced off of performance artists. The creative community crossed over genres, race, age, socioeconomic status, and every other form of abstract barrier.

He describes quite a few events where musicians he admired, some local and others from around the world, would appear at his shows and participate or just appreciate his music. He felt the creative thrill of a wide variety of collaborations, participating in as many as fifty different combinations of musicians and musical styles over the years.

Although this was not a lived conversation, Patricia supports Syd's point: "New Orleans musicians tend to be very accepting and supportive of people who come in from outside who just want sit in with them and learn from them. You don't find that everywhere." Not to say that the music community lacks competition. There are certainly sought-after jobs with the best clubs

and festivals, competition between bands for great performers, and a continuous scrutiny of tour dates and cd releases. Yet the spirit of support endures, just as a rising tide lifts all boats. As Patricia observes, this spirit “fosters creativity not just in the community but to people who come here who want come here. It helps them to develop artistically and creatively, to play with people they admire, who they are in awe of, or people who they can just learn something from.”

Here, let us return to Syd’s description of ‘bouncing off’ of other creatives. This is a signal, an idiomatic indication of an embodied interaction between people and ideas and creativity. We can assume that in most cases, artists aren’t literally bouncing their bodies off of the chefs, paint and pasta suddenly jostled together. Ideas, however, are very mobile things. The phenomenological categories of idea, mood and aura can be issued as a verbal, visual, or aural entities, and passed along much the way sound or light waves transmit image and sound. Those waves will indeed literally ‘bounce off of’ the receivers, thus the idiom is perhaps a subconscious recognition of a physical reality that is ephemeral and largely imperceptible. Ideas, auras and moods through these waves strike another person, who may either embrace or reject the experience. More exciting is the moment when the recipient reforms the idea, amplifies some unexpected aspect, and sends it back to the originator. New ideas are crafted, shared, reformed, and crafted anew. This is the bouncing off that Syd describes and cherishes. The ‘abstract barriers’ of race, age, gender and money are less tangible to the creative person than the excitement of bouncing ideas, music and art in this kinetic, creative environment.

‘Bouncing off of’ therefore adequately describes the kinesis of creativity between two tensions: the freedom to move and need for acceptance by and through a community with its own local traditions and histories. It is the dynamic merger of opposites that generates the ‘bounce’ with a certain kind of momentum.

For example, Syd found that his personal creative experience was enhanced by his awareness of a living web of creative activity, historic and contemporary, and takes his description to a deeper, existential level:

The constant was the city itself. It's your canvas, regardless of what form of creativity you engage in. My musical style didn't change suddenly into jazz or swamp rock when I moved to New Orleans, but my recognition of myself as one minuscule cog in this endless wheel was conscious. And that, in a nutshell, is my love of New Orleans. The city is the city and when you arrive, you become a part of it. You don't change it as much as it changes you. You are subsumed into something that is much bigger than you and you honor it by being authentic in your art. Fakers do NOT do well in New Orleans.

This sensation of immersion is compelling, and from a phenomenological point of view worthy of consideration. To be 'subsumed' involves the whole body--physical attributes, talents and skills, memory, embodied knowledge--every aspect of one's sense of self is relinquished to this ephemeral Other. This reveals another tension in the discussion, where the free, individual self can only be itself in the moment it is relinquished for the purpose of participating in the communal creativity as a 'minuscule cog in an endless wheel.' Heidegger also wrestles with this notion through Dasein's sense of self and other, in particular the phenomena of this joining together of many Daseins (individuals) into a communal Other: "The 'they' is an *existential*; and as a primordial phenomenon, it belongs to Dasein's positive constitution" (Heidegger, 2008, p. 167). The personal self can be lost in an impersonal 'they,' yet this does not mean that 'they' is somehow unimportant for the construction of individual Daseins: "As they-self, the particular Dasein has been *dispersed* into the 'they' and must first find itself" (Heidegger, 2008, p. 167). While some might read this as suggesting that the individual Dasein must reject the they in order to find its individual self, I read it differently: Dasein must find itself precisely because it has been dispersed into the they without losing its sense of Other. The they is therefore not purely negative but rather offers the opportunity for Dasein to find itself. In this sense, a tension turns

into a kind of creative negotiation between the self and the broader community. This creative arbitration is best represented in the concept of acceptance of and by a community, where the they-self is a way of being, of giving and receiving care.

Syd finds freedom in the joyous rewards of musical creation *within* the authenticity of creative musicianship and wide-ranging creativity in New Orleans. As he expresses that “fakers do not do well’ in New Orleans, this also suggests that a weak contribution, lazy creativity, is dis-honorable. The parameters for acceptable practice come into focus. Limits to personal freedom are inscribed in and through traditions, even if those traditions appear to embrace everyone (‘It’s okay to be weird here’). Not everyone or everything that is tolerated is actually accepted by the community. There is a taught strain between personal weirdness (‘you being you’) and collective authenticity (the ‘real’ Second Lines of the 9th ward). Yet these are not obstacles to Syd’s sense of freedom. Rather, his freedom emerges as he gives himself over to the call for authenticity, and he rises to the call for creative innovation, for bouncing off of other creatives, for veritas.

The friction is a consistent presence for my participants, who hold a high standard for authenticity even as they value personal freedom and abandonment that often does not demonstrate the desired level of cultural veracity. The place of the second line offers an opening for negotiation between the authentic and the artificial.

New Orleans is like a secret lover. You can easily get by without her, but when you are with her, it's all her.

-Syd, musician

The aura of New Orleans has long held sway over public imagination, but those who dwell in the powerful ambiance experience the compelling sense of place on a deeper level. The phrases and descriptions of the creative people who shared their deepest feelings brought new

insights into my efforts towards rich descriptions. The unique turn of a phrase, unexpected observations, and uncanny metaphors all enhanced my understanding, and thus elevated the following passages to a higher level of insight and a deeper level of human experience. As Syd begins to open up about his embodied experiences with the city, he explains:

New Orleans draws me back because of how magnetic she is. I feel differently in New Orleans. I feel a part of something. New Orleans is always a mournful place. I notice the things that aren't the same and I mourn them, but I also get 'that feeling' every time I arrive.

The elegant decay, the stark contrast of wealth and poverty, and always a tenacious undercurrent of rebellious joy are heightened here. Another magnetic tension in New Orleans is the sense of a timeless resilience opposed by the feeling of melancholy over decay and loss. Mourning and creation seem to rhythmically oscillate back and forth, as the locals often hum the tune, “Do you know what it means to miss New Orleans?” Mourning a lost city while you are living in, and often celebrating, the same city. Just as a magnet’s positive and negative sides can generate energy, so the opposing ideas in New Orleans stimulate heightened emotions, awareness of joy and loss, and fuel creative movement.

For instance, against the backdrop of such melancholy there emerges a stunning diversity of musical collaborations and styles. Syd recalls, “Being a punky pop guy in New Orleans was difficult at first.” Yet once he plugged into the music community, he played several gigs every week.

I was in my power pop band, a country band, an alt-country thing, numerous punk bands and more cover bands than I can remember. I played with the same people for years in some cases and for one-off gigs other times. We all went to see each other. I had impromptu situations like having Ray Davies [of the Kinks] in a bar watching me cover one of his songs. Michael Ray from Kool and the Gang jumped on stage at a dive bar one night and played a magical solo on trumpet on one of my ballads.

This freedom of movement between groups facilitates a seamless and endless stream of collaboration. A uniquely New Orleans practice among musicians is to show up in the audience at a club, horn or guitar slung over your shoulder, with an understanding that you will most likely be invited on stage for a song or two. Unrehearsed and entirely spontaneous, the guest musician will hop on stage, discuss briefly a song and key, and then they play it, confident in acceptance and kinship.

Syd also reflects about the abundance of music making:

In New Orleans you were constantly playing and constantly listening. Marching bands practiced on my street in Mid City and the best Van Morrison cover I ever heard was on a back street in the CBD by a guy with a one-string guitar. I have never played better than I played in New Orleans. I have never had more ideas than I did there. Spontaneity was almost inevitable. You literally never know who you might end up playing with.

