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**UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH**

**Creative Caprice: Intrinsic Interest; States of Consciousness;
Emotion & Practice-led Phenomenological Inquiry**

by

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A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

SCHOOL OF ART, DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

FEBRUARY 2020

Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.

Work submitted for this research degree at the University of Plymouth has not formed part of any other degree either at the University of Plymouth or at another establishment.

Publications (or public presentation of creative research outputs): N/A

Presentations at conferences: N/A

Word count of main body of thesis: 83,317

Signed:  _____

Date: February 10, 2020

Abstract

Creative Caprice: Intrinsic Interest; States of Consciousness; Emotion & Practice-led Phenomenological Inquiry

Steven A. Evans

This research project is a practice-led investigation of how strong emotion influences my creative actions. Through the development and articulation of a methodology for facilitating creative activity, the project considers how these emotions determine which intrinsic interests compel me to create works of art and design.

Fundamental to the development of the methodology was the formulation of a comprehensive walking method designed to engage the body, awaken the mind and, through the designation of markers, establish consistently accessible mental/physical spaces wherein creative thinking can be fostered. Given the current interest in the role that walking can play in facilitating creative thought, (Opezzo and Schwartz, 2014) I argue that my establishing of route markers into such processes, and incorporating individualized meditative techniques represents a significant contribution to this debate.

Through my experimentation with walking as research method, I exposed the profound influence past traumatic childhood experiences have had on my creative choice-making, which is also closely linked to a personal identity that derives from the culture I was raised in and my faith traditions. An awareness of the dynamic between cultural shaping of personal identity and the impact of past trauma is key to the potential transfer of the methodology to others

My developing understanding of my practice drew on commentary on artists, including Richard Long, Paul Klee and Joseph Beuys. My research draws on a range of theories of creativity as diverse of those of Margaret A. Boden and David Bohm; writings on walking, such as the work of Rebecca Solnit; ideas on making by Timothy Ingold, and philosophical writings by Jean Paul Sartre and Soren Kierkegaard, among others. My findings are presented as a series of iterations in different media, which invite the reader to consider successively closer approximations to the experience of my research-based discoveries.

Enhanced by the application of my methodology, my art-making was invigorated both personally and in my role as a college professor. In summary, this thesis distils the comprehensive nature of my investigation and reveals how intrinsic interest, creative states of consciousness, emotion and practice-led phenomenology intersect.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have turned that corner, that corner, in a groove on a well-worn wander. There's a scene, an instance, a moment in time that occupies such significance it isolates memories that are mere multiples of a sum, and assigns them space to expand. More than déjà vu; more than nostalgia, it rests at the precipice of yearning, and may best be described as a morsel ... a taste, a small portion, a delectable scrap or fragment consumed in transit.

Thank you, to those who fed me.

FORWARD

A burst of inspiration or clever notion, which precedes the development of a novel, creative idea can appear to just happen; falling, seemingly at random, as great, refreshing serendipitous drops of ...

written and illustrated by S. A. Evans
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FORWARD

inpuddles
toplay
they stay,
though the
rings will
roll away



ambling
about on
a cool,
damp
day.

with the
wet between
my toes,
where
jam flows

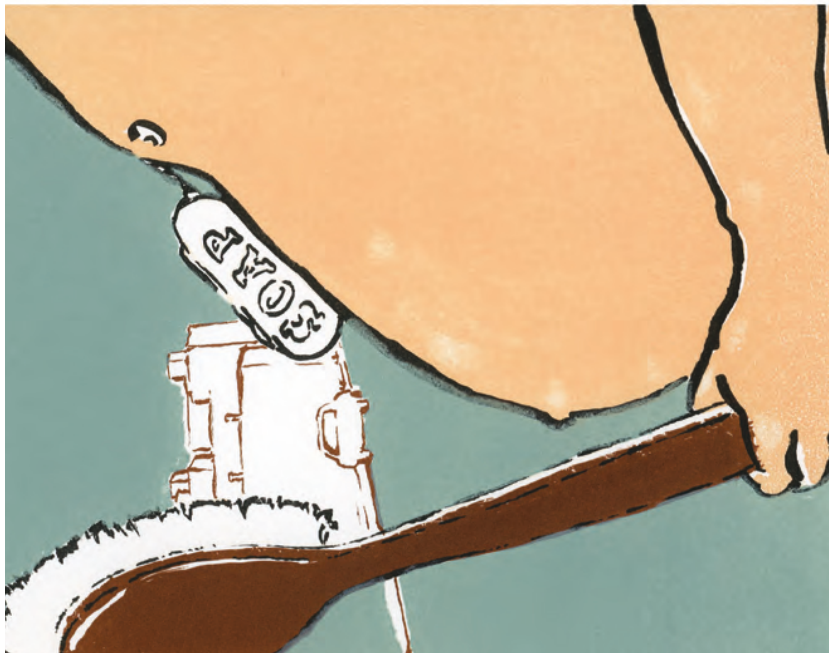
my knees
knock,
wobble
and quake



and around
my button
Small
streams
mayflow.

the fresh
drops
will tickle
as they
trickle,

i have a
brush
for hard
to reach
places



anda
towel
nearby,
while i
wait:

some
SOAP
on a
ROPE

for gentle
taps and
a gurgle
to make

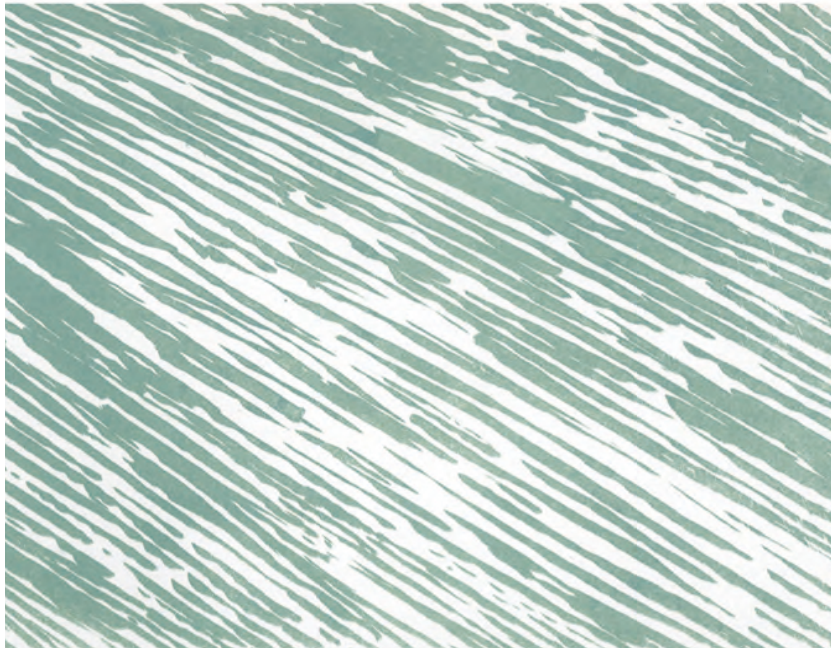


FORWARD

if only
very
soon
it would
just...

my eyes
turned
skyward
yearning
and hoping

rain.



Written more than thirty years ago in a personal journal, and as my practice has evolved, the poem *Rain* has been edited and realized in a variety of creative forms since its inception. Created as a book in response to my research, exported as page spreads and included as the forward of this thesis, the poem encapsulates my inquiry in abstract. It also highlights the durational, or longstanding nature of the motivations which compel my investigations. The research activities outlined in this thesis offer a window into my creative process, and in particular represent a clearer understanding of what is meant by the poems closing stanza: “if only very soon it would just ... rain.” Throughout this document the poem will be referenced in support of specific arguments as my research and findings are revealed.

Preamble On the Documentation Structure

Constituting the primary record of my research efforts, associated with this document are two appendices. The first is found at the end of this document in Section Seven. It includes excerpts from a performance text titled *How Deep is Deep Enough*. Written while completing an MFA in 2011, the purpose for the inclusion of the excerpts is to provide context for how the term trauma—beyond the working definition offered below—is used in this document.

The second appendix is found at www.stanzaic.com. *Stanzaic.com* offers select abstract, visual (and otherwise) articulations of concepts and ideas prevalent in my PhD research. How and why these are important to my research will be addressed in the body of the thesis in Sections Four Five and Six respectively. To be clear the book *How Deep is Deep Enough* were completed before my research project began, and therefore they should be seen as informing the reading of the thesis, rather than constituting a formal part of the submission.

In addition to the above supplemental materials, elements of this thesis text (and related material) were read aloud performatively just prior to my scheduled Viva Voce. This allowed for the narrative nature of the text to be presented with storytelling flair, permitting my distinctive voice, as artist-researcher, to be heard and not exclusively read as

words on a page.

It is important to note the unique structure of my documentation, with all its elements, was imagined during and is a by-product of my method-based research activities: activities that helped reveal a significant cultural influence which informed its invention. Growing up, struggling with reading comprehension in school, I primarily learned to read and engage with what I was reading in church.

In the sacred texts of my faith, there is an extensive footnoting system, which permits readers to tangentially jump to related texts and ideas as a part of the studying process. Also, as a part of the process, we were encouraged to write down thoughts, or musings in the margins of the pages alongside the text and the footnotes.

To wit, in this document, the main body of text is presented as two cascading narrative threads, separated into five sections. The two cascading threads will then be woven together into one column of a final concluding Section Six, which conforms to traditional essay style norms. At strategic junctures, thoughts and musings related to the text will interrupt the threads that flow from page to page.

(see: Verse 1)

A Word On The Threads

Laid out side-by-side, the threads support one another, similar to slabs in a Richard Serra installation. Complementary to one another, the two threads will be referred to as:

- A Primary Thread (this thread), punctuated by storytelling segments and visual elements, which are complemented by photos and diagrams that sequentially capture aspects of and the evolution of my research activities and development of my methodology.
- A Secondary Thread, which will act as a type of literature review, research journal, or unconventionally situated series of footnotes that offer commentary and expansion on the writing found in the Primary Thread.

At times, the Secondary Thread is deliberately circuitous, loquacious, or abrupt, reflecting movements inherent

VERSE I

“Unfortunately, you didn’t do it our way ... “

What’s ‘our’ way?

*“Our way is your way, so long as it is our way,
and you didn’t do it our way.”*

I don’t understand ...

*“What’s to understand? Our way is your way so
long as it is our way.”*

Again, what is your way?

*“The way to do things your way our way
consistent with how we do things our way.”*

*I’m confused. Doing it my way is your way, but I’m
not doing it that way?*

*“Not yet. At least not consistent with how others do
it their way our way.”*

*Others ... what do you mean ... do you have
examples you can show me?*

*“No. Well, sure. Though not exactly ... the problem
is their way of doing things our way is quite
different than your way of doing things our way.”*

But, I thought I wasn’t doing it your way?

*“You’re not. That’s the problem. You didn’t do it our
way ...”*

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in the investigation itself. In essence, offering a series of select footnotes to the Primary Thread, the Secondary Thread introduces wider thinking on the subject of focus. Serving to contextualize my research, the art practice and development of a methodology, which the Primary Thread is designed to reveal.

Complimentary to, and interrupting the pages upon which the Primary and Secondary Threads are found will be singular pages which contain Remarks & Verses. The Remarks & Verses are personal aphorisms. They consist of a compilation of philosophical assertions and poetry written in response to, or in conjunction with my overall research process. As well, found at the end of each section are singular pages that contain Figures (images, artworks) and Diagrams created in conjunction with the research.

In addition to the threads, intersecting the text in the layout at strategic junctures, the reader will contend with drawings of fishes, rabbits and paintings taken from my sketchbook. Collectively, they represent a type of thinking, as drawing, that was instinctively initiated as a means to ease my restlessness in moments of mental stagnation. Writing represents a laborious endeavor in my practice. The drawings and paintings provide for an important cathartic flirtation with non-textual detail in moments of contemplative stupor. In contemporary terms, these art works can be considered a type of ‘taking a line for a walk,’ as affirmed by Paul Klee.

In summary, the unconventional nature of my documentation is designed to capture the capricious thoughts and actions that underpin my thesis. The threads of the first five sections of this document are intentionally devised to speak in unison, or on their own, or over the top of one another. The Secondary Thread in particular includes tangential segments of writing that serve as deliberate orchestrated digressions.

The reader of this text may choose to follow any reference in the Primary Thread to the Secondary thread, *stanzaic.com*, the pages of the book *Rain*, or to the appendix containing excerpts of the performance text, and then return again to the Primary Thread—disrupting the linearity of the narrative. By design, this may render the reading experience rhizomatic in that this documentation is, as described by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, “made of variously

formed matters, and very different dates and speeds ... and that it is an assemblage.”(Deleuze, Guattari, p.3)¹

If there is a spine to my documentation, it is this aptly labeled Primary Thread. Starting with this Preamble, the Primary Thread offers, in Deleuze and Guattarian terms, core strata to which a reader may return and rediscover a sequentially revealed record of my findings. The final section of this document will serve to sum up my conclusions and tie together my practice-led research findings.

The Research Aims and Questions

From the outset of my inquiry, the following were articulated as the basis for the focus of my investigations. The aims of my research are:

- To investigate how spontaneous physical activities that involve walking and exploring familiar and unfamiliar environments can inform and invigorate my creative practice.
- To develop and articulate a methodology designed to rigorously initiate creative states of consciousness through corporeal awareness by recording thoughts and physical movements or actions while employing walking as primary method.
- To use my creative practice as case study with the intent to enhance my creative processes (creative thinking and doing), and increase my understanding of how intrinsic interest, touched by strong emotion can affect and influence my art-making.
- To be receptive to what a methodology with walking as primary method could reveal concerning strong emotion as it relates to my personal history and the cultural influences that inform my personal identity and sense-of-self in the context of my practice.

In conjunction with the above stated aims, the following research questions were articulated:

- How can spontaneous physical activities, namely walking in familiar and unfamiliar environments invigorate my creative practice and lead to new forms of artistic expression and experimentation?
- How can a methodology be developed to rigorously

1. Deleuze, Gilles, Guattari, Felix. *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and schizophrenia*. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Referencing Deleuze and Guattari serves exclusively to provide context to the term “rhizomatic.” Specifically, how it helps describe the overall function of the document structure, and in particular the dynamic of the Primary and Secondary Threads, relative to the other elements, which accompany them.

2. Sullivan, Graeme. *Art Practice as Research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 2005.

Because my research methods and methodology are explained and illustrated as personal approaches, it is important to address the academic justification for their use in my research. Later in this document in Section Three, related to the above stated intention, the book *The Reflective Practitioner* by Donald A. Schön is cited. Schön’s text is also analyzed in the Secondary Thread of that section. Insights offered per Schön’s book will sound similar to some of the insights offered here per this segment. This is important to note before analyzing Graeme Sullivan’s text.

Sullivan declares at the beginning of his book: “the approach I take is to examine visual arts as a form of inquiry into the theories, practices, and context used by artists. The critical and creative investigations that occur in studios, galleries, on the internet, in community spaces and in other places where artist work, are forms of research grounded in art practice.” (Sullivan, p.xi) It strikes me as a reasonably simple equation, both easy to apply and easy to solve. Especially in light of Sullivan’s contention that “the imaginative and intellectual work undertaken by artists is a form of research.” (Sullivan, p.xi)

The inherent problem of this view however, and as

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initiate creative states of consciousness through corporeal awareness, and can physical movements or actions be chronicled during and following acts of walking?

- How can a practice-led inquiry enhance my creative processes (thinking and doing), and lead to an increased understanding of how intrinsic interest touched by strong emotion can affect and influence my art-making?
- How can a methodology with walking as primary method disclose the role strong emotion plays in my creative processes, and what could that disclosure reveal concerning the impact my personal history, identity and sense-of-self has on my practice?

In Consideration Of Important Terms

The following are working definitions for select terms and the sense in which they are used in this document. Associated with the definitions and sense of use are key ideas. While these key ideas provide an insight into my discoveries and will be explored in greater detail in subsequent sections, all of my findings will be summarised in the concluding Section Six of this document. The inclusion here of the definitions and sense of use for the select terms and how they relate to key ideas is to provide the reader with a clear indication of the parameters under which the terms were considered throughout the evolution of my research process.

Faith

I am a devout member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS), born and raised. This means the perspective from which I view the world is, in part, as a product of a peculiar people. The term peculiar, as read in the fourteenth chapter, verse two of the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament of the King James version of the Bible, has been adopted by members of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints as a means of declaring that adherents of the faith are possessed of a distinct religious, cultural and ideological outlook.

noted by Sullivan, is that the visual arts in particular “[remain] outside the mainstream ... they are often seen as arcane and use obscure personal symbols that are difficult to interpret.” (Sullivan, p.xi) In addition to being an artist, theorist and researcher, Graeme Sullivan is also an educator. Later in this section, both in this Secondary Thread and in the Primary Thread, the reader of this text will discover my role as a post-secondary vocational educator who is also an artist pursuing a PhD, in part with the aim to understand the academic research process and in turn becoming an artist researcher.

Based upon my experience, I agree with Sullivan. The sense of being outside the mainstream can seem particularly acute in a vocational setting. But along with Sullivan, I harbour a hope as it relates to art. The diversity of experience, opinion, creative capacity and aptitude, and outlook on life is astonishing among a body of students at a vocational institution of higher learning. The fascinatingly broad spectrum upon which many students fall intellectually is at once tremendous and intriguing. There are thinkers and philosophers, and tinkerers and image-makers; individuals who mostly rely on a personal approach to what they do, because sometimes forgotten in the context of what is considered mainstream that is all they are left with. I relate because I was once them, and recognize that they potentially could in future become me.

But this type of discussion is tangential to this thesis. The intent in raising it is to emphasize the appeal and feasibility of embracing a personal approach in my research. Not because academically contextualized approaches are beyond reach or not applicable. But because that is how, through my research eventually revealed in this document, I have come to understand, again using the words of Sullivan, “those who promote this approach see the arts as comprising a set of practices that helps broaden the way we understand things and thus can be used to expand how information is gathered and represented.” (Sullivan, p. xiii)

3. Pink, Sarah. *Doing Visual Ethnography*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2013.

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This outlook stems from the understanding that members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints are devoutly Christian, but that our theology is distinct from the creeds and conventions of what historically can be considered mainline Christian theology. It also indicates that due to that outlook having largely developed in isolation—in the Salt Lake Valley of the Western US during the late 1800's to early 1900's—there are cultural distinctions associated with members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, more commonly known as Mormons.

Author Wallace Stenger (cited in Section Two), in writing about this self-defining use of the term, and the idea of peculiarity stated: “these people belong to one another, to a place, to a faith. History, common effort, a quite remarkable social stability, and a notable cultural adaptation have made it so.” (Stenger, p.300) My religious observance as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is central to my cultural identity and that identity affects decision-making in all aspects of my life.

One aspect of my faith is that there is an expectation one should be continually engaged in improving oneself through service, self-sacrifice and education. While this cultural ideal is not unique, its implicit influence is the impetus behind my desire to pursue a PhD. It also provides context as to my chosen line of inquiry. As abstractly expressed in the poem *Rain* composed in book form and found at the beginning of this thesis, my inquiry is, in large part, designed to address the questions: is inspiration truly capricious in its arrival, can sources of inspiration be differentiated, and why do I respond to inspiration the way I do intellectually, emotionally and creatively, in the context of my religiosity?

In a certain sense, the LDS doctrine of foreordination colours my thinking on the subject. Foreordination declares that all individuals have been foreordained to fulfill certain responsibilities in this life. The doctrine allows that as individuals prove themselves worthy, they will be given opportunities to fulfill assignments. In the LDS faith, these assignments are referred to as callings, principally callings to positions of leadership within congregations, over entire geographical regions, or even in governing the world wide church.

Pink's text is an interesting treatise on visual ethnography. The dilemma is that visual ethnography is not a method or mechanism for inquiry employed in my research. Referencing the text serves chiefly to help define what is meant by an (auto)ethnographic voice, in the context of the notion of reflexive return, or reflexivity. There is a need, plainly speaking, to situate my deliberations in a boarder academic framework of academic sources. Pink's book provided insights into ethnography and reflexivity that help strengthen my contentions. And though visual ethnography is not an aspect of my focus, it could be considered a viable potential post-doctoral arena of inquiry and exposition.

4. Barrett, Estelle & Bolt, Barbara. *Practice as Research, Approaches to Creative Arts Inquiry*. London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd. 2007.

Stewart's dedicated chapter in *Practice as Research* is illuminating. In it she addresses New Stories for Praxis: Navigations, Narratives and Neonarratives. There is a denseness and yet easiness to her writing. Stewart begins by declaring that research is all about navigation. She then proceeds to describe how in her home country they drive on the left side of the road. Without situating herself in a particular foreign location, she describes being forced to drive on the right side of the road and as a result feeling uncertain and lacking in confidence. To cope Stewart proclaims, “I went orienteering.” (Stewart, Loc.2787)

It is storytelling that feels familiar and intimately relevant. It is a metaphor of sorts for my situation. To venture into the academic realm from the vocational realm is to, in a sense, go from driving on the right side of the road to the left side. And a part of me must ask: where was this book and this particular chapter when I first began my inquiry and training? Of course, it likely would not have had the impact then that it has on me now. In Section Five I will address how I needed to learn how to 'know for myself' in regards to doing research. Walking was the method that got me there. And, ironically as will be discovered by the reader in Section Two it was on a wilderness winter hike as a leader of a Boy Scout troop that—to further extend the metaphor—I

SECTION ONE

The doctrine of foreordination is speaking primarily if not exclusively in religious terms and to spiritual matters. It does however affect decision-making in the secular aspects of ones life. It in part explains the implicit influence I speak of above. If one is continually engaged in improving ones self through service, self-sacrifice and education, their ability to provide for themselves and their family can improve. Invariably this then puts them in a better position to serve in callings as lay leadership. On a different scale, lay leadership can lead to accepting greater responsibilities. As an example, the current President and Prophet of the LDS church, Russell M. Nelson, was in his secular life a renowned heart surgeon.

In no way do I intend to suggest this PhD was initiated in order to fulfill a religious mandate, or to feed aspirations, allusions or even potential delusions of grandeur. The doctrine of foreordination should not so simply be summarized and codified. There is a complexity to belief in the doctrine that this thesis cannot address—such as the issue of individual agency and its role relative to the doctrine. But in order to offer a clear working definition and sense for the use of the term faith, this homily of sorts is relevant. My desire to examine the capricious nature of inspiration as I understand it in the context of my own creative capacity is linked to my religiously and spiritually motivated desire to understand my place in the universe; in other words, to understand what I could be foreordained to accomplish in this mortal life, even in the context of my artistic practice.

The risk then in referencing my faith in context to my research is I could render myself a mere curiosity. Regardless, my deeply held religious beliefs hold considerable sway in my actions. I cannot compartmentalize that aspect of my life and keep it separate from what I read and discover through my research. And as a matter of faith, or considered from a faith perspective, all sources of inspiration can be linked to the divine. But that is not what this thesis is arguing. Rather, my inquiry hopes to arrive at an understanding that it is in agreement with neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (cited in Section Six) wherein he declares: “the spiritual is a particular state of the organism, a delicate combination of certain body configurations and certain mental configurations.” (Damasio, loc.3966) To which he then posits: “by connecting spiritual experiences to

was able to, “establish new ways of recognition and behavior ... to learn new cultural codes ... [and to find] my way through a foreign process until eventually,” I could feel comfortable and learn to drive on the left side of the road. (Stewart, Loc.2793)

Beyond the above stated ideas, there are many methods and ways of approaching practice-led research discussed in the book. Robyn Stewart’s chapter held specific relevance. There simply isn’t space to discuss all of the methods addressed. However, an important idea from the book to put forward comes from one of its editors, Estelle Barrett. She proposes:

“... artistic practice can be viewed as the production of knowledge or philosophy in action. Drawing on materialist perspectives, including Martin Heidegger’s notion of ‘handlability,’ our exploration of artistic research demonstrates that knowledge is derived from doing and from the senses.” (Barret, Loc.116)

In that context, it is important to repeat here what is already outlined in the segment of writing in the Primary Thread wherein this text is cited. Narrative, and specifically autobiography underpinned all of my research efforts. But I was only able to come to that realization, and appreciate the full impact of narrative and storytelling after engaging with walking as method. And this was the natural consequence of positioning my practice as case study. With the intent to demonstrate: “practice as research [can] produce knowledge that may be applied in multiple contexts.” (Barret, Loc.102)

5. Ayer, A. J. *The Problem of Knowledge, An enquiry into the main philosophical problems that enter into the theory of knowledge.* Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1956.

There is precious little space in this thesis to sincerely and fully flesh out the ideas of A.J. Ayer. The reference to his philosophy concerning the problem of knowledge is neither to claim or question the validity of my storytelling found interspersed throughout this document. Storytelling cannot escape the orbit of nuance and the editing power of the author. Yet, storytelling is first, as well as chief among means humans have of conveying

SECTION ONE

the neurobiology of [feelings and emotions], my purpose is not to reduce the sublime to the mechanic ... [but to] suggest that the sublimity of the spiritual is embodied in the sublimity of biology.” (Damasio, loc.3969)

Emotion

Researcher Dylan Evans (cited in Section Six), states: “there are several ways we might go about constructing a definition of emotion.” (Evans, Loc.1552) He goes on to posit that emotion can be defined in neurobiological, behavioral, or using “functional criteria, by defining emotions in terms of their role in the mental economy.” While in-depth consideration of his methods falls beyond the scope of my inquiry, such methods can help with my attempts at offering a working definition and sense for the use of the term emotion in this thesis.

In the context of this document when speaking about emotions I am often speaking about how my contemplations and mental responses to readings and research activities benefit from an acute awareness of my emotional nature. Affirming that I am in agreement with Evans, who declares in the preface of his book (again, cited in Section Six), “I argue for a return to the view of emotions as reason’s ally, not its enemy.” (Evans, Loc.187)

Fundamentally, I have always held that same view and assert, for me personally, to think is to be emotional. Correlatively, and as it relates to the body, I also subscribe to the theories of neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (also cited in Section Six), wherein he asserts: “emotions are actions or movements, many of them public, visible to others as they occur in the face, in the voice, in specific behaviors.” (Damasio, Loc.431) Thus, not only must I be emotional in order to think, but my body must be wholly invested in the thinking.

And while the quote by Damasio above speaks primarily to the dynamics of visual clues that can be observed in the context of interpersonal communication, through his extensive research Damasio makes the case that “emotions play out in the theatre of the body” (Damasio, Loc.431) in its entirety. Again, referencing the poem *Rain*, the words as rhythmically compiled abstractly and visually track a body in an anticipatory state: waiting on inspiration from

knowledge of events based on facts as they occurred, and that are stored in the recesses of the mind as memory. Ayer, in his chapter on memory writes:

“Philosophers who write about memory are generally inclined to treat it as though it were analogous to perception. Though what was remembered is past, the remembering takes place in the present.” He goes on to declare: “... but it is sometimes maintained that our trust in our memories can be justified by an inductive argument. The objection that this is no ordinary inductive argument may then lead to the conclusion that the deliverances of memory are justified in their own way.” (Ayer, p.134)

There is a repetitiveness to Ayer’s writing I admire. It does not feel monotonous. In my estimation, whether intentional or not, his writing in *The Problem of Knowledge* abstractly imitates the phenomena of memory and the ability of the human mind to endlessly recollect. Inarguably, I could not pursue my inquiry and simultaneously escape memory. Riding alongside memory is the spectre of truth. I identify it as spectre not to render it ominous, or even ineffable. Spectres are describable in a variety of ways and their designs are not always menacing. But in speaking back to the issue of trauma, and my sense for the use of the term in this document, the very idea of truth can be paralyzing: did what happened to me as a child really happen, is a game my mind plays repetitively. And that renders me keenly observant and careful to protect the integrity of all of my memories.

6. Osborn, Alex. *Unlocking Your Creative Power: How to Use Your Imagination to Brighten Life, to Get Ahead.* eBook. Amherst, Massachusetts: Hamilton Books, 1991-2009.

Unfettered enthusiasm for creative and innovative ideas, and specifically techniques and methods designed to generate more of them underlines the focus of Alex Osborn’s writings. The positivity with which he outlines his beliefs and how he speaks of his “record as a creative coach” (Osborn, loc.48) is so culturally familiar to me, reading them for the

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toes to head; yearning and hoping to be affected by drops of rain, and to bathe in and be cleansed by the whole-body experience that can accompany experiencing a burst of inspiration.

Beyond the visual and literary metaphor of the poem, when I experience strong emotion such as joy, say in response to arriving at a novel creative conclusion, my body can't help but move. For example, writing certain segments in this thesis left me feeling pleasantly agitated. It is as if—in a sense—as a means of celebrating what I have composed, I have to get up from my writing pose and amble about the room in which I have been seated. This is followed by me talking to myself, repeating what was written over and over in my mind, sometimes audibly and with a palpable energy.

Correlatively, anger has a similar, yet more profound effect on my actions. For example, due to my learning challenges, especially reading comprehension and in turn an inability to express thoughts related to what I have read in a coherent and timely fashion, the agitation I experience not only compels me to get up, but to quickly exit the space where I am situated. This reflexive and seemingly urgent flight is accompanied by a stupor of thought. Throughout my life, I have noted in personal journals how my brow furrows and I can feel the blood in the veins in my head and neck throbbing. My body in response to the stupor, is rendered inert accompanied by feeling disconnected from my surroundings.

Despite the potentially disconcerting nature of the experience, this torpid state and sense of being disconnected can be motivating. More so than joy, I have learned to leverage my anger and associated reactions, as a positive force in my practice. Perhaps because, when harnessed and not allowed to develop into self-loathing and feelings of dejection, my creative anger urges me to think imaginatively, and to exert concerted effort in looking at a situation from a variety of perspectives. Which in turn directly leads to experiencing more moments of creative joy.

In this document, my acute awareness of strong emotions effect on me, not exclusively during the thesis writing process, or when pursuing my research activities, but also when acting in a creative capacity will be noted. In fact,

first time felt as though I was remember hearing them spoken to me for the one hundredth time. It's difficult to not hear the voices of past teachers, ecclesiastical leaders, coaches or mentors in his literary tone, which is all at once comforting and disconcerting. Is the scope of my understanding, of my creative processes, limited to the arenas from whence those voices originate?

The enhanced ability to generate creative ideas, viewed as a puzzle to be solved, in the same way a basketball team might be taught to break down a two-three zone defense, is an intriguing prospect. Can set systems of movement, relying on muscle memory and matched by concerted effort, empower an individual to, per Osborn, unearth one's own "Aladdin's lamp, rub it hard enough and light their way," not only to a plethora of imaginative notions, but to "[a] better way of living—just as that same lamp lit up the march of civilization." (Osborn, loc.66)

There is a simplicity to Osborn's assertion that compels further investigation, and questions to be asked concerning his metaphor: what is that lamp in physiological, as well as psychological terms, in the context of the phenomenology of human experience? Specifically, what is that lamp in context to my research, wherein I aim to articulate an improved awareness of creativity as both a mental and corporeal mechanism? For that is the fundamental task I have set for myself: to examine if my own capacity for imaginative and creative thinking or doing, born of my creative processes can be better understood, articulated, and enhanced.

In that sense, referencing Osborn's ideas as a starting point to my deliberations is important. As indicated in the Primary Thread, his ideas point to the foundational concepts which underlie my comprehension of creative processes. As someone who employs brainstorming techniques with regularity and efficacy, I agree with his contention that:

"Our thinking mind is mainly two-fold: (1) A judicial mind which analyzes, compares and chooses, (2) A creative mind which visualizes, foresees, and generates ideas. These two minds work best together. Judgment keeps imagination on the track. Imagination not only opens ways to action, but also can enlighten

my inclusion of the Remarks & Verses reflects a need to express an inner emotional voice present during my research activities. While as stated the Remarks & Verses are personal aphorisms, they can also be considered laments and perturbations, though not quite melancholia.

Additionally, it is important to note that an acute awareness of my emotional state as much or more and even as a characteristic of my religiosity, also affects my decision-making in all aspects of my life. In my religious observance, it is encouraged and I willfully strive to maintain a continual awareness of what I am feeling and experiencing emotionally in any given circumstance.

The second article of faith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints declares: “We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression.” Personal agency is an integral tenet of our faith. This is exemplified in a fundamental teaching that declares: “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.” Thus, from a religious perspective, my aim in life is to find the good and remain mentally positive even in the worst of situations. As a consequence, the hope then is to always be able to deal with adversity in a positive manner, and strive to empathize with others where possible.

Having served in a variety of lay leadership positions throughout my adult life in the LDS church, the intention is to rely on this willful, constant awareness of feelings and emotions as a means to guide inter-personal interactions. The hope is to literally be a blessing to others through a developed capacity for compassion and long-suffering. This desired attitude is fostered in LDS youth from a young age. Beyond how it prepares one to serve in leadership capacities, it also affects the way in which one approaches all other aspects of life.

In contrast, and even in opposition to this attitude is an ever-present, latent and inexpressible anger prevalent in my emotional make-up. It most certainly is a consequence of the sexual abuse I suffered as a child. Admittedly, my ire can be easily provoked. As a result, I can be reflexively guarded while simultaneously confrontational. In my experience, my guardedness and confrontational mannerisms are construed as volatility. Frankly, a certain economy of action is required to address the latent anger that is an

judgment.” (Osborn, loc.52)

However, I also concede that Osborne’s beliefs, at least as he prescribed them, have been discredited. Embracing the reality that there are complex forces at work, which potentially render his formula effective so long as they are customized and updated, per a contemporary understanding of their usefulness.

And through my research, as revealed in this thesis documentation, I have embraced the need to push beyond the simplicity of Osborn’s generalizations, mindful of their impact on my creative life up to this point, with the aim to examine what those complex forces, as noted above, might be relative to my practice.

7. Pope, Rob. *Creativity: Theory, History, Practice*. eBook. London and New York: Routledge, 2005.

What could it mean, in the context of my research, to open Pandora’s box? In some measure, each book opened and examined touching on the subject of creativity, or that was relevant to my efforts and development of my methodology, represented a container holding unexpected trouble. In the sense that theories or ideas of any given text might derail my research by forcing me to address notions on creativity that risk pushing my inquiry beyond the scope of this thesis.

Rob Pope’s book, however, invited the type of trouble that my inquiry seemed poised to uncover. In particular, due to the myriad references it contains, Pope’s text begged me to re-address especially relevant ideas on the subject of creativity, applicable to my research.

At some point reading, scanning and examining Pope’s book left me with the feeling that it was written with my research in mind. That is not to suggest kismet or that my findings, as laid out here in this documentation, are comparable in scope to the scholarship represented by his text. Rather, my statement of endorsement is proffered to reinforce the idea that my research efforts, though modest by comparison, are perhaps similarly timely and relevant to contemporary conceptions related to the study of creativity and creative processes.

In the Primary Thread, under the title ‘An Introduction’ I write: ... This will allow me to

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ever-present aspect of my emotional comportment. Thus, if acknowledged and promptly expressed the latent anger in a sense is released, and the risk of it evolving into rage eliciting bouts of despair and self-loathing is diminished.

As related through storytelling segments found in both the Primary and Secondary threads, this awareness of my emotional nature will be noted. Especially, in how it affected my research focused decision-making in ways not originally anticipated. It will also be noted how strong emotions coloured my responses to readings, and further explains the importance of the stream of consciousness and unconventional structure of the Secondary thread. Lastly, my definition and sense for the use of the term emotion also reveals to the reader how my mind and body responded not only to my physically related research actions, namely walking and hiking, but to my readings, permitting me to experience important insights related to my initial abstract.

Phenomenology

While Heidegger is cited (in Section Six), and the existentialist contemplations of Sartre are addressed (in Section Three), my use of the term in this document closely aligns with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's focus on the body as being central to human experience.

In his book, *Phenomenology of Perception* (cited in Section Six), Merleau-Ponty proposes: "In so far as, when I reflect on the essence of subjectivity, I find it bound up with that of the body and that of the world, this is because my existence as subjectivity is merely one with my existence as a body and with the existence of the world ... " He goes on to propose, "because the subject that I am, when taken concretely, is inseparable from this body and this world ... on the one hand the world itself [can be] contracted into a comprehensive grasp, and on the other the body itself [can be considered] a knowing-body." (Merleau-Ponty, p.475)

Begging the question: what does my "knowing-body" know? Not as separate from my mind but as a partner with the mind, or rather the mind as object bound to the physical world, through which I am able to engage my imagination, and act and think creatively. In the context of this document then, my definition and sense of the use of the term phenomenology represents my efforts to observe

examine the usefulness of my research, with regard to my own creative and imaginative thinking, in a context separate from my art-making. Initially, in follow-up to that statement, I declared: Particularly, in circumstances wherein creative ability can be considered a commodity, which could be of interest to arts education focused readers, amongst others.

In referencing that specific declaration, my Director of Study, in the editing process, suggested any such statement requires greater clarification, especially if included at this point in the text. Upon first consideration of the recommendation, I was forced to contemplate what I considered to be the self-evident nature of my statement. As a vocationally situated professor, it can be argued I am in the business of commodifying creativity. The entirety of my professional career has required me to barter my creative talent and capacity for imaginative thinking for money, and in turn, as a college professor, empower others to do similarly. While I agree further clarification on this point is best reserved for concluding paragraphs, it is important to consider the implications here, in deference to Rob Pope's assertions.

In his book, on the pages between the cover and the index, under the title 'Creativity,' Pope declares in a series of promotional style chapter sub-headings: "why creativity now?" Offers much-needed alternatives to both the Romantic stereotype of the creator as individual genius and the tendency of the modern creative industries to treat everything as a commodity." (Pope, loc.2)

Later, as read in his chapter, 'Why creativity now?' Pope carefully lays out his argument against ideologies, which equate creativity with production. In contending with Marxist critiques of Terry Eagleton, and Pierre Macherey, Pope proffers:

"More striking and perhaps disturbing, however, is the total conviction with which the term 'creation' is 'supressed' by Macherey and the equally unyielding certainty with which it is replaced by the term 'production.'" (Pope, loc.525)

Pope goes on to assert that such ideologies are revolutionary and offer the 'threat' and 'promise' of a "new wor(l)d order." (Pope, loc.525) To me, his retort is on point. In further engaging with Eagleton and Macherey's ideas, Pope concludes that while they have not failed in addressing the paradoxical

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and reflect upon perception as perceived and consciousness, or conscious states of mind grasped in the context of my research activities, and subsequent creative thinking and art-making.

In this document there will be story telling segments that outline my phenomenological observations and reflections. For example, one story recounts my awareness of my bodily state while on a wilderness winter hike with a Boy Scout troop of which I was a leader. Suffering through extreme winter temperatures and sleep deprived, I watched as the boys happened upon a felled tree and then marveled at their spirited physical responses to it (see: Section Two). Numbed by the cold and evident fatigue, the Scouts corporeal engagement with the tree contrasted my own inaction. This prompted me to contemplate on my lethargy. Later while reflecting on the incident I arrived at interesting insights concerning the current state of my artistic practice—ultimately affecting how I chose to proceed in the development of my research methodology which includes engaging in physical activities such as hiking and walking.

In another storytelling segment I recount an incident with a bumble bee (see: Section Three). While on a spontaneous walk the bee approached and hovered about my torso. The stillness of my pose and lack of overt corporeal response to the insect's intrusion into and out of the space my body occupied afforded me an important moment of contemplation concerning perception and states of consciousness. In particular, the potential state of consciousness of the insect versus my own. Which in turn led to contemplations about my childhood proclivity for escaping into the woods and walking along the edge of the creek near my home. An activity I would repeat, and that offered profound insights related to my research, but also highlights my growing awareness of my levels of consciousness, from the first person perspective.

These are not the only stories which point to my sense for the use of the term phenomenology in this thesis. Those mentioned above in particular speak to, per Merleau-Ponty, my desire to address: “the first need [to] know how I experience my own cultural world, my own civilization,” and in turn, “see a certain use made by other men of the implements which surround me.” Permitting me to “interpret their behavior by analogy with my own,

relationship between creation and production, “the obvious problems, in hindsight, are that [the] terms are resolutely binary and that [Macherey] wants to resolve the dialectic in his own either/or terms (i.e. thesis and antithesis) rather than find another term and concept between and beyond (a fresh synthesis).” (Pope, loc.551)

Essentially, if I am to understand Pope, he is arguing against a Marxist dismissal of the term creativity and its cognates creative and creation as “traditional, rather old-fashioned concept[s] to be demystified and dismissed.” (Pope, loc.500) Leading me to then ask of myself, do I not risk being similarly dismissive? In other words, owing to the origins of my understanding of creativity and its cognates, am I not demystifying my own understanding of creative processes, by making them more methodical and production like, and in turn declaring them old-fashioned?