After more than twenty years of watching this phenomena, I have come to understand that it is rude not to invite the guest musician, and that it would be equally unacceptable for the other musician to turn it down. Herein lies the kind of creative spark that fuels the aura of New Orleans. This will be an entirely unique performance, even if the song is well known. In this moment they will produce music; never before and never again will this combination of musicians play this song exactly this way. Syd's sensation of being a small part of a cosmic network of creativity, a tapestry of creative people *creating*, is potent inspiration.

However, the musicians are not the only people who feel free to move. Informal dancing at numerous events is a daily occurrence, another continuous practice embedded in the spirit of New Orleans. Patricia wants to explain this to me by again using an inverted example. She tells me a story about being in Atlanta to visit a friend, and going to a nearby club to hear a band that happened to be from New Orleans. She arrives and recognizes many people from the music community. Immediately she observes a distinct difference in the audience. "The people in

Atlanta were sitting in their chairs and drinking and listening to the music. And everyone from New Orleans there had a moving ass.” She laughs happily, remembering. “People here dance. They’re more expressive. My theory is that that is derived from Black culture. Because from my experience African Americans are much more physically expressive, and feel free, much more free—in their own element—and they express themselves. And White people don’t.” The tensions between movement and observation, between authentic expression and restraint—even the assessment of freedom possessed by the Black community and not the White—are evident yet again. Patricia, who is White, lauds the Black community for their kinesis, freely exercised. What strikes me is the Black community’s heroic *insistence* on the freedom of movement in the face of centuries of restrictions, restraints, and abuses, which persist today in many forms. In the kinetic place of the Super Sunday events, the Whites are most likely the visitors. Their feelings of physical limitations were easily observed as they clustered on the neutral ground, and I, too, felt the intense awareness of my skin and my Otherness in the space of the Black Indian procession. There is a palpable tension here between the insistence on freedom of movement in the face of a history of oppression and affective melancholy. Creativity emerges as Black bodies push back collectively against such strained restrictions.

The intersection of these opposing points is inescapable, as these personal experiences attest to the tensions between freedom and authenticity, exclusion and inclusion. Parsing the experiences of the participants’ lives into separate compartments dilutes the power of the whole, even if that whole is strained with such tensions. Even the idea of place, so vital and so impactful in the creative process, should not be separated from the kinetic push and pull between these concepts. The people I spoke with in this study taught me that place is more about the human landscape rather than the built or material. I also discovered that a profoundly deep,

powerful concentration of these ideas could be found in the practices of the mysterious and often reclusive Mardi Gras Indians. Let us turn now to explore this community, entering through the Tremé neighborhood and the people who dwell there.

The prettiest thing that I ever did see,
The wild Indians dancing in the street.
So beautiful, so hot, so strong, so grand,
Let by the Big Chief, handa wanda
Jo ko mo fi no hé la hé,
Dance all night, dance all day.
-Traditional Mardi Gras Indian song

An embodied, human-centered sense of place is powerful at the Backstreet Cultural Center, located in the heart of the Tremé neighborhood, across the street from the oldest continuously practicing Black church in the United States. The Backstreet Cultural Center, founded in 1988, is in a wood frame house remodeled to display artifacts, photographs and films from Mardi Gras Indians, Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs, funerals and second line processions. The ambience of this museum is personal, with many handcrafted displays assembled to honor a culture by people who are of the culture.

The location here in the Tremé is significant as the oldest Black neighborhood in the U.S., where many of the world's greatest Jazz musicians were born and continue to be born and raised. The community is close knit and personally connected, where "many people live in a forest of cousins, aunts, uncles and ties of blood and of people they grew up with and presumed they would know forever, along with places, institutions, rites, foods, music and the other threads of the fabric of New Orleans" (Solnit, 2009, p. 270). The Backstreet Cultural Museum is referenced often by New Orleanians with respect as an institution that honors the specific culture of this neighborhood and the Black community that is uniquely New Orleans. Its presence here defines the sense of "authenticity" described by other participants. As I approach the center, I

am struck by the warmth of a place where enthusiastic hand-lettered signs welcome visitors and give clear instructions. Antoine, the silver-haired creator and director of this museum greets each guest warmly as they enter. His fragile health is immediately evident. He has great difficulty breathing, speaking and walking. He can only get out a few words at a time before he pauses to gather another breath. Antoine carefully tells each guest: “We honor the American Indian because they helped us through slavery. When Blacks ran away they found Indians who helped us. So we honor them.” He shows us a hand-beaded cloth panel from an Indian suit. I will soon hear him repeat this welcome to every visitor. The humble cloth glitters with colorful beads. It is soft in my hands, heavier than expected, and I sense the weight of a history of oppression and the tenacious resistance present in the bold created object.

This room is crowded with Mardi Gras Indian suits, resplendent with glittering beads and colorful feathers that reach the ceiling, along with many pictures and artifacts—objects that are made and used by the Indians such as a staff, flag or shoes. Information about the creators of the suits is on cards, photos, and newspaper clippings in a wide variety of frames or glued informally to a poster board. Antoine is very proud of all of this, explaining that everything here was made by hand and given to him after he opened what he expected to be a photography studio. The qualification of hand-made is significant, and certainly seems to be a component of authenticity in this place. Antoine is eager to talk about the Indians and tell his guests about his culture, about the Tremé neighborhood, and about his family.

A noticeable attribute of the Mardi Gras Indian tribes is that traditionally they are predominantly older Black men, with a few younger men and teens, and rarely any women. Although this is starting to change, women from the community have expressed some difficulty in finding inclusion. I asked Antoine when they started allowing women to be a big queen.

Antoine shook his head rather energetically, and waved his hand. I realized he was trying to say “always.” He struggled to get the air to talk. Then he gradually told me about his family.

“Look at that suit. That’s a big queen.” It was from 2005. Then he showed me a picture from 1949 of an Indian tribe that looked much more like a typical idea of native American costumes—natural brown leather, fringe, a feather headdress. The young woman in the 1949 picture wore a costume that looked a bit like a cross between a Baby Doll and a Pocahontas. Antoine described his relationship to the woman in this picture this way: she was the mother of his wife, and so the grandmother of his daughter. He pointed again to the yellow suit on display, beaded with tall yellow feathers around the head of a small mannequin. “That’s my daughter.” He said his wife didn’t mask because she just did not want to, “but that doesn’t mean she didn’t help her daughter.” He told me that his daughter wanted to mask, so her mother and grandmother helped her. He was pointing to the yellow suit as he said this. Antoine’s pride shone in his eyes, in his gestures, and in his voice.

I said, “so everyone has the freedom, to mask or not if they want to.” He said “yes, yes,” and went back to his seat on a humming dehumidifier. He sways as he walks, as if there are perhaps back problems for him. I thanked him for telling me about that, because I misunderstood it.



The tension between inclusion and exclusion is another compelling contradiction in the Crescent City. Although I did not try to contradict Antoine’s description, and clearly his own family exhibits inclusion, there are other accounts of women being kept out of the Black Indian practices, especially those that will be public. At a presentation made by Cherise Harrison-Nelson in March of 2015 she described her long struggle with her father, who was Big Chief Donald Harrison Sr. of Guardians of the Flame. As a young woman, she wanted to mask with him but he outright banned her from participation. Ever determined, she got a rival tribe to elect her be their Big Queen. Only then would her father relent and let her be his Big Queen, opening up freedom to her within the Guardians of the Flame, and accepting her as an authentic participant. To give oneself over to a community, acceptance and care is on some level necessary. Cherise Harrison-Nelson is already embedded in the community, but her desire to participate more fully, to creatively move through the rituals as an authentic participant, was restricted at first. Freedom for her was unleashed when this very restriction that inspired her creativity and determination toward authenticity, which “frees [her] for a totality of involvements with which the ‘they’ is familiar” (Heidegger, 2008, p. 167).