Ultimately, and concisely I am, in some measure, endeavoring to resolve the dialectic relationship between my imaginative and creative capacity, my creative activities in all their variations, and the potential role emotion plays in my thinking and doing. Hoping to move ‘between’ and ‘beyond’ and arrive at my own ‘fresh synthesis,’ wherein both creativity and its cognates creative and creation stand alongside the terms process and production, without the latter replacing the former and each understood in the context of my practice.

8. Kozbelt, Aaron, et al. *Theories of Creativity*. The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity, edited by James C. Kaufman and Robert J. Sternberg, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010, pp. 20–47. Cambridge Handbooks in Psychology.

Aaron Kozbelt, Ronald A. Begheuo, and Mark A. Runco declare, “creative ideas often result from divergent thinking, but too much divergence leads to irrelevant ideas that are not creative in the sense of being both original and useful ...” (Kozbelt, Aaron, et al. p.20) Which begs the question: where is the threshold, or break point when it is determined too much is too much? Per Kozbelt et al, in terms of brainstorming techniques or methodologies designed to enhance creativity, the break point or threshold varies. Actions designed to “shift one’s perspective ... can be useful, but not if they are so extreme that ideas and solutions have no connection to the problem at hand.” (Kozbelt, Aaron,

and through my inner experience,” thus “[teaching] me the significance and intention of perceived gestures ... [satisfying my] need to know how an object in space can become the eloquent relic of an existence ... [and] how, conversely, an intention, a thought or a project can detach themselves from the personal subject and become visible out-side him in the shape of his body, and in the environment which he builds for himself.” (Merleau-Ponty, p.406)

Trauma

As a victim of childhood sexual abuse, the trauma associated with that event in my life is narratively described in the excerpts found in the appendix in Section Seven. Though the excerpts are not designed to examine a lifetime spent reconciling and compartmentalizing the distress experienced, they do provide evidence of a unique perspective on the subject of trauma. This is fundamental to understanding how my experience in dealing with strong emotions, as a result of the trauma experienced, helps me recognize the role emotions can play in my creative thinking and art-making. In turn the excerpts can also help the reader better understand my assertion that strong emotion influenced my research activities and the development of my methodology (outlined in Sections Four and Five).

Invariably, throughout my life I have dealt with what is commonly defined as post-traumatic stress. Per the Canadian Counseling and Psychotherapy Association, post-traumatic stress disorder is a potential consequence of childhood sexual abuse. The disorder can result in an individual re-experiencing a trauma event through things such as intrusive thoughts, in addition to dealing with exaggerated emotional responses to triggers (a more expansive definition of the terms post-traumatic stress is found in Section Seven preceding the appendix containing excerpts from *How Deep is Deep Enough*). This is important to note. In different sections I use the word trigger when speaking about situations or events triggering emotional and creative responses from me. I also use the word in the context of describing the functionality of interactive design projects initiated as a result of my research activities. But in Section Two, I address how a particular book triggered me

et al. p.20)

In parsing their argument further, it's clear Kozbelt et al. agree that situations where creativity enhancing techniques may be initiated, demand a high volume of divergence in order to achieve a truly innovative outcome, with the caveat that in order to “understand creativity in all of its richness, there is a need for moderation.” (Kozbelt, Aaron, et al. p.20) Therefore, in answering the question of where the break point or threshold can be found, it is clear Kozbelt et al. favour creativity enhancing actions and activities that are not extreme in nature or in the imaginative thinking they produce. This supports a conclusion I arrive at, per the development of my methodology, and which will be explained in greater detail, in the Primary Thread, in subsequent sections starting under the heading The Impetus of My Walking as Method.

Lingering further here with Kozbelt et al's arguments, it is important to note that they declare moderation is the governing principle by which they provide a “review of major contemporary theories of creativity.” And in so doing, they have chosen to: “... emphasize pluralism, whereby a multitude of theoretical perspectives, with different assumptions and methods, and operating at different levels of analysis, all (ideally) contribute to a more robust—if at times, contestable—understanding of human creativity.” (Kozbelt, Aaron, et al. p.20)

Correspondingly, this thesis, and in particular this Secondary thread, is constructed with a similar emphasis in mind. Certainly, there are many artists who share my outlook, and who's artistic experiences are similar to mine. Invariably, the ideas of Paul Klee and Joseph Beuys, among others will be considered. In so doing it is my hope to also “embrace pluralism” in the same sense Kozbelt et al have in their essay.

Thus, if as stated in the Primary Thread, my inquiry can be situated among at least three of the theories highlighted in Kozbelt et al's essay, in response, a moderated look at a variety of theories of creativity is not only prudent but desirable. In part, the intent would be to thoroughly probe the notion that some aspects of my tacit knowledge may not in fact be communicable, in the sense that they cannot be precisely articulated, regardless of the umbrella theory or theories under which they have been couched. Again, speaking of break

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in a manner akin to what I have faced due to my experience with sexual abuse related trauma.

Through therapy, one can learn how to deal with triggers. The aim is to first learn to note and in turn distinguish between triggers, and then learn to diffuse their impact by developing strategies on how to respond to the flood of emotions they can produce. One major challenge in effectively implementing any strategy is learning to deal with the improbability of being able to account for every situation or circumstance that can be considered a triggering event. Noting, distinguishing and responding to triggers is a continual exercise that requires near constant emotional recalibration by an individual who is learning to deal with the realities of post-traumatic stress.

Succinctly, it is important to declare that this document is not positioned to delve deeply into concepts surrounding triggers or post-traumatic stress. There is a sensitivity and scope of investigation required that falls beyond the aims of my inquiry. But in my attempt to define and offer a sense for the use of the term trauma my extensive personal experience must be considered. It reinforces my contention that I am both aware of my emotional nature and acutely sensitive to emotion and its impact on my decision-making.

Further, I posit that my definition and sense for the use of the term trauma is best appreciated as it relates to my definitions and use of the terms phenomenology, emotion and faith as they are offered above. In that my faith presented me with the first means and mechanisms to understand and appreciate emotion, while my readings provided me with the notion that emotion is linked to the body and that in context to phenomenology, the body is central to understanding my human experience, especially that experience as framed in the context of my notion of creative caprice.

On The Explication of Methodology

Before concluding this preamble, a concise word should be written explicating the principle research methodology used and discussed in this document. Walking functioned as the primary method of my research process. Specifically, how my walking method was formalized, which led to the emergence and evolution of a series of sub-methods, will be

points and thresholds, what is the break point or threshold where the determination is made that my practice is uniquely applicable to me and my social, economic, biological and happenstantial circumstances?

My inquiry at times, if not largely, has been arguably scientific in both approach and execution, while at the same time, it has been metaphorical in implementation. The authors of *Theories of Creativity* address distinctions that can be made between the two orientations by stating: “We define scientifically oriented theories as having an underlying goal of mapping the empirical reality of creative phenomena. In contrast, more metaphorically oriented theories attempt to provide alternative representations of creative phenomena.” (Kozbelt, Aaron, et al. p.21)

Why not then appeal to references that are more focused on issues of leadership in business arenas, along-side scientific discovery aligned approaches, in conjunction with art centric and philosophical ideologies? Certainly, such a survey cannot be indiscriminate, but at the same time—again, in the case of this document structure—can disparate references be linked together as long threads, which can be appreciated as both individual segments, but also seen as a belonging to a whole tapestry of writing representative of a swath of compelling ideas on the subject of human creativity?

Indeed, in arguing in favor of embracing pluralism I am indirectly arguing in support of this documentation structure. The manner in which certain references tangentially draw the reader away from the Primary Text, while other references adhere to standard academic documentation conventions are indicative of the way in which my mind is affected by the plurality of ideas I have encountered, some holding sway to the extent they compel me to consider them in written form alongside their citation.

All of which serves to highlight the paradoxical nature of an individual artist formulating his own theory of creativity through a practice-led research process. Plainly, what’s new about my theories is that they are not necessarily new models of thinking, but rather they are representative of a unique perspective, which can add to and inform the multiplicity of pre-existing models of thinking concerning human creativity.

discussed in detail in Sections Four and Five. Additionally, an important scientific source along with a variety of academic sources related to walking as both a creativity boosting mechanism and tool for doing research and art-making will be addressed throughout the document starting in Section Two. Per the aforementioned evolution and application of the walking method and resulting sub-methods, it is important to assert an auto-ethnographic voice emerged as a result of my research activities. This auto-ethnographic voice allowed for a qualitative aspect, and type of “reflexive return” in my research to arise. This voice will be contextualized here, and addressed again in the concluding Section Six.

Under the sub title “Reflexive Return” Graeme Sullivan, in his book *Art Practice as Research* (also referenced in Section Six) explains: “reflexivity, as discussed within the context of critical theory, acknowledges the positive impact of experience as a necessary agency to help frame responses and to fashion actions.” Sullivan goes on to explain, “reflexivity is associated with ... self-critique.” (Sullivan, p.62)² The ability to self-critique my actions and activities during the research process was fundamental to the realization of my findings. Sarah Pink, in her book *Doing Visual Ethnography* declares: “A reflexive approach recognizes the centrality of the subjectivity of the researcher to the production and representation of ethnographic knowledge.” She goes on to state that, “reflexivity goes beyond the researcher’s concern with questions of bias and is not simply a mechanism.” Pink then summarizes her thoughts by positing: “The assumption that a reflexive approach will aid ethnographers to produce objective data represents a ... cosmetic engagement with reflexivity.” This idea is followed by her contention that subjectivity should not be avoided. But rather, subjectivity should be considered fundamental to “ethnographic knowledge, interpretation and representation.” (Pink, p.36)³

In the book, *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, researcher Robyn Stewart deals with the issue of reflexivity differently. She approaches the subject from the perspective as a “teacher of artists.” Stewart writes:

“As you see, I am arguing that if we are going to play in the field of research we need to understand many research methods. We need to appreciate that each has limits and strengths in order to make a fit between the models selected and the particular needs of the

Acknowledging such helps me “situate [my] theories in the broader theoretical and empirical landscape of the domain, acknowledging and, when possible, [incorporating a plurality of perspectives],” (Kozbelt, Aaron, et al. p.40) while also inviting me to assert that first what I have to say on the subject is informed, and secondly it is new knowledge; precisely because—per an existential contemplation I have wrestled with since childhood—it helps me reconcile with the idea that though I am not an original being, I am a contextually unique facsimile of my progenitors. And as such my uniqueness is exceptional. (see: Remark 1)

9. Boden, Margaret A. *The Creative Mind: Myths and Mechanisms*. Second edition - eBook. New York, New York: Routledge, 2004.

At the beginning of chapter four, Margaret A. Boden in her book *The Creative Mind: Myths and Mechanisms* constructs a narrative about a young girl, with access to unlimited materials, learning to create beaded necklaces and bracelets in an infinite number of varieties. A professor of cognitive science at the University of Sussex, Boden uses the narrative to assert that a computer, enhanced by artificial intelligence, if possessed of large amounts of data concerning the innumerable possibilities inherent in patterns of creative thought and behaviours, could algorithmically reveal how human creativity works. It’s an interesting theory. While the focus of my research is not on AI research into human creativity, Boden’s book nonetheless provided me with a sound introductory look at the idea that creativity is potentially a solvable equation—one that, per Boden is well suited to being arrived at through computational processes and in the domain of creative mathematics.

In looking closer at Boden’s narrative and the heuristic ramifications of her contentions, it’s difficult to imagine a synthetic device, powered by an artificial intelligence being able to elucidate on “what it is like to be creative in many different fields.” (Boden, loc.40) If only for the fact that the human child, as implied in the narrative, likely received minimal or no training and was left to her own devices upon being given access to the materials required to make the necklaces and bracelets. Whereas, an artificial intelligence would not merely require similar training and

REMARK I

Am I an act of creation that has been added to a grand narrative with a perpetual archive, and is my purpose to extricate myself from that narrative, write my own text, and create a new archive as infinite as my own existence?

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paradigm under investigation. We need to use research as an interactive process shaped by our personal histories, gender, social class, biography, ethnicity and race. The resulting bricolage will be a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation that represents the researcher's stories, representations, understandings and interpretations of the world and the phenomena under investigation." (Stewart, Loc. 2901) ⁴

It is then her follow-up ideas concerning where to start and her recommendation to begin with "linking art and life" through autobiography that resonates most readily with my investigations. The foundation of the auto-ethnographic voice that emerged as a result of my research efforts is unequivocally autobiographical. To wit Stewart declares: "Not only does autobiographical method give us voice, it enables us to write aspects of our lives in a special kind of way." (Stewart, loc.2932) Stewart then goes on to explain, "autobiography enables the practitioner to apprehend artistic practice by revealing personal experience in the context of life stories, as the basis of research." (Stewart, loc.2931)

The reader of this text will go on to discover that the choice to employ walking as method has its origins in autobiography. In turn the sub-methods derived from the walking method also trace their origins to autobiography. However, it needs to be clarified that it was only through the invention and full articulation of my walking method that autobiography could be understood as forming "the basis of my research." Thus, walking (and the resulting sub-methods) is rightly designated primary, underpinned by an inherent autobiographical method which buttresses the auto-ethnographic voice. This provided insights on one of the motivations behind my inquiry by helping explain 'why I do what I do,' as will be discussed later in this section and effectively parroting Robyn Stewart wherein she posits:

"By using (auto)biography as personal history, and viewing events within a historical context, we are able to better understand a personal situation by bringing forward prior, related experience ... Such an approach provides a foundation and reference to explain why people act the way they do." (Stewart, loc.2937)

From the outset, the aim of my inquiry was to position my practice as a case study aware of but independent from

access to the same materials, but also, it would need to be taught, and allowed the time and life-experience necessary to grasp context: specifically, the desire to want to adorn a human body with ornamentation in the first place—let alone what it means, organically, to have an actual neck or wrist around which to strap a necklace or bracelet.

If, as Boden declares (as highlighted in the Primary Thread) human creativity is a paradox, is it not a contradiction to suggest an intelligently aware computer, upon being fed data concerning what it means to be creative, in a distinctly human sense, would somehow end up acting creatively, in similar fashion to a human child? Rather, doesn't it stand to reason that if artificial consciousness is achieved, the synthetic entity possessed of it would invent a decidedly non-human intuitive nature with each creative endeavor it chooses to undertake? In other words, the computer would end up acting as only a consciously aware computer could act within the context of its own developmental adolescence, which might not at all be similar to human developmental adolescence, regardless of the initial human influence and behavior modeling used to program it. Posing the following questions: what then could this truly tell us, if anything, about human creativity? Would it not, except acting as a comparator, mostly inform us concerning the potential of synthetic creativity and creative process?

Taking all of the above into consideration, Boden's ideas offered me the opportunity to consider whether or not the manufactured and thus arguably synthetic methods, designed to enhance my imaginative thinking and creative processes and that I planned to develop, could be considered inorganic and therefore inauthentic to my otherwise intuitive artistic nature? In striving to design a systematic methodology, do I risk rendering what otherwise could be considered spontaneous, emotive and incommunicable creative acts, coldly rational and highly formulaic (robotic) acts?

In that sense, then, Boden's theories prompted me to ask: Are there a series of ones and zeros, or repeating patterns that lead to innumerable expressions of the creative self? If so, and pressing, is it within the scope of my research to uncover and analyze such patterns, through programmed-like efforts, allowing me to repeat certain exercises again and again, with the intent

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the direct influence of other artist researchers who focus on walking as a part of their practice. Not because other references are not considered relevant, important and impactful, but precisely because, as a result of learning to develop a methodology through the introduction of walking to my practice, stories derived from or calling back to my (auto)biography, were easily recognized as—despite having been obscured up to this stage of my life—fertile ground from which unique insights on the issue of my creative capriciousness could be cultivated.

In connecting the notion of my practice as case study to the dynamic of reflexivity, it is important to take a closer albeit brief look at one aspect in particular of the walking method and at three of the aforementioned resultant sub-methods. The first instance the auto-ethnographic voice began to emerge is in the list-making of the jot journals captured immediately following a walk (see: *Walking Index*, Section Five). Again, the reader will learn about all elements of the walking method in detail in Sections Four and Five. As a direct consequence of the walking method, a practice of making custom envelopes, writing letters to artists and philosophers and mailing them to myself as a way of discarding non-relevant ideas was initiated. The letter writing functioned as a means of critical reflection upon literature consumed per the demands of the research focus. The writing and critical reflection then spurred me to collect cast-off items from my envelop-making actions, as well as to make scrapings from leftover paint as an element of an emergent painting practice inspired by the research process. All of which culminated in attempts to recapture facets of the discarded ideas through the creation of abstract visual (and otherwise) articulations of concepts and ideas prevalent in my research, and then compiled as a website.

Owing to the fact that further discussion on the particulars of my research efforts is premature and risk derailing the pending dissemination of my discoveries and realizations, there is a need to move on and get to the stories to be told about my research activities and how they are potentially connected to, if not compelled by stories from my past. However, it is important to pause and briefly contemplate on the problem of knowledge, supported by memory and recollections and their influence in the context of an auto-ethnographic voice as identified above. A. J. Ayer in his

to carefully document relevant and revelatory reoccurrences that could be inherent in them?

As outlined in my initial research abstract, cited in the Primary Thread, I have to submit that that is what, in part, my intentions are intimating: To develop and apply a systematic, if not computational in nature approach in my efforts to understand my own capacity for acting creatively. However, my sincere intent is to set up a system based on context and experience, whereas a programmed computer model would need to have its spontaneity set by an algorithm, or preconfigured parameters. Accepting that both may work within the bounds of rules and constraints instituted to generate potential creative responses, the establishing of those constraints arises differently owing to the fact my intelligence is organic and not artificial.

Additionally, Boden's book also introduced me to concepts concerning the human ability to construct maps of "the mental processes going on in [one's] own mind." (Boden, loc.1938) Turning to the Preface, under the title In a "Nutshell," and while providing her definition of creativity, Boden opens her thoughts with the sub-heading query, "What is Creativity?" to which she responds: "Creativity is the ability to come up with ideas or artefacts that are new, surprising and valuable." She goes on to explain that, "artefacts include paintings, sculptures, steam engines [etc.]" (Boden, loc.151) After further explanations concerning what is meant by surprising and valuable, Boden asserts that there are three forms of creativity: combinational, explorative and transformative.

In context to my practice, Boden's three forms of creativity offer me umbrellas under which I could locate what it is I do daily as a vocationally situated professor. On a certain scale, the curriculum I am tasked with building and delivering provides opportunities for students to (using Boden's words) "combine ideas familiar to them" and explore a "space of concepts" surrounding principles of design and development unique to the discipline they are studying. Ultimately, the goal of the curriculum is to provide students with the tools and knowledge necessary to then transform the space of concepts and allow for new combinations of ideas to be generated.

Certainly, utilizing brainstorming techniques is fundamental to the process, but Boden's

book titled *The Problem of Knowledge*, demurs:

“The answers to which we have found for the questions we have so far been discussing have not yet put us in a position to give a complete account of what it is to know that something is the case.” (Ayer, p.31) Ayer then goes on to assert: “When we claim the right to be sure of the truth of any given statement, the basis of the claim may be either that the statement is self-evident, or that its truth is directly warranted by our experiences, or that it is validly derivable from some other statement, or set of statements of which we have the right to be sure.” (Ayer, p.40) 5

In that sense there is little resolve on my part to excessively defend what is shared from the precincts of (borrowing from Ayer) my “privacy of experience.” The recollections, both directly research related and especially those found in the addendum containing excerpts from the performance text *How Deep is Deep Enough* are profound in their impact. They are offered with the avowal that they represent a right to be sure. And again, borrowing from Ayer:

“The difference is that to say that he knows is to concede to him the right to be sure, while to say that he is only guessing is to withhold it. Whether we make this concession will depend upon the view which we take of his performance ... But if he were repeatedly successful in a given domain, we might very well come to say that he knew the facts in question, even though we could not explain how he knew them. We should grant him the right to be sure, simply on the basis of his success.” (Ayer, p.33)

On Theories of and the Study of Creativity

The International Center for the Study of Creativity at Buffalo State University was established with the intent to enhance creative thinking skills and leadership practices, in particular as related to corporate success and individual advancement. One of the founders of the center, Alex F. Osborn, once declared: “Whatever creative success I gained was due to my belief that creative power can be stepped up by effort ...” Idealistic in tone, he concludes his declaration with the pragmatic assertion, “that there are ways in which

conceptions helped me frame my previously discussed awareness and processes differently. As will be discussed later in this thesis in both the Primary and Secondary Threads, certain artworks and research projects, directly related to the teaching aspects of my practice, will be examined. At this stage of the thesis it is more pertinent to scrutinize other ideas Boden outlines under the next bolded sub-heading, also found in the Preface, titled Exploring Conceptual Spaces.

Boden writes, “Conceptual spaces are structured styles of thought,” which she goes on to explain are normally derived from one’s culture and peer groups. Included in these conceptual spaces are “ways to write prose or poetry; styles of sculpture, painting or music; theories in chemistry or biology ...” Supplementary to these ideas, Boden then observes: “Whatever the size of the space, someone who comes up with a new idea within that thinking style is being creative.” (Boden, loc.217)

Easy to grasp, Boden’s observations invited me to consider the impact my culture had on why I do what I do, and how that informed what I would do, whether planned or unplanned with regards to my research activities. It was the first time I contemplated whether or not my initial and eventual experimentations were accidental in the sense I was merely being playful, or do I gravitate towards acting creatively, whether it be in a practice-led research sense, or in my art-making, in a manner that is consistent with my cultural identity? The final section of this thesis will unveil my conclusions on that subject. For now, it is pertinent to consider Boden’s perceptions on conceptual spaces further.

Circumspectly, I began to imagine her ideas as parsed above in a much more literal sense. Could I consistently construct simulacrum, representative of the conceptual spaces my mind wanders to, or rather in and out of, serendipitously? Towards the end of chapter four, Boden surmises that, “how can one describe a conceptual space, as opposed to merely listing its inhabitants? [How] can one know that a particular idea really is situated in one conceptual space, rather than another?” (Boden, loc.1955)

Ultimately, Boden offers an answer by conveying how “artificial intelligence can not only describe conceptual spaces: it can actively explore them, too.” (Boden, loc.1947) Per my research inquiry, I felt

we can guide our creative thinking.” (Osborn, loc. 42)²

The creator of the group brainstorming method, as a defined process for generating creative ideas, Osborn’s techniques at one time were influential in corporate culture. In the many subsequent years since his theories on group brainstorming techniques gained notoriety, Osborne’s methods have been discredited and empirically demonstrated ineffective. Regardless, it is clear that Osborne’s ideas on the power of collaboration have proven significant.

Human creativity can be enhanced by individuals working in teams. As well, in my experience, certain aspects of Osborn brainstorming techniques have proven vital in helping me prepare to engage in any variety of creative endeavors. Brainstorming, highly personalized and customized, can be considered an effective means to generate ideas for tasks as diverse as writing an essay, organizing group activities, as by a Boy Scout leader, or generating creative concepts for the creation of a work of art.

Seen through the lens of the North American work ethic ethos, Osborn’s brainstorming method provides an effective means by which imaginative solutions to complex problems can be arrived at through concerted effort. Having perpetuated brainstorming related techniques as a student, teacher and professional of the design disciplines, I have relied on my own highly personalized and unique brainstorming methods, which include list-making and mind-mapping throughout my creative life and certainly in my PhD research process. (see: fig.1)

Based upon my understanding of the method as applied technique, brainstorming relies on a person’s ability to connect otherwise unrelated ideas abstractly through word association and mind-mapping. Purveyors of the method presuppose that persons employing it are possessed of a diverse vocabulary, permitting them to write down a multiplicity of related terms with distinct meanings. The key is teaching a new user of the method how to adapt the techniques to their own peculiar set of circumstances, make connections between seemingly random words representing distinct ideas, and in turn draw novel conclusions from them.

During a guest lecture on the campus where I teach, Dr. Gerard J. Puccio, department chair and professor at the International Centre for Studies in Creativity at

compelled to attempt an answer of my own, not through mechanical computational methods, but rather through organically repetitive methods, in the context of an active mind and body. Ideally, could I grab hold of and apply a measure of Boden’s theories in order to better understand my own, seemingly autonomic, yet intuitive creative practices? (See: Remark 2)

10. Turner, Mark. *The Artful Mind: Cognitive Science and the Riddle of Human Creativity*. eBook. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2006.

How old is man? How old is art? What is modern? are the three principal questions, in my estimation, being asked in *The Artful Mind*. Edited by Mark Turner, the book includes essays from experts in the fields of neuroscience, cognitive and developmental psychology, archeology, vision sciences, evolutionary theoretical studies, fine arts and art history, semiotics, sociology and cultural history. These present an array of methodologies and modes of thinking aimed at examining the phenomenon that is the “cognitively modern” human mind, which as Turner asserts, “is to be robustly artful.” (Boden, loc.89) In that sense, the book offered me access to broad historical, cultural and scientific contexts, within which I could begin to situate my research activities, with the aim of helping me unravel, in some measure, the riddle of my own modern (in a post neolithic sense), robustly artful mind.

Linked together artfully, the chapter essays of *The Artful Mind* represent an editorial narrative that is remarkable in its undertaking. Each essay though distinct, serves a larger conceptual purpose—to bring together complimentary ideas from experts operating in seemingly disparate disciplines. Which strikes me as important to point out, if only because the structure of my thesis documentation, in particular this Secondary Thread, not to mention links to the Verses and Remarks found throughout, is in some measure designed to function similarly—in an editorial sense. But setting aside an examination of narrative and structure, a particular conception found in first chapter of the book titled, “Art and Cognitive Evolution,” seemed particularly germane to my inquiry.

Merlin Donald, a professor of Cognitive Science and writer of the chapter asserts: “human culture

REMARK 2

The notion of the ‘obsolete human’ is an irrational fear. However, giving into such fears—to which we so easily succumb—is how we risk rendering ourselves humanly obsolete.

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Buffalo State, expounded upon the dynamics of the brainstorming method. Through ideation, word play, spontaneous speaking and writing down key words related to an issue requiring a creative solution, the method can foster divergent thinking. A potential consequence of this divergent thinking is improved or enhanced convergent thinking, specifically related to the issue for which the brainstorming technique was initiated.

As a part of his presentation, Dr. Puccio displayed a graphic of a diamond shape. Descending on the outside of the diamond from its apex were arrows on the left and right accompanied by the words ‘divergent thinking.’ In the centre, in a channel linking the top and bottom points of the diamond, appeared the words ‘area of familiarity,’ while the words ‘area of discovery’ could be found in the left and right points of the diamond. Descending on the outside from those left and right points were arrows leading to the base point on the diamond, accompanied by the words ‘convergent thinking.’ (see: fig.2)

Surmised from the graphic and Dr. Puccio’s presentation is the notion that during the creative problem-solving process, once divergent thinking is initiated through brainstorming exercises, an individual can imaginatively uncover new ways of thinking about or comprehending a familiar concept. The new ways of thinking and understanding can therefore prompt fresh insights related to the subject matter, for which the brainstorming efforts were initiated. Construed as convergent thinking, these new insights represent the merging of familiar and newly realized perspectives.

Exciting for me, was not Dr. Puccio’s elaborations or the connections I might be able to make between the ideas advanced in his presentation and say Donald Schön’s notions of Reflection-in-Action (discussed in the Secondary thread of Section Three). It was in fact the creative conception I arrived at and noted in response to his explanations. Redrawing the diamond diagram in my notebook, above the apex, I scribbled: ‘my thesis is concerned with what happens just prior to brainstorming activities ... specifically, what is my mental—and equally important—corporeal state of being (what is my body doing) in those specific moments?’

As an enthusiastic maker of lists and mind-maps, my mental and physical states prior to engaging in idea generating

is essentially a distributed cognitive system within which worldviews and mental models are constructed and shared ...”, reinforcing his thoughts earlier when he writes: “[Art] involves the deliberate construction of representations that affect how people (including the artist) view the world.” (Donald, loc.128)

While Donald’s contention corroborates Margaret A. Boden’s theories (discussed in the segment of writing just prior to this one) concerning cultural and peer group defined conceptual spaces, or styles of thought, his ideas further expound on the theory by explaining such deliberate constructions, “[reflect] a very deep human tendency for reciprocal control of attention.” He then buttresses his contention by proposing that as parents do with children, “artists attempt to ... [lead an audience] by the hand, so to speak, into a carefully engineered experience.” (Donald, loc.111)

Looking closer at Donald’s ideas, it became important to ask: Is this true of all artists ... or more intimately, if not relevantly, is this true of my practice? In my role as a designer and developer, the answer is an absolute yes. As a story teller and artist who dabbles in a variety of media, it would be disingenuous of me to suggest that is not my intent, though how I do it may be considered less overt and deliberate. For example, by potentially pulling the reader here, away from the Primary Thread at any given juncture to these segments of writing, my aim is to lead the reader on a tangent of sorts, and by design offer them the best approximation of how my mind works; specifically, how distraction plays a part in my creative process.

In support of my thinking and returning to Donald’s chapter, he opens a paragraph by stating: “Most art is metacognitive in nature. Metacognition is, by definition, self-reflection.” (Donald, loc.136) This leads me to introspectively declare my art viewed as research, regardless of whether or not it leads an audience by the hand say from one thread to another, by default is metacognition in the extreme. And is it not unreasonable for me to convey, in a manner that remains reasonably consistent with standard conventions, how my research efforts, understood in this light, have exponentially helped me begin to more fully comprehend my own thought processes?

Beyond the first chapter, there were other conceptions of particular relevance found in *The*

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activities have been the primary focus of my research. Introspectively and upon analysis of my creative behavior, a restlessness typically accompanies my brainstorming and idea generating proclivities. My preference for standing, or moving about while talking to myself, figuratively allows me to chase and catch up to my thoughts before committing them to paper. The methodology I have developed through my PhD research has therefore helped me take better advantage of that restlessness, without stunting the spontaneity inherent in such walking and talking-to-myself routines.

Correspondingly in relation to the diamond diagram, I began to speculate on the moment of transition between divergent and convergent thinking. Brainstorming by design encourages the generation of multiple potential creative notions or solutions to a problem or issue. Again, through introspective analysis, in my experience, greater emotional attachment to one idea over another, especially as it relates to making art, most often is the determining factor as to why one or two peculiar creative conceptions, among many, are pursued at the expense of other ideas generated by the creative thinking enhancement activities.

On the same diamond diagram drawn in my journal, at the right point I noted that: “Emotional attachment appears to drive my decision-making: issues and creative ideas are not merely attractive to me mentally, but also emotionally ...” In retrospect, and upon further reflection, my inherent impetuosity—or what I have, throughout my practice-led research process, labeled creative capriciousness—with regards to my typical creative decision-making process was and is predictable. Not in the sense of forecasting which specific creative idea I would choose to pursue, but rather in predicting that the changeability intrinsic to my choice-making is often anchored to strong emotion. In very precise terms, the capriciousness in my creative behavior represents a change in mood; going from being indecisive, if not confused, to being eager to engage with imaginative, creative impulses that appeal to me on an emotional level.

In a historical context, Rob Pope argues that “only gradually and fitfully did a specifically human sense of agency creep into the meaning of create.” (Pope, loc.1313) In his book, *Creativity: Theory, History, Practice*, Pope contends that modern human notions on creative acts were preceded, if not “tinged—or tainted—with divine aura.”

Artful Mind. In chapter two titled ‘The Aesthetic Faculty’, Terrance Deacon, a professor of Anthropology, supposes: “Even though artistic expression does not come naturally, as does language and much social behavior, it is essentially culturally universal in some form or another.” (Deacon, loc.384) Perplexed by his allegation, I struggled to reconcile with the idea that artistic expression does not come naturally. Are we not artistically expressive in using language, and even at times in our social behavior? (See: Verse 2)

With that question representing an area of inquiry that extends beyond the scope of this thesis, I set aside my perplexity and instead focused on how Deacon’s ideas shed a different light on the value of striving to think the unthinkable, per one’s own conceptual spaces and engineered experiences. Again, hearkening back to the previous segment of writing concerning Boden’s theories on structured styles of thought, Deacon’s ideas intimate (at least to me) that art-making is potentially a programmed response. In that, if we first input language as a variable and add to it social behavioral moorings as another, the results could lead to culture mediated artistic expression, which in a certain sense explains the context from which the girl of Boden’s story telling derives the necessary knowledge to make her beaded necklaces. Again, inviting me to contemplate on the impact my culture mediated personal identity has on my research and art-making.

Stepping aside from the above ideas, but equally relevant to my inquiry, in her essay, *Dynamics of Completion*, Shirley Brice Heath declares: “all art enables acting as if.” A linguistics expert, Heath surmises that such acting is always in the direction of “something perceived and conceptualized,” but not yet complete, and therefore unsatisfying. It is a powerful idea, which reveals how imagination drives the artful mind to solve the “mystery of what is not yet there but can be made to be there.” She goes on to explain: “Art always pushes toward some sense of connection and completion ... to [complete] the tale, the scene, or the melodic line.” (Heath, loc.1716)

In essence, per my understanding and sensibilities, Heath is describing the allure of narrative. Offering a valuable insight into my practice as a storyteller. Per my narratives, there is always a push to complete the tale, even if the tale is told again and again in a variety of iterations. An example

VERSE 2

*So slides the slippery eel,
purposely playful—maddeningly unclear.
Where will it go, oh how it will wriggle
serpentine, meandering cylindrical will*

*A mind in transition; pivoting in space
on pace, at a feverish rate.
Wandering, writhing and thrashing about
in incandescent pools, escaping grasp*

*Remove it, extract it and render it limp
so dies the slippery eel, subject to intent.
Discern, dissect and map its meander
strip away the slime, make cement from the mire*

*Lifeless, the once animated worm
rots as a vestige to twists and U-turns.
Caught in pursuit of capricious laments
laden with faith and transcendent awareness*

*Again, the slippery eel will swim
not today, tomorrow, but soon it hopes.
Codified, calcified and rendered inert
The slippery eel waits, while irony works*

*To wring the last drops of bile from its bowel
its captors, simply, cannot let it lie.
Wrenched, beaten, ever alone
The poor beast sighs; it can never atone*

*For visions, daydreams and reveries in-between
the slippery eel wastes—a desperate soul pleads.
Imaginative, ineffable, so-called creatives
will never relent, in their vain protestations.*

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Pope asserts that it was not until the eighteenth century, in modern western cultural terms, that humankind began to make positive, non-links between the power of the mind (i.e. imagination) and the ability to create “productive mental images,” not attributed to divine intervention. Furthermore, he states that it wasn’t until late in the same century that the human ability to “create” was associated with “the fashioning of something new or novel in the contradistinction to the imitation of something old.” (Pope, loc.1313)⁷

Later in his book, Pope addresses the idea that “the basic materials for creativity are wildly available and almost anything might be turned into a tool for creative play.” (Pope, loc.1741) Citing research into the “extra/ordinariness of creativity,” (Pope, loc.1715) as it relates to pre-school aged children, Pope postulates on notions of whether or not “formalized schooling” inhibits “unselfconsciously” creative behavior. In particular, Pope draws upon psychotherapist Donald Winnicott’s theories, which assert “creative impulses” are present when one looks “in a healthy way at anything or does anything deliberately” in response to “moment-by-moment living.” (Pope, loc.1741)

With a thorough examination of Pope’s application of these theories, in solidifying his own ideas concerning language as an “extra/ordinarily creative resource,” falling beyond the scope of my inquiry, Pope’s ideas offer an interesting lens, through which to examine my postulations on my own creative behavior.

Well-educated in the application of design centric creative processes, as an adaptable and defined procedural methodology, and to which brainstorming techniques can be considered key, and having achieved success applying those processes in business related contexts, what role does unselfconscious (borrowing Pope’s term) creative behavior play in my creative activities? Specifically, how does a proven methodology that includes brainstorming techniques in any form coupled with an increased awareness of how ones’ moment-by-moment living environments spur creative impulses, help account for unexplainable instances of sudden creative enlightenment, i.e. the literal instance when I am able to conjure up a creative idea?

Theoretically, my inquiry into the study of creativity falls into the realm of “the subjective experience of the moment

of this, again, is the *Rain* book which has been included as a part of my thesis documentation. Another example can be understood by looking at a painting I created and that was born of my methodology building experimentations, titled *Quakies*. (See: fig.11, Section Five)

More information and insight concerning the painting will be offered, both in the Primary and Secondary threads much later in this thesis. Briefly discussed here, by delineating a margin, and not extending the pigment to the edge of the panel upon which the image is painted. My subconscious desire is to intimate to a viewer that there is a larger narrative associated with the constructed image that cannot be experienced by what is visually depicted in the neatly framed illustrated scene.

Lastly, there is another particularly relevant idea in the book that I felt was worth examining. Writing as a cognitive scientist in his own chapter, Mark Turner affirms that “art is universal to our species,” which supports Terrance Deacon’s notions addressed above. Turner expounds on his affirmation by going into great detail about how humans “... face a chaos of perceptual data. Bombarded by this diversity, we perform the highly impressive mental trick of compressing great ranges of it into manageable units.” (Turner, loc.1240) Those manageable units are what allows the mind to complete the tale, scene or line, as theorized by Shirley Brice Heath. In effect, it is the act of compression that enables humans to imagine possibilities without being overwhelmed by them—bringing about order among disorder. Which also lends further support to my choice to construct my thesis documentation as I have—at least this Secondary Thread made up of segments, or in Turner’s terms: manageable units.

In continuing to extol the modern human brain’s ability to “parse an ocean of diversity quickly,” Turner explains that we are not always aware we are facing such an onslaught. He then surmises that in moments when we do manage to recognize the deluge of diverse perceptual data coming at us, we ascribe it to a shift in viewpoint. This “shiftiness,” as Turner calls it, allows us to, “leave [our] perceptual coherence of the world intact.” (Turner, loc.1248) Thus, effectively allowing the human mind to fill in the gaps between what is actually being seen, heard or experienced, as compared to what can’t readily be seen, heard or experienced.

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of a private, minor insight by an ordinary individual.” (Kozbelt et al., p.21)⁸ It is precisely that individual ordinariness, which dictates any sudden bursts of creative enlightenment I have or continue to experience on a routine basis, are not due to divine intercession.

Additionally, it is prudent to assert they cannot be considered exclusively the result of the expert application of creative-process-oriented methodologies. A combination of applied technique and happenstantial, if not deliberate exposure to environmental influences, can best explain my creative impulses. As well, by looking at the potential emotional connections that can be made between my life experience and an inclination to express such experiences through a variety of artistic media, I can come to better understand the durational nature of my whole body of artistic work.

In academic terms, my inquiry can be situated between Stage and Componential, Cognitive, and Problem Solving and Expertise theories of creativity. Defined in the *Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*, Stage and Componential theory of creativity involves attempts at understanding “the structure and nature of the creative process in terms of stages, which can be sequential or recursive.” Relatedly, Cognitive Theories “emphasize the creative process and person ... in emphasizing the role of cognitive mechanisms as the basis for creative thought.” While Problem Solving and Expertise theories examine how “people generate creative solutions to problems,” relying upon “domain specific expertise,” and heuristic explorations. (Kozbelt et al., pp.21-33)

By suggesting my efforts can be situated among three theories, my aim is to heed the admonition of the authors of the chapter from which the theory definitions derive. In their opening paragraphs, Aaron Kozbelt, Ronald A. Begheuo, and Mark A. Runco declare: “to understand creativity in all its richness, there is a need for moderation, where no one theoretical perspective is emphasized at the expense of others.” (Kozbelt et al., p.20)

That same sense of moderation has permeated my inquiry. In addition to the above theories, in outlining models for understanding Systems Theories of creativity, the notion that “creativity is best conceptualized not as a single entity, but as emerging from a complex system with interacting subcomponents,” is advanced. One model in particular suggests “families, schools, and cultures” wield considerable

In that sense then, I assert that through the Primary Thread I will finish the tale of my research, and further declare that an effective way to combat distraction is to resist the urge to disqualify it and instead embrace it as unavoidable—revealing a conception relevant to my research findings, teased here and that will be distilled in the conclusion of this document.

11. Sternberg, Robert J. *Handbook of Creativity*. eBook. New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

The stated goal of the *Handbook of Creativity* is for it to serve as the most comprehensive and definitive text concerned with the study of creativity. In contrast to the cognitive science orientation of *The Artful Mind*, the contributions to the *Handbook of Creativity* are bound to the domain of psychology. In referencing the text, my aim was to compare and contrast ideas from the two books. Instead, due to its cohesiveness, the book helped me to systematically reflect on my conscious awareness of creativity in the context of my own practice. This provided me with a new lexicon and expanded knowledge base to consider that motivated me to not simply absorb and comprehend, with the intent to compare and contrast, but to respond actively to what could be read on the subject of creativity introspectively.

Principally, delving into the text invited me to intently contemplate on how my mind functions in contrast to how my hands, and as an extension, my body functions in response to what, over all, I was reading on the subject of creativity. As a result, I was able to better entertain my own thoughts on the distinctions that can be made between how the mind works in the face of what the body does during art-making activities.

For example: The *Handbook of Creativity* includes perspectives from the fields of: history and methods for studying creativity; biological bases and the evolution of creative minds; the influence of intelligence, personality and motivation on creativity; a comparison of human creativity across cultures; thoughts on computer models and how to enhance creativity; and a culminating treatise on fifty-years of creativity-based research. Simultaneously exciting and overwhelming me, my thinking in response to the book contracted to the point where I became focused on the pragmatic

influence over creative behavior. (Kozbelt et al., p.40)

In the subsequent sections and threads of this thesis documentation, connections will be drawn from the complex in person environment interactions, which compelled my processes in the development of a methodology. My actions will be outlined and chronicled, and in turn convey how my research activities have not solely focused on an instinctive capacity for creative thinking, or a systematically if not tacitly learned ability to apply creative process related techniques. As a multi-disciplinary, narrative focused artist, the aim will be to tell the story of my research activities in a manner that best conveys the richness of my experience.

An Introduction

Cognitive scientist Margaret A. Boden asserts, “Human creativity is something of a mystery, not to say a paradox,” followed by her contention that, “Creative ideas are unpredictable. Sometimes they even seem to be impossible—and yet they happen.” In Boden’s estimation, a “scientific psychology [could explain] how creativity is possible.” (Boden, loc.146)⁹ Per my research, is it possible for an artist researcher to develop a reflective and reflexive investigation into the extent to which the inherent spontaneity of creativity can be facilitated and amplified through the development of a methodology in the context of my practice?

At some point, early in my PhD studies, I came to the realization that my primary goal would be to comprehend why I do what I do as an artist—to in effect explain my behavior, not in technical terms, but cognitively why I am creatively capricious in the sense my thoughts inexplicably jump from one compelling notion to another, seemingly at random.

In part, my capriciousness is driven by the fact that, though I am possessed of expertise in specific art-making techniques and creative process related methods, I am insatiably curious and enjoy experimenting with all variety of mediums and technologies. But more interestingly, while the art projects I initiate have a start date, in my mind they rarely, if ever,

aspects of my practice—specifically, process and the mechanics I regularly employ as an artist.

Evidence of this contraction can be found in how I began to carefully consider and examine the scrapings (See: fig.14, Section Four) I had been making as a part of my methodology building activities. Interestingly, the first scrapings I made were done while I was making the *Quakies* (See: fig.17, Section Five) painting noted in the previous segment of writing. Analyzed in greater detail, in Section Five of the Primary Thread, but considered here in context to *The Artful Mind*, the scrapings represent (for me) a viscerally satisfying act of deftly, but playfully scraping leftover, or surplus paint, across a substrate.

Tactilely blissful and done without deliberate intent, the ragged, streaking lines are interesting abstractions. While I could draw comparisons to my scraping with the painting techniques of Gerhard Richter, Franz Kline, or Jean-Paul Riopelle, my scrapings were not inspired by any particular artist or work of art. It is interesting that they render forms that visually illustrate the dynamic of positive and negative space, which invariably occurs when marks are deliberately if not arbitrarily made on a monochromatic ground, is interesting. But that was not the reason for their creation.

The scrapings exist because of an innate desire to simply make marks and continue painting without being confined to the image found within a frame and for which the paint was originally mixed. Again, offering another demonstration of (as I state in the previous segment of writing) the potential larger narrative that can be associated with a constructed image and that cannot be experienced by what is visually depicted in the neatly framed illustrated scene.

Additionally, the scrapings have also led me to begin to explore abstract representational painting. Over the course of my research activities, not unlike the function of the drawings of rabbits and fishes interrupting these threads, I have also created a series of paintings, or studies as I prefer to call them, wherein I have extended my scraping technique to larger substrates. (see: fig.3) Similar to the drawings, they served as a type of creative release at times when I needed to step away from reading and writing induced stupor. And while the paintings represent the real world (a place or scene happened upon while on a walk),

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are considered finished or complete. They're often restatements of ideas and notions that no matter the time it takes I find myself compelled to engage in their next incarnation.

Decidedly, my art-making proclivities and practices on the whole can be considered durational in nature. I regularly spend a long time on projects, often setting them aside for lengthy periods of time, storing the unfinished work, waiting on the moment when I seemingly need to return to it, and perhaps even finish it in some form or fashion. The illustrated *Rain* poem, in book form and included as the forward of this thesis, is a good example of this.

Thoughtfully rewritten nearly twenty years ago, then set aside and recently edited in response to my research, I am just now coming to understand what I hoped to capture in those verses: Does rain fall in predictable patterns? If so, can the trajectory of their descent be, in some measure, anticipated? Analogously, do the bursts of inspiration, which precede the development of novel ideas arrive in the mind not unlike drops of rain, falling rapidly and randomly?

Essentially, as an earlier work, the book *Rain*, which started as a poem in response to, as a child, getting caught in a sudden and refreshing thunderstorm, can be read through the lens of my research, and understood as prefiguring much of what I am interested in now. In nascent philosophical terms the poem asks: can a practice-led inquiry set the stage for an artist to anticipate a coming storm, bath in its epiphanous showers, and thoughtfully articulate what has compelled him to think imaginatively and to act artistically?

Mark Turner, another cognitive scientist, asks: "How did the artful mind emerge? In a leap, or through slow development? What are the basic mental operations that make art possible for us now, and how do they operate?" (Turner, loc.89)¹⁰ Though he is speaking in evolutionary terms, Turner's question is profound and worth careful consideration for an artist who has come to understand

beyond their connections to my scrapings, they are abstractions with which I am unable to reconcile; perhaps representing, in a post-doctoral sense, a new avenue of inquiry for me to pursue in the future.

Beyond providing a perspective from which to view my new painting explorations, the *Handbook of Creativity* also invited me to ruminate on the hands-on nature of the learning environment within which I teach. As a vocationally situated professor of Art and Design, my exposure to and expertise in digital design software and coding languages is extensive. My role is to develop practical means to transfer my knowledge, and equip students with a skill set similar to my own.

Per my teaching experience and generally speaking, the students' perception, at the outset of their education, is that the computer, equipped with the necessary design software, along with borrowed coding frameworks, is the means by which art and design happens. One of the great joys of teaching at the college level of education is being witness to the moment when a fledgling pupil shifts their thinking, recognizing that he or she, and not the computer and associated software or code structures, is the catalyst to the creation of compelling art. Tools are merely tools, though in the hands of a skilled craftsman they can build remarkable and beautiful things. However, is there a distinction to be made between what the mind knows and what the hand wielding a tool knows?

As I read in the *Handbook's* eighth chapter titled, *Evolving Creative Minds: Stories and Mechanisms*, Charles J. Lumsden asks whether or not "a passion to create drive[s] the human species?" His question suggests that the capacity to use tools to creatively assemble, build and beautify, beyond instinctive directives, is what truly distinguishes human kind. A biologist, Lumsden draws a line between the human animal and other species, while acknowledging the organic interconnectedness of all life on earth. He hypothesizes that human creativity is not distinct, except that it is a "regional dialect for innovation—unique and special in its own way ... [which] nonetheless [is] a restyling of universal evolutionary stratagems." (Lumsden, loc.4748)

In that sense then, the moment I describe above wherein a pupil comes to the realization that they are the catalyst to creating art, begins to answer

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that progress in his art-making develops gradually over time. What insights into the continuous nature of my work, could be revealed through a practice-led inquiry that is appreciative of leaps that are admittedly slow in developing:

Perhaps it was while riding the L Train to Brooklyn, during my first research training residency in New York City? I can't be certain. However, at some point early into my doctoral studies, it became clear I yearned to comprehend why I was enamored and yet not overwhelmed by the slow burn of strong emotions underlying the story telling performances I created for my MFA thesis of a few years earlier.

The principle artefact of my MFA research is the book titled *How Deep is Deep Enough*. (see: Section Seven excerpts) Written and self-published as a performance text, it can be considered a finished work, and yet in my mind, it remains unfinished. In its present iteration, it's a compelling work or art, especially as performed aloud for an audience, in whole or in part. Regardless, there are more stories waiting to be plucked from memory and invented as addendums to the original text. And the question isn't why haven't they been written, but rather, when will they be, and what form might they take?

The book and associated performances were the first unmistakably clear instance in a lifetime of making art, where I recognized just how emotionally invested I can become in my art-making. Evidently, strong emotions can compel me to see a work of art through to fruition, regardless its finished state. Granted, the subject matter of *How Deep is Deep Enough* demanded of me an uncommonly strong emotional investment. And in the context of, or perhaps in contrast to, notions of bathing in epiphanous showers, it was wise of me to ask myself how much that text might actually influence the works I eventually will create in pursuit of a PhD?

the question, in my mind, of the distinction that potentially can be made between what the mind versus the tool wielding hand knows. Up to a point, the student's mind understands one thing—that tools create art, or that tools are used to create art. However, it is only when the student becomes expert in a particular tool manipulating technique, be it digitally-based or physically-based (I also teach traditional art course such as drawing and painting) that they understand tools do not create art of and by themselves—artists wielding tools do.

This suggests to me that, per Lumsden's ideas, the desire to wield a tool is not the catalyst behind, as he says, a passion to create and be dialectically innovative in a human evolutionary sense—or, in other words, the leftover paint on the pallet and my pallet knife did not drive my passion to create the scrapings. But rather, a passion for the continued act of art-making drove me to not dispose of the leftover materials, but instead to artfully make marks with them on a substrate. More about how this reasoning impacts my findings will be revealed later in the thesis. Discussed here, they offer an interesting aside to consider as the reader returns to the Primary Thread to discover the narrative details that precede the scrapings invention. They also highlight how the *Handbook of Creativity*, as stated above, invited me to be more introspective in response to not only this text but each subsequent text I read as a part of my research.

12. Bohm, David. *On Creativity*. eBook. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.

My affinity for David Bohm's ruminations and conceptions is considerable, especially as viewed from a faith-based perspective. His concept of he what he calls the 'whole,' as well as 'implicate and explicate order' fascinate me. Investing some time in reading and even listening to his ideas provides background as to how his thinking helped to propel my reading efforts forward:

"The mathematics itself suggests a movement in which everything ... enfolds into the whole and the whole enfolds it in it ... You could therefore say that everything is enfolded in this whole, or even in each part, and that it then enfolds. I call this implicate order, the enfolded order, and this unfolds into an explicate order. The implicate is the enfolded order. It unfolds into the explicate order, in which everything is

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Going back to my time in New York, while learning about the distinctions between methods and methodology, that was not a question I could answer. However, I did understand that my MFA thesis work would inform what I was doing and that there would be important initial overlaps.

Looking back on my contemplations, it is apparent now that despite being unable to answer the question of how my previous art will influence my PhD practice-led research efforts, my contemplations on my MFA work were pivotal in my drive to both find ways to facilitate my creative capriciousness, in the context of my professional training and experience in applying creative process techniques, as well as helping me begin to address the role emotion can play in helping to enhance my capacity for creative and imaginative thinking.

In response to the above ideas, and in looking closer, or even exclusively at the psychology of creativity, psychologist Robert J. Sternberg observes, “Creativity is the ability to produce work that is both novel (i.e., original, unexpected) and appropriate (i.e. useful, adaptive concerning task constraints).” (Sternberg, loc.175)¹¹ His assertions are clinical in tone. In very basic terms, per my understanding, they equate creative output with its utility, as a formidable tool to be wielded by the human mind in pursuit of evolutionarily beneficial outcomes. However, the exclusive focus on the mind and its effect on behavior intrigues me. What of corporeal centric stimuli, and its potential effect on the mind and its processes—how does the mind and body inform the other with regard to creative and imaginative reasoning:

The *Rain* poem was first realized in book form at a time when I was enthralled by the mechanics of art-making processes, while enrolled in art school. The illustrations are four-colour lithographs, printed by hand from a limestone slab. Due to the printing process chosen to make them, they took several weeks to produce. Creating the illustrations in this way is inherently laborious and even a little dangerous. The stone from which the images are

separated.” (Bohm, p.128) Bohm then goes on to declare: “The implicate order would help us ... to see that everything enfolds everything ... everybody not merely depends on everybody, but actually everybody is everybody in a deeper sense. We are earth, because all our substance comes from the earth and goes back to it.” (Bohm, p.129)

In continuation of the increased introspection I engaged in while reading *The Handbook of Creativity*, I offer Bohm’s thoughts above in deference to how they managed to steal my mind away from the words on the page, concerning the study of creativity, and that up to this point had seemingly held me captive.

Simply, reading Bohm was cathartic. As a reader, I get the sense he is not trying to prove or disprove anything, but rather his is just talking, thoughtfully articulating what he has come to understand about the world and the universe. His tone spurred me to pursue further my own peculiar ruminations (See: www.stanzaic.com/0stanza). As well, his tone prepared me for a change in my thinking that was a long time in coming and can be read in my analysis of his thoughts offered below.

In trying to define the indefinable, Bohm first analyzes, in generic terms, the motivation behind scientifically grounded creative discovery. Surmising that an initial motivator may be the simple child-like desire of a scientist to solve a puzzle and rise to the challenge of “explaining a natural process, by showing how it works.” (Bohm, p.2) (See: www.stanzaic.com/21ststanza) From which, he then concedes, the scientist undoubtedly derives considerable pleasure. However, Bohm indicates that the pleasure resultant from resolving riddles, alone is ultimately trivial and fleeting. Instead, beyond the gratification one can find in the potential novelty that accompanies a new discovery, Bohm asserts there is a deeper motivating factor working on an inquisitive individual: “to learn something new that has a certain fundamental kind of significance: a hitherto unknown lawfulness in the order of nature ... to find in the reality in which he lives a certain oneness and totality, or wholeness, constituting a kind of harmony that is felt to be beautiful.” (Bohm, p.3)

While there is a certain ambiguity that can be assigned to his thoughts, it is comforting to see them so expressed. And despite the indistinctness,

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pulled weighed close to fifty pounds. After each impression, representing one colour printed, the stone needed to be ground down with a levigator in order to remove the image burned into it with acid.

Hours of set up and clean up were required to get the stone ready to print, and then stored away for the next step in the four spot colour printing process. I've often contemplated on the sweat and energy required to produce the images. How integral to the meaning of the words were they? In contrast, I have created many illustrations for a variety of purposes, some for well-paying commercial interests, but none have had the longitudinal staying power the *Rain* illustrations have in my mind. In part that is due to the exclusively physical nature with which they were produced.

Similarly, while the short stories in the performance text, *How Deep is Deep Enough*, are impactful when read. It is altogether a different experience to hear me tell the stories aloud. My physical presence, intonation and booming voice can be imposing. You can hear the anguish and anger in my inflection, but moreso feel it in my didactic, emphatic tone. That is why I call it a performance text—it is meant to be performed with corporeal flair and vigor.

The originality of both the poem and the performance text demonstrate my creative and imaginative capabilities. My realization of the impact on my research of these two works of art, came to me while I was in transit: walking and on subway trains moving from my short stay accommodations and the gallery spaces where my research training occurred; constantly mapping my route mentally between the foreign locations where I was expected to be seems to have had an effect on the inner workings of my mind.

In retrospect, the potential importance of corporeal movement on creative decision making is also a vital theme that will be explored in my thesis. But first it is important to point out, that

and ardent tone, his ideas strike a nerve, because they are wholly relatable to an artist who is, by nature, always actively engaged in creative discovery. But is it enough to speak in such broad terms? Though seemingly self-evident in tenor, Bohm never necessarily quantifies exactly what he means by his poetic musings. This has impressed upon me the need to look beyond his text, even as a continuation of the texts that preceded it; to look for a more pragmatic explanation, or theory to latch on to and contend with—ideas that perhaps convey the spirit of his sentiments, but with an air of pragmatism assigned to them. Revealing exactly how to get beyond analyzing where my inquiry is situated in the larger context of the study of creativity and creative processes, to having a dialogue with what is being read, and effectively convey my discoveries, not with clinical precision, but with artistic, storytelling aplomb.

In that sense, *On Creativity* was most useful in helping me come to the realization that I needed to step further away from seemingly reviewing texts, almost at arm's length, and with the attitude and voice of a book reviewer, to viscerally internalizing what is being read. Coming to that realization was liberating, not just to my reading and writing efforts, but to the manner with which I was beginning to see my investigations and the approach I was prepared to take in the development of my methodology.

Arriving at Bohm's text represented a dramatic shift for me from comparing my ideas with others, to wanting to actively test them. Trusting in my capacity, though fledgeling, as an artist researcher, by beginning to connect the dots, or reweave together the common threads that could be pulled away from a multitude of sources I had been sifting and evaluating. (See: www.stanzaic.com/2ndstanza)

13. Feinstein, Jonathan S. *The Nature of Creative Development*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006.

Starting with his Introduction, the manner with which Jonathan S. Feinstein judiciously outlines his definitions and themes is acutely beneficial. There are no allusions made to paradoxes or the mysteries of human creativity. Instead, Feinstein's assertions are stated plainly with a discernable and understated confidence. Which, in tone, is what I was looking for from a reference at a critical stage of my research where, as indicated in the previous

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while my inquiry falls within the vast realm of the study of human creativity, I must clarify that I am uniquely interested in the specific domain of artistic creativity as it exclusively relates to my practice.

Investigations into creative behavior, not tied to artistic knowledge or excellence, are a proverbial deep rabbit hole down which one could easily get lost. This thesis therefore will strive to be respectful of the indeterminable nature of creativity, while being careful to assert that the limit of the scope of the inquiry be confined to the intimate phenomenological perspective of the artist conducting it.

With the goal to contribute new knowledge, my findings will derive from a methodological analysis of my creative practice, processes and capacity for imaginative thinking. Not only per my practice as an artist, wherein I regularly create art seemingly based on whims, but also per my role as a vocationally situated professor of the design disciplines and as a person of faith. This will allow me to examine the usefulness of my research, with regard to my own creative and imaginative thinking, in contexts separate from my art-making.

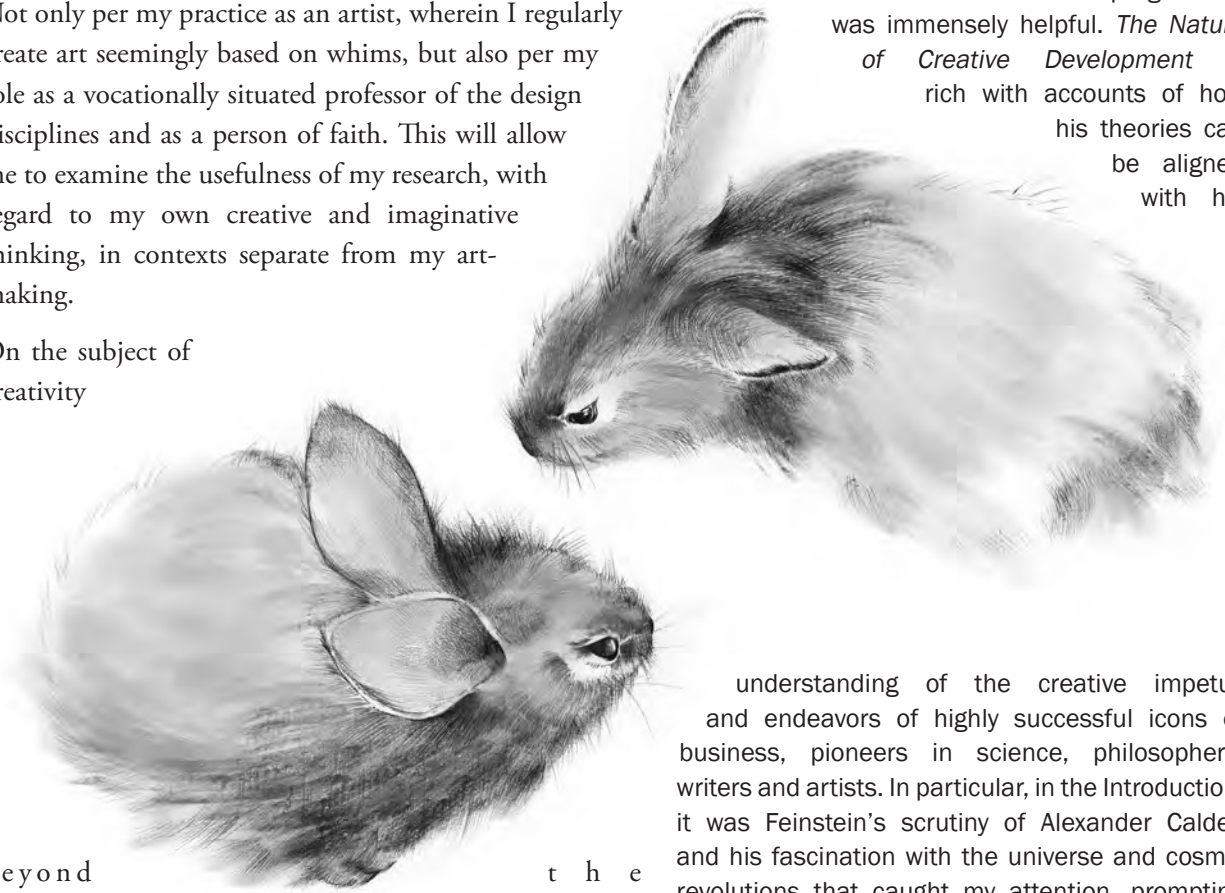
On the subject of
creativity

beyond the purview of cognitive science and psychology, David Bohm's book, *On Creativity*,¹² provides valuable insight to contemplate. His text is decidedly scientific in tenor and yet, oddly not. From a religiously inclined perspective, to me Bohm's conclusions are alluring in how they contrast and contradict my own sensibilities on the question of faith as it relates to

segment of writing on Bohm, I was beginning to find my voice on the subject of creativity.

Feinstein opens his book by declaring: "the creative development of an individual engaged in creative endeavors, across a broad range of fields, has a basic structure, which centers on, is based in, and grows out of ... creative interests." This is followed up by his contention that: "conceptions of creative interests" are born of "conceptual structures" taken from "domains of interests" that generate creative thinking, which form the guiding basis for the creative projects one pursues. Per Feinstein, conceptions of creative interests can be defined as those things we find interesting and want to explore and try to develop creatively, whereas conceptual structures are complex structures wherein we link disparate elements and experiences, and integrate them conceptually. (Feinstein, p.1)

Seeing my creative interests through the lens of Feinstein's pragmatism was immensely helpful. *The Nature of Creative Development* is rich with accounts of how his theories can be aligned with his



understanding of the creative impetus and endeavors of highly successful icons of business, pioneers in science, philosophers, writers and artists. In particular, in the Introduction, it was Feinstein's scrutiny of Alexander Calder, and his fascination with the universe and cosmic revolutions that caught my attention, prompting me to contend with Feinstein's theories. This was not due to my perception that Feinstein had misread Calder's autobiographical writings, but mainly because early in my own post-secondary educational pursuits, I had developed a keen

creativity.

A physicist with a declared affinity for the visual arts, Bohm distinguishes between creative processes and mechanical processes. His explanations can be seen as spiritual in tone, especially in relation to how he connects them to his philosophy of the “the whole,” coupled with his theories on “implicate and explicate order.” In my estimation, each can be interpreted as euphemisms for deity and divine processes. Setting aside his empathy for the ‘spirit of religion’ as he calls it, Bohm proclaims in the first sentence of chapter one of his book that: “Creativity is, in my view, something that is impossible to define in words.” He then follows up with the avowal: “I would like, thus, to indicate to the reader what creativity means to me.” (Bohm, p.1)

Succinctly, that is also my intent. To lay bare what creativity means to me in very intimate terms. Before elaborating on my mental and experiential undulations, it is important to discuss how I anchored the focus of my research exertions to a specific theory on creativity that helped first solidify and urge my investigations forward towards more concrete discoveries. Joseph S. Feinstein in his book *The Nature of Creative Development* states:

“An individual’s creative development is based in, centers on, and grows out of his creative interests ... [which] are distinctive domains or topics that individuals define for themselves. In general, the primary source of our creative interests is intrinsic interest: we form the creative interests that we do because we find them intrinsically interesting ... In the initial stage, when particular experiences and elements catch our attention and spark our interest, our response is in most cases rooted in intrinsic interest.” (Feinstein, 2001, p. 1, pp.107-108) **13**

Understanding that Feinstein is speaking in a business management context, and in agreement with his assertion in principle, it is my contention that it does not account for the impact emotional factors could have on which intrinsic interests act on an imaginative and creative mind. Representing an epiphany in my earliest deliberations, in culmination with the aforementioned references, contemplating Feinstein’s statement was crucial to helping me clarify the main thrust of my inquiry: emotion could be the key to understanding and facilitating my apparent

interest in Alexander Calder and his art, and Feinstein was revealing more to me about his work than I had previously contemplated.

Learning more about Calder, through Feinstein, effectively transported me back in time to the period in my life when a passion for art-making and an appreciation for the design disciplines first began to form the foundations of my identity as an artist. It was exposure to Calder’s artworks, experienced as a high school student at an exhibition on the University of Utah campus, that pushed me in the direction of studying art, and specifically graphic design.

Though a generalization, it is not a stretch for me to state that the years between secondary school and choosing a particular post-secondary educational path are marked by emotionally charged moments of apprehension and self-doubt. Prompted by Feinstein’s text, in particular his passages concerning Calder, my mind was flooded with memories of those tumultuous years of my own life. These memories were juxtaposed against the sudden realization that I could not remember reading or recognizing Feinstein mention emotion playing a role of any kind in Calder’s conveyance of his conception of creative interests. Nor for that matter, was emotion mentioned as an aspect important to any of Feinstein’s other exemplars, who’s conceptions of creative interests were also being examined.

Throughout the book, though it is alluded to by sometimes using words such as sentiment, excitement and passion, the impact of having an emotional reaction to a life event, which in turn prompts the creation of a work of art is not discussed. Emotion, in and of itself, as a significant aspect of and a deciding factor important to the inception and creation of a work of art, or even a whole body of work, regardless the field of endeavor is not considered in any way in Feinstein’s text. For example, when he references Calder’s autobiography and shares the artists account of being aboard a ship on a calm sea off the coast of Guatemala in his early twenties, any potential reference to emotions that could accompany such and even are absent: “... when over my couch—a coil of rope—I saw the beginning of a fiery red sunrise on one side and the moon looking like a silver coin on the other ... it left me with a lasting sensation of the solar system.” (Feinstein, p.45)

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creative capriciousness.

Undoubtedly, my performance text *How Deep is Deep Enough*, considered as a motivating artifact important to understanding my practice, is an emotionally charged work of art. As well, my *Rain* poem represents existentialist emotional angst, associated with introspective questions about my behavior and purpose as an artist. But how exactly could a phenomenological inquiry uncover salient truths about Creative Caprice? My initial abstract, which was written at the outset of my research activities, clarifies and outlines my original intent:

“Specifically, I mean to analyze how emotion could capriciously influence and determine which intrinsic interests compel me to create what otherwise might be considered impulsive, if not intuitive works of art. I posit that this can be achieved through the development and articulation of methods that encourage corporeal engagement through planned and impromptu physical activities that involve walking, climbing into and exploring familiar and unfamiliar environments, both physically and conceptually. It is my objective to demonstrate that these physical activities can rigorously initiate creative states of consciousness. Defined by me, based upon experiences related to my faith tradition and proficiency in creative process enhancing techniques, creative states of consciousness are: acute instances of corporeal and cognitive awareness where one is being creative and enjoys a heightened sense of imaginative thinking. It is my contention that my creative practice, and extensive professional experience can be used as the basis for a phenomenological inquiry, with the underlying aim to invigorate my art-making and realize new efforts at artistic expression and experimentation, by examining the connections that can be drawn between intrinsic interests and personal experience.” (Evans, Abstract, 2014)

While I argue that the methodology developed as prompted by the above statement, is rigorous, and has facilitated the inception of compelling works of art, by allowing caprice to flourish, the question concerning the role emotion plays in determining intrinsic interest is less determinable. My aim is to tell the tale of my research and its methodological development, in a manner that exemplifies the challenge and changeability inherent in the

In my estimation, as an artist who potentially has similar anecdotes to share concerning my own instances where I was inspired by the natural world, Calder was more than just awestruck by the scene. His descriptive language is evocative and nostalgic. However, Feinstein simply uses Calder's account as a means to illustrate the arguments he is making about conceptions of creative interests serving as a point of elucidation, which ultimately leads to and supports his book's larger point concerning the paramount importance of intrinsic interest to an individual's creative development.

Unable to argue with his sound pragmatic reasoning, I was however cognizant of just how emotional I had become in response to what he had, or more precisely, what Feinstein had not written. Though the short paragraphs focusing on Calder were preceded by paragraphs containing similarly framed analyses of Azad Bonni, a neuroscientist, as well as a literary scholar named Henry Chen. In addition to a much larger analysis, over several pages, focusing on the life of Virginia Woolf about her conceptions of creative interests, nowhere does Feinstein discuss the role or potential impact emotion could have played in any of those individuals' lives.

Though captivated by his accounts, I returned again and again to Feinstein's ever so brief accounts of Calder. Each return fed a strong desire to wade back into the deep pool of memories of my youth, in particular, to recall the excitement, the unease, the ignorance and wonderment that accompany that stage of one's life, while standing at a threshold, beyond which awaits one's future.

Certainly, Feinstein might declare that my nostalgia in response to his text was demonstrative of being intrinsically interested in Calder, his life and his work, which is patently true. But in reality, it was more than an intrinsic interest driving my response. I was emotionally invested in or even compromised in some manner by the rediscovery of the impact that engaging with Calder's art had had on me at a young age. Able to pull back for a moment and objectively consider what I was experiencing, my next instinct was to pore over Feinstein's book, looking for any instance where he might consider the role of emotion being important to the feasibility of his theories.

At a glance my first option would be to carefully examine chapter four, titled “Intrinsic Sources

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process, conveying the cacophony of many introspective voices conjured up while ruminating on the writings of a variety of researchers, philosophers and artists—their works digested and providing intellectual sustenance. This supports the written and visual illustrations of my practice-led explorations, while at the same time drawing connections between what has been accomplished and my emotions, as they represent my current state of mind and moods or derived from the cultural influences of my upbringing and personal history.

Looking beyond this introduction, the text will achieve the above by reveling in the confluences of fortuitous events, examining the impact on mind and body of experiencing the natural world in extremes, and by portraying one of multiple, important instances of epiphany with storytelling flair. In turn, the documentation will unveil my conclusions, uncovered while caught up in a prolonged period of cognitive awakening, wherein my practice related behavioral patterns were thoughtfully scrutinized, allowing for the development and formalization of a methodology, which has proved beneficial to all aspects of my research and my practice. (see: verse 3)

Of Interest.” No such luck. Listed among the chapter’s subtitles are: “Richness; Curiosity and Wonder; Challenge and Difficulty; Novelty; and lastly, Desire For Understanding, Truth, And Enlightenment—Philosophical Bases of Interests.” Upon closer examination of the chapter, I did not find what I was looking for, so I pressed forward jumping from chapter to chapter in the book.

Perhaps the closest correlations to emotion I could find can be read in chapter 8, titled “Resonance And Connections.” Ironically for me, on the first page of the chapter, Feinstein again relies upon Alexander Calder as a subject of scrutiny. As well, interestingly, the plainness and confidence of his writing I alluded to earlier wanes a little. In hearkening to Calder, Feinstein asserts, “when we juxtapose [his] early abstract sculptures with his conception of his interest in the universe as the basis for art, the correspondence and resonance is stunning.” (Feinstein, p.224) This is followed up with statements that affirm, “knowing someone’s creative interests and conception of interests,” does not mean we can predict what creative projects that someone will pursue, which is then concluded with the assertion that, “creativity is inherently uncertain and unpredictable.” (Feinstein, p.224)

Though resonance is not equivalent to emotion, either by definition, or per Feinstein, the chapter, focusing on it left me feeling as if Feinstein was addressing the idea of emotion, at least in spirit. But it is odd that the author has stayed away from employing the word, or even the idea on the whole, seemingly at all anywhere in his five-hundred plus page book. Again, though there are instances where sentiment, excitement and passion etc. are considered, but only in context to an example being scrutinized. An overall understanding of emotion as a topic worth thoughtful consideration is notably absent.

Perhaps then that is why creativity is considered, in the words of Feinstein, uncertain and unpredictable. Additionally, looking back on the antecedent texts to *The Nature of Creative Development*, perhaps a lack of appreciation for the role emotion could play in creative process is what prompts writers to declare human creativity is a paradox, a riddle or indefinable. In regard to my understanding of creativity, and in context of my practice, it really is not possible for me to ignore the role emotion plays in my art-making. If I were to

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be honest, other than cultural influences growing up that suggested getting a job as a designer was the more economically safe path for a creative person, I chose to pursue the design disciplines because deep down I understood they were the safer path to avoiding strong emotion and its potential influence on my art.

Outside of Feinstein's book, there is a place to consider emotion in the broader literature pertaining to other fields. The concluding section of this thesis will do just that, in context with the full distillation of my research findings. Looking more closely at my use of the term emotion here, in this segment of writing, it is prudent to consider that I have, in a certain sense but not exclusively, used the term emotion as a synonym for trauma—especially as it relates to the art aspects of my practice that are not considered design discipline focused.

Again, as I have stated, it is undetermined whether or not this investigation can begin to fully answer questions concerning the role emotion could play in human creativity and creative processes. However, Jonathan S. Feinstein's lack of consideration for emotion in his text compelled me to deliberate on the relevance of emotion to my overall inquiry.

As an individual who at times suffers from considerable emotional distress due to early childhood traumatic life events (see: excerpts Section Seven), emotion, as a subject of intense focus is fraught with a certain peril. To that end, my intent is to strive to be clinical in my approach to emotion. While emotion will be counted as fundamental to better understanding how, per the introduction, I can capriciously influence and determine which intrinsic interests compel me to create what otherwise might be considered intuitive works of art. My approach in talking about it will be measured and careful.

SECTION ONE

FIG. I

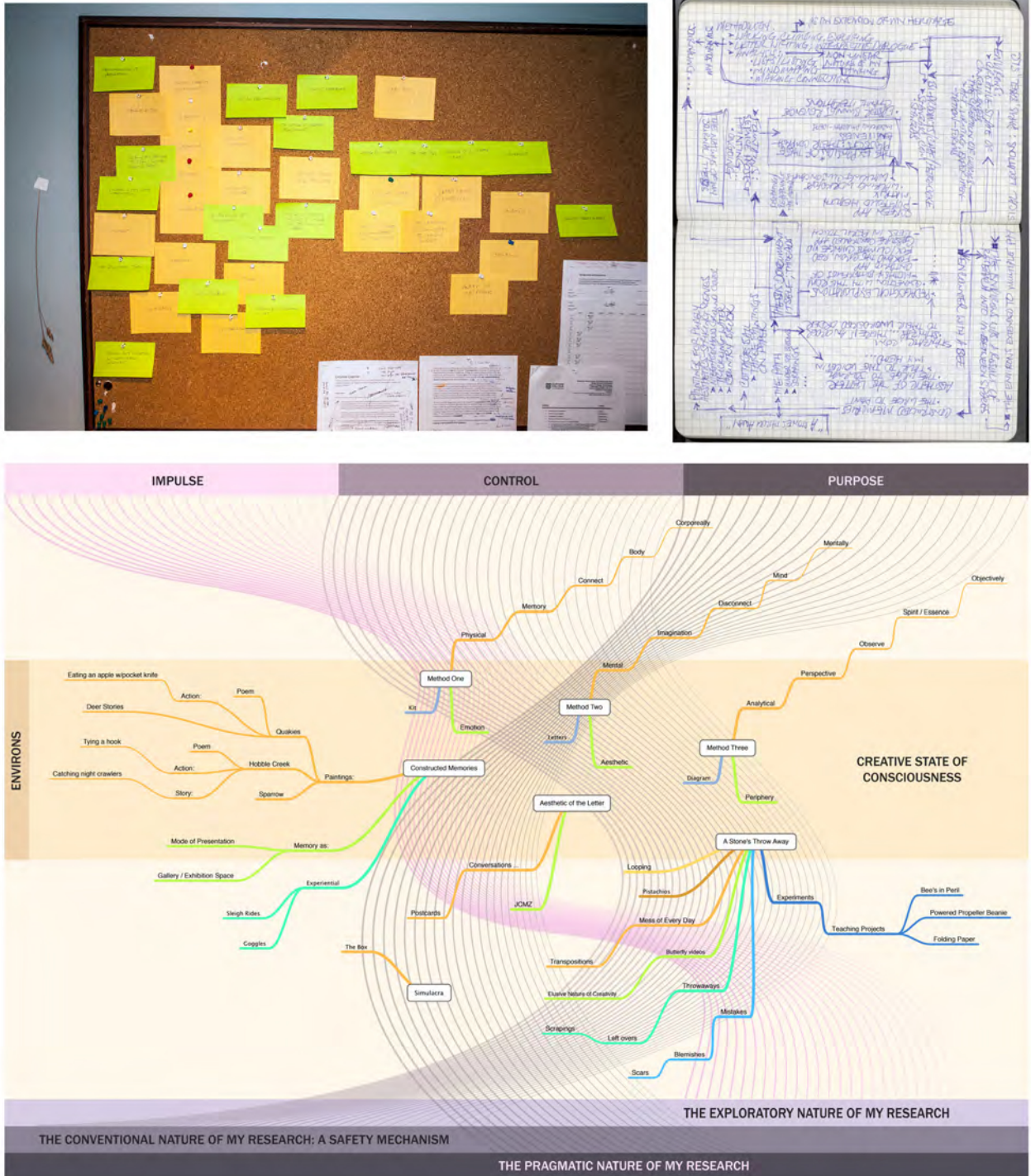


FIG. 2

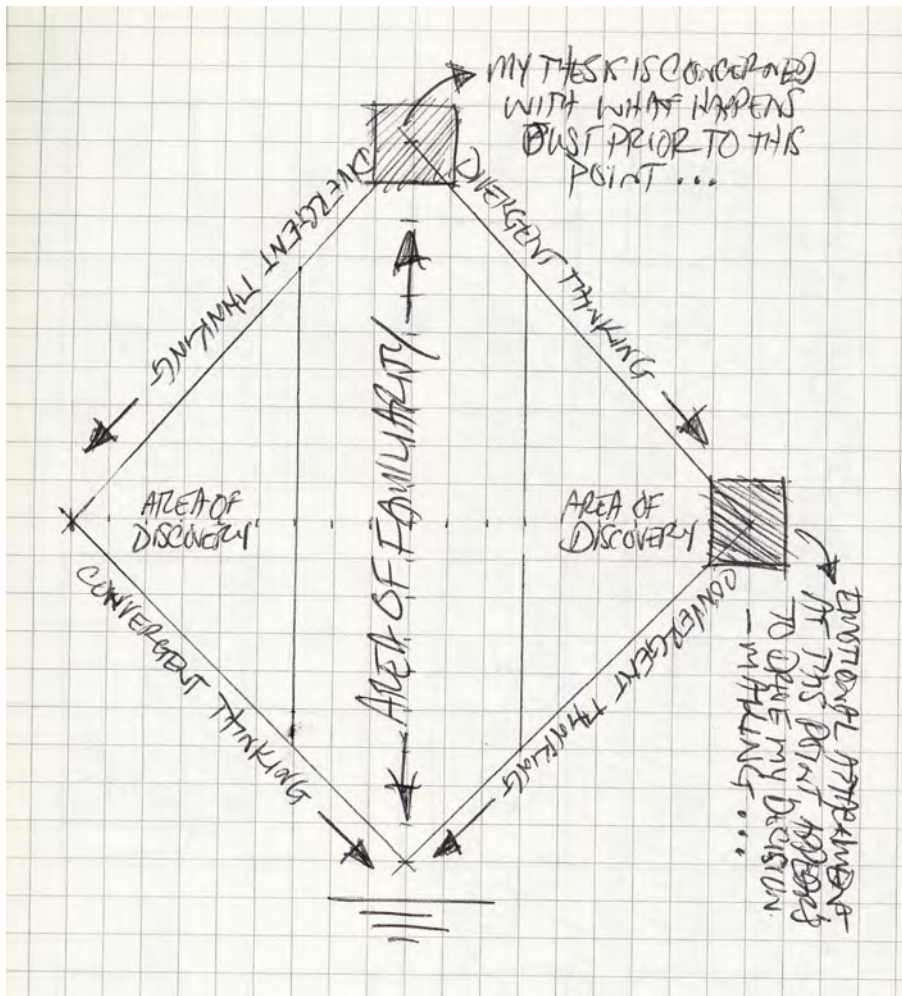


FIG. 3 - Mixed Media on paper, various sizes



VERSE 3

*I yearn to purge my mind of melancholy,
and realize the driver's dream.
To herd the urge for idle thought,
beyond to pastures green.*

The Importance of Walking to the Mormon Faith

It can be argued a US citizen's sense of identity can inextricably be linked to Independence Day traditions surrounding annual celebrations on the fourth of July. Correspondingly, in the state of Utah, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, commonly referred to as Mormons, can inextricably link their social and religious identity to Pioneer Day traditions and celebrations on the twenty-fourth of July. (See: Remark 3)

A state holiday, the twenty-fourth is marked by the Days of 47 parade, rodeos and firework displays that rival those on the fourth. While the day is set aside to commemorate the arrival of the first Mormon pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847, it also represents an opportunity to celebrate the thousands of Mormon pioneers who over many years trekked to and settled not just in Utah, but in much of what is now the western United States. In particular, it is the stories of hardship and heroism suffered by Mormon handcart pioneers on their journey to the Great Salt Lake Valley between the years 1856 and 1860 that is fervently venerated.