I also asked Antoine about the new Indian tribes that have just started. Antoine made the left-handed arm gesture that I was learning suggested a negative response. He said, “Those aren’t real to me. They’re too new.” He continued with this surprising objection: “They need to mask four years to be chief.” He holds up four fingers and shakes his head. “Most of these new ones don’t last. Well,” he leans towards me to make eye contact, “they usually get into financials. Then they don’t last.” A slow breath, then Antoine continues: “You got to be spy boy, and then wild man and flag boy, before you can be chief. So, they just start out chief. They don’t last.” The friction here is evident: Antoine does not see these upstart Indian tribes as legitimate. He does not express to me, a clear visitor, that they should be physically restricted from participation, but he is firm in conveying that they do not meet with his standard of authenticity. The strain between exclusion and inclusion, veracity and mendacity, can be felt in his words and gestures. There is a constant push and pull here between creative innovation and an attempt to maintain authentic connections to the past—a past that is always under threat of being erased or lost.

Antoine also invited several visitors to come to Downtown Super Sunday in two days’ time (the very event discussed in the previous chapter). He had a simple flyer ready and I took one. I asked him where would be the best place to go, and he pointed to the hand drawn map where the streets intersected. He told me that if it rains then the Indians won’t come out. We talked about the weather prediction. I said, “I think I’ll just go and be there just in case.” He said, “Me too. I’m gonna go.” He smiled.

The museum itself is ripe with creativity. Everywhere you look are handmade objects—mostly Indian suits, but also posters, decorated picture frames, tambourines, fans, other costumes such as baby doll dresses and tuxedos. Framed newspaper clippings, hand lettered signs and a

wide array of glittering objects are found throughout the museum. Only in the hallway has some attempt been made to standardize the display with black picture frames and computer-printed labels. These photos beautifully honor Big Chiefs who have passed away, with dates for birth and death labeled ‘sunrise’ and ‘sunset.’ The frequency of recommendations to visit this place as I conducted my research over the last few years serves as an endorsement for its authenticity in the eyes of the New Orleans community. I sense the personal nature of everything here—like I am in a home. These objects were crafted with great care and at personal expense by individual artisans, who chose freely to do so, seeking to both preserve and to share what they created. The value that is placed on the cultural traditions and practices is clear in the aura of the objects and the display, as well as the effort that Antoine puts into talking to each person who comes in.

Treasuring this community was also reflected inversely as participants expressed concern for New Orleans, revealing a sense that everything discussed here is under threat. The tensions between authenticity and artifice (the ‘real’ and ‘fake’ versions of New Orleans) are only amplified by the strain of anxiety about endurance of the culture into the future. I have heard many musicians lamenting the cost of housing that is pushing them out of their home neighborhoods and away from their network of musicians and friends. Patricia voiced the concern that New Orleans used to be a very cheap place to live, but is becoming very expensive.

She says:

When you are an artist you don’t have any money. You need some place where you can live inexpensively and still be a creative person. That’s kind of worrisome actually, because a lot of people are having a really difficult time now. I mean, people that I know are having a hard time staying here.

She reveals that she also had to move out of the city only two weeks before we meet.

The stress and loss of her personal community appears often through our conversation, as does her love and passion for the nature of life in New Orleans. She understands well the need for

freedom, although she does not overtly use that word. The tensions between the need for the creative community and the inability to afford to dwell within those neighborhoods is revealed in the concern on Patricia's face, the strain in her voice, and in her gaze as she shifts her eyes anxiously around her office.

New Orleans residents are actively pushing back against this trend, as evidenced by signs posted all over town denouncing the conversion of residential properties into commercial short-term rentals that destroy the fabric of the neighborhoods. Patricia further articulated this loss of community through the absence of courteous greetings in her old neighborhood as the tenants changed from resident neighbors to short-term renters:

People here say hello, and they're friendly, and [my neighbors] wanted to make sure we didn't feel intimidated. My husband and I were an older White couple, you know, and younger Black men would say, 'Hey, how ya doin?' And I'd say, 'Well, I'm okay,' you know? That's the way people are here. They're very open, open. You see people walking down the street and you might not know them, but you speak to them.

Patricia grieves for her previous neighborhood as much for this aura of community as for its proximity to music venues, restaurants and her personal network of friends and colleagues. She further expressed frustration that many 'hipsters' are coming from San Francisco and New York to settle in New Orleans, "who do not understand our culture, coming in and trying to change our culture." She assertively challenges their authenticity as creative people, even though they try to present themselves as such:

I don't know how many of those people who come here are what you'd call true creatives. Most of them seem to be people who have a website or social media thing which, to me, is not being creative themselves. It's not. So, they are kind of forcing the creative people out. Creative people tend to be poor and they have no place to live. I mean, I can see it.

Patricia holds a high standard for creativity, specifically noting that posting pictures of 'food porn' online is not creativity. She smells the false nature of this much as the musician

repeatedly decries personal and artistic inauthenticity. Syd's concern for authenticity is balanced with hope:

I worry about New Orleans. Each time I go back it is more gentrified. In the past, if you came to New Orleans, you changed yourself in order to fit her. Now I see so many wanting to change New Orleans to fit themselves, and that is not a good thing. Still, New Orleans is bigger and more powerful than all that and I feel confident its bohemian spirit and ghosts will keep it as a light in this country.

Is New Orleans really as 'open' as they say? Is Patricia 'closed' to the new residents?

Her perspective is embedded in a powerful sense of care and belonging for the community described at such length in this writing. Merleau-Ponty discusses this contrariness, the seamless self-contradiction of humanity through the intrigue of ambiguity, as we are "beings who are both embodied and limited, and an enigmatic world of which we catch a glimpse (indeed which we haunt incessantly) but only ever from points of view that hide as much as they reveal" (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 54). Patricia often describes New Orleans as open and accepting, yet she (and others) simultaneously restricts the hallowed streets to newcomers who will not meet the narrow standards of authenticity. Syd is quick to call out fakers. Antoine values the hand-made veracity of the material objects in his museum, yet he condemns the mendacity of the upstart Indian tribes who have not earned their place in the community and rarely endure over time. This friction, the continuous scrutiny, functions in a remarkable way, for this is the pressure that ignites the creative aura, generating new levels of creative achievements as each individual and collective 'they' seek to provide evidence of their authenticity.

Patricia colorfully describes her passion for New Orleans as a "velvet lined rut." She explains, her eyes shining, "It's like, oh my god this place is so screwed up. What am I doing here? But it *feels so good*. It feels so good to be here. So I have to put up with the crap...you decide what you want to live with." Merleau-Ponty likewise celebrates the spectacle that is

humanity, encouraging openness to children and societal figures that are often marginalized: “this world is not just open to other human beings but also to animals, children, primitive peoples and madmen who dwell in it after their own fashion; they too coexist in this world” (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 54). In New Orleans, the authentic celebration often embraces the otherwise marginalized, including the presence of people in wheel chairs at second lines and in one of the Indian tribes in Downtown Super Sunday. Meanwhile the wealth of the ‘hipsters’ is viewed as mendacious, a threat to the local culture.

Patricia’s expression, the ‘velvet lined rut,’ is a dramatic image. Typically, to be ‘stuck in a rut’ is a vivid idiom expressing the tiresome quality of boring repetition, an image that suggests a filthy trough worn deep by a vehicle that was stuck in the mud (another great idiom for an anti-fun persona). Add a velvet lining, and the meaning is transformed to sensual, sexual, and luxurious pleasures—pleasures that outweigh the contradictions, the problems with crime and corruption, and solidify a determination to defend the culture, ‘warts and all.’

As we move deeper into the LED’s, I found the most powerful phenomenological descriptions of the creative experience came from the one Mardi Gras Indian who agreed to speak with me, a man who has a creole name as well as an Indian name, and who is a Spy Boy for one of the prominent and historic tribes in New Orleans. Black Hawk has been masking for all of his adult life and is deeply embedded in the culture. Each year, like the other Black Indians, he creates a new suit for Mardi Gras Day. Traditionally, they will also come out for Super Sunday in their area of town, St. Joseph’s day, and occasionally for a performance at festivals such as Jazzfest, SatchmoFest, or Congo Square RhythmFest. Each full Indian suit will have several beaded panels surrounded by enormous, vibrantly colored feathers. Often these

designs are multi-level, and have several components that move as the Indian walks, runs, dances, or participates in mobile events ceremonies in the streets.



Authenticity and creativity hold a symbiotic relationship in the Indian tradition. Black Hawk begins thinking about next year's designs immediately after Mardi Gras, working out the color and design ideas carefully. As he describes the creative process, I am drawn into his experience through the vivid and lyrical way he speaks, often repeating a phrase from the previous sentence:

You find the center of your cardboard. And once you find the center of your cardboard, then you go around, you go around...you go around and put designs on top of designs and make different designs. And then once you come up with the design that you want, it's like, you sit back and you look at it, and you probably just be like, well you know I

could add something here or take this away. I'm gonna erase this line, and erase this line, and add this line, and make it a different design.

He pauses only briefly, then continues:

And so, we go from there, and once we go from there, it's like you got to build it with cardboard. You cut out the pieces, you gonna cut out the individual pieces, and you build those individual pieces. And once you have your whole – built, you put it together, to see if it go together or not. If it go together before you put any sewing on it, that means its gonna go together after you sew it. Once it comes together it's almost again like a puzzle. You gotta put it together, then take it apart, then put it back together.

Black Hawk's stream-of-consciousness description reflects the primordial spirit of his creative process, hinting at decision making and physical moves that are integral as he works on a design. It is intrinsic for him, imbedded in his movements and vision and perception as he works, finishing simply with "It's gotta feel right."

How it feels is exactly what I gradually learn from Black Hawk. We talk next about how he chooses the colors for his suit. First he talked about this year's suit, and explained that at first he wanted to do peach with lime green and white, but the cost for the peach feathers was too high. The long peacock feathers would have to be both dyed and shipped, which is costly, so he changed to purple and lime green, using a google image search to find examples for his color scheme. His ideas evolved over a relatively short period of time, perhaps a few weeks. As Black Hawk remembers and talks about it, the musical repetition of phrases emerge in the rhythmic way he speaks:

And so when I was waiting on the purple feathers on my suit, I saw a bouquet of roses. And it was peach roses and purple flowers, and I told my wife, 'That's what color I'm going in. Peach and purple. And that lime green.' So once I put a design together then I put a color scheme together, then once I put my color scheme together, it's like, I start buying some colors and some beads so I can do a test piece. So once I do a test piece I see how the test piece come out. If the colors don't go together good then I go back to my plans. If the colors go together good then I'm like, that's what I'm going with.

This passage reveals the internal conversation—the internal song! – as he considers carefully each step of the creative process, each step building upon the previous step. He pauses to consider the results, and then when he’s ready he moves on. The lyrical way that he speaks here, repeating phrases like a fond melody, the delivery of his voice and his accent sound musical. A lifetime of living creatively and musically flows from his words, bouncing off of me with the kind of reverberation Syd described.

At last, I find the intensely visceral descriptions I seek. Black Hawk responds to my question about how it *feels* to sew and make his suit with this beautiful, stream of consciousness flow of words:

I’m gonna be totally honest with you. I’m gonna be totally blunt with you. The experience of just sittin’ there sewing, it’s like the ancestors. You’re working on a piece that is like you want, you go to work and you come home and that’s all...it’s like you confined to it...it’s like you locked up. I feel like I’m in jail because that’s all that I’m doing. My mindset be different when I...But I still have to find time for my wife and my children and stuff like that. It’s like goin’ until two and three o’clock in the morning, sitting there and it’s like all your hurt and pain and love and anything that’s goin’ on with you, it’s all going into that suit. So when they say it’s a spiritual thing, it heals, it’s a spiritual thing, because everything, all your emotions, all your feelings, everything, goes into what you’re doing. Sitting there doing that, day in and day out, at that table. And once you finish it’s like, it’s almost like a religious, like joy. Once you see the poetry and the picture you had in your head from when you first started, and it’s come to life, and it’s like Bam! I did it! This is what I pictured in my head and it came to life. You brought it to life!

Confinement, the physical sense of being in jail, restricted from movement—this is how creativity feels for Black Hawk during this production phase. A tension between movement and restriction is revealed here through his comparison to the confinement of prison. The stillness required to sew thousands of beads and feathers is a burden, a hardship for the Indians who are accustomed to freedom and movement. This sacrifice is evident as he struggles to describe it, yet this leads to one of the most insightful and beautiful moments in our conversation:

It's like all your hurt and pain and love and anything that's goin' on with you, it's all going into that suit. So when they say it's a spiritual thing, it heals, it's a spiritual thing, because everything, all your emotions, all your feelings, everything, goes into what you're doing. Sitting there doing that, day in and day out, at that table.

I tear up every time I hear him say it or read over it. This is the burning answer to the whole question: Creativity *feels like* putting all “your hurt and pain and love and everything” into what you are making, it is joyous and painful, intensely spiritual. Once you have experienced it, it becomes *necessary*. Freedom and confinement, pain and joy, rhythmically oscillate. And it doesn't end there. The experience is amplified when shared with the creative community. I asked Black Hawk how it feels when he comes out into the street and reveals the suit everyone. Joy and pleasure are unmistakable as he says, “Yeah...If you've ever heard a Mardi Gras Indian say “I've got glory,” that's what it means.” He stretches out the word glory, with a long emphasis on the ‘o’ sound, spoken with emotion. “On Mardi Gras day--we push for Mardi Gras. (St. Joseph's day and Super Sunday, that's just a plus.) But you pushing for Mardi Gras. Mardi Gras day is the day. And once you step on the street, and you step outside in that suit and your family see you and your friends, and spectators see you, one or two, and they tell you how pretty you is, that's when you have your glory. It's a ---, it really is a ---- joy.”

This idea of glory is unique; it is not the way academics or professional artists typically speak, yet it resonates deeply with me. It resounds with spirituality, with an ecstatic rush of joy that lifts us up and transcends what our bodies normally experience during our earthly routines. The spiritual connection reaches far back in the history of the word. The Latin, *gloriani*, expresses rejoicing, pride, and honor. In medieval texts it connotes magnificence, the splendor of God, praise and adoration. Ancient Indo-European languages reduce the term to *gnoria*, adding the concept of knowledge to praise, and suggesting the public adoration or glorification of a figure or god that is known to all. The desire for public adoration is evident in Black

Hawk's narrative. That the sense of praise is also accompanied by a sensation of upliftment, of an embodied rising up that is perhaps prompted by an increased heartrate, a head held high, the elevation of self on a spiritual level. Here Black Hawk calls on the ancestors as well as his living companions as he, too, is aware of fitting into a cosmic, transcendent Other.

Without prompting, Black Hawk returns to the sacrifice of movement he has given to make the suit. He says:

I learned a lot about myself. It's like when you're sitting...a lotta times, with us being human beings, there's always a fear of... when you doin' something, and it's like you stop yourself because you scared to fail. And doin' it, and like the determination, the determination, and the patience, the time, the dedication, the drive, just sittin' there. There's nothing like that drive that you have pushing for that moment—that glory. And once you have that glory, steppin' out on that street, then it's like I need it, I need it. [Pause.] Because like, nothing else can compare to it.

Black Hawk reveals another phenomenological experience here, which is the fear of failure and how it can not only discourage creativity but also annihilate it. Movement now is tied to the freedom to create as well as freedom *from* fear of failure. In the same breath, Black Hawk tells us the qualities—the feelings—that are needed to overcome such fears: determination, patience, dedication and drive. Further, he gives us a purpose for all of his effort: The glory, this supreme gratification that is so exciting and uplifting that it justifies all the work and money, and might even be gloriously addicting. The pull towards the glory is so powerful that it readily overtakes the resistance of cost, restricted movement, and long hours of work. Tension here is an intense, potent pull towards authentic glory, earned through creative work and a recognized place in his community: “you step outside in that suit and your family see you and your friends, and spectators see you, one or two, and they tell you how pretty you is, that's when you have your glory.”