Following the assassination of the LDS church's prophet and founder Joseph Smith in 1844, Brigham Young—the LDS church's succeeding leader and second prophet—feared further persecution. A few years prior in 1838, following an extermination order (Missouri Executive Order 44)¹⁴ issued by governor Lilburn Boggs of Missouri, the Mormon Missouri settlement at Haun's Mill was attacked. Seventeen individuals were massacred including children. These events had driven Mormons to flee the state and establish the city of Nauvoo at a bend in the Mississippi river on flatlands in the state of Illinois.

After receiving warning from Illinois governor Thomas Ford, "that the United States Army might try to prevent the Mormon exodus from Nauvoo into Indian, British or Mexican territory;" (beautifulnauvoo.com)¹⁵ in the dead of winter, Brigham Young organized the immediate Mormon exodus west to territories then held by the Mexican Republic. In the years following the arrival of the first Mormon pioneers in the Great Salt Lake Valley, tensions between the US government and Brigham Young's theocratic style government over what was now designated

14. "Could You Legally Kill A Mormon Until 1976?" <https://www.news-leader.com/story/news/local/ozarks/2018/09/01/missouri-executive-order-44-mormon-war/1147461002/>. Accessed - June 2019.

15. "Nauvoo during the Mormon period (1839 - 1847) - Beautiful Nauvoo." [https://www.beautifulnauvoo.com/nauvoo-during-the-mormon-period-\(1839-1846\).html](https://www.beautifulnauvoo.com/nauvoo-during-the-mormon-period-(1839-1846).html). Accessed - May 2019.

15a. "History & Culture - Mormon Pioneer National History Trail (U.S. National Park Service)." <https://www.nps.gov/mopi/learn/historyculture/index.htm>. Accessed - May 2019.

16. Stenger, Wallace. *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail*. Lincoln, London:

REMARK 3

At some point, we are all animals in someone else's zoo.

SECTION TWO

the Utah territory (extending from what is currently much of Colorado to the western edge of Nevada) were high.^{15a}

Having suffered oppression and armed conflict, and with the threat of an eventual arrival in the Utah territory of a U.S. Army expeditionary force,^{15a} Brigham Young established a Perpetual Immigration fund and issued an Epistle for all saints to gather to Zion:

“‘Let all things be done in order,’ said the Thirteenth General Epistle of October 29, 1855, ‘and let all the saints who can, gather up for Zion and come while the way is open before them; let the poor also come, whether they receive aid or not from the Fund; let them come on foot, with hand carts or wheel barrows, let them gird up their loins and walk through, and nothing shall hinder or stay them.’” (Stenger, p.224)¹⁶

Due to zealous missionary efforts since its founding, in 1855 members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Europe numbered in the thousands. But the Perpetual Immigration Fund, referenced by Young, was woefully inadequate to meet the demand prompted by the Epistle. Unable to fund continual wagon train voyages for the thousands of souls now eager to not only heed the prompting of their prophet, but also to embrace the hope of starting a new life in the American west, Brigham Young settled upon a pragmatic plan to bring his Saints to Zion:

“I have been thinking of how we should operate another year ... We cannot afford to purchase wagons and teams as in times past. I am consequently thrown back upon my old plan—to make hand-carts, and let the emigration foot it, and draw upon them [the carts] the necessary supplies, having a cow or two for every ten. They can come just as quick, if not quicker, and much cheaper ... A great majority of them walk now, even with the teams which are provided ...” (Hafen, Hafen p.29)¹⁷

The plan was bold. From a cynical perspective it could also be considered reckless. As a matter of record, as read in a multiplicity of first hand journal accounts, it was a matter of faith. For members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints their travails on the Mormon trail were born of divine edict. This perspective is perhaps best understood as recorded in the dozens of songs and hymns written about and by those who made the trek to Zion

University of Nebraska Press, 1992.

It is interesting to read such uniquely crafted prose that is both comprehensive and lyrical concerning this chapter in the history of my ancestry. There are nuances in Stenger’s story telling that reveal edges, both rough and smooth concerning real events and real people so easily mythologized. For that is how to an extent, as a child, I had experienced the accounts of the Mormon Trek west—as a kind of mythology, often conveyed as parable, and always delivered with an earnestness difficult to describe. In part, because of how the stories are intertwined with the cultural and even physical landscape of Utah. But how much of what Stenger has written can be considered historical, in the sense it is a true representation of events that, for lack of a better description, are a part of me?

Stenger’s book positions itself as historically accurate but not devoid of opinion. The interpretive lens of his writing is designed to encapsulate his perspective on a place and a people, and their collective history which he found fascinating. He lived in Utah and evidently experienced the earnestness of which I speak. And I am grateful for his tone in addressing it. There are other agenda driven voices that obscure, or repurpose that earnestness in favour of making a statement. Stenger is not concerned with statements or agendas. Rather, he declares: “I write as a non-Mormon but not a Mormon-hater.” This statement follows an earlier statement where he observes:

“There is no firm ground here; there is only Mormon opinion, Gentile [an historical Mormon term for describing non-Mormons] opinion, and the necessarily tentative opinion of historians trying to take account of all the facts and allow for all the delusion, hatred, passion, paranoia, lying, bad faith, concealment, and distortion of evidence that were contributed by both the Mormons and their enemies.” (Stenger, p.313)

Thus revealing, to an extent, the dilemma for me in including a segment of writing about the importance of walking to the Mormon faith. I am inherently biased and perhaps even delusional, but rightly wary. I have experienced anti-Mormon vitriol, bigotry and even hatred, and not simply throughout my life but among colleagues while

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on foot:

How long in the world I have sigh'd
From the days of my earliest youth,
When, sick of its sin and its pride,
I sought and I pray'd for the truth.

It came, and the Gospel I found,
To me it was life, joy, and peace;
Salvation was beaming around,
With hopes of a happy release.

And then I was longing to be
Where the will of my Father is done,
Where the noble, the pure, and the free
On the earth are united in one.

I go where no tyrants dare come,
Where oppressors would tremble to tread,
Where the honest in heart find a home,
While the nations will crumble and fall.

'Tis with joy I am bidding farewell
To the proud, boasted land of my birth;
I go with the upright to dwell,
Where the pure will find heaven on earth.

It is Faith, 'tis not fancy, that paints
The vision of bliss that I see;
I go to the home of the Saints—
To Zion, the land of the free.

(Cash, Ann. "Farewell To The Land of my Birth.")

In his book, *The Gathering of Zion*, Wallace Stenger recounts: "Joseph Smith, the Prophet, Seer, Revelator, and President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and his brother Hyrum, its Patriarch, were shot to death by a black-face mob in the upper room of the jail at Carthage, Illinois." He goes on to declare, "that act of ruffianism, which culminated (though it did not end) the hostility of the middle border toward Joseph's peculiar people, was expected to scotch the Mormons for good." Stenger then observes, "instead it did two things: it tempered their already well-tempered steel in the blood of martyrs ... and it assured the carrying-out of migration plans that had been fitfully contemplated long before

engaged in research training as a part of both my MFA and PhD experience. In that sense then, there is one important quibble with Wallace Stenger's writing that I feel should be addressed. Throughout the book, he often describes Mormon pioneers as not only being more pathetic and ill-prepared than the average immigrant of the time, but he ascribes to them "some of the stuff that makes heroes." (Stenger, p.221)

Stenger's eloquent fictionalized estimations of who these Mormon pioneers were and what motivated their journeyings, at times romanticizes them and the events surrounding their trek west. Masking his condescension through sincere expressions of affection and admiration. Objectively, these people were no more or less pathetic or ill-prepared than any other poor, tired, huddled mass of immigrant yearning to be free of the era. That does not mean however, that they were not an essential part of the larger tapestry of souls that helped establish significant communities that became flourishing cities across the Western United States.

That is why, as will be expressed later in this section, I find it highly problematic that a lauded American author who has written a significant text on the subject of the history of walking ignored and failed to address this important episode in American history. But to discuss that in further detail here would be counter-productive. As it relates to this section of the thesis, a review of Wallace Stenger's book, in response to its citation in the Primary Thread, offers the reader an opportunity to better consider my inclusion of that segment of writing. It is designed to contextualize my stated intuitive desire, if not love of walking, prior to the distillation of how walking factored prominently in the development of my research methodology. And, as it relates to my quibble, it should be noted what I have written is also historically accurate but not devoid of opinion. These people are heroes to me, and any condescension expressed concerning them comes from a different place, and is hopefully less potent.

17. Hafen, Leroy R. & Ann W. *Handcarts to Zion: The Story of a Unique Western Migration, 1865-1860*. Lincoln, London: University of Nebraska

Joseph's death." (Stenger, pg.17)

Looking closer at the Saints trek west, Stenger declares: "a stylized memory of the trail," lies at the "heart of Mormondon." He goes on to assert, "For every early saint, crossing the plains to Zion ... was not merely a journey but a rite of passage, the final, devoted, enduring act that brought one into the kingdom." Stenger then proffers: "the shared experience of the trail was a bond that reinforced the bonds of the faith; and to successive generations who did not personally experience it, it has continued to have sanctity as legend and myth." (Stenger, pg.1)

From a personal perspective, it is hard to argue against Stenger's observations. The memories, as passed down and shared again and again of the Mormon trail endure. They are part and parcel of my personal heritage. As a multi-generation member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, I have ancestry that was directly involved in and affected by the Mormon exodus. But one does not need to be born into the legacy. The stories of sacrifice, endurance and death on the Mormon trail are, or eventually become, part and parcel of every Member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints' personal heritage.

The LDS church reports a current world-wide membership of close to sixteen million. Active congregations can be found on every continent. With a carefully correlated curriculum and remarkable uniformity in manner of worship among congregations in diverse locations among disparate cultures, stories of the Mormon pioneers, in particular hand-cart pioneers, finds its way into every LDS chapel and classroom the world over.

Born and raised in Salt Lake City, Utah I regularly attended the Days of 47 parade, rodeos and fireworks displays. Frankly, to a degree, celebrations on the twenty-fourth can be construed as more significant than those on July fourth. But the stories themselves are not merely reserved for telling on a specific day of the year. They are often spoken not just in Sunday worship sermons (talks), but shared as a part of Sunday School lessons, and even in civics classes in grade school. These stories are as important a narrative as any of the foundational narratives of the LDS church and its enduring culture.

Having lived in France, and now having lived most of my adult life in Canada, the twenty-fourth of July is not

Press, 1992.

18. Madsen, Susan Arrington. *I Walked to Zion: True Stories of Young Pioneers on the Mormon Trail*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1994.

In the words of Wallace Stenger, *Handcarts to Zion* (17 above) and *I Walked to Zion* are books that "rely exclusively on original documents rather than on historical opinion." In his eyes this doesn't diminish the texts, so much as it doesn't allow the texts to account for the fact "those who wrote the original journals and letters ... were very often blinded by Pentecostal enthusiasm, tribal loyalty, or imperfect information." We are all blinded by something. What better way to see can there be then, but to see the world through the blindness of others? To which Stenger ultimately submits: "... but for the events themselves they are the best documents we have, and whenever possible I have based [my] book on them." (Stenger, p. 313)

Setting aside Stenger's view, there is an impact that accompanies reading about history through the original journals and diaries of those who lived it. At least from my perspective, and especially as it relates to the journals and diaries of Mormon pioneers. There are familiar patterns to the organization and use of words; patterns that are prevalent in the manner of speaking and lexicon of the modern Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Thus, the stories do not feel so distant, as if what is being described could not actually have happened last week, let alone more than a hundred years ago. Of course, that is an absurd notion, except in how it reinforces my contention of an intuitive desire to walk, born of a profound kinship with my ancestry.

19. Opezzo, Marily & Schwartz, Daniel L. *Give Your Ideas Some Legs: The Positive Effect of Walking on Creative Thinking*. Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition, Stanford University, 2014, pp. 1142-1152. American Psychological Association.

It's interesting how distinct and yet similar in intent my experimentations with walking are with those summarized in this report as a means to enhance my own capacity for imaginative and creative

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set aside for celebrations in either location. Regardless, I have heard the same stories of Mormon pioneers, and in particular hand-cart pioneers repeated in sermons and Sunday school lessons, not merely delivered in English but also in the French language among Mormon congregations. I have also witnessed the stories shared in Spanish, Chinese and Farsi during Sunday services and classes. They truly are, borrowing from Stenger, a means of continually strengthening the bonds of faith. The stories help reinforce the notion, taught again and again, that to be a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is to be a pioneer; to be adopted into and share in a distinct pioneer heritage. It's an intoxicating idea, supported by harrowing pioneer histories, some tragic and all utterly compelling.

Fundamental to these faith sustaining stories is the fact thousands of men, women and children walked some thirteen hundred miles, averaging 8 to 10 miles a day, from the banks of the Mississippi river to the Great Salt Lake Valley. Whether a part of the original exodus from Nauvoo that included wagon trains and teams of cattle and horses, or a part of the hand-cart companies, the fact that many of the travelers made the journey on foot is repeatedly emphasized. Walking is a central element in the retelling of events. Every summer, all over the Western United States and even here in Eastern Canada, Mormon youth participate in Pioneer Trek re-enactments. They are organized into companies, costumed in pioneer-style clothing and pull hand carts several miles for several days, camping and enjoying fireside devotionals at night.

In the book, *I Walked to Zion: True Stories of Young Pioneers on the Mormon Trail*, Susan Arrington Madsen writes: "between 1847 and 1869, more than seventy thousand Latter-Day Saint pioneers made the trek, seeking religious freedom, with most of them walking every step of the way." She goes on to state: "Many books have been written about the westward journey of the early Latter-Day Saints ... in most of these books, however, children and teenagers are rarely seen and almost never heard." She then declares the aim of her book is to "[take] a look at the migration from the perspective of young people." (Madsen, loc.45)

It is through those perspectives that the significance of the act of walking to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints can, in context to this thesis, thoughtfully be appreciated. Following her preface, Madsen does not

thinking. Perhaps part of the similarity speaks to the inherent limitations and mechanics of walking and how they can be leveraged to produce, at least in the case of Opezzo and Schwartz's study, scientifically verifiable results.

Anecdotally, until the release of the study, walking was viewed as an effective means to jumpstart, or enhance one's own creative thinking. As stated in the Primary Thread, as uncovered in my readings, a variety of individuals understood, tacitly speaking, that walking was both physically and cognitively beneficial. The study's researchers allude to this fact by citing Friedrich Nietzsche's aphorism, "All truly great thoughts are conceived by walking ..." followed by a brief analysis of what the report calls the "Mind-body Connection" wherein they cite a variety of studies similar to theirs that focus on the impact of aerobic activity, instead of walking, which is considered a mild activity. (Opezzo, Schwartz. p.1142)

So, why did I choose walking as opposed to more rigorous activities as my key research method? There are practical reasons which are similar to Opezzo and Schwartz's reasoning for specifically studying walking (and which will be addressed below). But per my parsing of Feinstein's ideas on creative development, I chose walking because there are potentially weighty emotional underpinnings related to my intrinsic interest in human bipedal movement. Looking back on the genesis of my experimentations the decision to employ walking in the first place seemed to be made on a whim. However, at this juncture, I am able to look back on the whole of my research efforts and recognize that my focus and reliance on walking was capricious, but also subconsciously deliberate in its adoption.

The concluding section of this document will examine what I mean by the above. More important to this segment of writing though, is to look closer at the structure of Opezzo and Schwartz's experiments, as a comparator to my own experiments. Not with the intent to affirm one set of research actions informed the other, but rather (and prior to the inevitable disclosure, in the Primary thread, as to how walking was employed as the lynchpin component in the development of my methodology) to assert that my efforts, independent of Opezzo and Schwartz's, can offer insights into how walking can boost creative thinking.

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offer commentary, but instead allows the journal entries she has compiled to speak sincerely and succinctly of these young people's personal experiences. Some anecdotes capture a sense of wonder and even playfulness. Others are hard to read for their emotional impact:

"I used to see other children running along barefooted and thought it would be nice to take my shoes off too. But my feet were not accustomed to such rough usage ... one day while trying the experiment, I wandered a little way from the road and, getting among a bed of prickly pears, was obliged to sit down and take care of my feet ... as the wagons kept traveling on, this threw me some distance behind our team ... considerably fatigued [catching up] ... I think this must have cured me of the desire to go barefooted.

Another favorite pastime consisted of walking far enough ahead of the train to get a little time to play, when we would drive the huge crickets ... that abounded in some sections of the country, and build corrals of sand or rocks to put them in, calling them our cattle."—Mary Jane Mount (Tanner), age: 10 at time of journey; Abraham O. Smoot Company.

"After three and one-half months walking ... we finally came out of Emigration Canyon, dirty and ragged. When I saw my mother looking over this valley with tears streaming down her pale cheeks, she made this remark: 'Is this Zion, and are we at the end of this long, weary journey?' Of course, to me as a child, this had been a delightful pleasure jaunt, and I remember it only as fun ... But to my mother, this long, hot journey with all of us ragged and footsore at the end and the arrival in the valley of desert and sage brush must have been a heartbreaking contrast to the beautiful home she had left in Sweden."—Alma Elizabeth Mineer (Felt), age: 6 at the time of journey; John R. Murdock Company.

"My mother was sick all the way over, and my sister Jenetta had the worry of us children. She carried water from the river to do the cooking. Her shoes gave out, and she walked through the snow barefoot, actually leaving bloody tracks in the snow. Father was a good singer. He had charge of the singing in our company, and the night he died he sang a song, the first verse

Per Opezzo and Schwartz's report, four studies were conducted. Each involved some variation of participants moving from one seated station to another, sitting, then getting up to walk, or walking, then sitting followed by more walking. This all coinciding with the administration of time sensitive tests to measure the participants capacity for creative thinking. As well, and important to consider, the experiments were conducted in nondescript classroom settings where all of the walking was done on treadmills, with the provision that participants were directed to switch rooms in order to "equate any effects of context switching." (Opezzo, Schwartz. p.1146)

As an outlier and relevant to my inquiry, Opezzo and Schwartz's team, per their description of experiment three, integrated ideas from current research surrounding Attention Restoration Theory (ART). ART "posits that walking in natural environments invokes 'soft fascination,' which does not require direct attention and allows for the renewal of directed attention capacities." (Opezzo, Schwartz. p.1145) Aware of ART related concepts and the potential applicability to my research, I do discuss the theories later in this section. However, due to the fact my research concentration is trained more closely on the act of walking, it is more pertinent to remain focused on my analysis of Opezzo and Schwartz's findings, as they are definitively thorough in their application and offer a more relevant foundation from which my evolved systematic methodological efforts can be compared and measured.

On the surface, there is considerable overlap between my efforts and Opezzo and Schwartz's efforts, which is evident in looking specifically at their third experiment. In it, as with the other experiments, participants were administered divergent and convergent creative thinking tests prior to and shortly following walks. However, the participants were required to take their walks outdoors on a fixed path across a university campus. The study notes that there was a demonstrable improvement in the participants' test scores, as compared to the previous two studies. Specifically, the study states: "[participants] increased their creative production more than two-fold." (Opezzo, Schwartz. p.1146) Which, on its surface, implies that there are curious corollaries to be drawn between Opezzo and Schwartz's conclusions, and my own suppositions and discoveries. (see: Walking Index)

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reads ‘Oh Zion, when I think of you, I long for pinions like a dove, And mourn to think I should be so distant from the land I love.’—Peter Howard McBride, age: 6 at the time of journey; Edward Martin Handcart Company.

“My father, David Reeder, would start out in the morning and pull his cart until he would drop on the road. He did this day after day until he did not arise early on October 7, 1856 ... Sister Eliza wrapped a cherished sheet around him, and we placed him in a shallow grave hoping the wolves would not disturb. We must go our way in silent mourning and in a weakened condition.”—Robert Reeder, age 19 at the time of journey; James G. Willie Handcart Company.

“At Elk Horn River, my feet were so swollen I could not wear my shoes. Then when the swelling went out, my feet were so sore from the alkali that I never had on a pair of shoes after that for the entire journey.

While pulling this heavy load, I looked and acted strange. The first thing my friend Emmie knew I had fallen under the cart, and before they could stop it, the cart had passed over me, and I lay at the back of it on the ground. When my companions got to me, I seemed perfectly dead. Emmie could not find any pulse at all and there was not a soul around ... Captain Rowley came up to us. ‘What have you got there, Emmie?’ he said. ‘Oh my, Fanny is dead,’ she said. It frightened him, so he got off his horse and examined me closely but could not find any life at all.

When I came to myself, my grave was dug two feet deep, and I was in a tent. The Sisters had sewed me up to the waist in my blanket, ready for burial. I opened my eyes and looked at them.”—Fanny Fry (Simmons), age: 16 at time of journey; George Rowely Company

These accounts, among many others are etched in the Latter-Day Saint psyche—especially among those born into the faith and hailing from Utah. Before looking at the science of walking it is important to lay them out as a continuation of why, as stated in the previous section, walking was an intuitive response and became my primary research method.

Per my investigation, walking out doors, in particular in the woods near my home, was essential to the overall efficacy of my method, helping to stimulate further investigations, and more vitally, assist me in achieving my stated research aims of invigorating my creative practice. Interestingly, though using a treadmill was never considered as a part of my research, walking on residential neighborhood sidewalks, or indoors on the campus where I teach became an important part my investigations due to the prevalence of inclement or harsh weather conditions of the climate where I reside. In other words, the basis for my explorations were first predicated on the premise that walking outdoors on irregular pathways was inherently more effective than walking on a paved path or indoors.

Again, that was a principal conclusion that could be drawn from my experience, supported by a plethora of anecdotal examples, which are discussed in the Primary Thread. From Jean Jacques Rousseau to Søren Kierkegaard, along with many examples cited in *Wanderlust* by Rebecca Solnit, nearly all speak of the efficacy of taking walks, not indoors but out of doors. The notion of using a treadmill however, is an interesting, clever and pragmatic solution to situations where getting out of doors may not be feasible. In review of my efforts, there were at least a couple of instances when weather conditions were particularly severe, and where having a treadmill would have been useful. With necessity being the mother of invention, alternative solutions did present themselves, such as talking walks in the hallways of my work place, which will be noted in the Primary Thread as being approximate to treadmill walking, but perhaps not as efficient.

Additionally, as with the study report early on, distractions while walking out of doors were noted as having the potential to derail the positive effects of walking on creativity. In fact, the data from nine participants involved in Opezzo and Schwartz’s third experiment, who reported being acutely distracted by “the rapid onslaught of fast moving bikes, very large trucks without apparent mufflers, and a participant answering his phone mid-test,” (Opezzo, Schwartz. p.1146) were not measured. Out of necessity, my attempts to account for similar variables impeding my efforts, such as noisy passing cars, stopping to chat with a neighbor, my dog and regular walking companion wandering

On The Science of Walking

Prior to beginning the tale of my research, as stated in the closing paragraphs of the previous section, it is important to identify emerging scientific research concerning walking and its potential effect on creativity. In 2014, a year after I began my research activities, a report titled, *Give Your Ideas Some Legs: The Positive Effect of Walking on Creative Thinking* was published by Marily Oppezzo, researcher in educational psychology and Daniel L. Schwartz, professor at Stanford Graduate School.

In their abstract, Oppezzo and Schwartz assert, “four experiments demonstrate that walking boosts creative ideation in real time and shortly after.” Further declaring, “walking outside produced the most novel and highest quality analogies, the effects of outdoor stimulation and walking were separable. Walking opens up the free flow of ideas, and it is a simple and robust solution to the goals of increasing creativity.”

(Oppezzo and Schwartz, Abstract)¹⁹

Following the number ten reference above to the Secondary Thread, descriptions of all four experiments conducted by Oppezzo and Schwartz are provided and contextualized per my research efforts. Considered here in the Primary Thread, the Oppezzo and Schwartz report serves to scientifically corroborate a view held by the likes of Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean Jacques Rousseau, as well as Rebecca Solnit among many others with regard to the notion that walking is an effective means of enhancing one’s own creative thinking, in addition to substantiating my practice-led research experiments that involved walking.

Looking closer at Oppezzo and Schwartz’s report, their experiments and methods were designed to examine the effects physical activity can have on human cognition in general. Whereas my experiments and methods, though similar in intent, allowed me to introspectively consider the effect walking could have on my own cognition. All of which were accomplished with the understanding that I was operating as an individual artist, trained as an educator and possessed of more than twenty year’s experience expertly employing creative processes in professional and post-secondary educational settings. Thus, allowing me to investigate how not only walking, but talking to myself—a quirk of my personality and integral aspect of my practice—

off and needing to be called back, were carefully reflected upon and addressed throughout the evolution of my walking method—in ways that the Stanford study does not or perhaps could not address. Similarly my experimentations were much more varied in their application, allowing for a fluidity that is inherent to a practice-led research inquiry. But also, my investigations, though equally rigorous, were not as scientifically strict in their execution, as those of Oppezzo and Schwartz.

In summation, there are other important links to be made between my activities and those instigated by Oppezzo and Schwartz. As alluded to above, my efforts included experimentation with and a consideration for hiking, running, biking and other aerobic exercises in place of walking as a mechanism for boosting creativity. However, as with the authors of the study, I too concluded that, “asking [myself and potentially others] to take a 30-minute run [or bike ride] to improve [mine or their] subsequent seated creativity testing would be an unhappy prescription.” Whereas, “the more practical strategy of taking a short walk,” seemed to be a reasonable mechanism, easily adopted to suit my research focus. (Oppezzo, Schwartz, p.1143) Not to mention, how it could render my methodology more accessible to others, who may choose to adopt my methodology as a part of their own practice.

Furthermore, and of particular importance, one area where there is no overlap between mine and the study is in my use of wayfinding techniques in the designation of markers mentally set along my typical walking paths. (see: fig.12, Section Four) A distinct invention, unique to my efforts (as briefly discussed in the Primary Thread) I used markers to: establish, return to and re-enter actual spaces that are familiar through repeated physical encounter. Briefly expanding on the idea here, in advance of a full distillation of my experiments in Section Four, these actual spaces, which I came to label *Environs*, also functioned as conceptual mental spaces, wherein creative states of consciousness could be sustained.

Lastly, in the study report, while there is mention of a change in context (switching rooms and treadmills) benefiting participants, there is no mention of a meditative component being introduced as a part of the testing. Again, as is revealed in the Primary Thread, my experimentation with simple meditative techniques, as fundamental

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could be identified and leveraged as a primary means, by which I have and can continue to improve my capacity for imaginative and creative thinking.

Acknowledging the vantage point from which my experimentation approached the subject, Oppezzo and Schwartz's report declares: "Attempts to improve creativity often involve training people in the steps of creativity ..." which is followed by the declaration that it is possible to teach individuals how to "shift their perspective," and/or compel them to be more creative through "effortful manipulation." However, Oppezzo and Schwartz's report does not address what happens when walking (and in the case of my investigation, in conjunction with notions of climbing and exploring, in addition to the role emotion could play) becomes a primary means, or a deliberately set upon method for an artist to enhance his well-established creative practice.

Additionally, while one of Oppezzo and Schwartz's experiments does involve directing their participants to walk out of doors, nowhere do they address how to mitigate the potential distractions that can accompany such an activity. Nor do they address the effect meditative techniques could have on the practice of walking. And, more importantly, neither does their report consider the potential of incorporating wayfinding techniques, or relatedly, setting way-markers in the landscape as a means to establish, return to and re-enter actual spaces that are familiar, through repeated physical encounter and that function as conceptual mental spaces, wherein a creative state of consciousness can be sustained.

Again, further elaboration on Oppezzo and Schwartz's experiments, contextualized per my research efforts, is provided in the Secondary Thread. As well, in the Third Section of this documentation, the origins of and invention of my walking practice, at the outset of my research efforts, will be carefully outlined—in particular, how walking and by association, my notions of climbing and exploring as metaphors for fostering and sustaining consciously creative states of mind, were settled upon as the chief method of my methodology. Allowing me to argue that my findings not only corroborate but compliment the findings of Oppezzo and Schwartz, while also in some measure validating the accounts and anecdotal reports of the creative boosting power walking has had on a variety of individuals

to my walking exercises suggests a flexibility in my research efforts that Oppezzo and Schwartz apparently did or could not entertain.

Moreover, while I could draw other comparisons to Oppezzo and Schwartz study, it is sufficient to declare that my investigation is, in some measure, equally verifiable as well as timely in its advent, in comparison to the investigation summarized by their report. Though this particular field of research on its own is fascinating, this thesis is not equipped to push forward, further and exclusively exploring the subject of walking alone. Rather, its distillation in the Primary Thread, along with my analysis here should serve to provide a sound scientific perspective from which my research efforts can be appraised before being appreciated and scrutinized in subsequent sections.

20. "A Line Made By Walking."

Richard Long, www.richardlong.org/Sculptures/2011sculptures/linewalking.html. Accessed - June 2015.

My first introduction to the work of Richard Long occurred when I was in high school. His sculptural works were discussed in a twelfth-grade advanced art class, in context to a proposed class field trip to visit the shoreline where Robert Smithson's sculptural work *Spiral Jetty* is located. Growing up in Utah, *Spiral Jetty* was a regular topic of discussion in every art class I had starting in grade school. Despite being covered by water, our teacher was interested in taking a small group to visit the setting of the sculpture, with the aim to engage with and experience the landscape wherein it was constructed. He then showed us slides of other environmentally situated artworks, with Richard Long's walking sculptures in particular attracting my attention.

To this day, I am moved by Long's readily apparent corporeal awareness within a landscape. His use of walking as a mark-making tool, in particular in his piece aptly titled: "A Line Made by Walking," is inspiring. Seen now, in the context of my research, the work compels me to ask: do I simply pass through a landscape; what subtle alterations do I make, or leave behind; are my footsteps mark-making tools, and why have I not considered their destructive, if not constructive impact?

While many of the Long's sculptural works

throughout history.

A Survey of Walking as Method and Practice

In relation to walking and the role it has played in cultural and individual creative expression, I want to begin by referencing the iconic walking sculptures of Richard Long. There is a quality to his sculpture, *A Line Made by Walking* (1967)²⁰ that is primal. Whether deliberate or not in intent, his work negotiates with our collective past, in that our species has been walking across the planet for millennia. To move from one spot on the earth to another in bi-pedal fashion is both inherently destructive, and constructive. Long's equating of the walked line with the drawn line is brilliant, and his seminal works were influential to my overall inquiry, owing in large part to the fact they were situated in wild or reasonably untamed locations.

In addition to Richard Long, the work of Francis Alÿs also had a direct influence on my inquiry, but for decidedly different reasons. As with Long, many of his works of art require the use of walking as an essential element in their realization—though the act of walking appears incidental to the overall creative concept. For example, in his piece titled *Sometimes Making Something Leads to Nothing* (1997)²¹, Alÿs pushed a block of ice around Mexico City until it melted away. His quirky, action-based performance strikes me as unfettered by conventional notions of art making.

That is not to say I consider his works strange. Or that his works can't be interpreted as post-modernist in how they performatively convey the durative and repetitive nature of task completion. Rather, I find a certain hopefulness in his works, in that my long-standing habit of walking and talking to myself represents an opportunity to render something I have previously described as a quirk of my personality a mechanism that allows me to embrace an innate desire to be equally unconstrained in my explorations. (see: Verse 3) Additionally, in contrast to Long, referencing Alÿs's work provided demonstrable evidence that walking can be incidental to and yet function as an essential aspect of art-making.

Related, but different in the potential effect it has had

cannot exist without walking, per my research, consideration for his walking centric art-making helped me begin to make a clear distinction between walking as an art form, or as a deliberate artistic act, and walking as a mere aspect of the methods and methodology I was intent on developing. While my practice does not involve creating works of art that rely on my body altering a physical environment, appreciation for Richard Long's ideas and methods helped me to more fully consider my sense of corporeal self during my many walking outings. (see: Remark 6) That appreciation was important in helping me fully develop a comprehensive walking method, which is thoroughly outlined in the Primary Thread.

21. "Sometimes Making Something Leads to Nothing." Francis Alÿs, <http://francisalys.com/sometimes-making-something-leads-to-nothing>. Accessed - May 2015.

Upon first viewing Francis Alÿs' performances, which rely upon walking as a key element, I was amused by the cleverness and absurdity of his conceptions. In certain ways they are not unlike the observations a comedian makes and then exaggerates for the benefit of an audience. The distinction in my mind concerning Alÿs's performances are more profound in their impact—though that is not to diminish in any way the pleasure that accompanies being entertained by a talented comedian. Nor is it my intent to assert that Francis Alÿs has created performance works of art that can be construed as vapid. In my opinion, comedy has a place in art and I feel Alÿs strikes a good balance between finding humor in repetitive, modern human actions and activities, and the absurdity inherent in them.

To that end, is there some risk of what I am doing being viewed as merely developing a shtick or routine that is ultimately forgettable? Though I am not seeking profundity outright, I do aim to build upon my long-standing creative process practices that rely on brainstorming and mind-mapping techniques, with the intent to develop a comprehensive methodology by which I can invigorate my art-making and realize new efforts at artistic expression and experimentation. Inherent in my research activities, there is a certain depth of experience to be shared. And to me, there is a weightiness found in the effort exerted in pursuit of

REMARK 4

Human folly often precedes moments of clarity and inspiration; therefore, what significant difference, if any, can be drawn between the fool and the genius?

on my research, walking can be studied and relied upon to inform builders of cities and neighborhoods on how to map out and construct better, more efficient, walking responsive communities. For example, pioneering urban theorist Kevin A. Lynch's emphasis on understanding individual wayfinding skills, as an essential component in urban planning, exemplifies how any line made by walking, beyond its traceable aesthetic, can capture the mental space one occupies while in transit. Lynch's principles for wayfinding in the design and planning of urban spaces, as analyzed by Karen O'Rourke, in her book *Walking and Mapping; Artists as Cartographers*,²² were useful in helping me refine techniques that rendered my walking method sustainable and effective.

O'Rourke's book revealed other examples where walking and formulating mental, if not creating physical maps, helped to better inform my research. Specifically, as she analyzes a diverse collection of artists whose explorations resulted in some surprising and imaginative works of art.

For example, led by Layla Gaye, Ramia Mazé, Daniel Skoglund and Margo Jacobs, and developed conjointly with designers and engineers in Göteborg Sweden for Sonic City Festival (2002 – 2004), participants were adorned with sensors, and “[using] real-time interactions between wearer and [their] surroundings” created music controlled by the urban surroundings. Encouraged to improvise their movements, allowing for the wearers’ “paths [to become] musical compositions,” the city itself functioned as a musical instrument, as well as a type of interface with “mobility [serving] as an interaction model for electronic music making.” (O'Rourke, pg.132)

The implications that an environment can speak back with stimuli, recognized as more than just coincidental noise, and in turn be synthesized for imaginative and creative purposes is fascinating. The very idea abstractly reinforces my contemplations captured in the Secondary Thread of the first section concerning Mark Turner's notions that when faced with a cacophony of sights and sounds: humans are capable of ‘compressing great ranges of perceptual data into manageable units ...’ most notably, and in context to my inquiry, for the purpose of art-making.

Although experimenting in sound-based art or composing music does not fit within the range of my typical art-

my findings. (see: Verse 5, Section Three)

22. O'Rourke, Karen. *Walking and Mapping*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2013.

In *Walking and Mapping*, Karen O'Rourke has compiled a comprehensive catalogue of walking as research, art, experience and agenda. In the preface, the author describes her book as: “an occasion to develop a cross-cultural databank where another pedestrian's story can jog our memory, calling up places or events we had long forgotten.” It is an invaluable repository of references important to my research, notably in how the author considers and asks: “A Form of Perception or Form of Art?” as the title for Chapter Two and then carefully examines what she means in the body of her text.

There is no judgment of merit or value assigned to the works, methodologies or findings cited. Rather, an astute enthusiasm for the diversity of experiences permeates the writing. It is with that same type of enthusiasm I hoped to color my experimentations at the inception of my methodology and its methods. The notion of contextualizing what I was doing for the purpose of comparison helped ground my theories concerning what the methodology, and methods could eventually reveal. Additionally, I could willfully avoid overt imitation and yet comprehend that my experimentation, invariably and unconsciously, would emulate the experimentations of others.

This balanced manner of looking at walking and mapping was fascinating. The book encourages a curiosity-based survey of the vast array of phenomenological experiences associated with walking, framed in context to mapping, with a certain focus placed on psychogeography and wayfinding. It is that focus that invited me to consider Kevin Lynch's methods in particular, as relevant to what my methodology was becoming. In her 5th chapter titled, “When Walking Becomes Mapping: Labrynth, Songlines,” O'Rourke relies on her scrutiny of Lynch's urban planning methods to capture ideas about the “legibility” of a city, or urban spaces. In similar fashion, I leaned on O'Rourke's ideas and analysis to help me begin to consider the “perceptible structure” of both the physical and mental passageways and spaces I was exploring. (O'Rourke. p.103)

VERSE 4

The landscape is a moving picture—an image that moves one to dream, on to dreams ... on towards rolling hills and a land full of giants.

New old souls, and I want to be one. But, it's a dream and a moving picture. An image that moves a little bit each day until it is more and more out of one's reach.

I don't think I will be a giant in a land full of them, and I wonder aloud what does that mean?

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making activities, understanding how such works can be created, relying in large part on walking as a tool essential to their inception, helped me foment my own ideas on the subject. In particular, exposure to what I was reading in O'Rourke's book helped me establish parameters for managing the perceptual data that could be generated by the use of my methodology.

Specifically, what was I prepared to glean from each walking experience? Or in other words, how much cognitive, perceptual data was I bringing with me into the environments I wandered in and out of, versus how much was I prepared to take back with me? (see: Remark 5) There was a give and take dynamic to reconcile. How might I balance going on a walk and being inspired by an arresting scene (see: www.stanzaic.com/72ndstanza), which compelled me to create a spontaneous work of art in response (see: fig.3), versus, initiating a walk with the intent to re-enter a creative state of consciousness where I was hoping to re-engage with a still formulating imaginative and creative concept?

At risk of revealing results related to my findings too early in this thesis, it is important to set the questions aside and instead describe how Reading O'Rourke's text led me to examine other contemporary examples, theories, or instances where walking plays a central role in the process of boosting creativity, or imaginative thinking—specifically those instances that can be considered similar to my own emergent practices.

In regard to the notion that walking and even mapping, either mentally and or physically, can help locate oneself in his or her immediate surroundings, my thinking turned to a previous experience I had had exploring the concepts of *dérive* or psychogeographic explorations. In particular in how *dérive* or psychogeographic explorations can inform an artist on what they may be reading culturally, visually and audibly from any particular environment they find themselves in.

Defined by Guy Debord, *Dérive* means: “drifting—a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances.” As it relates to psychogeographic exploration, “*Dérive* involves playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll.”²³

Could the concepts of psychogeography and wayfinding be applied to the cognitive spaces my mind was wandering in, (see: www.stanzaic.com/18thstanza) while I was physically hiking, climbing and exploring immediate and not so immediate environments? In learning to wayfind myself back to an immediate and familiar physical space could I also wayfind myself back to a specific cognitive space, wherein I entertained intrinsically interesting creative ideas and concepts? My understanding of these mental spaces, as I initially called them, coupled with the examples in the book, represent the theoretical impetus of my initial research thrust. The text exposed me to notions of *dérive* and Situationist practices, correlating with my experiences during an MFA artists' residency in Berlin, as discussed in the Primary Thread.

23. “Theory of the *Dérive*.” Guy Debord, <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/theory.html>. Accessed - July 2017.

The above web site offers additional information concerning the situationist practice and techniques of *dérive*, providing context to my awareness of the practice as it is referenced in the Primary Thread.

24. “Spectral Variants.” Paul Fabozzi, <http://www.paulfabozzi.com/sv.html>. Accessed - September 2016.

More information, including a descriptive video which chronicles the evolution of his process, can be accessed at Paul Fabozzi's Web site, providing further information concerning his actions, or data gathering and the resultant works of art born of those activities.

As an aside, while the full evolution of my walking as method will be chronicled in Section Four, situated here at this juncture of the text, and related to the work of Fabozzi, there were three instances where an arresting scene, happened upon during my earliest walking outings, incited me to get in the studio and create a work of art in direct response. (see: figs.4 & 5)

The paintings represent the idea that walks as a means of gathering perceptual data, can result in the creation of compelling works of art. There were certainly beautiful, or arresting scenes I happened upon during my many walks. However, the fact that

REMARK 5

The truth presented as the truth is the truth, unless it is a lie. But even then, truth can be found in the telling of the lie, because the lie inevitably leads back to the truth—which in many instances is the purpose for telling the lie in the first place ... So, is the lie ever truly a lie, if it only ever, ultimately, leads back to and reveals the truth?

REMARK 6

Isn't beauty always a means to an end, regardless one's awareness of what comes next? It is what one creates intuitively, even unconsciously, because it is what one simply knows to do. And how wide is the gap between the grand task to be accomplished and the extemporaneous actions born of the effort that went into its undertaking?

Drawing upon an experience I had in 2010, the above notions and the practices associated with *dérive* or psychogeographic explorations, were introduced to me in a peculiar fashion while enrolled in an MFA seminar during an artist residency in Berlin. The seminar, titled “Within Walking Distance,” was aimed at theoretically examining the human penchant for strolling, journeying, parading and processions. Using the streets of the German capital as a walking playground, the facilitator of the seminar, Nicolás Dumit Estévez, encouraged participants to engage in a personal dialogue between traditional acts of pilgrimage by religious devotees, and their own pilgrim-like movements as artists-in-residence and happenstantial tourists.

Having been reminded of how the seminar had awakened in me a sense for the rising significance of walking and the connections that can be made between my own personal faith and its potential, even if not evident in its effect on my art-making, I turned to an old journal from 2010 as a reference. At this juncture, delving into my experiences captured in the journal and associated with that particular residency, will be reserved for the concluding section of this thesis. However, it is important to re-address the performance works of Francis Alÿs—a key reference from that MFA seminar—and their pertinence to my research, especially at this stage of the documentation. In particular, it is important to point out the impact his work had on my aesthetic sensibilities.

Alÿs’ performance work can be interpreted as attempting to convey an appreciation for the peculiarity of everyday or ordinary experiences. In the video of his performance piece titled *VW Beatle* (2003), Alÿs can be seen pushing a Volkswagen Beatle around the streets of Wolfsburg, Germany. As I was growing up, my mother had a Volkswagen Beatle. At times it would not start and I can remember pushing it to a gas station, or back home our driveway.

It is possible to assert that such experiences are unique, despite their potential cross-cultural commonality. In that sense, the ideas and concepts present in Alÿs’ art, underpin ideas by David Bohm I highlighted in the Secondary Thread of the first section concerning, “[finding] in the reality in which [one] lives a certain oneness and totality, or wholeness, constituting a kind of harmony that is felt to be beautiful.” (Bohm, p.3)

the two works seen in figure 3 took nearly four years to finish, and the painting in figure 4 remains unfinished up until the writing of this thesis, indicates to me that there was something more I was looking for from my walks. Essentially, I was not interested in walking as a means to be inspired by the scenery around me. Walking represented something more—something I was not yet able to put into words at this stage of my research. Though my practice is durational in nature, and the last painting will be finished, I am just not invested in it.

25. “Traverse Me.” Jeremy Wood, http://www.jeremywood.net/artworks/traverse_me.html. Accessed - August 2015.

The above link points directly to Jeremy Wood’s specific, detailed cartographic drawings using GPS to track his walking.

26. “Hamish Fulton: Walking Artist.” Hamish Fulton, <http://www.hamish-fulton.com>. Accessed - June 2016.

Hamish Fulton’s web site is designed and constructed (at the writing of this thesis) with the express purpose of conveying his life and practice as a walking artist.

27. Solnit, Rebecca. *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT press, 2001.

Solnit states that “the history of walking is everyone’s history.” In the book, she sensibly outlines her premise that humanity relies upon on bi-pedal locomotion, not only to get from point A to point B, but in particular as a mechanism for contemplation, and more profoundly, activism: “the subject of walking is, in some sense, about how we invest universal acts with particular meanings.” (Solnit, p.3)

Accepting Solnit’s premise that the history of walking is everyone’s history, and not wanting to contradict her, but rather expand on her thesis, upon reading her book, I began to wonder why her text, whether deliberately or not, ignored my well-chronicled culturally and genetically inherited walking history. While Solnit’s text tries to be as inclusive as possible, in my opinion her book

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In striving to express the beautiful, if not harmonious wholeness of my research process, analyzing Alÿs' work led me to ask: is it not common that when ruminating on certain salient ideas—when one's own voice is speaking, referencing another distinct voice—many other voices can be heard in concert? This leads me to ask how can I capture a measure of that phenomenon, which in turn led to my practice of writing letters (see: fig.13, Section Four) to philosophers, artists and thinkers addressed to myself, and which will be chronicled in Section Five.

Further, in building upon the re-reference to Francis Alÿs, and in order to substantiate the instincts which figuratively, if not literally, led me down paths worth walking in the first place, other ancillary discoveries or contemporary artist practices made during the course of my investigations, should be discussed to help situate my early probing.

Upon discussing Alÿs and my early experimentations with walking and the resulting art I was engaging in, one of my advisors in an online meeting introduced me to the work of Paul Fabozzi. A New York based artist, Fabozzi employed methods remarkably similar to my own in the creation of his 2009 work titled, *Spectral Variants*.²⁴ His use of a pedometer to conceptually measure time and distance within an urban setting, taking photos and “building quantities of information,” derived from his walking exercises, mirrors my early methodological contemplations.

Fabozzi's conception of walks functioning as a type of data gathering, in addition to his stated fascination with the off-cuts from sculptural works born of those walks, is curiously similar to my own experience. Briefly discussed in the Secondary Thread of Section One, my practice of scraping left-over ink and paint on scraps of paper (see: fig.15, Section Four) as a part of a budding painting practice are, in part, connected to corporeal experiences with my deliberately instigated body movements. Though Fabozzi's methods did not influence my own, the corollaries are fascinating. Again, a more thorough examination of that aspect of my research will be explored in detail in Section Five.

In continuation with the above, other supplementary intriguing examples of walking as research, or as an essential aspect of art-making, can be cited as germane to my inquiry. In the same vein of developing consistent means of relying on walking to gather data, or quantities of information,

neglected a particularly significant walking event in American history. I can accept that perhaps it did not fit within the bounds of her conception of activism. Regardless, I find the omission curious, considering where the author currently resides.

Based in San Francisco, Solnit's research—at least as represented by her published text—failed to address a (modern) historic pilgrimage that help shape the American West. From 1846 to 1869, in order to escape religious persecution, seventy thousand Mormon pioneers trekked across five states to settle in the Great Salt Lake Valley. From there, hundreds of Mormon colonies were established. These colonies were instrumental in the growth of communities and cities in what is now the Western United States, notably: Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Nevada, Arizona and California. (see: fig.6)

As a fifth generation Mormon, many of my direct ancestors participated in what has been referred to as the great Mormon migration or exodus. The omission of this significant American historical event in Solnit's book troubled me. More importantly however, the omission prompted me to reconsider my personal knowledge of my ancestor's trek west as subconsciously representing the genesis of my own personal walking inclinations.

In retrospect, my highly emotional response to Solnit's book was pivotal in helping me commit to walking, along with notions on climbing and exploring, as fundamental to my research. Further, it is not a coincidence that my Scout Leader experiences, recounted in the Primary Thread, spurred my desire to walk in the first place. Volunteering as a Scout Leader is linked to my religiosity. My religiosity is tied, in no small part, to my identity as a descendant of Mormon pioneers.

Lacking space here to fully explore the above ideas, they are addressed in greater detail in the concluding Section Six. More important at this juncture, is to highlight how *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, awakened deeply seeded emotional connections to walking, and helped me choose to walk, climb and explore as the primary method in my methodology.

28. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*. Oxford UK, Oxford University Press, 2011. e-book.

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artist Jeremy Wood employs walking in combination with the use of GPS devices in order to create drawings that can easily be compared to detailed cartography.²⁵ The precision of his renderings, as the visual manifestation of his wayfinding journeys, encouraged me to imagine it was possible to track back to the same locations, again and again in my walking exercises, inviting me to introduce an element of repetitive compulsiveness to my actions, which proved important to their overall usefulness while also appealing to my detail-oriented nature.

Additionally, exposure to Wood's work, invited me to reconsider the notion of 'engineered experiences, and the human desire to push toward some sense of connection and completion,' as discussed in the previous section's Secondary Thread. Maps by design, in my estimation, invite people to connect dots, satisfying a seemingly human urge to establish, record and maintain connections to places that in my case does not manifest itself in the form of cartography style map making, but more so through writing lists and creating mind-maps, or multipart diagrams. (see: fig.1, Section One)

Beyond Fabozzi and Wood, walking seen as a potential engine driving one's artistic experiences can further be validated by scrutinizing the work of walking artist Hamish Fulton. Possessed of the notion that, "a walk has a life of its own," and that while "a work of art can be sold, a walk cannot" (Fulton, hamish_fulton_v01.htm)²⁶ Fulton is clearly enamored with the idea that walking as a practice is also a lifestyle choice. His walking as art practice has taken him to a variety of countries and locations throughout the globe. And while during the course of my investigation, a desire to walk in far-flung places was entertained—namely on the streets of Paris in homage to Jean Jacques Rousseau and along the foothills and in the mountains overlooking my childhood home of Salt Lake City, Utah, (see: Walking Index) succumbing to the urge, or need to go great distances to walk felt unduly self-indulgent.

Under the next heading below, in this thread, the dynamic of walking in far off or remote locations, versus environments immediately accessible to my home will be addressed. In relating back to my deliberations found in the Secondary Thread of Section One I cite Margaret A. Boden's assertions that math, computers and A.I. can unravel the paradox that is human creativity. While I accept the premise that

"These hours of solitude and meditation are the only time of the day when I am completely myself, without distraction or hindrance, and when I can truly say that I am what nature intended me to be." (Rousseau, loc.670) The introspection of Rousseau as read in *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* is intoxicating: Though there is a melancholy prevalent in his oft mournful prose, which evokes a pensive sadness. There is also, in my opinion, an underlying sense of hope that can be read in the all-consuming and self-therapeutic nature of his writing.

In contrast, in the Introduction, the book's translator Russell Goulbourne asks: "is the Rousseau of the *Reveries* as happy as he claims to be?" He then follows with the assertion that, "the text in fact gives no unambiguous answers to such questions. On the contrary, it gives voice to the contradictions and obsessions which give us a very sharp sense of a Rousseau still working through the problems he claims to have overcome." (Rousseau, loc.143) Not wanting to dwell on the insights of the editor, they did tempt me to ask the following: does one ever actually overcome ... or does one only ever work through, and learn to better live with that which troubles the soul?

In my estimation, Rousseau is neither happy nor sad. Acutely aware of the realities of his circumstances he is actually bemused, in the sense that he is engrossed in deliberating with himself about the recursive question of purpose in the context of his many personal vexations, either coincidental or perceived: "I have sought often and at length to discover my life's true purpose in order to determine how to live, and I soon became reconciled to my lack of ability to conduct myself skilfully in this world when I realized that here was not the place to seek that purpose." (Rousseau, loc.840) (see: www.stanzaic.com/12thstanza)

Per my reading of his writings, if happiness, in contrast to sadness, is a potentially constant state of being we arrive at upon seeking it, what of the in-between states of being we stumble upon and even linger in while engaged in the journey to find temporal bliss? Above all else, that is the most pertinent question Rousseau's prose piqued in me, which unexpectedly, provided me with an important prompt to re-direct my research activities and compel them in an interesting direction, at least for a time early on in my inquiry.

Still determined to walk, climb and explore, but

it is possible to programmatically pattern a practice after the practice of an avowed walking artist such as Hamish Fulton, the question of whether or not it is advisable to do so, correlates with the notion of whether or not it is advisable to place faith in synthetic computational systems, versus human processes and practices, with the aim to teach humanity about creativity.

The same motivations, or in computational terms, the variables that persuade Fulton in his walking, evidently do not have the same persuasive effect on me—at least not in the same way and with the same results. Therefore, while Fulton's works are interesting, it is prudent that this thesis look closer at the motivations or variables that persuaded me on the subject of walking.

The Impetus of My Walking as Method

Stepping outside the above exemplars (as has briefly been explored in both the Primary and Secondary Threads) the conception of walking as an effective means to jump-start the imagination and spur creative thinking appears prominently in the histories of a variety of thinkers, philosophers and writers. Aristotle's purported walking while lecturing, at the inception of the peripatetic school, is legend. Kierkegaard notably wandered the streets of Copenhagen in pursuit of his rhetoric. As echoed by Oppizzo and Shwartz in the Secondary Thread of this section, Friedrich Nietzsche is purported to have stated, "only ideas won by walking have any value." Similarly, but with greater relevance, Paul Klee, states in his Dialogue with Nature that one must be out in nature in order to understand one's own nature as being a part of nature.

All of these sources insinuate that historically, tacit knowledge of the effectiveness of walking was understood, if not methodologically leveraged. In Rebecca Solnit's *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, the author considers the matter in greater detail and with a much more specific focus. She starts by declaring "... thinking is generally thought of as doing nothing in a production-oriented culture, and doing nothing is hard to do. It's best done by disguising it as doing something, and the something closest to doing nothing is walking." (Solnit, p.4)²⁷

not knowing how that translated as research, in response to the thoughts and questions raised by my contemplative and emotional engagement with Rousseau's ruminations, my focus shifted away from that determination slightly. As indicated in the Primary Thread, I was struggling with the idea that my walking had to be in extreme circumstances, or that I had to travel to distant places in order to do my walking exercises. Stepping away from the impracticality of those notions, my aim was to explore what it might mean to investigate notions of being in-between, in a deliberate research as performance sense. This led to some interesting revelations that ultimately directed me back to walking, climbing and exploring as a research method:

My first earnest and concerted efforts at conducting what I considered to be practice-led research, involved examining my expanding ideas on what I considered to be 'in-between spaces'. Interestingly, the idea for these performative efforts as I called them came to me during yet another Boy Scout related activity, unrelated to the one recounted in the Primary Thread in this section.

Charged with finding opportunities to provide service for my troop, a few older Scouts, including one of my sons, accompanied me to the home of an elderly woman in our congregation. Widowed, and with her closest adult child living several hours away, she asked us to do some spring cleanup work in her yard: raking, cutting the grass and preparing her gardens for planting. Again, it is notable that we were outside, albeit, not in remote or feral surroundings, but rather in the backyard of a small home in a suburban neighborhood.

It was an unusually warm day for the time of year, mid to late spring. The first insects of the season had obviously just hatched and bugged us throughout the morning. At the back of the property, beyond a small patio and garden, the lawn rose sharply upwards, ending at a row of tall ragged cedars separating the yard we were working in from the neighbors. As I raked leaves and debris from the fringes, and swatted at gnats, I paused to rest while my eyes wandered into the space under the trees, between the two yards.

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Solnit's premise paints her analysis, of the cultural history of walking with a regard that is captivating. For instance, her scrutiny of Martin Luther King's reinvention of the Christian pilgrimage, as a key element in his campaigning for social justice, is intriguing, particularly in how she compares his earliest "prayer pilgrimage at the Lincoln memorial in Washington DC," stating, "it was so called to make it sound less threatening." Juxtaposed against his later marches, notably Selma-to-Montgomery, to which she ascribes the idea that, "[while] a pilgrimage makes an appeal ... a march makes a demand." (Solnit, p.57)

Able to sympathize with the plight of those engaged in King's pilgrimages or marches, Solnit's recounting of this period in US history, resonated with me. The deliberate use of walking in the civil rights movement, as evaluated by Solnit, is stirring. Interestingly, it aroused a latent curiosity, concerning my own walking cultural heritage, confirming my suspicion that my cultural identity had informed and helped motivate my research actions on a subconscious level. This urged me to ponder intently on the overlapping ideas found in her book, in contrast to the strangely exciting ideas introduced to me during the MFA Berlin artist seminar mentioned previously. Emotion—in fact alarmingly strong emotion—accompanied my reflections on Solnit's writing. First muddling and then liberating my thoughts, her ideas engendered a sense of self-awareness that will be discussed and thoughtfully analyzed as this document progresses to its conclusion. (see: Remark 7)

In continuing to look at Solnit's writing, it is important to note that the examples she highlights are viewed from the context of her own walking and pilgrimage experiences, engaged in as research for her book. Solnit's interpretations and assumptions are purposely, and in my estimation, unduly dispassionate in tenor. Never trite, her analysis left me feeling informed, yet curiously agitated, imbuing me with the sense that there was a need to turn to an even more sympathetic writer on the subject, with the intent to compare and contrast my ideas with hers.

Despite having to wade through the depths of his melancholy, as conveyed in his book, *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*,²⁸ it was gratifying to equate my passion for strolling and wandering with that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In the Introduction, where Rousseau is credited with stating: "There is something about walking that

Created by their girth and height, and not intersected by a fence or man-made barrier, the space under the trees functioned as the de facto border that delineates and separates the two distinct properties. As I stood there and contemplated on what I was looking at, I surmised that despite being large enough for me to stand in, neither I nor anyone else did so. The space under the trees in that sense, represented a type of no-man's land—an unclaimed, deliberately situated in-between space that serves to separate two properties.

Certainly, no more than fifteen feet in length and three to four feet wide, at a glance the space under the trees was hardly worth consideration. Spaces like this, to my recollection, exist in every neighborhood. Why was I transfixed on this particular space at this time?

Fatigued, hot and sweating, in my mind, I asked myself, "Who owns this in-between space I'm looking at? Where does one property end and the other begin ... Can I enter into the space and effectively occupy both properties simultaneously?" Though interesting to contemplate, a more intriguing thought then occurred to me: "at that moment, looking on it from my current vantage point, was I not already mentally occupying the space, and in effect, to some degree, in possession of it?"

Read concurrently with Rousseau's *Reveries*, Jean's Paul Sartre's book *The Psychology of Imagination* (which will be addressed in the Secondary Thread of Section Three) came readily to mind. As I stood there contemplating on the in-between space, his declaration found at the beginning of the book, struck me as germane to my observations: "the great function of consciousness is to create a world of unrealities, or imagination and its noetic correlative, the imagery." (Sartre, p.vii)

In follow up, I then began to think on an idea I came across in the book *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*. In it, editors Levi Bryant, Nick Srnicek and Graham Harman contend, "we can aim our thoughts at being, exist as beings-in-the-world, or have phenomenal experience of the world, yet we can never consistently speak about a

REMARK 7

Can you really say you've been somewhere, if you don't have the dirty feet to show for it?

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animates and activates my ideas; I can hardly think when I am still; my body must move if my mind is to do the same.” (Rousseau, loc.212) It is hard to imagine that that specific passage is not speaking directly to me. Equally, later as I read the recounting of his second walk, it was natural for me to sympathize with Rousseau’s musing: “these hours of solitude and meditation are the only time of the day when I am completely myself . . . when I can truly say that I am what nature intended me to be.” (Rousseau, loc.670)

A wonderfully expressive writer, it was pleasing to sift through his words and to draw out connections between walking and his pensive if not misanthropic reveries. His lament to “let me give myself over entirely to the pleasure of conversing with my soul, for this is the only pleasure that my fellow men cannot take away from me,” (Rousseau, loc.631) is petulant but romantic. Coupled with his sentiment that, “Adversity is without doubt a great teacher, but its lessons come at a cost and often what one gains from them is not worth what one paid for them.” (Rousseau, loc.818) It was tempting to lose myself in his musings. (see: Remark 8) While Rousseau’s sentiments are comforting, in contrast to Solnit’s objectivity, how exactly could his reflections propel my research forward?

Seizing on the opportunity to entertain Rousseau’s lamentations and to cite Solnit’s deliberations helped to contextualize and inform my budding walking method—in addition to unearthing conspicuous introspective ideas to reflect on. However, each reference ultimately failed to open the door on the underlying emotional significance of why walking as a method was attractive to me, primarily because, my intent was not simply to entertain walking or strolling and wandering, but also to explore notions of climbing and exploring, often integral to such activities.

Fortuitously, and coinciding with my earliest project proposal preparations and reading survey, a chance event in my day-to-day activities as a father of five boys provided me clarity on the impetus of my choosing walking as method:

Over the past several years, I have volunteered as a Boy Scout leader, mentoring youth between the ages of eleven and seventeen. The mandate is to teach a variety of life skills. We work on earning challenge badges and certifications that require getting out-of-

realm independent of thought or language.”

(Bryant, Srnicek, Harman, p.4) **29**

Returning to my yard cleaning labours, incited by my thought exercise, I resolved then and there to more conspicuously investigate my line of thinking in regard to in-between spaces. What could it mean to occupy an in-between space both mentally and physically? Excited at the prospects, my goal was to seek out, deliberately occupy and traverse similar in-between spaces, and hopefully discover how such exercises could inform and advance my research.

On the west side of my own backyard, at the end of a neatly pruned hedgerow of cedars, but stopping at the fence which separates my property from my neighbors, is a noticeable gap. Not wanting our dog to escape through it, it is blocked off with a tall, single piece of lattice secured to the fence on one side, and to a main trunk of the hedgerow on the other.

Easily removed, I detached the lattice and began with performative intent, moving back and forth in the gap. It was a tight squeeze as I left my yard and an even tighter one re-entering it. Each time I traversed this in-between space I purposely hesitated in an effort to sense my body, or rather to elicit a sense of being in a space that was previously deemed problematic, in that it was not meant to function as an in-between space, but instead needed to be closed off.

Not gaining much from the experience of standing or pausing in that particular gap, I re-erected the lattice barrier and began wandering my neighborhood looking for other in-between spaces. In particular, I walked straight to a narrow swath of green grass that separates a couple of homes, an elementary school yard, and the strip of forest along the edge of the Oshawa Creek that traverses my neighborhood.

Civic property the wooded area that runs alongside the creek is just enough acreage to be designated a conservation area. Entering into and walking in the woods or along the creek with great regularity would eventually factor heavily into my research. But at this point of my investigations I had not yet considered the full potential of the

REMARK 8

There is that moment at the crest of the hill, just before the boulder tumbles back down from whence it was rolled where Sisyphus is able to get a glimpse of and perhaps begin to comprehend the universe and his place in it. Is that such a terrible thing, and can it even be considered punishment: to push that boulder back up the hill day after day, considering there is the potential of catching that glimpse? It is enough for me; it is faith in the probationary nature of this mortal existence.

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doors: hiking, exploring, canoeing and camping. Not long after starting my PhD studies, I was blessed to participate in a wilderness winter camp. Fortuitously, the experience proved instrumental in the development of my initial PhD research focus.

The purpose of a winter camp is to learn survival skills—to subsist in knee-deep snow and -15 to -20 temperatures. This camp was no exception. Shortly after arriving at the campsite, wonderfully large snowflakes blanketed us in waves as we erected our tent: a large, old, pale-orange canvas shelter, straight out of a Louis L'Amour novel. After the storm passed, clear, dark skies revealed a three-quarters full moon. It sparkled with a crystalline halo, and watched over us as our bodies refused to sleep. It was too cold. Many in the camp spent the night huddled on log benches or in portable chairs, half alive, feet outstretched towards the fire; feeding the flames a healthy supply of acrylic threads on the toes of 'winter' socks, easily melted by the heat.

The next day, sleep deprived and thoroughly exhausted, we prepared to set out on a hike. Eager to get our congealed blood flowing again, we were ready for an adventure. It was a partly cloudy, crisp day. The fresh, powdery snow from the night before provided grip for our boots. With each crunch under foot we trudged deeper into the woods. Initially, we followed game trails, chasing a variety of mysterious animal tracks. There was a sense of being truly feral, primal and on the move, aware of the cold but not cold—alive. After descending a short cliff face, while traipsing through a lonely hollow, the boys stumbled upon a felled tree. (see: fig.7) With reckless abandon, they climbed it; they couldn't help themselves. I marveled at their youthful enthusiasm and agility. It was a strangely joyous event. The air was filled with laughter, shouting and bravado—as if they had stumbled upon a lost, ancient ruin of some significance.

After several moments marveling at the spectacle, I pondered on the situation. The

conservation area. Instead, I was fixated on exploring the notions I had had concerning in-between spaces.

Cut weekly by the city as an essential accessway into the conservation area one edge of the swath of grass opposite the conservation area, is lined with tall wild shrubs and thick brush underneath cottonwood, maple and birch trees. The brush and trees represent a boundary between the grassy area and the school yard. Similarly, as in my yard, but with performative intent, marking out my actions as if an actor on a stage, I ventured into the brush and under the trees with the hope to glean something from the experience.

Again, as with my backyard, there was nothing notable to record about my experience. Though I had entered another in-between space that was similar to the one in the widow's yard, I was not inspired in any way by the deliberateness of my performative actions. Furthermore, it left me asking: what did I mean by performative intent ... Was I, in a sense, trying to be similarly performative as was Francis Alys?

Over the next couple of days, still unsure of my intent, I expanded my performative explorations, seeking out other gaps or boundaries within my extended neighborhood. Happening upon another large accessway, between houses leading from a busy street on one end and a public park on the other, I entered and lingered in it. As with my previous experiences, I was left with the sentiment of wanting something more, unfulfilled by the experiments despite documenting them, and not knowing why. (see: fig.9)

Feeling pressure to produce results of some kind, I continued my explorations and began asking more pointed questions of myself about what I was doing. Specifically, what was I looking for from these in-between spaces? How were these performative experiments connected and even complementary to, or a potential replacement for my desire to walk, climb and explore?

If I were emulating Francis Alys, in a sense, I surmised there was potentially something interesting about my actions. However,

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fact I was merely a bemused onlooker begged a question: “do you remember the moment when you stopped climbing trees ...” my mind asked, followed by, “why—why don’t you remember, and why did you ever stop?” The question gnawed at me. I could’ve just climbed that darn tree, but that’s not what the voice inside my head was referencing. The scenario on the whole, the tree climbing preceded by walking, hiking and subject to the severity of the elements materialized into an artist’s parable: “How long have I been merely subsisting—wallowing in unrealized visions of things such as written works, visual works, innovations and daydreams? When did I stop exploring, discovering and capriciously climbing trees, and subsequently awakening my seemingly dormant imagination?”

Eventually, the troop moved on. But the experience lingered with me. “Can I return to and jump-start my frustrated reveries?” I asked myself again and again: “Does the key lie in resetting the conditions which lead to the instance of epiphany? If so, can it be done consistently, while remaining true to the impulsivity of that moment?” Leaving those woods and that felled tree, I was determined to return, but in a very different sense, to walk, climb and explore again and to examine how that might work in a phenomenological sense—as an integral part of my practice. Crucial to the formation of a research focus and understanding of what I had loosely conceptualized as Creative Caprice.

Resetting the conditions of that moment, in the woods with the boy scouts, could prove an interesting challenge. A healthy amount of experimentation would be required to understand the dynamics of the circumstances. For example, what role did the remoteness of the location versus the extreme nature of the weather conditions play in the experience? Are those conditions absolutely essential to experiencing future moments of epiphany, inspiration, or greater awareness for one’s own capacity to think imaginatively, or act creatively? Additionally, as alluded

what I was doing made me think more so of the performance art of Tania Brugera, and specifically her piece *Tatlin’s Whisper #5*, at Tate Modern in 2008. In it, mounted police were employed with the express purpose of herding museum attendees from spot to spot in a large gallery space. Were I present at that performance, based upon my current activities, would I allow myself to be herded, or would I want to perhaps crouch under the horses, if possible, and occupy the space in-between its fore and back legs, under their bellies?

Additionally, my thoughts also contemplated upon the infamous Marina Abramović retrospective at the MoMA (2010), where museumgoers were expected to squeeze between two standing naked performers, situated in a doorway linking one gallery room to another. However, notions concerning the difficulties inherent in crossing psychological boundaries associated with personal space, or the power dynamics associated with who or what has authority over publically occupied spaces did not seem particularly relevant to my research. It certainly would be disruptive of me to, instead of stepping aside, scurry under one of the horses, or to gesticulate between the two naked performers, but pointedly, instigating disruptions was not what I was after.

Recognizing that I was not actually interested in ideas concerning making disruptions, led me to come to terms with the fact there was a certain gravitas of phenomenon I was searching for, but couldn’t quite address through these first, initial in-between space activities and explorations. In response, I felt an urge to revisit older works of art that in some way might abstractly be connected to my notions on in-between spaces, or at least what it might mean to pass by and notice, but not actually enter into them.

Several years ago, I began but never finished a multifaceted art project, which started with the creation of a variety of intaglio prints. The prints were made from inking and embossing bits or shards of tall grasses and plants taken from the shoulder of highways. Affixed to small, square plywood panels, the panels were organized in a grid among several other

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to, and connecting back to the emotional underpinnings not yet fully articulated in this section, how could the experience begin to explain my assertion that: emotions can have an impact on which intrinsic interests act on an imaginative and creative mind?

Setting those questions aside, an exciting development born of the winter hike, and in very basic terms, was a powerful desire to willfully walk, hike, climb or explore, whenever the urge or opportunity presented itself. It was clear, that a viable method, important to the formation of my methodology, had been stumbled upon. While duplicating the spontaneity of the felled tree instance was tricky, it tempted the notion that embracing a certain type of impulsivity was feasible and desirable. This appealed to my inclination to get out of doors on foot with regularity, validating not only my intuition, but the findings of my investigative survey, which, in retrospect, corroborate the scientific substantiation to eventually come from the release of the Opezzo and Schwartz' Study on the benefits of walking.

In essence, the experience on the whole was a catalyst that compelled me to want to walk anywhere and everywhere, and to climb into and explore any physical or associated conceptual space happened upon. In a follow up incident, my meditations on the first incident, were magnified and confirmed viable. The felled tree incident could be re-experienced, in a distinctly different manner, but in the same spirit of experiential extemporaneity:

On a day-trip up north in what is referred to in Southern Ontario as cottage country, I was tending to issues at our family's summer property just outside the town of Fenelon Falls. The picturesque nature of the location invites walking to get from one destination to another. You feel compelled to leave vehicles parked in order to stroll along the lakeshore, back and forth into the small rural town that is the hub of the community, especially when the sun is shining and the lake is glistening. It was early spring, well before the yearly influx of summer cottage goers disrupt the routines of the town's quiet residents. I was with my teenage son and his close friend. We had been at the Cow & Sow pub enjoying a burger and fries for lunch.

painted and distressed panels on two larger plywood boards.

During the gluing process strategically I omitted a few panel squares, resulting in noticeable gaps. Within those gaps I artfully attached roadside debris and found items to the plywood boards. Representing the primary piece of a larger project titled *Fringe Grasses*, the panels when hung form a diptych mosaic, which representationally, but abstractly depicts the scenic blur one glimpsances through car windows or mirrors while traveling at high speeds on a roadway. (see: fig.10)

In retrospect, it is clear why I chose to revisit this particular project, as opposed to others. The notion of creating and filling gaps had obviously intrigued me for some time, not just recently in regard to my PhD research. As well, reexamination of the mosaic diptych also led me to consider what I meant by the notion of unfinished works of art, prompting me to investigate the project's inception.

A couple of days later I returned to the highway and specifically to the exact shoulder from which I had gathered the plants and objects used in the *Fringe Grasses* diptych. Parking a safe distance from the roadway, I began walking towards the roadside. Surveying the scene in front of me I made an observation: the particular stretch of highway I was approaching is actually a large interchange, with on and off ramps exiting the highway and leading to or from city streets. Due to the deliberateness of the roadway engineering, strangely beautiful, circular and oblong patches of earth had been delineated, wherein hearty if not weedy plant life and tall grasses were growing.

Situated elsewhere in an urban setting, these strangely beautiful circular and oblong patches of land might well be designated usable green space. What's more, situated elsewhere, it wouldn't be the least bit odd to place in them benches or even playground equipment for children to play on. Were the spaces I was currently ambling towards not hemmed in by imposing concrete and steel barriers and paved roads upon which motor vehicles traveled at high speeds, my imagination could easily picture myself

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After lingering on Main Street, we walked along the river that rumbles over the falls, which give the town its name. Headed back to the groomed walking and bike path which got us to the pub, we stopped at a bridge. During summer months, it is swung parallel with the fast-moving water to allow boats access to the lift locks. This was one of the rare times we got to see it connecting shoreline to shoreline. We took advantage of the opportunity to look out on the lake from an unfamiliar vantage point. And that's when the boys, both former members of my Scout troop, began climbing. (see: fig.8)

They first climbed down the support structure to the water's edge. They then disappeared into the substructure of the bridge. The experience was only two months removed from the winter camp experience. Again, enthusiasm was high. These boys were older, but their zeal for climbing and the bravado in the moment matched their younger counterparts' expressions. What's more, it was an equally spontaneous act. The importance of being out of doors and of spontaneous physical movements resonated with me.

The fact that the bridge was in an unfamiliar orientation invited us to look upon it differently. In turn, this new perspective invited us to experience the bridge differently. Encountering it at what was an opportune time, the bridge in its unfamiliar orientation permitted me to experience a shift in viewpoint. Though seemingly coincidental, this new instance of walking leading to climbing down into the substructure of a bridge cemented the sense that I was on a good path in the development of my methodology.

In direct response to each of these walking, climbing and exploring experiences, the following reflection was recorded in my journal: To walk is to think; to think is to be; and to become is to arrive some place more aware than when you set out to find it. With the walking and climbing aspects of each adventure serving as a metaphor for mental and creative exploration, it's clear, the metaphor

walking towards a lovely, if not peculiar, public park made up of multiple odd shaped paddocks.

As I came closer to the roadside, a certain sense of danger overcame me. Though I was not actually in close proximity to the speeding vehicles on the highway, I'm not actually certain it was legally permissible for me to cross over, enter and occupy the spaces

Gripped by a heightened sense of awareness, I paused and compared what I was feeling to my experiences on the sub-zero winter hike in the woods with the Boy Scouts and climbing down into the substructure of the bridge in Ontario cottage country (stories recounted in the Primary Thread of this section). Later, I noted in my journal that my movements at the highway roadside were cautious, quick and calculated. I was not merely entering and exiting an interesting in-between space, but I was, in a sense, transgressing boundaries, and the experience was exhilarating.

Certain that I was not the first artist to be intrigued by such infrastructural spaces along the edge and in-between high-speed roadways and interchanges, I headed home to do some research. My first web query led me to the prints of Peter Andrew—a Toronto based photographer who captures aerial images of highway interchanges. Andrew's shots appear to have little post-capture editing and instead focus on the plain, but intricate beauty of interweaving ribbons of pavement, concrete, vehicles, painted lines and the blotches of thriving green in-between.

Beyond a growing appreciation for Peter Andrew's aesthetic vision of highway interchanges as visualized from above, I searched for art related to the terms 'in-between,' 'boundaries' and 'spaces.' The sculptures in the online portfolio of David Altmejd captivated me, in particular, how the viewer is only able to penetrate his non-symmetrical, spatially chaotic Plexiglas installations by looking through thin translucent plates.

Inevitably, I also found myself examining a blog at rhizome.org, which chronicled xcult.org's ongoing global exhibition about notions of space from 2009. Mesmerized by Joe

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and its associative connotations, were only arrived at, after deliberate bodily acts of movement in a natural space were initiated. This highlighted the meaningful effect that corporeal engagement could have on the conscious mind. However, without access to the aforementioned Opezzo and Schwarts study, and despite ample anecdotal evidences to rely upon in support of my supposition, there was a need to broaden my survey, but with narrow intent to bolster confidence in my ideas.

In a plosone.org research article, researchers Ruth Ann Atchely and David L. Strayer posit:

“Our environment plays a critical role in how we think and behave. The modern environment experienced by most individuals living in urban or suburban settings can be characterized by a dramatic decrease in our exposure to natural settings and a correlated increase in exposure to a technology intense environment.” (Atchely, Strayer, p.1)³⁰

The article describes the adverse effect this can have on “higher cognitive functions,” and suggests that “prefrontal cortex-mediated executive processes” can be restored by suggesting their research “[demonstrates] that there is a cognitive advantage to be realized if we spend time immersed in a natural setting.” (Atchely, Strayer, Abstract)

At a glance, the findings outlined in Atchely and Strayer’s concise article were exciting. They appeared to scientifically support my presumptions, and even authenticate the tacit understanding of the profound effects of walking, spoken of by Rousseau and Solnit, while also lending credence to the art practices outlined above, surveyed in preparation for instituting my own walking methods. What’s more, they aligned nicely with my experiences, namely on the winter hike and during my day trip up north.

However, a deeper look into Attention Restoration Theory (ART), of which Atchely and Strayer are proponents, revealed it was not well suited to helping me realize the whole scope of my research intentions. My intent was not to contend with a lack of concentration, due to mental fatigue, nor was it to engage in the development of therapeutic regimes on the scale Attention Restoration Theory is positioned to address. Ironically, investing too much energy in ART could potentially lead my research down paths I was unprepared to travel.

Winters online exhibition of his progressive scan studies, I wondered about the possibility of remaining static or stationary and in motion simultaneously. Can I mentally occupy a space, not only while I am in it, but also while in transit to it? (see: www.stanzaic.com/53rdstanza)

Suspending my web query activities, though inspired, I wondered to myself: “is this it—is this where the art born of my research can or will be situated?” In response, I then began to consider investigating the notion of liminality. First introduced to me in concept by my MFA advisor, Nicolás Dumit Estévez, whose influence and ideas, relevant to this inquiry are discussed in the Primary Thread of this section, I felt art and practices dealing with thresholds, rites of passage, or ritualistically traversing boundaries, or being “betwixt and between the familiar and the completely unknown” as theologian Richard Rohr states and as read at inaliminalspace.org, problematic for me personally.

While I appreciate Estévez’s approach to the subject, say in his performance piece *Baptism as a Bronxite in the Bronx River* (2011), and though I am not suggesting his work is derisive, as a religiously devout individual I am wary of pushing my practice into realms that risk taking lightly my own faith-based observances related to the idea of liminality.

Obviously, in using my creative practice as the basis for (per my initial abstract cited in An Introduction, in Section One) a phenomenological inquiry, references to my faith and the culture surrounding its ritual traditions is unavoidable. However, there is a fine line I feel I must walk, between referencing what is relevant, versus divulging and in turn diminishing in any way that which I consider to be sacred.