In all of this, Black Hawk feels attuned to the ancestors, an idea that is often referenced in literature, song and the conversation of the Black Indians. There is an intentional connection, spiritual and cultural, with their ancestors who were native both to the Americas and Africa. Deeply embedded in a historic and contemporary community, different from yet overlapping with Syd's musicians, Patricia's writers, and Antoine's Tremé.



As I review my field notes, listen to and transcribe the interviews, and study my photos and video documents, the tensions between authenticity and artifice emerge as pivotal to understanding how it feels to be creative in this very creative community. The freedom to live authentically is also a call to follow through—to go all the way with your ideas, to put 100% of your heart, soul, effort and talent into your contributions to the creative Spirit that fuels this city.

I begin to see what Antoine meant, about Indian tribes that are ‘real’ or ‘not real’ to him. At the Downtown Super Sunday I noticed some of the tribes embodied the requisite authenticity more than others. These groups featured an aggressive performance by the Wild Man, and each person's roles within the tribe were evident through their actions—kinetic demonstrations of their roles within the moving place of the Super Sunday procession. These Indians were almost

entirely older Black men, seasoned in life and suspicious of outsiders. This is life for them, not merely a performance. And it provides a sharp contrast with the groups strolling past that are younger, less aggressive and less defensive. One such big chief I saw only wore the shirt and pants with feathers, while someone else walked behind him wearing his full head piece (a glittering green affair sweeping high above his head and reaching the ground on each side) over a t-shirt and jeans. A third person carried his staff. It was hot, those suits are heavy, I know, but occasionally there seems a lack of commitment in evidence.



The Indians who engage the audience, who are fully committed to encounter--the creative kinesis, are passionate and powerful. This is the glory that Black Hawk experiences each year, and there is no question of authenticity. Feelings of courage, pride, a spiritual connection with the ancestors, and the glory of the moment shared with the tight-knit community, encompass the fullness of the whole mesmerizing vision.

I cry every time I leave New Orleans and every time I return.

-Syd, musician

Perhaps the greatest challenge of developing a cohesive argument for the research outcome is the interconnected nature of the findings, especially as these concepts both enable

and restrict each other. Freedom, movement, acceptance, authenticity, community, and place are all tangled together, pushing and pulling. This tension was revealed in the passionate way the participants spoke about their experiences and their compelling reflections about being creative in New Orleans. Once revealed, such friction can be seen in each interview and is also evident in my research in archives looking at books, news articles, photographs, videos, and online material. Describing these ideas in an academic format therefore proved to be a unique challenge, for extracting these ideas into individual items for analysis, such as separating freedom from movement, reduces the significance of both experiences. The creative participants revealed the high value they place on authenticity, and a degree of judgement that was unexpected. Yet the pressure to be authentic challenges the community to rise to the expectations, to overcome such tensions with fabulous creative achievements in song, dance, costume, and embodied presence. Indeed, what is revealed is that the ambience of contradictions is necessary to open the space for this abundance of creativity.

Until nearly the end of my field research, I believed that the cultural landscape was impossible to separate from the built landscape; that the aesthetic, visual encounter was key to the creative aura of a place. I now see that this preconceived idea is highly limiting and for many people inaccurate. Perhaps my own somewhat introverted personality influenced that idea, as well as my own visual sensitivities. It was a revelation to discover that the human landscape, the community of people who support and understand the creativity in New Orleans, were actually the principal elements that make a space into a place. *The community is the place*, and without them the appealing architecture and historic sites could become no more inspiring than a tomb—an un-place.

The social contract remains a puzzle, such as the permission to break certain laws in certain venues. An unresolved struggle for me is the criminal problem of the Super Sunday and second line events. After Uptown Super Sunday, during the small hours of the St. Joseph's night events, one of the Indians was shot but survived. On April 2, the day of Downtown Super Sunday, four people were shot with one fatality. One of these was in the neighborhood where the second line was supposed to begin during that afternoon. Another happened on one of the blocks of Esplanade where I walked several hours later. Historical and institutional violence against the Black and indigenous cultures continues, a pervasive evil which this country has yet to crush. It is intriguing to note that it is these two cultures that make up the primary creative collective of the second lines. A wide range of violence, past and present, is embedded in the flesh of the city just as surely as the cobblestones and the streetcars. Is violence a necessary cause or effect for creativity? If creativity emerges from tension, as I argue here, then is it necessary to sustain tension to generate creativity?

The nature of the freedom in New Orleans is often negatively characterized in the media as reckless, public debauchery, unrelated to creative expression. One of her many nicknames is 'the city that care forgot.' A history of prostitutes and pirates pervades local legends, yet there is a measure of evidence for the idea that a permissive society leads to unexpected expressions of that freedom, such as the birth of Jazz music that became the joyous invention of emancipation. What this research newly reveals is that tensions, pressures and contradictions within this uniquely creative society, have the *capacity* to stimulate creativity. It is the very contradiction between unleashed personal freedom and traditional authenticity that fuels new leaps in creative expression. The umbrella is merely an object of material culture that serves as a device through which we can see clearly how this tension activates creativity. My

intuition is that these responses to the question of ‘how it feels to be creative’ will provide compelling insights into the way educators can empower creativity in classrooms and school communities.



CONCLUSION

Then I may hope that my page will possess a sonority that will ring true.

-Gaston Bachelard

The journey of research is a long and winding path, full of intriguing rabbit trails, unexpected perceptions, and the tingling success of insightful knowledge, newly gleaned. Plagued by distractions, dead end leads, or miscalculations, the investigator's lonely trail can at times become a weighty burden. In my own case, the challenges lay in finding time and access, overcoming periodic moments of self-questioning, and finally in crafting a framework for delivering the research findings that will benefit others. As I look back over the last few years, I can see where the germ of this project began, the many configurations through which it evolved, how it was adjusted by academic and personal experiences, and through the methodology of wandering finally matured into a rich and rewarding investigation.

My ongoing concern about the rigid restrictions on our students, especially at the elementary level, continues to disturb me and serves as an ongoing motivation in this work. As I entered deeper into the creative atmosphere of New Orleans, the stark differences grew ever more vivid. With greater urgency, I now seek to generate a clear understanding of the tensions that can inspire creativity and develop these ideas into a format that will benefit our schools, reimagining schools as creative environments, especially in visual arts classes but with implications for the greater school climate as well.

I believe this study has delivered on the promise of the research question, 'How does it feel to be creative in a creative place?' The answers are nuanced, intriguing, complex and inspiring. The success of the research overall can be tied to the use of phenomenology as a methodological lens to reveal embodied knowledge, perceptions of placedness on creativity, and

the interdependent frictions between freedom, authenticity, movement and belonging. This chapter will first provide a summative discussion of the findings, making connections with the literature that generated the foundational support for this investigation. The impact of the methodology on the research is also considered. Following that I will identify significant implications for the practice of creativity and arts education. Finally, I will outline areas for future study, questions that were revealed through the research or lie outside the purview of this investigation.

Discussion of the Findings

This research was initially prompted by the sharp, disturbing contrast I observed in two environments where creativity was expected: in school art classrooms and second line parades in New Orleans. The opening pages of this dissertation describe a high-pressure, top-down art classroom where creativity is ordered ‘at’ the students. While most art rooms are not as combative or negative as this one, the practice of legislated, project-centered artwork is not uncommon. When compared with the kinetic, creative productivity of the second line parades in New Orleans, the disturbing contrast was unavoidable for me. As an art educator, I was agitated by the restrictive nature of many of our elementary and secondary schools while simultaneously inspired by the creative aura of New Orleans. The body of knowledge that I gradually amassed over my research journey reveals distinctive ways that creativity emerges through the tensions evident within culturally embedded practices, perceptions generated through rich descriptions of how it feels to be creative in a creative place. However, the findings provide both supportive evidence and challenging contradictions. The provocation of creative restraints in school art classrooms indeed contrasts with the aura of Second Line parades. Schools tend towards top-

down curricular legislation, and even when that legislation seeks authentic creativity it is restrained by issues of time, finances and equitable access. Meanwhile the free-wheeling spontaneity of visual production and creative expression is in reality restrained by the scrutiny of the local cultural community, where creativity has some legislated norms. An interesting difference here is that the first line of the parade (those with planned, matching costumes or the brass bands with matching t-shirts and jeans) are to some degree self-legislating (internally) some elements of their creative expression with the keen awareness that they will be observed. It appears that ‘freedom for freedom’s sake’ is not a simple conclusion in this matter, and that the implications are far reaching.