Stepping away from my awareness of the performance works of Estévez, I did briefly look at the prints, drawings and animations of William Kentridge, which in my view can be construed as addressing liminality, but in the context of political and social boundaries. However, ultimately I felt an extended look into the subject from that vantage point, risked pushing my investigations back towards

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The nagging question of truly having to exclusively seek out remote locations and to completely disconnect from the modern conveniences of the world troubled me. The feasibility of needing to be somewhere isolated, in extreme conditions and at great distances from my home and studio presented a dilemma. Expense, planning and the coordination required to consistently engage in such activities was potentially prohibitive, particularly in regard to my limited available resources. However, if the above dilemma could be viewed from the perspective as representing an opportunity, the prospects of resetting and perpetuating the conditions of my walking, climbing and exploring was desirable, buoyed by the knowledge gleaned from my survey, especially if it were achievable on a smaller, more intimate scale.

Even still, the idea of creating grand scenarios where the potential for adventure is high was alluring. The pragmatics of my work and family life however, convinced me that such undertakings might not be possible with any consistency. At this stage of my research process my thinking was conflicted. It appeared the most pertinent and pressing question that needed an answer was: could more mundane environments, closer to home produce similar moments of conscious awareness, inviting regular episodes of imaginative and creative thinking, while maintaining a sense of spontaneity and even adventure?

examining that which I consider sacred—an unfruitful line of inquiry this thesis is not designed to approach.

Not surprisingly, my searching and above contemplations did however spur me to think about what I consider to be risky, problematic and even dangerous, in turn directing my thoughts back to ideas I had had earlier about the circular and oblong patches of green of the highway interchange I visited. Specifically, that if found elsewhere in an urban setting, they could be designated as parkland or even as a conservation area.

Immediately, I mentally revisited my earliest in-between space performance experimentations. The gap in my backyard is problematic because it is dangerous to the well-being of our family pet, who could escape our yard, wander onto the street and get hit by a car. It's also a space through which an unwanted interloper could invade our property. As well, my thoughts focused on the swath of green grass leading to the conservation area along the Oshawa creek that traverses my neighborhood. So busy worrying about discovering in-between spaces elsewhere, I had ignored the wonderful potential of it; why did I not see it as different kind of in-between space?

Though walking in the conservation area wouldn't produce the heart pounding excitement of wandering about in the green spaces of highway interchanges, nor did it carry the risk associated with hiking in the wilder parts of Southern Ontario, it could offer me an in-between space within which to wander and explore my body, in motion, in space. As well, walking in the conservation area could permit me to approximate both the winter hike with the Scouts and the bridge climbing experience with my son in Ontario cottage country—albeit in greater proximity to my home.

29. Bryant, Levi, Srnicek, Nick, Harman, Graham. *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*. Melbourne, Australia: re.press, 2011.

The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism

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and Realism represents a dense volume of ideas and thoughts focused on Continental Philosophy. The citation above, as part of my re-telling of my in-between space explorations, provides insight as to where my broad exploration of ideas and texts at this stage of my research had taken me. Ultimately, a prolonged foray into continental philosophy risked pushing my inquiry beyond the scope of what I had mandated in my initial project proposal.

However, briefly entertained and in context with my early explorations, the tenets of Continental Philosophy opened my eyes to possibilities of seeing how cultural influences and history (in this case, and specifically, my personal history) could inform my research activities. There was room in my actions to be logical and analytical, while also being appreciative of how the past can shape intention.

30. Atchley, Ruth Ann, Strayer David L., Atchley, Paul. *Creativity in the Wild: Improving Creative Reasoning through Immersion in Natural Settings*. plosone.org. Accessed - August 2015.

This article presents the findings of a study designed to test the promise of Attention Restoration Theory (ART). The theory “suggests that nature has specific restorative effects on the prefrontal cortex-mediated executive attentional system, which can become depleted with overuse.” (Atchley, Strayer, pg.1) In essence, the researchers are substantiating the hypothesis that, due to the prevalence of increased exposure to “technology intense environments ... of urban and suburban settings,” coupled with the decrease in exposure to raw nature within those settings, humans can suffer sensory overload hampering “higher order cognitive tasks,” essential to creative reasoning. (Atchley, Strayer, p.1)

Early in my investigations the article provided access to a scientifically grounded study, to which I could refer as I experimented with walking, climbing and exploring exercises, and in particular as I contemplated the effects physical activity, or just being out of doors, appeared to have on my imaginative and creative thinking. Overwhelmed at the start of my research, in part by the need to sit for hours reading, making notes and writing as much as is required for a PhD, the results of the study as outlined in the article were a godsend.

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In the second paragraph of the first page, the researchers assert: “High levels of engagement with technology and multitasking place demands on the executive attention to switch amongst tasks, maintain task goals, and inhibit irrelevant actions or cognitions.” This is then followed by the contention: “ART suggests that interactions with nature are particularly effective in replenishing depleted attentional resources.” (Atchley, Strayer, p.1)

Compelled by the findings in the report, I began to consider how my intuitive physical response of walking and talking to myself was potentially combating the effects of such technology intense circumstances. Equally intriguing, reading the report invited me to carefully consider the spaces I gravitated to where I sit down to read physical or digital books, make notes and type on my laptop.

At home, during long months of cold and inclement weather, if I don't need to be at a desk in order to use a mouse or stylus, I prefer to be in the solitude of my bedroom in proximity to a large window with the curtains open, allowing as much natural light into the room as possible. In the warmer months, my preferred spot is in an Adirondack chair on my front porch. Additionally, as spurred by the report, I gave myself license to not merely wander about the house or the hallways adjacent my office at work, but to get out of doors and go on a walk, in response to feeling achy or drained.

While the report represented an important link to solving the larger puzzle I had created for myself, this thesis is not positioned to offer more than a cursory look at the science of ART as it is unfolding. In contrast to the declaration in the report that states: “The current study lays the groundwork for further work examining the mechanism of this effect.” (Atchley, Strayer, p.2) My inquiry is not concerned with shutting myself off from technology, but rather, necessarily will need to find an appropriate place for it in the context of research activities. Regardless, it is important to note that the report set me on a good path by encouraging my curiosity and fueling timely contemplations on getting out of doors. As well, it highlighted the potential effect that gaining access to immediate natural environments could have on my creative reasoning, while also in very pragmatic terms, providing a context against which my tactical behavior as an artist could be weighed.

As stated in the Primary Thread of Section One, I

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rarely sit and draw, paint or create (physically or digitally) for long continuous stretches. My art-making is always and regularly interrupted by some physical activity, in particular walking and talking to myself. But also, after reading Atchley and Strayers' report, I began to make note of the fact I often stop working to shoot a mini-basketball at a hoop affixed to the top of a door in my basement studio. Or, as indicated above, I pace about the house, or hallways at work in between creating or coding digital elements for a design project.

Having two desks, one at home and the other in my office at work, it's rare that you will find me sitting at either of them for long periods of time. I am a wanderer. When reading print outs of syllabi, project outlines, or contemplating tasks to be completed and things to be done, I prefer to do so while walking. I especially love stopping at large windows to think and to make notes, using the window sill as a writing surface. Again, in kinship with Jean Jacques Rousseau, it is clear I must be moving, or at least yearning to be in motion, in order to make my creative mind work.

In summary, the article helped me recognize that these intentional temporary displacements, as well as specially designated sitting and thinking locations, are important to success in my creative endeavors, and, fascinatingly, in helping me construct this very thesis:

Again, I find myself preparing to write, seated in my favorite perch on the front porch; my eyes wandering, mesmerized by the crisscrossing patterns made by tree branches bobbing and fluttering in the breeze. There is a chipmunk living among the rocks in the garden at my feet. I catch glimpses of the clandestine critter daily as it sprints to and fro, under a bushy, lime-green leafed shrub. Just behind me and in the corner of my eye, a large, bulbous-bodied spider repeatedly spins a web between the slats on the frame of the bay window dominating the front façade of our home.

Regularly, bees hover about and land on the flowers in the planter next to where I sit. Spirited sparrows flit across the front yard, leaving and returning to a nest I have yet to discover in the siding of the house. At dusk, as the summer heat fades, and because I am mostly still and silent, a familiar cottontail

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scampers into view, sampling the clover
sprouting from my front lawn, unaware of my
presence.

While the narrative above may sound idyllic, as if coopted from the journal of Beatrix Potter, it is legitimately the setting where much of the writing of this thesis has been done. As much as sitting and formulating thoughts, to be organized as words on paper is important, reveling in the phenomenology of not only my writing experience but research activities through prose, which evokes compelling mental images is equally important. For isn't that, in part, the aim of Atchley and Strayers' study? To examine what happens when individuals disconnect from the demands of a modern, technology saturated world (even if it only means sitting on a front porch to write) and embrace life experienced through the body and its senses as it is subject to the natural elements of the natural world around them.

FIG. 4 - 41x35" Acrylic on plywood panel



FIG. 5 - 35.5x24" Acrylic on distressed plywood panel



FIG. 6

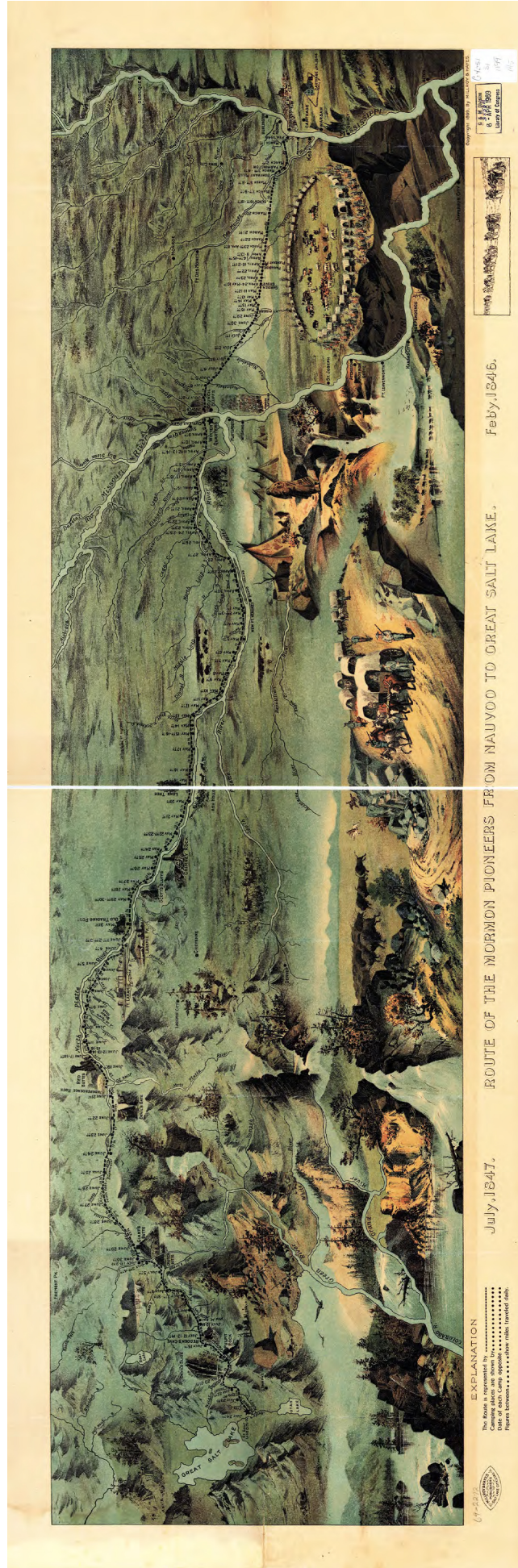


FIG. 7



FIG. 8

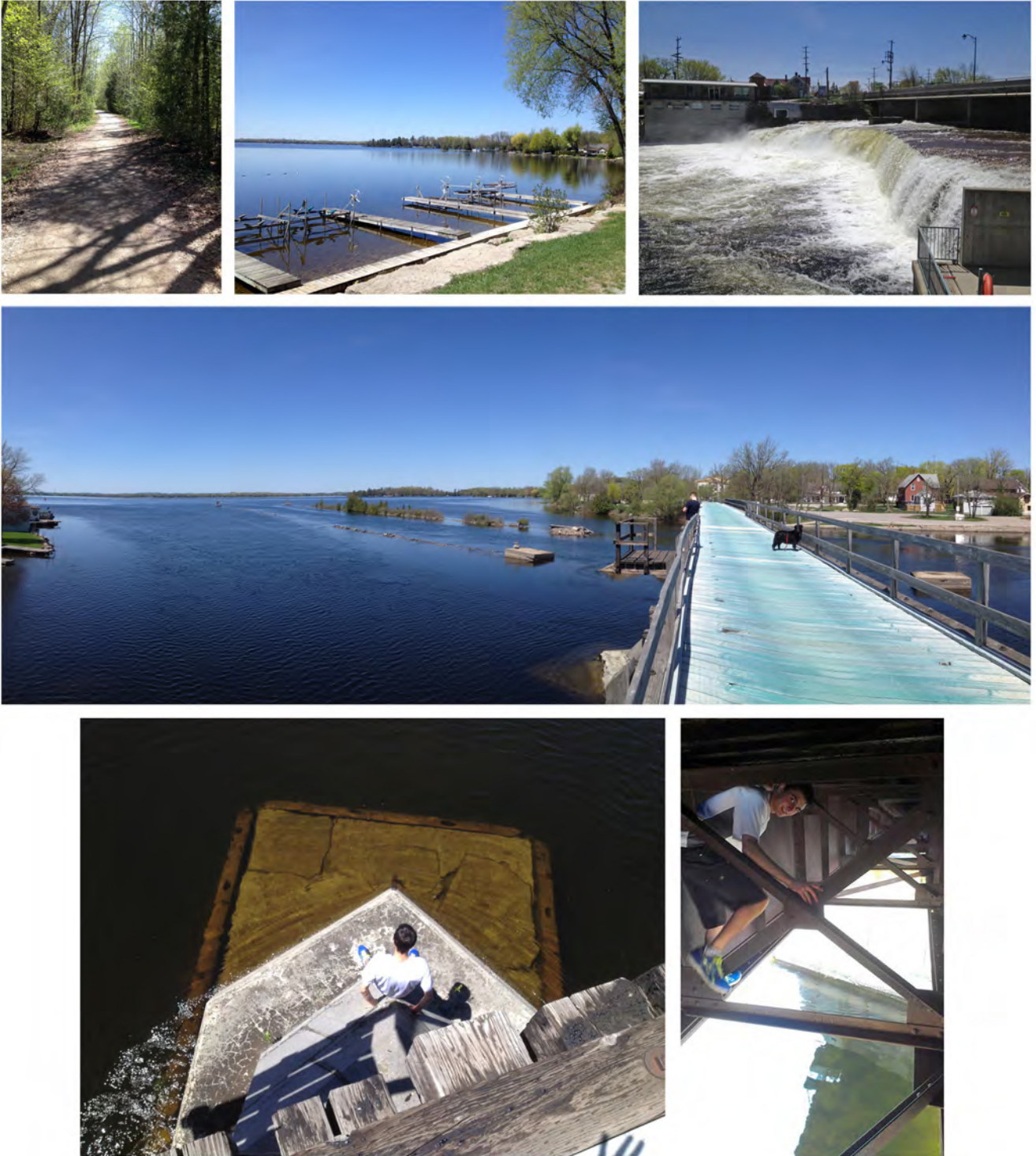


FIG. 9

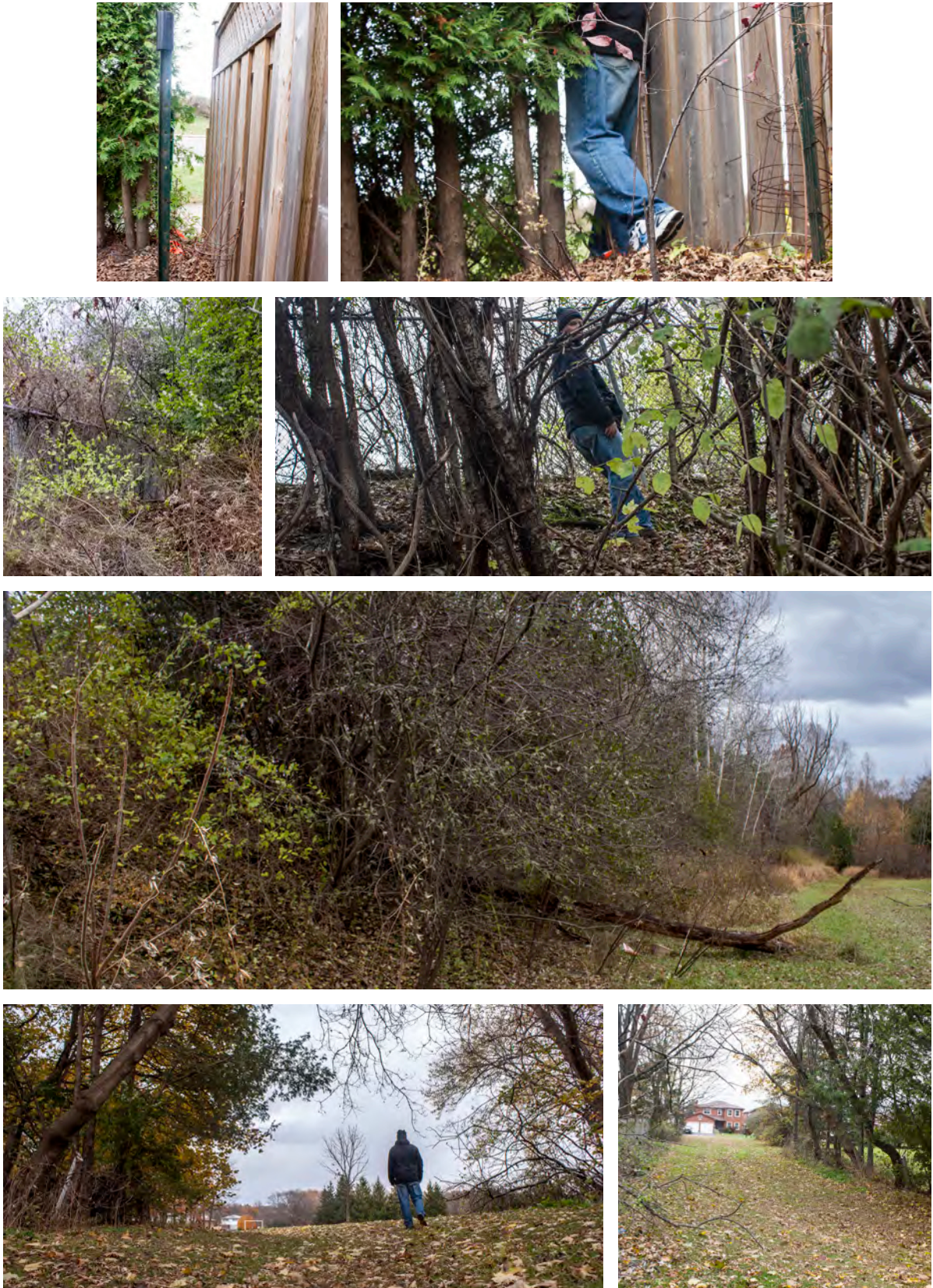
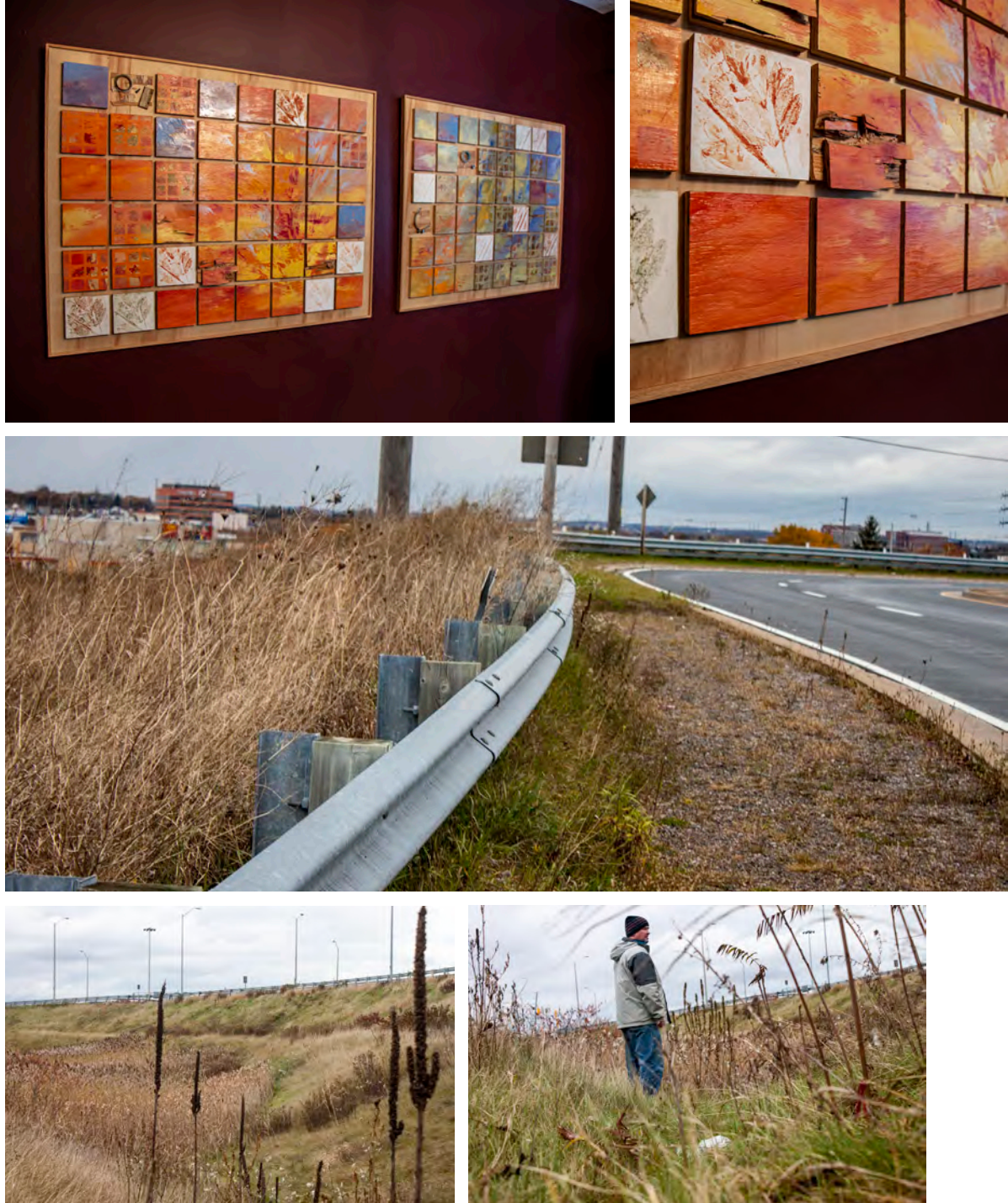


FIG. 10



On Finding Good Paths to Follow

In his book *Art as Experience*, John Dewey states:

“Experience occurs continuously, because the interaction of live creature and environing conditions is involved in the very process of living. Under conditions of resistance and conflict, aspects and elements of the self and the world that are implicated in this interaction qualify experience with emotions and ideas so that the conscious intent emerges.” (Dewey, p.35)³¹

Desirous to institute a regular routine of deliberate walking excursions, my next course of action was to explore planning regular outings, similar to the ones described in the previous section. Clearly, it was not possible to orchestrate incidental or impromptu events, such as climbing a felled tree, or descending into the substructure of a bridge while on a walk. (see: Verse 5) Thoughtfully planned outings naturally meant my walking, climbing and exploring would be less adventurous. What’s more, in deference to Dewey’s quote above, there was a need to investigate how emotion could qualify each new experience, in addition to exploring whether or not it was possible to capitalize on more mundane environments closer to home.

Before engaging in any planning then, I felt there was a need to invest more time analyzing the ideas of Jean Paul Sartre. In concert with Dewey’s statement above. Sartre’s assertion that: “a perceptual consciousness appears to itself as being passive,” caught hold of me, especially when considered in the context of his follow-up thought: “an imaginative consciousness, on the contrary, presents itself to itself as an imaginative consciousness, that is, as a spontaneity which produces and holds the object as an image.” (Sartre, p.17)³³

Extending Sartre’s thoughts beyond their presentation in his book, I contemplated what it could mean if my own calculating imaginative consciousness, holding on to an object as an image, could potentially render that image a mental object, in the sense that as a mental object and not merely a two-dimensional image, but a multi-dimensional thing, my mind could see and engage with it and it’s many sides.

31. Dewey, John. *Art As Experience*. New York, New York: Perigree Books, 1980.

Art as Experience is an interesting treatise on aesthetic experience. At times written in a somewhat colloquial style, John Dewey, it can be argued, conveys his philosophical ideas with bluntness. For example, in the book he declares: “There is something stupid about turning poetry into a prose that is supposed to explain the meaning of the poetry.” (Dewey, p.171) It’s hard to argue against his sentiments and even the use of the term ‘stupid.’

There is a sincerity to his words that I admire, and which emboldened me to include poetry and introspective commentary in this thesis as represented by the Verses and Remarks, interspersed throughout. With the understanding that their inclusion, interrupting the Primary and Secondary Threads, supports and augments what is written, not with the aim that one directly explains the meaning of the other, but rather, in the words of Dewey, “to enforce a point of theory.” (Dewey, p.171)

Beyond his bluntness, I found Dewey’s writing appealing if not vexing at times in how he struggles to convey the depth of his philosophy clearly. For example, as cited in the primary text, Dewey contends: “Experience occurs continuously, because the interaction of live creature and environing conditions is involved in the very process of living.” (Dewey, p.36) The statement, in principle, is not hard to grasp, however it assumes a great deal more understanding of what is meant by his use of the term ‘experience’ than is perhaps ironically, available to Dewey’s reader up to this point.³²

Per my reading, nowhere does he define his use of the term experience, in phenomenological, or even ontological terms. It was only up until I read his follow up statement that I began to grasp what he is driving at: “Under conditions of resistance and conflict, aspects and elements of the self and the world that are implicated in this interaction qualify

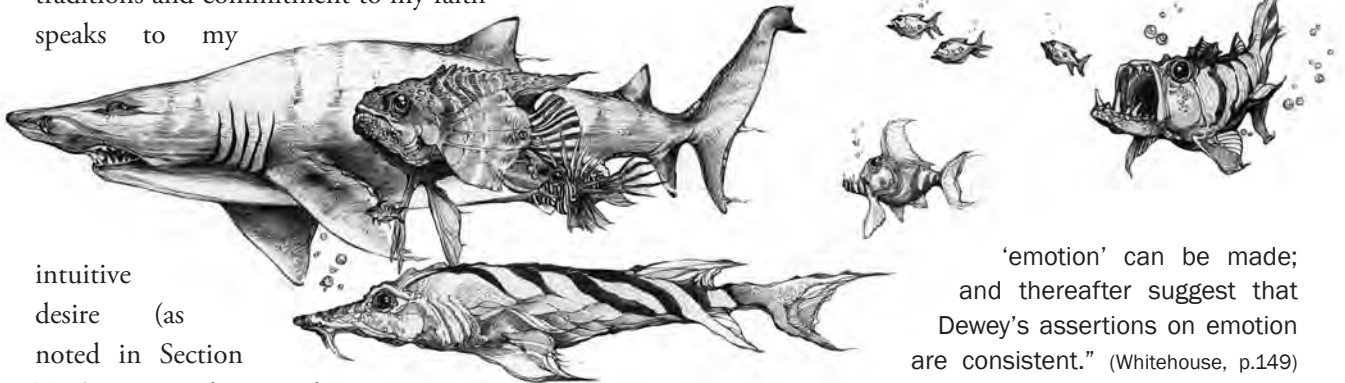
VERSE 5

*Crazy are we, like cats in a tree
put there by dogs, dogging our deeds.*

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Considered further, could the experiences I had had (i.e. hikes with Scouts; yard work in the widow's backyard, in-between space explorations etc.), as viewed through the above lens, allow for any subsequent walking experiences to become successively more real? In other words, could my intended walking, in Sartreian terms, produce to some degree "hypnagogic vision[s] ... [seeing] vividly and with complete objectivity ... [an] impression of re-ality ... [that] was perhaps deeper than experienced when facing the real object?" (Sartre, pp.48-49)

Resolved to explore the above ideas and initiate premeditated opportunities to walk, climb and explore, I embraced the idea of creating more modest, but still grand scenarios where the potential for adventure was high. After all I had considerable experience to draw upon to help me in my planning. Years spent not only organizing camps, hikes and service opportunities as a Boy Scout and ecclesiastical leader, but also participating in them as a youth beneficial to my preparations. Plus, my cultural traditions and commitment to my faith speaks to my



intuitive
desire (as
noted in Section
Two) to explore and
move about the world around me.

As a result, I do not live a sedentary life-style. Planning regular and fairly ambitious excursions is common to me. Settling upon the idea to spontaneously head in a general direction in a vehicle, towards distant but reasonably accessible, isolated or remote locations is consistent with my current and past lived experience. As is the idea that some destinations would be known to me, while others would not. In drawing upon my knowledge, strategies were invented to factor in distance, time to get to the location, along with accounting for other resources necessary to make each trip effective.

My plans included bringing a camera, sketchbook and notebook along. Following my walking explorations at

experience with emotions and ideas so that the conscious intent emerges." Further, I was then rewarded by his subsequent declaration: "Things are experienced but not in such a way that they are composed into 'an experience'... what we observe and what we think, what we desire and what we get, are at odds with each other." (Dewey, p.36)

Intrigued with John Dewey's text, and especially it's many references to the role emotion potentially plays in art-making, I wondered if I was alone in my analysis. Thus, I turned to an alternate reference to help me better comprehend his prose:

32. Whitehouse, P. G. *The Meaning of "Emotion" in Dewey's Art as Experience*. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 37.2 (1978): 149-56. Web.

In his essay *The Meaning of "Emotion" in Dewey's Art as Experience*, P. G. Whitehouse "hope[s] to show why Dewey's use of 'emotion' is unclear; then indicate the category of thought from which a definition of the word

'emotion' can be made; and thereafter suggest that Dewey's assertions on emotion are consistent." (Whitehouse, p.149)

Whitehouse's intent is to contend with critics of Dewey who charge that he prevaricates in his appeal to emotion throughout his book. For example, on the opening page of his essay, Whitehouse cites Eliseo Vivas as plainly stating Dewey is inconsistent concerning his contentions about emotion as it relates to aesthetic experience, which can confuse the reader. Whitehouse also cites Philip M. Zeltner who notes that "Dewey is at his obfuscating best in his discussion of emotion." (Whitehouse, p.149)

Certainly, in reading *Art as Experience* for the first time, it is easy to empathise with Vivas and Zeltner. There are many confusing passages that put me at odds with Dewey, such as: "In

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my chosen location, the aim was to find a quiet place to sit and record the experience through writing, sketching and image making. Doable, and certainly much more calculated in intent, my strategies, in my mind represented a well-articulated method that could potentially produce quantifiable data and even artifacts.

Despite my preparations and excitement at the prospects, a lingering doubt hung over my intentions. All of the previously discussed examples, implicating walking as a catalyst in other artists, researchers and writers' practices concerned me. The thoughtful employ of similar methodologies appeared to directly benefit their creative processes. But to what end could my jaunts truly benefit my research, or begin to address the potential scope of my thesis?

Furthermore, what exactly was the scope of my actions, not to mention, were my efforts an attempt at embracing Attention Restoration Theory as discussed in the previous section, despite the fact it had been deemed counterproductive? Also disquieting was the fact that though I was in the earliest stages of my inquiry, my activities up to this point had seemingly not yet produced any artwork, save the photos from my in-between space performances.

Clearly, my research efforts were adrift in ambiguities. Any notion of attaining what I discerned to be a Sartrean sense for objects that become images, which in turn, according to my own reasoning could become mentally tangible, multi-dimensional objects that are truer than nature, appeared to me to be an untenable ideality. It was as though I were waving my hands in excitement at an idea, inspired by Sartre's writing and its relevance to my efforts, despite the fact I didn't quite yet understand whether or not what I was contemplating was achievable, let alone whether or not it was potentially useful to my inquiry.

The Notion of A Stone's Throw Away

While examining the book, *The Reflective Practitioner*, by Donald A. Schon the following passage struck me as relevant: "If it is true that professional practice has at least as much to do with finding the problem as with solving the problem found, it is also true that problem setting is a

the development of an expressive act, the emotion operates like a magnet drawing to itself appropriate material: appropriate because it has an experienced emotional affinity for the state of mind already moving forward." (Dewey, p.71) Firstly, I would contend, how can Dewey be certain that the emotion is the force drawing material to itself, which conceivably could inspire the creation of a work of art? Is it possible that emotion is the attractable, and that the appropriate material is the magnet, drawing emotion to it? And what is meant by the phrasing: 'state of mind already moving forward?' Is the mind, compelled by emotion, consistently in a requisite state of motion, moving toward so-called appropriate material?

While I readily accept that emotion, acting as a magnet—or motivating force in the artist—can move the mind forward to appropriate material in order to initiate an expressive act. It is also possible that appropriate material can elicit an emotional response, regardless the emotional state and whether or not the mind of the artist is moving forward, resulting in (what could be interpreted as creative capriciousness) an expressive act, that might not have been expected.

Expressed in a different way, it is not always, in a linear sense, an 'a' leads to 'b' then 'c' then 'd' equation. It is possible that, 'c,' 'b' or 'd' together or independent of one another could lead to 'a.' That is to say, an emotional response and a resulting expressive act can be triggered by the random or accidental exposure to appropriate material: 'a' representing emotion and 'b,' 'c,' and 'd,' respectively, representing appropriate material, regardless of their order in the equation.

At a glance, in my mind Dewey's proposition is convoluted except where he assigns the notion of 'affinity' to the equation. As it relates to my research, this is where I began to esteem *Art as Experience* as significant. Could the idea of magnets (i.e. emotions), for which there is a recognizable affinity, along with the notion of attractable materials be addressed during the execution of my research, and how?

In the concluding Section Six of this document I further expound on these ideas. I also examine the notion that what we desire, versus what we get, especially in regard to emotion and in context to my inquiry, is not always what we expect. At this juncture, however, it is more pertinent to declare

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recognized professional activity.” (Schön, 1983 p.18).³⁴

Per my research there was a problem set: Firstly, the question of engaging in fairly ambitious walking excursions as I had determined to do, secondly, the fact my experimentations had seemingly not yet produced any art because the methodology was not yet fully articulated, and thirdly, what did I mean by objects becoming images, which in turn become mental objects? One day, caught up in a vacillating stupor between Sartre’s notions on imaginative consciousness and spontaneity, a peculiar incident occurred:

Bulbous, cotton ball shaped clouds hung in the sky, slowly expanding. A faint, warm breeze wandered in and out of shadows cast by the early afternoon sun. The heavens were the kind of brilliant blue you only experience in late spring—continuously intense all the way to the horizon. Life had slowed down. My teaching responsibilities were nearly done for the year. Days spent engaged in course prep and curriculum development, plus ample time to focus on my practice-led research awaited me. I was at ease, at least professionally. However, a lack of demonstrable progress on my PhD research weighed on my mind. Ideas about how to commence my walking method had a figurative choke hold on me.

Upon pulling into my driveway, returning home from the college, I paused on my front steps and looked longingly across the street. The vacant grassy field, which abuts the conservation area a mere stone’s throw away from my front door, was beckoning. The winding Oshawa creek, which runs through the center of the conservation area defines its meandering boundaries. Only a few weeks ago, trout from Lake Ontario would have started the long journey up stream to spawn in its tranquil, shallow pools. In the fall, salmon as big as three to four feet long make the same journey—so large their dorsal fins peek out of the water. It’s a twice-yearly spectacle, and “kinda magical, when you think about it,” I mused.

A self-professed avid walker, with a large dog

that the longer I engaged with Dewey’s book, the more readily I agreed with Whitehouse’s conclusion that: “The meaning of the term ‘emotion’ is unclear. Dewey gives no definition of the term in this text ... [however,] *Art as Experience* is about his own concept of experience, not primarily about the subject matter of aesthetics. Conclusively then, and most applicable to my inquiry is Whitehouse’s summation that, “Emotion is the directing force of aesthetic experience. It directs the artist in his expressive act and marks the particular consequences of the act—the art object.” (Whitehouse, p. 156)

Owing to the fact that this thesis is not positioned to begin to address philosophies on aesthetics and art criticism, P. G. Whitehouse’s commentary on Dewey and his book *Art as Experience* was nonetheless valuable in helping me reflect on my fascination with Dewey’s book and its relevance. My inquiry, in equal terms, is in large part concerned with the discovery and articulation of my own concept of experience, and in particular how emotion directs my expressive acts. When Dewey writes: “Were expression but a kind of decalomania, or a conjuring of a rabbit out of the place where it lies hid, artistic expression would be a comparatively simple matter, ” I readily recognize a voice eerily similar to my own in tone and intent. (Dewey p.78)

Additionally, in his chapter on *Substance and Form* when Dewey contemplates “objects of art are expressive, they are language,” I readily relate, (Dewey p.110) primarily because I often find myself in passionate discourse with my own works of art, as if they are a powerful, independent influence inside my mind, resulting in a discourse that does not involve words or even images. Long before I’ve contemplated the influence as a visual object, conveyed through any variety of mediums, the discourse affects me bodily, in the same way an itch irritates. (see: www.stanzaic.com/1ststanza)

Again, in the concluding Section Six I will further explicate what I mean by the above. Here at this stage of this document, it is prudent to hold back and give Dewey’s poetically conveyed assertion space to breath: “In its beginning an emotion flies straight to its object. Love tends to cherish the loved object as hate tends to destroy the thing hated.” (Dewey p. 78) Such statements, coupled with the pragmatic nature by which Dewey views art and aesthetic experience, are what rendered is

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in need of regular exercise, I chided myself as delinquent in my dog walking duties. Yearning for an excursion, likely as much as she was, impulsively, I set my backpack down in the front foyer and called to her. After searching for her leash and harness, once buckled up, Zoe and I bounded out the front door. We were eager to romp through the bush along the creek's edge, largely with the aim to spy shockingly large fish in relatively shallow water, but mostly to set out on a walking adventure, purely for the joy of it.

Crossing over my yard and then the street, we headed up my neighbor's driveway. We are on good terms, and they never complain at us using their side gate as a short cut. Their property borders a vacant field, which is owned by yet another neighbor. Empty, not farmed, nor suitable for home development because of its proximity to the final approach path of a small regional airport runway, the field unofficially acts as a buffer between my residential neighborhood, the borders of the conservation area, and the creek. Permission to ramble through it is implied—or at least that was mine and many others' assumption. Several of my neighbors can be seen wandering in and out of the field daily, suggesting we are free to do the same.

Once safely removed from the street, walking along the edge of the field, I unhooked the leash from Zoe's collar. She dashed out ahead of me, eager to chase after something—perhaps a rabbit concealed in the tall grass my senses could not discern was there. Taking advantage of the pause, I lingered where I stood and took in the scenery around me. It felt good to purposely step away from the world and simply draw a breath uncombered by the business of the day in reasonably wild circumstances, even if it was only forty yards from my front steps.

Wondering if I should call after Zoe, standing there, a curiously large bumblebee buzzed into view and hovered about my torso. Not allergic, or prone to panicking at the sight

text compelling to me, which can readily be seen in the repercussions my research has had on my pedagogical interests and efforts.

Charged chiefly with teaching pragmatic skills, designed to enable design discipline focused students to compete in an ever-changing technologically driven job market, the didactic tone—in the edifying sense of the word—of Dewey's text is refreshing. His views on distinctions in art are persuasive. In the chapter *The Common Substance Of The Arts*, Dewey states: "What subject-matter is appropriate for art? Are there materials inherently fit and others unfit. Or are there none which are common and unclear with respect to artistic treatment?" (Dewey p. 194) Dewey is distinctly aware he is asking a knotty question.

Careful not to pontificate on the issue, he follows the question up with a thoughtful appeal to historic distinctions made between what could be considered, in his terms, popular arts and official arts. His review touches on theatre, ballet, painting, poetry and literature. He then resets and contemporizes (to his era) the argument. In the subsequent chapter, *The Varied Substance Of The Arts*, Dewey declares authoritatively: "If 'art' denoted objects, if it were genuinely a noun, art objects could be marked off into different classes." (Dewey p. 222) Next, after pointing out the absurdity of efforts to classify art in the same way genus and species of animal are classified, he posits: "If art is an intrinsic quality of activity, we cannot divide and subdivide it. We can only follow the differentiation of the activity into different modes as it impinges on different materials and employs different media." (Dewey, p.222) Thus, this answers definitively for me the question concerning the division I suffered from and that is spoken of in the Primary Thread of this section. It truly is a machination and my art is my art, whether or not it is created under the guise of personal fulfillment, or in the context of my professional design discipline related activities.

33. Sartre, Jean-Paul. *The Psychology Of Imagination*. New York: Washington Square Press, 1966.

The Psychology of Imagination presents Sartre's views on imagination and consciousness. The book focuses on perception, conception and imagination. As cited in the Secondary Thread

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of flying insects, I remained still and calmly observed the lively drone drift close to and then away from my belly. “It’s gonna do what it’s gonna do, whether I’m standing here or not,” I pondered, prompting a peculiar and probing thought: “how aware was that bumblebee of me in that moment ... it certainly is a part of my consciousness experience, but how—if at all—consciously aware could that particular insect be of me?”

While postulating on the sentient perceptiveness of the airborne pollinator drifting away from my mid-section, my mind settled upon a series of rousing thoughts: “Merely an obstacle, an object to investigate, but ultimately navigate away from on its journey to seek out nectar, a bumblebee would have no instinctive interest in me.” This lead me to then ask myself: “if I were to compare myself to the bumblebee—what is the nectar I, intuitively if not instinctively, seek ... and what are the obstacles I should be navigating away from on my journey to find it?”

Continuing on with my musing, I asked myself some follow-up questions: “Where or what have I been walking towards, resolved to climb into and explore? Are well laid plans to initiate ambitious excursions actually just an obstacle or distraction I should steer clear of? Do I truly need to travel an hour or more into Ontario cottage country to find wild, wooded areas with flowing water, or proverbial bridges with substructures to climb down into?”

My mind then turned to the time and energy I had invested in exploring in-between spaces. I truly was steps away from an ideal in-between space. By in-between space I meant a space that not only is feral, and as such offers a sense of adventure, but it is also a space that both physically and mentally exists outside the normal everyday spaces I inhabit, spaces my mind and body sometimes wanders to on its own, just as it did today. What’s more, the nectar I was seeking can be found in the

of Section Two, in context to my survey of the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Sartre posits in his brief introduction that his “book aims to describe the great function of consciousness to create a world of unrealities, or imagination.” (Sartre, p.vii) The writing is confident that human intellect is capable of grasping the imaginary by understanding the relationship between consciousness, visual imagery and reality. I am less certain that such understanding can so assuredly be grasped, except perhaps through the lens of emotion.

That said, Sartre’s notion that to perceive the world is a condition of “passive consciousness,” is particularly pertinent, in that, as my method and in turn methodology really began to take shape, I found myself continually asking: do we intentionally assign what we see, such as earth, rocks or trees—objects as Sartre prefers to call them—as temporal? Is it not until we engage our “imaginative consciousness” that we spontaneously produce these temporal objects as images—images that are the product of the imaginative mind; images that, it can be argued, are “more true than nature?” (Sartre, pp.17, 49) To that end, if the answer is yes in response to the above, what then exactly determines which object, in Sartrean terms, will act on the imaginative mind?

As this thesis pushes towards a conclusion, a comprehensive answer to that question will be proffered. Succinctly stated here, specifically for me and my practice, it is emotion. What I mean precisely by that will be introduced in section four and carefully outlined in the concluding section five of this thesis.

There is one more idea Sartre champions that is immediately applicable and should be addressed, namely his conception of the “ideational elements of an imaginative consciousness,” of which he declares:

“What we ordinarily designate as thinking is consciousness which affirms this or that quality of its object but without realizing the qualities of the object. The image, on the contrary, is consciousness that aims to produce its object: it is therefore constituted by a certain way of judging and feeling of which, we do not become conscious as such but which we apprehend on the intentional object as this or that of its qualities. In a word:

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instances of imaginative and creative thinking, like those I had experienced on the Scout winter hike and during the day trip up north. However, I wanted those instances to occur with greater regularity, and if possible, to help me focus my imaginative and creative thoughts. Why then could they not be fostered right here, a stone's throw away from my front door?

Enamoured by my musings and introspection, I scrambled to find something with which to record my thoughts. I had left the house in haste, leaving my smartphone on a side table. The best I could do was commit the thoughts to memory, vocally repeating them over and over to myself as I hustled back to my office in my basement to write them down. The first thing I scribbled in my journal was: "how can I consistently initiate creative states of consciousness, not in distant places, but near my home and where I work?"

Upon heading back to the field to catch up with and find my dog, I recognized my impetuous jaunt with the dog and subsequent encounter with the bumblebee was a different kind of epiphany than what I had experienced previously. It liberated me from notions that far off, isolated locations and extreme conditions were not absolutely essential to the effectiveness of my walking method.

Calling Zoe's name, it occurred to me that each incident leading up to this one had successively brought me to this point, convincing me that the spontaneity which pervaded the previous two walking incidents on the winter hike and during the day trip up north could be maintained, while the rigmarole associated with grand preparations was unnecessary. I could take off on a deliberate walk, at any time and within the immediate untamed environments where I live, work and play, meaning that simpler means were required to help standardize and quantify each new successive experience following this one. This changed the very nature of my research outlook, impelling my investigation

the function of the image is symbolic." (Sartre, p.124)

And to what end then will the works of art, born of this inquiry and soon to be discussed, be considered 'symbolic' of the effectiveness of a method and methodology that was developed? Predicated on the stated premise that, if well formulated, those methods and methodology could enhance my capacity for creative and imaginative thinking.

34. Schön, Donald A. *The Reflective Practitioner, How Professionals Think in Action*. New York, New York: Basic Books, Inc, 1983.

There is a pragmatism found in the arguments of Schöns' text that is alluring. Subversive in tone, the book is both a critique and exposé that is fervent in its attempts to promote a demonstrable change in attitude, (see: Verse 6) particularly, in regard to the relationship between what can be considered "soft knowledge of artistry and unvarnished opinion," and "hard knowledge of science and scholarship." (Schön, Preface, loc.44) Stated differently and more succinctly, Schon declares through an in-text manifesto:

"We are in need of inquiry into the epistemology of practice. What is the kind of knowing in which competent practitioners engage? How is professional knowing like and unlike the kinds of knowledge presented in academic textbooks, scientific papers, and learned journals? In what sense, if any, is there intellectual rigor in professional practice?" (Schön, Preface, loc.44)

My first impression upon examining the text was to resist such observations concerning the inherent dynamics of prejudicial conflict. A lot has changed since his book was written. Other, more contemporary texts, such as by Graeme Sullivan on the subject of practice-led research will be considered in the concluding section of documentation. Situated here, a good long look at Schön's ideas provided me a starting point from which to consider these issues, coming at them for the first time—again repeating myself—as a vocationally situated professor of art and design.

Considered from that perspective, the arguments found in the preface of Schön's book could be

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*I think you think I think you stink. Unless
you think if you stink I might think to stink is
something untoward?*

*If so, it's not the stink you think that I abhor. But,
rather, the thinking that leads one to believe their
stink is not worse than yours!*

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forward with renewed vigor and increased anticipation.

On the Consequences of Encounters with Bees

The encounter with the bumblebee was a revelatory experience. It allowed me to come to terms with the idea that I could access creative states of consciousness while in familiar local environments, rather than plotting to situate myself in far flung locations. This proved instrumental in the development and maturing of my methodology. But prior to discussing that maturation, other considerations which the revelation helped me make must be considered. As noted earlier in this section—that my current and past experiences could inform the planning of my excursions—my spontaneous walk with my dog and encounter with the bee called me back to my childhood. Growing up in the East Millcreek neighborhood of south Salt Lake City, the East Mill Creek ran adjacent to our back yard. Similar to the Oshawa Creek, it also traversed a suburban community and was bordered on each side by a forested area.

Coincidentally, where my current home is situated, in proximity to an urban, but wild and untamed³⁵ or feral³⁶ swath of forested land is remarkably similar to where my childhood home was situated. Of course, there is nuance to each of the three terms used above. That nuance is addressed in greater detail in the Secondary Thread. Succinctly, the two swaths of land were certainly once wild and untamed before being encroached upon by human development. Over time however, at least per my perception now and even back then, the once tamed wild flora of each space has spilled upward and outward beyond the borders enforced on them. Meaning, in a sense, each space can be considered feral in that the vegetation has pushed back and reclaimed its autonomy or wildness. This is an idea that appeals to me.

As a small boy I spent countless hours exploring East Mill Creek. I often fished for Brook and Brown trout, but mostly roamed up and down the banks of the creek at the backyard edges of neighbouring homes, climbing and playing among the trees. I have few specific recollections

represented symbolically as a type of uroboros. In that scholarship and practice are the head and tail which belong to the same beast, swallowing itself over and over. And except in arenas where conceit prevails, knowledge, regardless of its academic, professional, or economic value is worth pursuing doggedly. (see: www.stanzaic.com/12thstanza)

In concert with my stated resistance, there is merit for me in examining the potential conflict between academia and the professions as scrutinized by Schön . Especially, in how he illuminates the manner in which individuals in each respective domain potentially view the concept of practice. This dynamic is highlighted when Schön writes out an imagined dialogic exchange between a nameless academic and practitioner (to which I can relate, as it reminds me of some exchanges between myself and my advisors). Per Schön the practitioner could very well be heard saying, “while I do not accept your view of knowledge, I cannot describe my own ... my kind of knowledge is indescribable ... I will not attempt to describe it lest I paralyze myself.” (Schön, Preface, p.44)

The irony in the above statement is self-evident. A deep, abiding intimate knowledge of any particular subject matter represents a mystery of sorts for the possessor of said knowledge: how can one truly explain what it is one knows and, in the process, convey the nuance or very essence of that knowledge in individualistic human terms?

Considered differently, the ability to explain what one knows about a subject matter is not necessarily the same as showing what one knows about it. (see: www.stanzaic.com/21ststanza) While an academic could present data as representing knowledge, that data can only be considered knowledge insofar as it has been interpreted—with interpretation always being subject to bias.

Adding to the ideas above, the notion of paralysis, in the face of careful self-examination of one's own practice, is an intriguing concept. Through careful introspective analysis, at what point does a ‘wizarding wizard’ risk revealing—unique to him or herself—that he or she is merely a magician expertly trained in the art of theatrics and deception? What I mean is, skills, ability and knowhow, though fantastic at how they potentially render a practitioner a magician, do not represent knowledge in the same sense data can only be considered knowledge as far as it can be

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of my wanderings, other than noting that my time spent walking, hiking and climbing in and around East Mill Creek was a sublime escape. In fact, writing about it now evokes an indescribable sense of calm; eliciting a nostalgia for a consciousness or state of mind and being; feral, having reclaimed a sense of wildness that perhaps can only be experienced in childhood.

Mike Pearson, in his book *In Comes I*, declares: “Human activities are written in the landscape and daily passages become biographic encounters with traces and memories of past activities.”³⁷ In referencing Archeologist Christopher Tilley, he then writes: “personal biographies, social identities and a biography of place are intimately connected ... a landscape is a series of named locales, linked by paths, movements and narratives.” Pearson then posits that a “landscape is differentiated.” Equating it to a “network of related places, some revealed through particular moments ...” In further considering his thoughts, Pearson contemplates that there is a “temporal dimension” that can be assigned to a landscape: “[A] complex interweaving of concurrent rhythms and cycles, present even within the one body.” Which he then follows up with “there is a historical dimension too: environment is itself pregnant with the past—as we walk it, we not only remember our own past ... but also enact the activities of those who have gone before,” summarizing by quoting Tim Ingold that “places do not have locations but histories.” (Pearson, p.12)

My walk punctuated by the encounter with the bumble bee left me—in a sense—pregnant, or perhaps even in the process of birthing and re-introducing myself to my past. Initially, and unconsciously I had embraced bodily rhythms and cycles tacitly known to me; returning to a landscape or a space of “temporal dimensions,” and accessing my activities as someone who has “gone before.” The encounter with the bee invited this change in perspective. More time and space later in this section, as well as in subsequent sections is reserved to further explore these ideas. But at this stage of the document it is important to step beyond them and also consider how my spontaneous walk and encounter with the bumble bee invited me to reconsider, and even begin to alter my perception of my practice as it was currently constituted.

Aptly described as a division in my mind, a distinction

interpreted.

Continuing to indulge in arguing with Schön falls well beyond the scope of this inquiry. There are other contemporary texts worth further consideration (Such as Graeme Sullivan’s *Art Practice As Research*, which will be cited in Section Six) that speak to practice-led research.

Regardless, *The Reflective Practitioner* provided an important initial conceptual approach to help me interrogate the practice-led inception of my art objects, as motivated by my methodological experimentations. In turn this conceptual approach helped me recognize that any art objects created during my research process could speak back to my overall inquiry and vice versa. In Schön’s terms: “constancy of appreciative system is an essential condition for reflection-in-action. It is what makes possible the initial framing of the problematic situation, and it is also what permits the inquirer to re-appreciate the situation in light of its back talk.” (Schön, Preface, p.270) In my estimation, that is a goal worth striving for, and in Section Five of this thesis I will begin to outline where and when, with regard to a specific art object this dialogue occurred, and then ultimately how I attempted to capture the dialogue through the inception of yet other art objects.

35. Farley, Paul and Michael Symmons Roberts. *Edgelands: Journey into England's True Wilderness*. London: Random House, 2011. ebook.

The use of the terms wild, untamed or feral in this document were used in a matter of fact manner to describe the geography wherein my initial research activities, and in turn much of my walking, hiking and climbing occurred. The conservation area, or landscape of the Oshawa Creek, and the counterpart landscape of East Mill Creek near my childhood home are unequivocally wild, untamed and feral places. As is, to a different and larger extent, the wilderness landscape wherein the winter hike with Boy Scouts, as recounted in Section Two occurred. However, considered in a broader context, describing these places, landscapes or spaces as wild, untamed or feral allows for some interesting implications to be considered.

As should be evident, since childhood I have

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could be drawn between the intuitive art-making of my practice, and the pragmatically crafted media-making, created in my role as both a professional designer and vocationally situated professor. In the latter capacity, per my teaching and professional experience in graphic, interactive and web design, media works are viewed exclusively as the means by which visual, textual, motion-based or programmed and auditory compositions are created. Their purpose is to communicate a promotional or advertising centric message on behalf of a corporate entity with a service or product to sell. As well, the imaginative notions inherent in those creative works can be construed as being born of my use of brainstorming techniques and creative processes, as discussed in the Primary Thread of Section One. In contrast, experimental media artworks, performance pieces, as well as my life-long drawing, print-making and painting activities are considered the fine art of my creative practice.

Described differently, G. James Daichendt in his book: *Artist Teacher: A Philosophy for Creating and Teaching* relates how it is possible to:

“[see] art as being closely aligned with philosophy, whereas design is similar to the work of illustration, which is made for the purpose of an intended audience ...” Further explaining that, “this understanding of design [is] similar to craft ... [and] craft is generally concerned with a product that is utilitarian and uses particular materials.” (Daichendt, p.69) **38**

In the wake of the bumblebee experience, the division (design as more closely related to craft and art being aligned with philosophy) became less distinguishable due to the potentiality of the walking method mutually benefiting all aspects of my practice. Every creative act related to my practice could benefit directly from its impending development, regardless of how it was kneaded together using brainstorming and creative process techniques for practical purposes, or whether or not it was seen as intuitive in nature and done for personal fulfillment. Consequently, before delving too deeply into the maturation of my methods and methodology, a brief, but important examination of the dissolution of this division is merited.

At the outset, in my initial PhD project proposal stages, the question of why I do what I do, specifically as an artist,

regularly sought respite from the world in wild, untamed and feral places, landscapes and spaces. It is not a great mystery then why my attention was drawn to the space between backyards at the widow's home, or to the in-between places in my neighbourhood, and even to the shoulders of a busy highway as discussed in the secondary thread of Section Two. Nor is it a mystery why, as a consequence of the winter hike in a wilderness landscape, and subsequent day trip up north led to the important introspections I arrived at during my encounter with the bumble bee. But what is a bit of a mystery is how long it took me to gain access to those insights.

Though the opportunity was there, it apparently passed me by which is ironic considering, per Farley and Symmons Roberts, these places, landscapes and spaces are a “paradox ... feral as they are, a no-man's-land between the watched and the documented territories of urban and rural ... a passing place, [a] backdrop ... seen but unseen. Looked at but not into.” (Farley & Roberts, Loc.993) Thus, pulling away from the primary thread and taking the opportunity here in the secondary thread, perhaps these places can be looked into and the unseen can be seen in them. This could allow for, in context to this document, a better understanding as to why these wild, untamed and even feral locations factor so prominently in my research-related thinking and doing.

In the introduction of their book Farley and Symmons Roberts assert, per their lexicon, that the untamed and feral places, landscapes or spaces often found intersecting or bordering urban settings can be designated edgelands. In writing about their childhood wandering in these edgelands they state: “It was easy ... to find yourself lost in back lanes or waste ground, to follow the wooded perimeters ... an old path leading through scratchy shrubland ... to find yourself on the edges of arable land.” (Farley & Roberts, Loc.80) Though I do not employ the term edgelands, my use of terms wild, untamed or feral are offered in the same spirit wherein Farley and Symmons Roberts proclaim: “[we] celebrate these [edgelands] ... these unobserved parts of our shared landscape as places of possibility, mystery, beauty.” (Farley & Roberts, Loc.130)

In further consideration of the idea of celebration, Farley and Symmons Roberts observe: “at their

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but also as a designer and professor, pervaded my thinking. How does one first understand and then describe one's own creative processes, sources of inspiration and additionally, the distinctions made between intuitive art-making, as compared to brainstorming technique and design process driven art-making? If for no other reason than, in pragmatic terms, it is because that is a question my employer and pupils expect me to answer, in a classroom setting, on a nearly daily basis.

Paul Klee, in his notebooks provides an informed response to the question of why and how, specifically as it relates to creativity and creative processes, by asserting: "The power of creativity cannot be named. It remains mysterious to the end." This he follows with the curious statement: "But what does not shake us to our foundations is no mystery. We ourselves, down to the smallest part of us, are charged with this power." (Klee, p.17)³⁹ Which begs the question: what is meant by the use of the term power—does Klee mean the power to be creative but unable to pinpoint and articulate the origins by which the creative act was perceived and thus realized in some foundation shaking form? As well, what are the origins of the charge, or desire to wield said power—is it innate, or intrinsically linked to human experience?

Clarifying his position, Klee further suggests: "We cannot state its essence but we can, in certain measure, move towards its source. In any case, we must reveal this power in its function just as it is revealed to us." (Klee, p.17) Thus, this indicates to me that, in some measure, my research must aim to reveal this power in its function not in Klee's terms, but uniquely as I comprehend it, as it is revealed to me.

Correlated to, and similar to Klee but with a different emphasis and specifically in response to the question, 'what forces give rise to art?' Joseph Beuys, in the book *What is Art: A Conversation with Joseph Beuys*, states: "All my life I have returned to this same question time and again: What is the need—that is, what is the truly objective constellation of forces working in us and the world—that justifies the creation of something like art?" (Beuys, loc.306)⁴⁰

Beuys then goes on to expound on his ideas by explaining his understanding of the difference between "simply doing" and "having an ideology," by first clarifying that he comprehends ideologies related to creating art, differently

most unruly and chaotic, edgelands make a great deal of our official wilderness seem like enshrined, ecologically arrested, controlled garden space ..." To which they then proclaim: "Children, teenagers, as well as lawbreakers have seemed to feel especially at home in them." Which is an interesting notion, especially in how Farelly and Symmons Roberts then qualify their thoughts with the idea that the former group seeks out edgelands because they lack the means to travel beyond them, treating them as "their jungle spaces ... [or] playground." While the latter group seeks them out to conceal, or to avoid dealing with the consequences of criminal activities. (Farley & Roberts, loc.161)

In further solidarity with Farelly and Symmons Roberts ideas, I particularly appreciated their scrutiny of modern cultures seeming fascination with "wilderness travel" and "wilderness writing." Their ideas speak to, to a degree, the internal conflict I wrestled with in attempting to plan my own grand adventures. Farelly and Symmons Roberts posit: "But there is an undertow to our yearning for wilderness that feels less comfortable. When you get to your wild place, who will you meet there? Whose hospitality will you call upon? ... Usually no one's, because ... [the] yearning [is] not just for wild places, but for wild places without any people in them." And though admittedly that is part of the appeal for me of wandering into wild, untamed or feral places (or edgelands). I concur with Farelly and Symmons Roberts wherein they beseech: "... have a walk around edgeland woods ... This has the added advantage that you won't die of exposure if you take a wrong turn ... " Not to mention, you will never find yourself too far removed from home and the company of others—be they children and teens, the occasional delinquent, or especially a beloved pet. (Farley & Roberts, loc.2159)

One other aspect of Farelly and Symmons Roberts writing that intrigued me is their observations made concerning the "act of Easter witness on the streets of Manchester or Liverpool." In the act, devotees mimic Arthur Blessitt's actions, who in 1969 "heard the voice of God calling him to take down the twelve-foot cross from the wall of his café, and walk the streets with it." (Farley & Roberts, loc.380) Per Farelly and Symmons Roberts observations, this act of devotion compels an individual cross-bearer to travel from town to town, invariably requiring them to traverse edgelands

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than what may commonly be accepted. In particular, Beuys states that thinking critically about creating art while one is doing it, is not the same as having an ideology of creating art. This is further made clear, as recorded in an exchange with the editor and essayist of *What is Art*, Volker Harlan, wherein Beuys states: “I actually see ideology in what you said—that simply doing without such reflection is much healthier than, let’s say, planning something, reflecting on it, in contrast to simple, playful activity that has its own dynamic.” (Beuys, loc.375)

Later, Beuys further explains himself by declaring: “For ideologies are not just ideas, but misuse ideas in order to glorify instinctual urges by means of a thought apparatus.” (Beuys, loc.375) To which the author of the book, who is interviewing Beuys, clarifies that his initial question posed to Beuys was not intended to champion ideologies, but rather to ascertain Beuys view on the “... contradiction implicit in the fact one cannot simply make something any old how ... nor can one plan it precisely either.” (Harlan, loc.375) To which Beuys cedes that the dichotomy between the purity of experience inherent in playful experimentation, in contrast to the carefully planned execution of an artwork is not absolute. “... this doesn’t mean that you can’t aim for perfection—that one shouldn’t value rigor and direction; that one mustn’t avoid being imprecise or looking through ideological spectacles.” (Beuys, loc.422)

Internalizing Beuys ideas led me to contemplate on the fine line between the careful planning of my walking experimentations, and what could result, versus my impetuous walk with my dog that led me to the bee encounter as a culmination of my other notable spontaneous walking experiences. This led me to then consider whether or not the planning of my outings was too contrived, say for example, as was the case with my in-between spaces experiments, in contrast to the fact my spontaneous, epiphany inducing walking adventures were too random in nature and therefore, unlikely to be repeated?

Looked at more closely, that first hike with the Boy Scouts, although in extreme environmental conditions, was a purely playful activity—manifested in the boys’ spirited felled tree climbing detour. My son and his friend climbing down into the substructure of the bridge in Ontario cottage country, again was a purely playful activity. The jaunt with my dog into the conservation area, a mere stone’s

notably with some difficulty. As they continue to write about this spectacle, they first observe that this act of witness is in fact an act of “unobserved endurance.” The authors then ask: “what keeps them going through the edgelands? The lure of their destination? It should be more than that.” Farley and Symmons Roberts then postulate: “The Crucifixion was essentially an edgelands story. The Bible suggests that the site of the crucifixion was outside the city wall.” (Farley & Roberts, loc.380)

Earlier, I assert that it should be evident that I regularly sought (and still seek) respite from the world in wild, untamed and feral places, landscapes and spaces. My motivations for doing so are not likely much different than any other persons. However, and speaking bluntly, to be a devout member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is to, at times, both travel in and inhabit the edgelands of culture. As such, I metaphorically and thus—conceivably—in a physical sense find comfort in such places. Further, to be a survivor of childhood sexual abuse and acutely aware of my emotional state, the appeal of escaping into wild, untamed and feral environments is equally comforting, but for different reasons. In my experience it is easier to deal with an internal untamed or feral wildness by escaping to such places in times of emotional duress.

Lastly, though I do not engage in overt acts of witness I do at times, admittedly, retreat into edgelands, or wild, untamed and feral places to commune with and perhaps hear the voice of God. Feasibly answering my earlier introspection as to why it took so long to allow myself access to important insights: because I did not wish to conflate that aspect of my spiritual nature with the aims of my inquiry, partly, for fear it could be misunderstood and potentially mocked. Ultimately, because I feel there are distinctions to be made between an understanding of inspiration in a spiritual context, versus inspiration in the context of creative thinking and doing, especially as it relates to my notion of creative caprice.

For example, in speaking about spiritual inspiration, ironically, it was during a walk with my wife and the dog that the final decision was made to enroll in a PhD program. We had in fact set out on the walk to talk about it and think on it. Prior to that decision-making moment, much discussion and prayer had been engaged in about the impact it could have on our family. Plus, that one walk was

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throw away from my front steps and where I encountered the bumble bee, was also a purely playful activity. Each experience reinforced the notion advanced above, which asserts that simply doing absent predetermined reflection is conceivably healthier than carefully orchestrated actions. However, that does not mean that any one of those experiences, could not be considered healthy, if in some part, they were the result of a methodology that by design instigates their deliberate occurrence.

Taking all of the above into account, I began to recognize that the walking method my research effort was formulating, as nascent methodology, should not be viewed as an ideology. Nor, should it exclusively be viewed as a defined method belonging to a larger methodology (which will be outlined in the next section). Any method of walking and in turn climbing into and exploring creative states of consciousness must manifestly allow for both calculated planning and spontaneity, ensuring that impulsive, experimental playfulness benefits from and is not constricted by, using Beuys terms, valued rigor and direction.

Turning my attention to other matters, the revelations born of the encounter with the bumblebee represented, per Mark Turner (as referenced in the Secondary Thread of Section One) shiftiness in my thinking, inviting me to wonder: did that shiftiness occur succinctly, because those revelations were intrinsically interesting to me, due to the emotional ramifications of being able to reconcile the question of ‘what is art?’, in the context of my own creative practice? This is especially, relative to my role as a vocationally situated professor who is also engaged in the pursuit of a practice-led PhD, within the confines of the academic domain of Fine Arts.

In response to Turner’s notions of shiftiness, the bumblebee encounter did help me shift my thinking and see the division between art and design identified above, for what it is: a machination of my own making. What’s more, it revealed that my research could permit me to explain and convey what it could mean, from a unique phenomenological and artistic perspective, to be creatively spontaneous, impulsive or impetuous, not in a dispassionate sense, but more pointedly what it could mean to discover, recognize and convey instances of creative caprice, within my artistic practice, that are guided by playful intuitiveness. Thus helping to reveal my over-arching aim, as declared

not the only walk taken; I had in fact on multiple occasions gone on many walks in a variety of spaces in order to contemplate on and discuss the issue with deity.

In contrast, I do not seek the same insight from deity concerning my art-making, or for that matter nor do I consult with my spouse on matters of art-making. Regardless, the pattern of behavior is prevalent. And a part of me wonders what could be learned by modifying my practice accordingly? However, I believe per the theological doctrines to which I subscribe I am left to my own devices in such matters. In principle, that is—in speaking back to my sense for the use of the term faith, and even the doctrine of foreordination as addressed in the Introduction—an aspect of my humanity and a matter of personal agency to be dealt with and improved upon at a distance from divine influence.

36. Monbiot, George. *Feral: Rewilding the Land, the Sea and Human Life*. Toronto: Penguin Group, 2013. ebook.

The term feral merits some consideration on its own, separate from the terms wild and untamed. Though at times I have used the term in tandem with wild and untamed, it is important to note that feral specifically refers to animals or species that are wild after having escaped captivity, or after having once been domesticated. George Monbiot does not directly deal with this definition as will be discussed subsequently. But the spirit of that precise definition is discernable in his writing. More importantly, the spirit of that precise definition colours my use of the term in this document. In a liberal sense, the use of the term in tandem with wild and untamed suggests that by removing myself to such spaces, I can appreciate the sentiment that one could feel liberated, even if only temporary, from the captive and taming effects of modern conveniences.

Per George Monbiot, in his book aptly titled *Feral*, the term can be associated with the concept of rewilding: conservation efforts focused on promoting natural renewal and growth through a variety of mechanisms, such as the reintroduction of apex predators into their native ecosystems. Obviously, my use of the term in this thesis is not motivated by a desire to advance an agenda in favour of such activism. Nor is my aim to espouse

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in An Introduction in Section One, to convey how strong emotion can capriciously influence and determine which intrinsic interests compel me to create what otherwise might be considered intuitive works of art.

notions of abandoning the trappings of modern life that can sometimes be associated with the concept of rewilding. Rather, my use of the term aligns, in small measure, with that of George Monbiot wherein he argues: “I see rewilding as an enhanced opportunity for people to engage with and delight in the natural world.” (Monbiot, loc.304)

Certainly, my sense of what the term feral can mean speaks to issues of concern on a much smaller scale than those of Monbiot. But there is overlap. Following the statement quoted above, Monbiot declares: “Feral [a reference to his book] also examines the lives we may no longer lead and the constraints—many of them necessary—that prevent us from exercising some of our neglected faculties.” (Monbiot, loc.305) Invariably, that is a realization I arrived at as the cumulative result of my experiences as recounted in both the Primary and Secondary threads up to this point in the document. There are, using Monbiot’s term, faculties I had forgotten how to access and utilize. And my use of the term feral, though initially not done consciously, exudes an excitement derived from their rediscovery, which can be linked back to the introspective question I asked of myself while watching my Boy Scout troop climb a felled tree on the winter hike.

Regardless, it is a stretch to seek greater correlations between my actions and the broader theories espoused by George Monbiot. Plainly speaking, I am not seeking to “rewild my own life,” and “escape ecological boredom” on a scale equal to his intentions. Nor, do I agree with his contention that we are “not alone in possessing an unmet need for a wilder life,” or that “this need might have caused a remarkable collective delusion, from which many thousands of people now suffer.” (Monbiot, loc.305) Candidly, I lack the scope of lived experience to speak authoritatively to those notions. And as is evident, this thesis lacks the necessary scope to thoughtfully consider such ideas in greater detail. However, there is an avowal he makes in chapter three of his book, titled “Foreshadowings” that is germane to the focus of my research.

After intense storytelling about stalking flatfish with a spear, and then associating the rush of that hunt with randomly happening upon a freshly dead deer and claiming it as the grand prize of a foraging outing, Monbiot writes: “I believe, though I have no means of showing that this proposition

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is true, that in both cases I was experiencing a genetic memory.” (Monbiot, loc.654) It is a fascinating idea to ponder. It certainly evokes some thoughts related to my own avowal of an intuitive drive to walk, wander, and trek about as declared at the beginning of Section Two, under the title The Importance of “Walking to the Mormon Faith.” But again, there is simply not enough space here to head too far down that particular path of inquiry. Succinctly, my inquiry only permits me to briefly consider simple corollaries and to suggest that anything beyond that could represent a post-doctoral avenue for further investigation.

37. Pearson, Mike. *In Comes I: Performance, Memory and Landscape*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2006. ebook.

In continuation of my notions of performatively walking, or occupying the in-between spaces of my immediate environment, *In Comes I* offers a unique look at “performance and landscape, biography and locality, memory and place.” (Pearson, p.5) Though it may seem strange it was not included as a reference in the previous Section One writing segments. The text is more relevantly referenced here, in particular as I came to the realization (as a consequence of my encounter with the bumble bee) of the connections between the conservation area near my current home and the wooded spaces bordering East Mill creek near my childhood home.

In a certain sense *In Comes I* corroborates my revelations outlined in this section by demonstrating that though novel in the context of my experience, my approach in arriving at them was not an original inclination. Indicating that my previously noted experimentations and contemplations could be considered a duplication of other previous approaches, whether conducted by folklorists, historians or even archaeologists ... let alone other artists whose actions will be looked at more closely in Sections Four and Five. The inherent problem with the idea of duplication is the insinuation that this thesis can be aware of and in fact represents a duplication of many if not every potential action ever conducted on the subject, notwithstanding those actions that are especially relevant to me and my circumstances.

Ideally, in concert with Pearson wherein he declares his book “proposes an original approach

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to the study of performance,” (Pearson, Introduction) I can assert that my research and methodology—to be outlined in detail, in subsequent sections—can also be considered original in its approach to the study of the effects of walking on creativity? But in reality, perhaps it is more prudent to declare that my actions represent refinements, as opposed to wholly unique actions. And that these refinements are compelling when offered in the same metaphorical spirit where Pearson quotes Gilbert White, as read in his book [*The Natural History of Selbourne*]: “Men that undertake only one district are much more likely to advance natural knowledge than those that grasp at more than they can possibly be acquainted with ...” (Pearson, Introduction)

Regardless, it is premature at this point to advance these thoughts further. In circling back to the relevance of this text, cited here at this juncture of the document, another quote Pearson includes in the cover pages of his text is worth consideration. Raymond Williams, as taken from the book *The Country and The City* posits: “Nostalgia, it can be said, is universal and persistent; only other men’s nostalgias offend.” (Pearson, Introduction) Begging the question, is my nostalgia of that character? Whether or not it offends is left to the reader. But it certainly is persistent, and evidently universal despite the distinctions that can be drawn between landscape, memory, place, biography and performative expression.

38. Daichendt, G. James. *Artist-Teacher: A Philosophy for Creating and Teaching*. Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2010. ebook.

Daichendt’s book is cited to provide context to my notion of a division, or distinction that can be drawn between art and design in my creative practice. Throughout the course of my creative life that division or distinction has tainted my thinking to such an extent the design related aspects of my practice are assigned a different kind of legitimacy, as compared to the fine art related aspect of my creative thinking and doing.

Outside of the reference in the Primary Thread, the book does not speak to the overall intentions of my research focus. Bluntly, larger discussions concerning divisions or distinctions that can be drawn between the fine arts and design disciplines, fall well beyond the scope of this investigation.

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39. Klee, Paul. *Notebooks, Volume 1 - The Thinking Eye; Volume 2 - The Nature of Nature*. London: Lund Humphries Publishers Limited, 1973.

The Paul Klee notebooks represent an introspective analysis of what the artist is thinking and more specifically doing, during the creative process. In the preface of Volume 1 – The Thinking Eye, commenter Giulio Carlo Argan argues that the “fundamental themes [of Klee’s thoughts] are always those of non-positivity, of elusiveness, of the uncertainty of existence, of the emptiness of reality, and the need to fill that void by human endeavor and artistic creation.” (Argan, p.12) Such ideas certainly fall in line with my references to the existentialist ideas of Sartre, and later in the Secondary Thread of Section Two, Søren Kierkegaard. But I am conflicted in exactly how Argan comes to that conclusion, along with his assertion that: “It is the aim and the will of humanity somehow to control its own destiny, to know itself and clearly to establish its position in the confusion of chaos.” (Argan, p.12)

Is that what I am meant to read from Klee’s thoughts and drawings in volume one and his cosmic ponderings found in volume two? If so, then his notebooks are relevant to my text and narrative threads. My attempt to capture and express my experience with creative processes and even cosmic lamentations (see: Verse 7) are similar to Klee’s. However, I don’t require Giulio Carlo Argan’s mediating notations to understand the dilemma of attempting to convey the phenomenological. It is in part an attempt to describe the transcendent. Any description I proffer could fail to transmit an informative comprehension of my own experience due to its uniqueness to me individually. While a more thorough examination of the notions stated in the last sentence above are a fruitful avenue for inquiry, that is not the principle aim of my investigations.

At this juncture, such notions represent my doubt when confronted with Paul Klee’s seeming certainty and confidence with which he annotates his diagrams, or as he muses in Volume 2: “Creative power is ineffable. It remains ultimately mysterious. And every mystery affects us deeply.” (Klee, p.11)

More pertinent to the citation of Klee is the

VERSE 7

*Where does it go, the tiny hole
whittled in my brain?
Straight and true to the heart of hope,
to drain my tainted faith.*

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relevance of his ideas in the context of what this thesis is constructed to reveal. Citing Klee establishes and helps contextualize my efforts as an artist attempting to share what can be learned about myself in the process of being creative. To that end, my hope is that this thesis, in spirit, can be similarly as useful as Klee's, not in broad scope, but rather in specificity.

40. Beuys, Joseph. *What is Art?: Conversation With Joseph Beuys*. West Sussex, United Kingdom: Clairview Books, 2012. ebook.

It is one thing to survey a text which attempts to capture the breadth of an artist's ideas on a subject matter as nebulous as art. It's altogether a different experience, in conjunction with reading that text, to encounter the artist's work and engage with it as a charmed observer. My first in-person exposure to Joseph Beuys' sculptural works was at Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin. Motivated to seek out the collection in response to reading the book *What is Art*, it was easier to better appreciate his ideas as captured on its pages.

The imposing nature of his sculptural works, in particular the installations "The End of the 20th Century (1983-5)" and "Tallow (1977)," instilled in me a sense of texture and weightiness despite not being permitted to touch or interact with the pieces, except to walk around and observe them. (see: Verse 8) The experience on the whole was haunting for that fact alone—it is almost cruel, in my mind, to not permit gallery goers to tactilely engage with art that begs to be touched or even balanced upon, similar to how a boy might climb a felled tree in the woods.

Of course, I understand why touching his pieces as mentioned above is not permissible. I don't particularly want observers touching my paintings, or art I create unless there is an interactive aspect to them. Again, in my mind bringing to the fore the issue of what is art versus what is design per my practice, and how the two might better merge in the future. But it also speaks to the uncomfortable feeling I experienced in both interacting with Beuys ideas as captured in the book, and as conveyed through my experience walking around and observing, at an enforced distance, his sculptural works at Hamburger Bahnhof.

VERSE 8

*Why am I here:
To look at art; eight euros
Really?*

*Why am I here:
To buy a book—to read
Really?*

*Why am I here
To watch the rain fall, and people scramble
Really?*

*Why am I here
To see art; to ponder art
Really?*

Why am I here ...

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Beuys thinking is so readily accessible, it almost feels tangible, or as if I am able to, at least mentally, touch if not feel the texture of his ideas. Why then can I not touch his actual art and experience the textures of the materials used in thier construction? In that sense then, I came to the realization that through my documentation I would necessarily have to convey, in measure, the mental and physical nature of what I am doing—to capture, or outline my methods and methodology in such a manner as to make them accessible, while also finding ways to allow the reader to—figuratively—mentally experience the texture of my ideas.

In contrast to Beuys sculptures in Hamburger Bahnhof, there are sculptural works by other artists that allow for and that are situated such that observers can tactilely engage with them. Notable to my personal experience, once located outside the north east corner of the Art Gallery of Ontario, but now situated in a park behind the gallery, is Henry Moore's sculpture: Large Two Forms. It is a favorite work of art, passersby not only touch, but climb on top of. Additionally, having visited the Goodnight Museum Park at the North Carolina Museum of Art, it is a wonder to walk through the Gyre rings by Thomas Sayre, among many other large sculptures, set out over several acres of land.

Pursuant to my thoughts above, in Section Four, I will begin to highlight and speak about the early works of art I created, and which are directedly related to my research efforts. As well, in Section Five, I will also address how my methodology and practice-led research has compelled my practice to venture into arenas of art-making that marry my fine art proclivities with the technology intrinsic to the design disciplines I am engaged in daily as a vocationally situated professor.

Also, in a very abstract—if not simple sense, I feel it is important to remind the reader that my thesis documentation addresses issues of tactility. Throughout this document, at various points in the text and as indicated in the Preamble, the reader is invited to leave the words on this page and engage with an actual book, to pick it up and flip it's pages. As well, the reader is frequently prompted to visit www.stanzaic.com in order to tactilely engage—albeit via a trackpad, mouse, or touchscreen

VERSE 9

Am I falling

Falling in line

Falling outside of time

Time outside lines

Drawing breath

Drawing new lines

Sketching, dreaming and making ...

One Believe I know what I am doing.

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—with visual (and otherwise) articulations of concepts and ideas prevalent in my PhD research. (see: Verse 9)

In circling back to Beuys, it is clear his ideas on art, as discussed in the book *What is Art*, in concert with the firsthand experience of walking among his sculptures had a profound effect on me. Though I am not a sculptor, I do, especially per the pedagogical aspects of my practice, sculpt user experiences, again, helping me further dismantle the division, or distinction between the art and design aspects of my practice.