Concerns with the impact of place upon creativity through the phenomenological intersections between place, dwelling, and body were shown to be of prominent significance to the participants. The methodology of phenomenology, focusing on the embodied language of Lived Experiential Descriptions, empowered the research methods to yield fruitful information and understandings of these three initial aspects of there-being, and also figured prominently in the creative process. Data collection, as anticipated, was comprised of research in archives and museums, where I read a wide variety of books and print media, investigated websites and watched extensive film and video archives. Knowledge here was expanded and given greater meaning through personal observations and encounters. Over time, the experience of walking (kinesis as dwelling) emerged as a significant means of phenomenological data collection, all culminating in interviews with cultural participants—experts in the practice of being creative in a creative place. These direct personal interactions, both planned interviews and informal conversations, proved to be the most fruitful. The living conversations, the energy and enthusiasm we shared about being creative, generated astute observations as suggested by

Vagle's 'Descriptive Empirical Phenomenology' method of data collection (Vagle, 2014, p. 51). Such an approach provides the needed illumination to tease out rich descriptions of lived experiences, setting aside expected interpretations until the participants have shared all that they wish to reveal.

Attunement to the descriptions of the participants opens the door to understanding, but a literal reading of this data does not yield a complete picture. As Bachelard admonishes, "we must go beyond the problems of the description—whether this description be objective or subjective, that is whether it give facts or impressions—in order to attain to the primary virtues, those that reveal an attachment that is native in some way to the primary function of inhabiting" (Bachelard, 1994, p. 4). It thus becomes the role of the researcher to sensitively interpret, to some degree, the deepest meanings behind the descriptions, the implications of the words within the contextual lived experiences of the participants. "One feels that there is *something else* to be expressed besides what is offered for objective expression. What should be expressed is hidden grandeur, depth" (Bachelard, 1994, p. 186). Therefore, as I spent time with the visual material in the archives, as I spoke with artists and artisans, as I walked and dwelt in the community as a temporary resident, I attuned myself to the physical notions that were present and implied. Contradictions were revealed, intriguing tensions between authenticity and personal freedom, that in turn illuminated unique ways that creativity is inspired and shared. Deciphering phrases, descriptions and idioms related to the body disclosed the essence of how it feels to be creative in a creative place.

As discussed above, the findings are intertwined, tangled together with overlapping expectations that pull against one another in some areas (the constant scrutiny for authenticity) and push together in others (liberty, personal freedom, and tolerance). In this analysis, to

separate the conceptual nature of freedom from movement would weaken both to the point of uselessness, fragmenting the power of these ideas as expressed by my participants and as I myself experienced. Likewise, the perception of acceptance is deeply embedded in the creative community, yet I was surprised to discover that there are many requirements for true, full acceptance. Authenticity ranks quite high among those requirements, including giving everything to your art and artistic performance, and valuing the traditions of New Orleans without trying to change them for external or economic gain. Local creatives and newcomers are both aware of this and respond to the pressure, the scrutiny, and strive to meet the standard.

Material culture, the created objects (such as the Second Line umbrella), costumes, and banners, are evidence not just of the organic creative energy in New Orleans but as evidence of the creative motions of creating bodies—a physical manifestation of the phenomena of being creative. The pressure to produce ‘authentic’ material culture challenges locals to ‘give their all’ to their art, whether it is a satirical social statement or a resplendent Mardi Gras Indian suit.

In chapter 3 I discuss Heidegger’s assertion that our understanding of community is a powerful, pre-linguistic awareness of *care*, that we are welcomed, accepted and *cared for* by some collection of other humans (Heidegger, 2008, p. 131). Even as the participants describe the network of care within the community (such as the musicians who nurture other musicians) the watchful eye is ever present. This pressure on the creative practitioner is just the force that pushes the best performance from each person, reaching ever deeper to achieve and create new and exciting contributions. Heidegger identifies powerful connections between freedom, authenticity, care, movement, and community:

They thus become authentically bound together, and this makes possible the right kind of objectivity which frees the other in his freedom for himself. Everyday Being-with-one-another maintains itself between the two extremes of positive solicitude—that which

leaps in and dominates, and that which leaps forth and liberates. (Heidegger, 2008, p. 159)

The creative people in this investigation seem to understand these ideas on a primordial level—intrinsically, they sense these essential elements as integral to their own mode of dwelling and being. Instead of leaping, which is Heidegger’s term, the phrase ‘bouncing off of’ effectively indicates an intrinsically communal sense of being-with that invites the flexible give and take of creativity. The dancer lauds New Orleans as a place ‘where you can be you,’ and the writer observes that ‘you can be weird here,’ then describes how the music community supports each other artistically and socially but with caveats. This aura of acceptance, the sensation of ‘being with one another’ was consistently challenged with a demand from within that same community for authenticity. Verbally, artistically and emotionally the participants expressed these feelings in many ways, and so it became my honor as the researcher to identify these notions, to reveal and question the contradictions, and thereby generate a new understanding of ways that friction can spark creative expression, and the ongoing tensions can generate a lifestyle of creative productivity—creativity as a way of being in the world.

Limitations and Challenges

There were of course some research efforts that met with little response. I am acquainted with several musicians and performers who enthusiastically post on social media about New Orleans culture whom I optimistically thought would be great resources. However, most of them proved to be unavailable or unresponsive. While Facebook messaging allowed me to make some initial contact, the fruits of that particular effort were extremely limited. Surprisingly, some of the people who work at the museums and cultural centers around the city were professionally helpful but personally and emotionally closed off. They were happy to provide access to their

archives and would chat freely about the history of the second line umbrellas, but had little to offer when I tried to ask them about creativity—especially personal creative experiences. One curator did not even show up for a scheduled interview, and another arrived very late to simply introduce me to the manager of the photographic collection.

A pitfall I found necessary to continually avoid was a tendency to focus on the nature of a creative place rather than the nature of the creative feeling. The notions of freedom, acceptance, authenticity and kinesis are readily applicable to places where creativity is encouraged. Although this line of questioning is extremely interesting to me, and perhaps an ancillary necessity in this investigation, it does not answer the research question.

The second line umbrella as a device for revealing more about the creative experience in New Orleans was effective to a point, but not entirely relative to the people who ultimately were the most important interview participants. I believe that the historical information I have gathered will offer encouragement to the cultural community through an article that could be presented through a regional journal, where visitors and residents alike could learn about its history and have the opportunity to see unique umbrellas that were handmade and meet the local standard of authenticity.

An area of New Orleans culture that is not included in this research is a music genre called Bounce. This genre emerged from the rap and hip-hop music in the 1990's (Spera, 2012 p. 173), launching into the national music scene shortly after Katrina as a visceral, angry and often sexual expression of frustration and a celebration of the body. Where it diverges from the focus of this study is the location of the music and performance, as Bounce is a primarily indoor event where the music is electronic (DJ's or amplified instruments) and the style of dance is

sexually explicit. It has not yet appeared as part of the Second Line practice, perhaps the need for electricity limiting its mobility without a float or vehicle to provide power.

To acknowledge that one could always do more, find more people to interview, add to the list of observations, is perhaps the unavoidable reality of bringing a research endeavor to a close, even if only for a season. If time and funds were limitless, then I would spend more weeks in New Orleans and seek out additional interview participants. However, the consistency of the four participants' responses suggests that increasing their numbers would not necessarily increase the depth or breadth of insights. While each person spoke of authenticity in different ways, for example, all of them spoke with authority and intensity about its importance. The richness of the descriptions and the tensions that emerged so clearly carry the power of the nature of their creative communities.

Implications for the Practice: Pedagogical and Methodological Potentials

This study was sparked by a desire to better understand the nature of creativity, to offer richer and more meaningful creative experiences to art students and free the young people in our schools from the negative physical restraints I so often witness. Through the academic endorsement of this research, followed by presentations and publications, I seek to push the current movements for school change towards a pedagogy of belonging and care, where freedom towards authenticity can be understood as vital to an aura of creativity in education, and where frictions are not automatically suppressed. The tensions revealed in this investigation have a dramatic implication for the context of schools, where enormous energies are targeted towards the conflicts between administrators and non-compliant children or between teachers and disengaged students. This research can now inspire teachers to *reimagine the role of friction as*

a pedagogical tool, which itself would be a profound shift in the foundation of how education is constructed. For example, setting students the task of solving a problem for the local community will inspire research, collaboration, competition and experimentation—all kinetic events that get kids out of their chairs into the role of creative productivity. Reconnecting schools to communities, including the tensions within those communities, offers a dynamic sense of being-with that is fundamental to generating collective creativity. Tensions are most often tied to conflict, where creative solutions can bring profound resolution. When proposed solutions are shared with those directly affected, then a human landscape is constructed, where children see themselves as valued members of the community, and their creative actions construct a meaningful place (kinesis as dwelling) where they are connected and appreciated.

The vital connection between place and the creative community of New Orleans is clearly evident and serves to construct a human landscape within which *dwelling* occurs. Now as we turn this understanding towards schools, I assert that we should no longer attempt to separate the environment from the learner nor should we allow creativity to be relegated to the art department as frivolous and expendable. Although current trends have instigated some public interest in creativity as an element of curriculum, the response thus far primarily appears in the form of magnet schools; the long-term application and outcome of these highly publicized education venues is yet to be seen. This year in Texas Mansfield Independent School District, a large, conservative, public school system, has rebranded their district-wide education programming with the language of ‘choice,’ ‘creativity,’ and ‘innovation,’ yet the actual structure of the schools remains unchanged. I discussed the promotional campaign with the director of the fine arts program for the district and asked him what this meant for the fine arts department. “Nothing, really,” was his response. He indicated that it was mainly for the high school that was

already dedicated to career tech curriculum and a few elementary schools. Likewise, the Fort Worth Independent School District school board and superintendent this year unveiled a new initiative that sites creativity as one of only four targeted goals. Despite the fanfare, the curriculum remains unchanged, instructional methods unaddressed, and an enormous amount of time and resources are still dedicated towards behavioral compliance (dress code, attendance, and silence in class).

There is a clear connection here with place-based pedagogy and with the arts based social justice movement (Adams & Owens, 2016, Gradle, 2011, Greene, 1995, Ball & Lai, 2006).

While my initial literature review focused on creativity as such, my research has led me to the conclusion that creativity must be articulated with place. As the findings guide pedagogical implications this direction, it seems important here make connections with such practices in the field of art education. Place-based arts education turns the curricular focus towards regional cultures and the needs and interests of the immediate community:

In addition to teaching the local, this pedagogy listens to the locals by paying close attention to local students' interests and by examining texts, artifacts, and performances of local cultural production, and it empowers the local by legitimating local cultural production as literature and art. (Ball & Lai, 2006, p. 262)

Especially relevant for marginalized communities, placed-based pedagogy acknowledges the legitimacy of visual culture including music, literature, dance, and visual art products, flipping the notion of 'outsider art' on its heels. In the context of place based or community pedagogy, the insider is the local practitioner, while the outsider is the newly arrived initiate. "Place-based educators...argue that the study of places can help increase student engagement and understanding through multidisciplinary, experiential, and intergenerational learning that is not only relevant but potentially contributes to the well-being of community life" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 7).

Advocates for place-based pedagogy assert that schools are often guilty of further marginalizing regional culture (Ball & Lai, 2006, p. 265), thus proponents for these curriculum models press for hiring local cultural practitioners and implementing curriculum that respectfully acknowledges the regional culture that naturally should be a part of the children's lives.

Advocates for visual culture as curricula also assert that students need to understand the imagery and iconography that is their lives as they are lived, from local traditions to global media:

“Critical inquiry of cultural attributes can be helpful for identifying, interpreting, and analyzing contextual complexity. A study of these conditions can reveal how representations (signifying practices and products) ascribe and circulate meanings, values, and pleasures about symbolic culture” (Krug, 2003, p. 17). In New Orleans, there are active efforts to bring cultural awareness to school children both as formal curriculum, in after school programs, and through community mentoring. Cherise Harrison-Nelson works with schools to educate students about the Mardi Gras Indian traditions through costume, music, spoken word performance, dance, and literature (Fennerstock, 2014). Bruce Sunpie Barnes opened a storefront workshop for students in his own neighborhood to teach them the songs and traditions of the Tremé community in an informal after-school program using his own resources and through collaboration with his neighbors and fellow musicians (Barnes & Breunlin, 2014). I have often seen very young children on stage with brass bands during performances who are encouraged by a relative to play along on a drum or horn, as each generation endeavors to pass on not just awareness of the songs but the experience of performance as a cultural practice.

In New Orleans, the tensions outlined in this dissertation can be seen in numerous local issues, such as the struggle between musicians and the city council over sound restrictions that would substantially reduce the musicians' income through live performances and dilute the

cultural presence of music in the streets of the city (Ramsey, 2013, p. 1). While the 2013 ordinance was defeated, new drafts come before the city council on a regular basis. Engaging local children, especially those in arts education courses (music, performance, and visual arts) in the conversation has enormous potential for building connections with the local community. Likewise the tensions between Mardi Gras Indians offers ripe opportunity for investigation, artmaking and debate about the conflict with some facets of the Native American communities, or the scrutiny between the elder and younger Black Indian tribes. The relevance to students' lives is powerful, as the outcome of local issues will affect their opportunities to be educated, to seek employment of their choosing, and understanding how to use their voices and the power of visual images and material culture to advocate for their rights as citizens.

Thus certain kinds of tensions—while appearing to be obstacles—can stimulate student creativity, be a catalyst for challenging social norms, and generate energetic invention. In this environment, student research adds to the curriculum with a body of knowledge that is greater than any one educator might bring to the table, and creative innovations are pushed to new heights that exceed the prior knowledge of anyone in the classroom--including the teacher. “For visual culture educators, classroom-based cultural production can be an important method for generating and facilitating sociopolitical awareness, understanding, and participation” (Darts, 2004, p. 324). Further, the intersection between creativity and arts education as a political act is evident in the lives of individuals struggling to survive hardships such as poverty, immigration, abuse and other threats to wellbeing. These young lives are already fraught with tension and conflict. This research reveals an opening to empower students to harness friction as a catalyst for change. We cannot repress such conflicts nor romanticize them, instead we can reconceptualize them as spurs for creative innovation. Drawing on lessons from New Orleans

and its complex history of creative, kinetic production, classrooms can be liberated from overly rigid, external restrictions to allow kinesis in and through the tensions defining a place; educators can and should open up room for students to “bounce off of” one another and “bump into” their lived environments. Schools can enhance the sense of place with the visual art classroom, advocating for the places of learning to recognize the significance of the “social and ecological places people actually inhabit” (Gruenewald, 2003, p.3). In this newly imagined environment, education centers can become sites of *creativity-in-place*, where the school community is the human landscape rich with personal meaning for each student, just as Heidegger describes for Dasein’s *dwelling-in-place*. The impact of such an empowering educational lifestyle, where tension fuels creativity, promises to propel learning into profound new directions.

As an educator, then, an exciting opportunity lies in the potential for wandering as a pedagogy, where students can collect and assimilate data about their own school communities and neighborhoods as a means to discover the worldhood in which they indeed dwell, and their place of belonging within it. As Heidegger describes, “To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell” (Heidegger, 1971, p. 147). Students would also engage in the types of wandering described in the ‘Wandering Pilgrimage’ section above (Arrival, Hanging Out, Milling Around, The Event, and Dispersal) as a means to distill the essence of their experience. As an educator who regularly travels with students overseas, I have seen the eye-opening moments of revelation that students experience when they first encounter a foreign city, taste an unknown food, or step foot in the ruins of a city where humans were dwelling thousands of years ago and where a potent aura remains. A pedagogy of wandering expands the promise of a phenomenology of places (Bachelard, 1994, Trigg, 2012, Tuan, 2014, Tuck & McKenzie, 2015) and reaches past the traditional ‘nature walk’ that a science class might offer. The

opportunity for students to seek meaning within the built landscape of their local area, to trade knowledge about the people and places in a shared neighborhood, offers the students an understanding of their relationship to the school (and learning) that can give them the sense of community belonging that was lamented at the opening of this research endeavor (Gradle, 2007).

Methodological Potentials

This research has consistently focused upon the vibrant, conflictual creativity of New Orleans, in particular the cultural, public practices that generate the kinetic place of the second line parade as a locus for embodied creativity. The archives, texts, film and interview participants were all deeply invested in this particular geographic location. While this successfully provides an in-depth understanding of how it feels to be creative in a creative community, there are other avenues of investigation that are ripe for future investigation. .

This investigation has not attempted to compare the practices of New Orleans with other areas of the Caribbean, Africa, or American indigenous communities (past or present) with any kind of academic thoroughness. Some customs, instruments and costumes are easily connected with regions that share a cultural ancestry, and my research has informed my own knowledge about some of these visual cultures to a moderate degree. I am intrigued, and I can imagine an interesting timeline comparison of the dress and practices of Louisiana indigenous cultures with the evolution of the Black Indian practices in New Orleans. Of further interest would be a comparison with other Mardi Gras and Carnival customs in Central and South America, where Brazilian visual and musical culture appear to share some intriguing similarities with New Orleans. Likewise, a global history of the umbrella could be illuminating, especially if this investigation could focus on its adoption and decoration in non-Western communities. However,

this research is not designed as an anthropological comparative study, and thus these far-reaching questions remain open to future investigation.

A new line of inquiry that was brought out by the research process lies in the practice of costuming as a creative liberty, and the implications that could have in education. New Orleans is a place where ‘you can be you,’ and there are many examples of people who decide to reinvent their identity for particular events (such as Mardi Gras day) or for an extended period of time in their lives—even permanently. It is not unusual in New Orleans to see someone on any day or night wearing elaborate costumes and full make-up, demonstrating a complete commitment to the role (perhaps as evidence of their authenticity). I wonder if the freedom to invent a persona, to adorn yourself as a character or satirical object, is somehow liberating to other creative expressions. I would be interested to craft a study exploring the impact that costuming, such as cosplay or school dress up days, might have on other areas of creativity.

Further investigation is also needed into the presence and nature of tension at arts magnet schools, where creativity is loudly proclaimed as both curriculum and product of the education programming. In such environments, what is the role of freedom, kinesis, authenticity and belonging? Are there expectations of authenticity that exceed technical prowess? Do students at magnet schools identify poseurs and fakers? What tensions exist that stimulate creativity? How do these students describe their embodied creative experiences? Such an investigation could yield intriguing insights into the current pedagogies that proclaim creativity, suggesting successes and challenges against which the insights of my research could be compared.

The precise role of the body in creative kinesis remains somewhat elusive, as the biological and physiological realm is beyond my expertise and the scope of this investigation.

The research reveals some new aspects of the phenomena, such as the moment when creativity *feels* like a discovery but actually is your invention—as Black Hawk describes, “the picture you had in your head from when you first started, and it’s come to life, and it’s like Bam! I did it!” Phenomena such as bumping into and bouncing off of also reveal the embodied dimensions of creativity when it is viewed in places of kinetic production. I recently presented a workshop to art teachers focused on the nature of creativity where man described his painting process this way: “I just let my hands do the work, then I look to see what happened.” Sometimes when I am writing, typing at a keyboard, something appears on the screen that I am not conscious of thinking, and I feel like I learned it from my hands. How is that possible? This is a profound phenomenological question. When our bodies are making, a fusion of impulse, atmosphere, ideas and body occur in a marvelous, agonizing, yet generative event. This investigation has revealed many aspects of what that experience feels like, including discoveries about the motivations and tensions that provoke and stimulate creativity to greater heights and with ever-escalating sensations of excitement.

A methodology of wandering in some ways is an invention that feels like a discovery, for humans have experienced walking and wandering as a means to understand their world from the depths of pre-history, from the first bipedal motions upon the earth (Yuan, 2014, p. 2). A significant outcome of this dissertation research is the opportunity now to develop wandering as a research methodology, formalizing the intuitive process for other research topics and fields. In my case, the phenomenological investigation of cultural practices that occur on public streets, enacted by people who moving through the cultural landscape on foot, demand that I, too, be bodily present, on foot and on those streets. Watching through a window will not suffice, nor will viewing film or video made by another person replace the embodied encounter of being

present in that moment and in that place. A wandering methodology—data collection at three miles an hour—demands the embodied presence of the researcher for a personal lived experience.

Such a methodology, in its purest form, challenges even the most essential elements of research. To my view, the only way to reveal the nature of a wandering methodology is to set aside the research question itself. The purest form of wandering as data collection, from a phenomenological perspective, requires bracketing even the research question (Vagle, 2014, p. 67), to walk and wander in a fully unknown place, to be willing to be lost while collecting and describing the body's nuanced sensations. What I am proposing here is to first use the five senses to tease out the ways the body collects data from the world, giving preferential emphasis to *how* the senses collect and assimilate data over what data is being collected. Next would be to mine those observations for indications of aura of the place—is the essence of the aura embedded in the physical data collected by the senses, a synthesis perhaps, or is it something less tangible? This method of data collection—the quest-less wandering—should be enacted in different locations as a way of testing the methodology, such as urban, natural and ancient landscapes. In particular, it would be instructive to apply such a methodology to the school itself to perhaps reveal forms of creative kinesis in unanticipated places. Phenomenologists such as Heidegger, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty here can add theoretical support for movement, temporality, and a sense of 'wonder' that wandering can yield, while Rebecca Solnit and Henry David Thoreau offer sensitive understandings of what it means to walk, to wander, to be lost, and to give oneself over to sensory encounters

Indeed, I relish the future opportunity to develop the wandering methodology as a meaningful contribution to phenomenological research methods, for by articulating the body's

place in data collection the phenomenologist's role leaves behind the desk and the arm chair to bring Van Manen's 'lived experiential descriptions' and Vagle's 'descriptive empirical phenomenology' to their ultimate potential (Vagle, 2014, p. 51 and Van Manen, 2014, p. 298). Reflection and analysis then would include invoking a dissection of idioms, as I have done in throughout this dissertation research, for revealing what humans understand and seek to articulate about wandering, as well as mining the sensory encounters (the data collected) for tangible methods—hooks that other researchers can hang their own research quests upon.

Closing

Inexplicable elements in creativity remain, as innovations and new leaps defy our best theories and push the limits of our definitions. This truth is a space within which I am happy to dwell, for I hope to never reach the end of new creative experiences.

Ever exploring, seeking, reaching.

A book that will never be closed and set aside.

An ocean's endless tide.

The endless ephemeral is, to me,

Ecstatic beauty.

APPENDIX
RESEARCH RECORDS

Museum and Archival Research Record

Jazz Museum in the U.S. Mint --Museum exhibits on August 5, 2015
Williams Research Center at the Historic New Orleans Collection on June 20, 2016
The Hogan Jazz Archives on Tulane University campus June 21, 2016
Backstreet Cultural Center August 3, 2016
Jazz Museum in the U.S. Mint --Museum exhibits on August 4, 2016
Jazz Museum in the U.S. Mint --pictorial archives on April 3, 2017.
Backstreet Cultural Center March 31, 2017

Events Research Record

Satchmo Summer Fest including a Second Line for Satchmo
First weekends in August, 2014, 2015, and 2016
Super Sunday Uptown on March 19, 2017
Congo Square Rhythm festival on March 18, 2017
Super Sunday Downtown on April 2, 2017.

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