Roughly 2200 Steps

At this stage of the document it is prudent to step outside the narrative flow, examine my walking method⁴¹ and offer an account of my thinking while scrutinizing its full formulation and articulation. As indicated in the previous section I had begun to recognize the method as nascent methodology. Simultaneous with and subsequent to my preliminary walking outings, a variety of sub-methods began to emerge. Manifestly, each of these sub-methods, derivative of multiple walking experimentations, contributed to a number of important research related contemplations and insights. Thus, in preparation for the full distillation of my findings in the concluding section of this document, each of these physical and artistic undertakings should be analyzed. Not as distinct actions, but as a set of triangulating methods in support of the focus of my research.

To start the analysis then, the first task is to identify the walking method as primary. In turn, at least as it can be articulated up to this point, the method can be broken down in the following series of deliberate and sequentially ordered steps:

1. Spontaneously engage in a walk, preferably in the conservation area near my home, or similarly untamed setting, but not exclusively, dependent upon circumstances.
2. Put the smart phone in airplane mode, followed immediately by fetching the pedometer, resetting the counter to zero, and clipping it to a waist band, or a pocket at my hip—each act, serving as a choreographed physical routine, functioning as a prompt to signify a deliberate, research focused walk was commencing.
3. Engage in a deliberate pause, focusing on my breathing, augmenting the effect by pirouetting in place three-hundred-and-sixty degrees, with my eyes closed—the pirouetting performance serving as a cognitive prompt, preparing my mind for the reflective totality of the walk.
4. When walking on a neighbourhood sidewalk, or on an indoor pathway where myriad distractions are prevalent, deliberately bounce a bouncy ball, with the intent to establish a walking rhythm and to extend, or

41. “Adam Bateman’s Mormon Trail.” Staff, <https://catalystmagazine.net/adam-bateman-s-mormon-trail/>. Accessed June, 2016.

On the subject of walking and art there is an array of references that can be reviewed. It is pertinent here at this juncture to make mention of the diversity of societies, residencies, groups, and networks that compile lists of walking artists and that were surveyed throughout the course of my research. Similar to deliberations concerning long or extended durational walking practices discussed in Sections Two and Six respectively. Joining a society, or attempts aimed at attending a residency as a part of the research process were contemplated, but considered an ill fit. Timing and the commitment of limited resources were the primary factors guiding my decision making. But there was also a sense of loss as it relates to the intimate nature of what was happening as a result of developing the methodology.

The walking and invention of the sub-methods revealed the significance of autobiography to the research. But sharing more than is necessary with regards to my biographical sense of identity represents a quandary. How many times must I explain to a new person, in every new circumstance that not only am I a survivor of child-hood sexual abuse, but I am also a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, or Mormon? That is not a lament. I am certainly not ashamed of either aspect of my identity, but the prospects of doing so over and over can weigh on me.

In that context then, Adam Bateman’s performance of walking the Mormon Trail should be looked at first. Bateman, who is also a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints walked from Florence, Nebraska to the Salt Lake Valley. The journey took seventy-four days. Equipped with a modern-day handcart (a three wheeled running stroller) and accompanied by his dog, he used a “walkmeter to track his daily progress by satellite.” (Staff, catalystmagazine.net) In describing his

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re-establish the meditative effects associated with the pirouetting and attentive breathing performance.

5. Make voice memos on the smart phone, capturing creative and imaginative thinking engaged in and entertained during the walk.
6. Take photos of arresting scenes or interesting objects observed during a walk, when and where appropriately relevant to my research and resultant art-making.

At first glance, the walking method so ordered feels methodical, but not quite complete. There is a sense that a key element important to the method's overall potential effectiveness is missing. But before offering further analysis, it is important to note that greater explanation for the motivations and how the peculiarities of each action evolved will be addressed in Section Five. This is to ensure that in this section the systematic nature of the method as delineated above and absent the provocations behind their inception can be more carefully probed. For example, along with the sense that the method is incomplete, there is the question of not only why wear a pedometer, but also what is the potential value if any in recording the number of steps taken during a walk?

Correspondingly, and even more pressing it also seems prudent that any creative notion or idea generated in response to engagement in the walking method should exclusively be recorded using a smart phone. Pragmatically speaking, digital recordings are subject to deletion or obsolescence and can only be accessed so long as the device they are stored on is charged or plugged in to a power source. In light of these limitations, there is a need for another mechanism to be adopted. One that is consistent with the idea of spontaneity and by which valuable imaginative and creative ideas entertained during each walking outing can be sorted and clarified.

A study found in the online journal of Psychological Science titled *The Pen is Mightier Than the Keyboard* offers insight into arriving at a solution. The writers in their abstract assert: "In three studies, we found that students who took notes on laptops performed worse on conceptual questions than students who took notes longhand." (Mueller, Oppenheimer, Abstract)⁴³ These findings, if abstractly applied to my method, could be impactful in their simplicity. There is a potential demonstrable benefit if not a need to write

performance, Bateman declares:

"The idealization of past landscape travel and mythologies are built up from the nostalgia surrounding these heroic feats ... In my mind, demythologizing something isn't proving it false; it's more like recognizing how language functions in society. And so, in a way, demythologizing anything is also re-mythologizing it. It's adding a new truth."

(Bateman, *catalystmagazine.net*)

When you not only read about his personal trek, but survey the many photos shared on social media, there is a marked intimacy in the catalogue of his journey. An affinity that is very familiar to me; a longing to understand the origins and influences that affect one's identity, and an inherent sense of belonging that comes with that longing.

Though my research focus and walks produced by the invention of my walking method are not similar in execution to Adam Bateman's performance of walking the Mormon Trail, the meditations that motivated his actions overlap with mine. However, the risk in looking at his performance too closely as a comparator to mine, is that a tension could arise between each of our perspectives on our shared heritage. This tension could devolve into observations concerning each other's sensibilities and religiosity which would neither inform nor be helpful to my inquiry. Especially considering his performance was an overt expression related to his biographical sense of identity with a focus on mythologies and language, while my actions are connected to facilitating and enhancing my creative thinking that in turn revealed connections to my biographical sense of identity.

To a different degree the same could be said of my efforts when placed in context to the actions of many other artists.⁴² A tension naturally arises that while fascinating is not necessarily germane to a practice-led inquiry that is looking to advance knowledge about and within a practice. There is considerable tension to wrestle with as it relates to understanding how my methods triangulate. However, connections to other artists must be drawn so as to establish an awareness of the field to which my inquiry belongs.

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down and clarify my thoughts, as dictated into my smart phone. However, it had already been contemplated that the possibility of making detailed sketches, or doing longhand note writing and even making art immediately following a walk, in the context of a busy life, was not feasible. As a result, a simpler mechanism needed to be considered.

In another study published by the The History of Science Society, Staffan Müller-Wille and Isabelle Charmantier argue that “lists can be considered as genuine research technologies. They possess a potential to generate research problems of their own but also pose limitations to inquiries that can be overcome only by the use of new media.”

(Müller-Wille, Charmantier, Abstract)

The researchers based their contention on the careful examination of Carl Linnaeus’s reliance on lists

throughout his career as a botanist.

In particular, they state: “As instruments of structured synopsis, lists permeate the whole of Linnaeus’s work ... But lists would also become the main instrument for Linnaeus to explore territories of the unknown.” (Müller-Wille, Charmantier, p.744)⁴⁴

As manifest by the revelations now being contemplated in response to assigning a sequential order to the walking method, Müller-Wille and Charmantier’s observation that “the list was a handy means to present and preserve knowledge in a concise and structured yet open-ended manner,” (Müller-Wille, Charmantier, p.743) is intriguing. In fact, looking at my current and past journals and sketchbooks collected since my late teens, a propensity for capturing and

Thus, a look beyond the performance of Adam Bateman is merited. In conjunction with the ideas presented in the Primary Thread and in order to fulfill the declaration set out at the beginning of this segment of writing, below is a list of web sites visited that touch on the array of references reviewed:

42. “Walking. The creative and mindful space between one step and another.” Herman Bashiron Mendolicchio, <https://walkingart.interartive.org/2018/12/hbm-walking>. Accessed May, 2019.

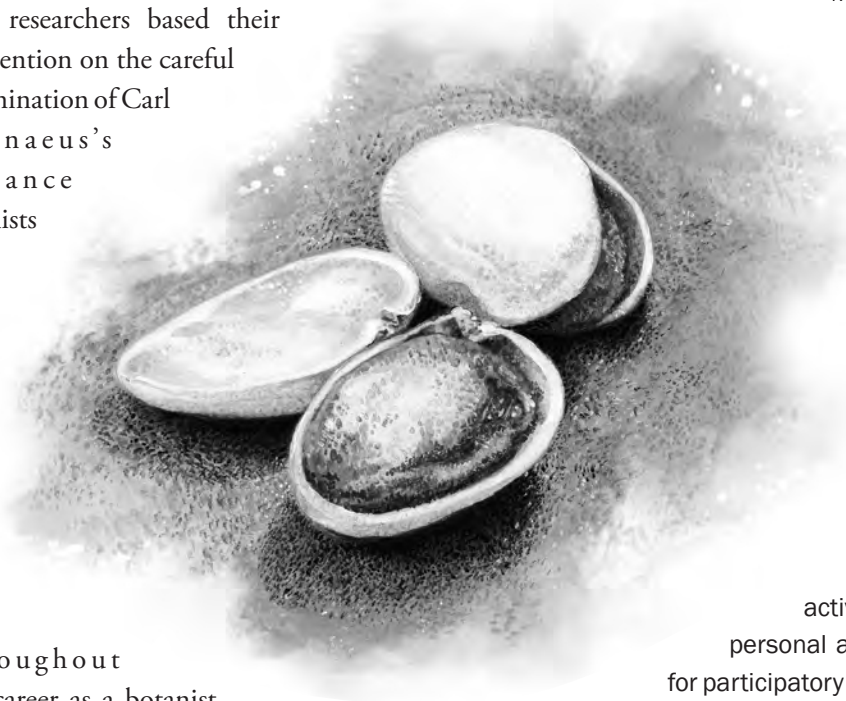
Interartive offers a fascinating compilation of walking artists and walking as art. On the site, an article written by Herman Bashiron

Mendolicchio provides a summary of walking and its relationship to creativity and art-making. In the article he declares:

“There are multiple dimensions of walking art experiences: from collective walking practices and local exploration, to spiritual walks in search of the self; from the political use of walking, to the introduction of technology; from a poetical subtle act, to environmental activism; from the solitary and personal action, to its function as a tool for participatory practices; from its employment as a methodology, to its understanding as an attitude.” (Mendolicchio, walkingart.interartive.org)

It is a salient observation that provides a good backdrop against which the following list of sites visited can be offered without further commentary:

- <http://www.wildfjords.com>
- <https://walkinglab.org/artists-in-residence/>
- <https://www.arc-artistresidency.ch/en/home>
- <https://www.inbetweentime.co.uk/whats-on/acts-of-walking/>
- <http://www.walkingartistsnetwork.org>
- <https://www.talkingwalking.net/about-talking->



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describing my creative thinking as detailed lists is evident. A demonstrable reliance on list-making is clearly visible in my earliest artistic research practices. Incorporating it into the method was likely inevitable. However, it was a revelation of sorts to view this propensity, or long-standing aspect of my personal practice in this context.

As a result of my desire to render the walking method comprehensive, and speaking back to Section One where it is stated my pursuit of a PhD was in part to understand “why I do what I do as an artist—to in effect explain my behaviour,” the revelation is exciting. List-making helps to answer, again as stated in Section One, how and perhaps even why “I capriciously jump from one compelling notion to another, seemingly at random.” The lists found on the pages of my sketchbooks and journals mirror the intuitive list-making inherent in my thinking process. Additionally, because of the expediency with which lists can be made, the desirous spontaneity of my actions can be sustained. This allows for ideas captured in the dictations made on my smart phone to be quickly logged, sorted and clarified. Thus, two new steps can be added to the six listed above:

7. Upon returning to the starting point of the walk, record the number of steps taken and in what circumstances, i.e. along a feral path, city sidewalk, or indoor pathway.

8. Promptly review the voice memos and jot down the important points in list form, with the intent to refer back to the jot notes (lists and short paragraphs) at a later time when needed or when appropriate to art-making, in the context of my practice.

The recording of steps taken and jot note making lend a sense of completeness to the method. The addition of these two actions allay fears that even seemingly insignificant creative and imaginative ideas entertained during any particular walk will not be lost or forgotten. Additionally, any trepidation experienced concerning the need to immediately get into the studio to make art in response to inspiration had during an excursion is eliminated. In the context of a busy life-style, creative concepts and notions could be readdressed at times more amenable to my schedule and consistent with my customary art-making practices. The urgency, or excitement of bathing in a rain shower of creative ideas so to speak, could be delayed for a

walking/5-year-walking-forecast/deirdre-heddon-walking-5-years-from-now/

- <https://walkinglibraryproject.wordpress.com/about-us/>
- <https://www.museumofwalking.org.uk>

43. Mueller, Pam A, Oppenheimer, Daniel M. *The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard. Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking. Psychological Science, Vol.25, Issue 6, 2014, pp. 1159-1168.*

The question of whether or not it was beneficial, let alone feasible to sit down and meticulously record my ideas truly worried me. It is not that I was unwilling. As stated in the Primary Thread, throughout my life I have been an avid journal writer—albeit my manner of journal writing can be considered unconventional. Rarely do I record a date to go along with a specific entry. Nor do I typically write about current events in an autobiographical sense. Instead, I prefer writing poetry and recording my thoughts as a type of commentary on life. But this long-standing and particular manner of recording my thoughts struck me as potentially counter-productive. Surveying Mueller and Oppenheimer’s article allowed me to carefully reconsider how to better align my typical method of journaling with my newly formulated, imaginative and creative thinking boosting methodology.

Upon careful examination of my journals, going back to my early teens, along with the poetry and commentary it was clear I was also very fond of making lists. It is interesting looking back on old lists and struggling to remember fully what they were referencing. Clearly, if I was going to add a hand-written aspect to the method, making lists was the best answer that could allow for the ideas produced by my walking to be recorded. However, I felt the need to better understand the potential usefulness of list-making from a theoretical perspective.

44. Müller-Wille, Staffan & Charmantier, Isabelle. *Lists as Research Technologies. Isis; an international review devoted to the history of science and its cultural influences 103.4 (2012): 743–752. Print.*

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short season.

As well, though the recording of the number of steps could seem perfunctory, upon experimenting with long and short walks in a variety of circumstances, it became clear there was an optimal number of steps where the method permitted me to initiate and consistently reproduce creative states of consciousness. Somewhere between 1500 – 3000 steps represent the optimal range within which an excursion can truly function as an in-the-moment exercise. It is between that range of steps that corporeally sweat on my brow and in the small of my back becomes recognizable. My hips noticeably relax and seem to open up, allowing for a more natural and fluid walking gait. (see: Verse 10) With each step the whole weight of my body can be felt landing on the earth, not with a thud but deliberately, and in a manner that makes it possible for me to notice my whole person (body, mind and spirit) in motion.

Cognitively, while engaged in a walk within this step range my mind is engrossed in a myriad of research and practice related thoughts as it catches up to where my body has traveled, before moving beyond a survey of the actual space by my physical senses. Fascinatingly, there is the sensation that both my body and mind are in motion. Not traveling separate of the other, say in separate directions, but rather in tandem though not necessarily in synch because the body appears to be pulling the mind along with the intent to ensure that both aspects of my being land at the same place; onto a perceptual and mental plane of awareness that can accurately be described as existing within but outside of myself.

Ultimately, ideas concerning perception will be explored further in the next section. Remaining consistent with the aim of this section, the method formalized as the series of steps set out above allows each walk taken to function as a prolonged instance of meditation. Not with the aim of allowing myself to reflect on the literal visual and auditory stimuli of any particular setting, but rather to tempt my whole person to climb into and explore a creative state of consciousness, where new ideas could be allotted space to germinate, while allowing for older notions and concepts to resurface and be readdressed within this new method driven, creative practice enhancing context.

In follow-up to my thoughts expressed above, I began to investigate how my list-making propensities could benefit my methodology. As indicated in the Primary Thread, lists offered me a means to truly codify my creative ideas gleaned while walking, and in turn permitted me to see links or common narrative threads between one walking outing and another. The simple act of immediately sitting and writing down my thoughts recorded as dictations and then translated into lists solidified the method.

Referencing anthropologist Jack Goody, Staffan Muller and Isabell Charmantier declare: “a list has a geometry and creates space of its own.” They go on to explain, again citing Goody’s ideas, that lists, despite having a beginning and end can be read in any direction and visually establish a defined area on a page with distinct boundaries and edges. In my estimation as a designer, the space a list occupies in a layout is distinct from the space established by a paragraph or other element. Explained differently, lists are essential to good web design.

Often set to display as a block element, a list can be used to define a dominant hierarchal area that is not impacted by other elements on a web page. “A block-level element always starts on a new line and takes up the full width available.” (https://www.w3schools.com/html/html_blocks.asp) Lists, in a visual sense stand out and facilitate the comprehension of a modern reader more accustomed to scanning documents both digital and printed as opposed to reading them line by line.

Why this is important to my research is not readily apparent. But as the culminating act of my walking method, list-making in my jot journals allowed me to re-establish on paper, in an immediate physical sense, the conceptual spaces I was walking, climbing into and exploring on my outings. Those spaces, or as I have labelled them in the Primary Thread ‘Environs,’ will be discussed in greater detail under the heading, Of Markers and Environs in this section. Discussed here, and per Muller and Charmantier, my lists function “not [as] stable objects of contemplation,” but rather as objects that “invite manipulation through reordering” producing a “dialectical effect.” As “permutations” list-making acts as an invaluable “tool for organizing

VERSE IO

*You can really feel it when your hips start to swivel
And your body glides across the earth
Mind wandering, but not lost
It is found amid daydreams and notions
With an ocean of a difference between the two
Whether still, tranquil or rhythmmed
by wave upon wave
Of thought and the back and forth
of inner conversation
In an unknown known space,
where you've walked
Aware of each step, upon step, upon step;
A mere stone's throw away
From the tedium of the every-day.*

Of Markers and Environs

With the walking method set as a series of formalized steps, a regular walking regime was initiated. No walk in particular was planned. The walks happened spontaneously and regularly as had been imagined. Along with every step taken, transcripts of the jot notes made following every walk engaged in as a part of the research process are recorded in Section Five. It should also be noted that attempts were made to find resources against which such a regime of walking could be compared and contrasted. The challenge being that references where artists were as prescriptive in their application of walking and with aims similar to my own were hard to uncover. Regardless, two references in particular can be found in the Secondary Thread. Though not similar in focus, in spirit the walking explorations of Claire Hind, Claire Qualmann⁴⁵ and Ernesto Pujó⁴⁶ can be considered so as to provide greater context to my efforts. But again, remaining consistent with the aim of this section it is important here in the Primary Thread to look closer into the sub-methods that emerged subsequent or simultaneous to the walking method.

At first subconsciously, but then reflectively, and in particular on walks into and out of the conservation area, my mind began to set markers along my path. In pulling back and thinking about the idea of triangulation, the markers serve to establish a boundary or border wherein my thinking can safely wander outside of but not beyond the purview of my mind's eye as my body moves about in an actual physical space. The markers effectively help me plot out a kind of causal map, or conceptual blueprint⁴⁷ that allows for the space to be revisited with consistency. Resulting in a representativeness, or a return to compelling creative ideas and concepts again and again as can be read in the jot notes, especially as I remain disciplined in following the steps of the walking method as outlined. In that way then, the sub-method was reinforcing the effectiveness of the principle method.

The first notable marker designated during these walks was an old fence post at the corner of the field abutting the conservation area. The second was a small felled pine tree, spied alongside the typical path my walking followed and the third was the noticeable growth pattern of the trees, each aligned in rows creating a navigable natural pathway

the acquisition of knowledge" (Müller-Wille, Charmantier, p.744) or in my case, my imaginative and creative ideas and conceptions that ultimately result in the creation of works of art.

45. Qualmann, Clare & Hind, Claire. *Ways to Wander*. Axminster, England: Triarchy Press, 2015.

There is a discernable playfulness in the words of Claire Hind and Clare Qualmann that should not be mistaken for superficiality. Walking, or specifically their prescribed ways to wander are an exercise in careful introspective contemplation. And that is where the overlap to my walking method begins, but also where it begins to end. In one instant, at the opening of the book Claire Hind in a letter addressed to Clare Qualmann declares: "walking is both a controlled, limited and rule-based activity and a free, spontaneous and improvised experience." (Qualman & Hind, loc.104) But she then clarifies her insight by making references to other texts, even crediting them for the inception of her actions in this book. What starts as an important and distinct insight is diminished in my estimation by placing her ideas in contexts where the link between walking and creativity is discussed primarily in abstract.

I want to understand Clare and Claire, and the earnest "Ludus (serious play) and Paidia (free play)" (Qualman & Hind, loc.113) they propose in their text. I also understand the need to contextualize their ideas and actions, but feel the appeal to other texts weakens their insights. There is deep personal meaning behind their wandering activities, a few of which they attribute to becoming new mothers, and bringing their children along as part of their exercises. But at times there is an incompleteness of thought in the text. For example, in chapter three they write: "for years I have used the metaphor for wandering to help explain how I understand the central creative process I believe to be at the heart of design." (Qualman & Hind, loc.117) And though they continue to expand upon wandering as metaphor, a more precise explanation of what exactly the authors mean remains elusive.

In contrast, though my use of the poem *Rain* is

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within which it was easy to meander. (see: fig.12) Wanting to duplicate this phenomenon outside of the conservation area and along the typical sidewalk path used when walking in my neighbourhood, the first marker established was a small stone wall edging a neighbour's front lawn. The second, a tree seemingly growing out from under a large boulder in a small wooded patch between homes, cut through while making a loop into a public park and back to my neighbourhood streets. The third, the crest of a small hill of the paved driveway leading in and out of the park from a small parking lot.

Additionally, when walking in the hallways on my campus, it was equally easy to set markers, such as a particular floor to ceiling column, conspicuous doorway, or stretch of hallway. Beyond my regular walking method pathways, within immediate proximity to my home, my experimentations with the method included setting markers while walking various pathways in distant locations. When I traveled up north at our summer cottage property for example, the markers set along a groomed rail trail path I walked, included a peculiar tree, a non-recreational motorized vehicle gate barrier, and an isolated stretch of trail bordered by thick bush on one side and the lake shoreline on the other.

Over the course of four years, experimentation with the method occurred in even more exotic locations. During a weekend visit with my parents in Utah, I utilized the method with markers being set, while hiking in the foothills and mountains overlooking my childhood home of Salt Lake City. At opportune times, throughout the course of my research residencies in Germany, I utilized the method and marker setting on the streets of Berlin, and during a weekend jaunt to Basel, Switzerland. As well, during a planned three-day layover in Paris, a couple of highly memorable walks, with markers being set, concluded with me settling in at the medieval gardens at the Musée de Cluny. Seated there, the entirety of my efforts, not in parts but as a sum of a whole was within my purview:

Mesmerised by dozens of sparrows, fluttering about in the garden, my contemplations turned to how my method had begun to constitute a comprehensive methodology—not just in terms of formalized steps governing

used as metaphor in a similar sense, my aim is for my explanations to not be so elusive. The specific steps outlined for my method are intended not as recommendations, but as a calculated means by which a specific mechanism can be activated in order to initiate and repetitively gain access to creative states of consciousness. This is the reason for the systemization of the walking method and in turn recognizing and formalizing the pattern of setting markers, regardless of the geographic location of a path taken. Plainly, the two methods work in tandem in an effort to be deliberate in my aim to make sense of the seeming randomness of creative ideas falling on me like drops of rain.

This pointed emphasis on repetitiveness, and establishing consistent patterns of doing, is more significant than what is indicated by Hind and Qualmann—or for that matter than can be found in other sources I have investigated with the exception of the report offered by researchers Marily Oppezzo and Daniel L. Schwartz. But as stated in the Primary Thread, in spirit, there are similarities between Hind and Qualmann's actions and my own. Reading their text, it is possible to come away with a sense of reverence inherent in their prescribed performative wandering that often includes precise descriptions and specified steps to follow. As well the assertiveness of voice they employ at times in their writing is reminiscent of my own.

Again, this raises the question of my actions representing a duplication of other actions. Clearly, my research efforts do not emulate those of Hind and Qualmann or vice versa. Not because their actions are not compelling or relevant, but because their actions are distinct, being born of unique research related circumstances and presented in terms of walking as art. Whereas my actions are distinct due to my own research related circumstances, compelled in no small part by my distinct cultural background, along with the fact my intent is to not position my walking as art. Thus, our two sets of circumstances not being the same in intent, require that each of our actions could be considered potential refinements on the other but only in retrospect.

Looking deeper into the other sub-methods that evolved as a result of the systemization of my

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the commencement and completion of a method focused walk, but starting with the significance of the marker setting. Seated there, taking in the scene, relaxed and at ease, I was able to determine the significance of the markers was to establish an *Environs*: a conceptual, simulated cognitive space, anchored to an actual locality within which my body and mind could, in concert, or independent of one another, wander to and linger for an indiscriminate period of time just as an architect had planned out the boundaries of this garden within which I had situated myself.

Per my initial abstract, the creative states of consciousness I had been striving to initiate via “corporeal engagement, through impromptu physical activities” had successfully evolved into cultivated and delineated cognitive spaces, linked to actual environments that were easy to find, climb into and explore both physically and figuratively. Between bites of a Nutella and banana filled crepe, purchased along Boulevard Paris St. Germaine, one of my chosen markers in Paris, I was able to surmise that the more regimented the walking became, with the help of the marker-setting and while maintaining the spontaneous prompting behind each walk, the more readily I could return to and reengage with creative ideas and concepts that resonated with me.

Enthralled by the mass of sparrows in the garden and the orchestrated chaos of their flight from one patch of shrubs to another, I began compiling a list in my larger sketch journal of the art produced as a result of my many walks. Invariably, the list started with the *Quakies* painting, which allowed me to reflect on how I had recaptured a measure of what inspired its inception and creation. My ability to effectively return

walking method can reinforce this idea of distinctness. There is a part of me that read through Hind and Qualmann’s text hoping to uncover a similar intent and perhaps even recognize the invention of sub-methods as a result of their actions. It is there, but is not overt. And perhaps that is where, at this juncture of the text, a little caution on my part needs to be exercised.

There is an innate need for me to be precise and almost narrow in describing my methods as a research methodology, and to draw connections between the cultural heritage and past practice related factors that influenced my decision-making. Yet, there is also a need for me to own my actions with the same understated composure that permeates Hind and Qualmann’s writing. My research methodology evolved from within me, but it is not unique, except where it represents an additional voice added to the chorus of voices that extol walking as integral to understanding one’s own creative capacity. And that is enough.

46. Pujol, Ernesto. *Walking Art Practice, Reflections on Socially Engaged Paths*. Axminster, England: Triarchy Press, 2018.

“We walk. No one taught us how. We taught ourselves, while adults watched in awe, holding our hands, trying to protect us from bump, fall, and hurt. However, for most of us, that early childhood experience is beyond recall.” But is it? In all sincerity, it is not beyond my recollection. At least in terms of small instances of remembrance that hold considerable sway and that are both haunting and sublime. Nothing from my childhood seems so far off as to be considered beyond the reach of my power to recall. There is a sense of ownership over those instances, or memories that is important to contemplate. Especially in the larger sense of owning one’s choices, actions and even lack of choice.

In his text, *Walking Art Practice*, Ernesto Pujol heartedly embraces notions of ownership: “I walk neither as a needy body, nor as a utopian thinker. I walk as one with myself. My self is finally unified by the walk. Brain and body become mind. And in becoming mind, I am mindful; I walk mindfully.”

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to the ideas and motivations that birthed it had spurred the creation of a larger companion painting titled: *Hobble Creek*, identical in aesthetic feel and tone. After its completion, directly related to the two larger works, a smaller, more illustrative in style painting was started that depicts a dead sparrow.

All three paintings were laid out and framed by a carefully delineated border in the spirit of intimating to a potential viewer that there is something more to be said about each of them, both individually and collectively. Subsequently, two poems were written inspired by the scenes depicted in the first two large paintings. In combination with the poems, planned performative actions designed to be captured as video vignettes were conceptualized to theoretically convey meditations entertained as stirred by the reveries they induced. In response to the third painting, the outline for a short autobiographical story from my childhood was crafted, leading to two more short story outlines being drafted, which can be directly associated with the two larger paintings.

Though, not yet complete, the ongoing works collectively represent a comprehensive constructed vision of my past, punctuated by underlying, existentialist ruminations concerning the authenticity of not only those lived experiences, but a life-time of creating art, with which I seem to have been wrestling in my mind. Clearly, as I sat there considering the scenes in each of the large paintings being depicted and their consequent, performative or literary iterations, it was apparent the works were derivative of my MFA thesis work, concluded more than four years earlier. The primary mechanism by which I was now better able to comprehend the entirety of my efforts was not the walk

(Pujol, loc.133) There is little effort in Pujol's text to mask his desire to both situate himself within the spaces he walks and to "strive to understand what it is that [he does]." (Pujol, loc.117) It is a voice that echoes my own. But he also equivocates. While Pujol owns his choices, actions and even his sense of not having a choice, he declares: "Walking belongs to everyone. I do not own walking. No one artist owns walking," (Pujol, loc.154) which strikes me as sincere but misleading. It is understood that Pujol is suggesting no one artist can exclusively claim walking as their own, but in order to understand why they do what they do, an artist who walks will have to claim ownership of their walking whether or not is an aspect of their research, practice, or it is their work of art.

My walking practice is not motivated by ideas surrounding social engagement in the same sense as Ernesto Pujol. But it would be disingenuous for me to suggest that at a certain point my desire to engage in walking as my primary method was not due in part to a perception that my cultural heritage and understanding of walking from that perspective had been ignored, or worse willfully omitted from contemporary sources. Begging the question, was choosing walking in fact a choice? This thesis is not positioned to answer that question, except to state: in concert with Pujol's manner of expression concerning his activism, if my methods as a whole methodology can be considered triangulated, it is because they belong to me; I own them and especially the deeper meaning in them. They are in their own way a recollection that is not beyond my grasp precisely because they can be spelled out and rendered systematic.

47. Gopnik, Alison. *The Philosophical Baby, What Children's Minds Tell Us About Truth, Love, and the Meaning of Life*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009.

My sense and use of the terms "causal maps," or "blueprints" derives from Alison Gopnik's theories as laid out in her book *The Philosophical Baby*. My aim is not to make a direct connection per se, but to draw upon Gopnik's conceptions abstractly wherein she asserts: "Children's brains construct a kind of unconscious causal map, an accurate

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I had just completed, but the totality of the walks I had engaged in up to that point, and in particular my peculiar practice of writing letters to individuals whose literary works I had been reading in conjunction with my methodological investigations. (See: Walking Index)

On The Aesthetic of Letter Writing

At a certain point during my walks, it became clear that once in an *Environs*, my mind was not merely sorting and determining the intrinsic value of one creative or imaginative concept over another. Playful and even petulant conversations were being had. These conversations are, as discussed in my survey of *The Reflective Practitioner* in the Secondary Thread of Section Three, the dialogue between the Sartrean image objects of my mind, and the actual art objects of my practice-led research.

Not stream-of-consciousness in nature, the dialogic interplay of the exchanges was conversational and yet introspectively evocative. Instinctively, and without provocation, I began to imagine these exchanges between myself and the imagined voices of a select few dead philosophers, thinkers, writers and artists, whose ideas had captivated and lingered with me. Performatively, I began to write letters to the historic figures followed by mailing them to my home address, care of my attention. (see: fig.13)

The first letter I wrote was to Jean Paul Sartre. I have little recollection of what was said after pen was put to paper. A portion of the letter, derived from multiple conversations I had had with Sartre over the course of several walks, was captured in a photograph taken so I could send evidence of my research activities to my advisors. Up to the point of writing this section of my thesis, I have yet to look at or reread what was written, as captured in the image. Nor have I opened that particular envelope, or any subsequent envelope, despite each being addressed to the subject of my disputations, care of my attention, and labeled with my home address.

picture of the way the world works. These causal maps are like the more familiar maps we, and even computerized systems ... use to represent space.” (Gopnik, p.39) Gopnik then goes on to explain, “one thing a map does is to let you make blueprints. A blue print looks like a map, but instead of making the blueprint match the world, we change the world to match the blueprint.” (Gopnik, p.39)

In expanding upon her ideas further, and as they relate to my walking method and resultant sub-methods, Gopnik argues that, “once we know how to make spatial maps [and related blueprints], we can also decide to make changes in the spatial layout of objects, including our own bodies ...” (Gopnik, p.39) On the surface, the relevance of Gopnik’s ideas to my research and development of a methodology are evident. But in particular, it is her assertion that based on humankind’s ability (an ability demonstrated since infancy) to make these spatial maps and blueprints, we are able to predict resulting and directly related consequences. In other words, in our minds we are able to position ourselves and imagine ways to shorten the distance, physically and cognitively between points relative to their arrangement in our mental blueprints. Per my methodology then, it is possible to establish a blue print for an *Environs* and situate myself both physically and cognitively within it.

Considering these ideas further, as it relates to my sub-methods beyond setting markers, Gopnik’s conceptions become even more interesting. In further explaining what she means by “causal maps,” Gopnik asserts: “Human beings also construct a different kind of map—a map of the complex causal relations among events.” (Gopnik, p.41) Gopnik then goes on to describe how “children seem to have a single coherent vitalist picture of the world. They think that eating causes you to have more energy, while illness drains you of that energy—that growth lets you dial up your causal force while death robs you of it.” (Gopnik, p.41) Per Gopnik, this allows children to do more than anticipate or predict direct consequences of choices and actions. It permits them to anticipate and predict what potentially can be considered counterfactual consequences. The example she then draws upon is, “trial and error learning ... allows

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The letter writing, in context to my research, was not about holding onto and better formulating certain thoughts or ideas, but rather, it was initiated as a means of letting go of notions and contemplations deemed not readily helpful. Perhaps someday I will open them and discover the letters are full of ideas that were in need of fermentation—which would be wholly consistent with the durational nature of my practice.

Academically speaking, while it could be prudent to suggest the letter writing was inspired by a notable exchange, say between artists Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock, or in some way by Walt Whitman's letter written for a dying soldier, or even the collections of letters written by Sylvia Plath, it was not. Nor was the act of writing letters and sealing them in custom designed, cut and folded envelopes inspired by mail or postal art in the tradition of Ray Johnson. Truly, writing the letters was an extemporaneous and artistically organic response to the myriad of thoughts rattling around in my brain.

My primary frame of reference for the aesthetic of crafting a handwritten note, folding and sealing it into a custom-made envelope, was the correspondence between myself and my wife, some twenty-five years ago. Over a nine-month period, living a continent apart, I wooed her through my words on paper and drawings made on ready-made envelopes. I suppose there was a need to similarly distance myself, but continue to woo certain ideas versus others, with a theoretically comparable emotional inattentive attentiveness. During my walking exercises, as I discriminated between the many creative and imaginative ideas related to my research, including those that were intrinsically interesting to me, certain notions struck me as needing

us to notice that aspirin makes our headaches go away," whereas having the ability to create causal maps and to draw causal relations between events allows for the "kind of theory making that lets us design a new drug such as sumatriptan to get rid of migraines." (Gopnik, p.42)

Not wanting to delve too deep into Gopnik's theories and venture too far from the focus of this thesis, it is prudent to pull back and contemplate on these ideas as they relate to my methodology. In retrospect, it was predictable that as a result of choosing walking as my primary method there would be an emphasis on setting markers. In turn, per Gopnik's theories, this permitted me to make spatial maps and construct a blueprint for an Environs. Within the Environs casual maps could be created and causal relations drawn between familiar and emotionally comforting creative ways of dealing with creative ideas. Such as writing letters as a means of conveying the mental dynamic of arguing with myself. Followed by making scrapings in an effort to hypothetically extend, or gain access to the story of a painting beyond the boundary of its edges. And collecting cast-offs and addressing the seeming duality of acting as artist researcher, and vocationally situated professor by creating digital Stanzas; Stanzas which in part represent a need to continually maintain the vocational skills important to my teaching practice while pursuing a PhD.

More analysis of the above ideas can be found in the Primary Thread and in the following Section Five. Succinctly addressed here, and again as it relates to notions of triangulating methods, the systemization of the walking method evidently led to the invention of interesting sub-methods. Each of which speak to—hearkening back to my sense for the use of the terms—my faith and its relation to the desire to walk, and inherent to walking the practice of setting markers. As well as the emotional ramifications inherent in the resulting sub-methods that were intuitively utilized, but it is premature to further consider these thoughts here. They require more space than is available in this portion of writing and ultimately will need to be better summarized in the concluding Section Six of this document.

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to be set aside or even cast off in favour of other ideas and conceptions more immediately pertinent to my efforts.

Considered, or explained differently, my walking, climbing into and exploring an Environs could be described as employing a memory system, in the spirit of Giordano Bruno's mnemonics. However, my system is in no way mathematical and neither is it as comprehensive in its invention. The notion that ideas, images, places and people, along with voices heard and responded to, by either acknowledging or pushing them aside with the intent to zero in on what was needed most pressing, is an apt description of how my system functions.

Per my methodology, the letter writing served as the essential mechanism by which I could cull my ideas, helping me to narrow my practice-led research focus. No one letter was written in response to any one particular walk. Their creation just happened, throughout the course of my walking exercises, especially at intervals when it was evident I needed to express myself and let go of a particular viewpoint, or strain of thinking that otherwise might be compelling, but was not germane to my proximate efforts.

The deliberate act of mailing the letters to myself with no guarantee they would return, and then storing them in my archives unopened when they did, allowed me to effectively censor myself. This led to my setting aside certain ideas in a deferential creative fashion, while simultaneously hanging onto and potentially returning to them at some future, indeterminate date.

On Scrapings and Cast-Offs

While working in my studio, and in response to notions of cast-off ideas, my attention became trained on the oft discarded items and materials which customarily

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accompany the art-making process. Coming from a background as both a fine art printmaker and graphic designer, the practice of pulling a proof in both the limestone-based lithographic and the commercial offset four-colour printing processes, had always enthralled me. There were times when an imperfect proof seemed to be the more valuable artifact of the laborious printing process, instead of the many carefully registered reproductions one could make by hand, or that could be produced by a large, mechanical printing press. Moreover, in the printmaking tradition, paper and ink is not often wasted.

As a consequence of the letter writing, coupled with a growing appreciation for my innate pragmatic proclivities, some unexpected art was created, leading to an understanding of how to triangulate my methods and arrive at a fully articulated methodology:

Stored in my cache of art-making materials were several nonstandard size offcut sheets of printmaking paper. Held onto for more than ten years, these offcuts had been set aside with the hope they could be reused at an opportune moment in the future. While learning to paint on a large scale, I was inexperienced at how to accurately measure out quantities of pigment required to build up my image by layering colours on the panel.

For my *Quakies* and *Hobble Creek* paintings, early on, there was often a lot of paint left over on my pallet. Naturally inclined to find a way to reuse it, I fetched the offcut sheets of paper and began scraping the paint onto them with a pallet knife. Lovely abstract patterns emerged that enticed me to more readily return to my paintings, just so I could, at the end of layering another colour, make more scrapes across the once forgotten substrate that had languished untouched for far too long.

In response to the scrapings, I introspectively explored my reluctance to waste paint, as well as my fixation on irregular, offcut pieces of paper. While cutting and folding my first couple of

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envelopes for my letters, I had inexplicably set aside a precious few scraps of paper that normally would have been thrown in the recycling bin. Contemplating on their appeal, I realized that my affinity for the scraps was not dissimilar to my affinity for the battered surfaces of my drafting tables, along with the remnants of spilled paint, or the dirt and grime of the floor in my studio. (see: fig.15)

What that meant exactly, wasn't readily apparent, not until I was able to surmise that these visual remnants of my art-making activities specific to my small studio served as markers of a different kind. Not only does the dirt, grime and spilled paint on the floors and the ragged surfaces of my work tables lend to the space an art studio aesthetic, they also act as visual signposts, helping to frame and delineate my studio as a type of permanently ensconced Environs in its own right.

Stanzas

In context to Bohm's notion of an implicate order, and especially the idea that 'everything enfolds everything' (as discussed in the Secondary Thread of Section One), I was able to recognize that corollaries could be drawn between my home studio space and the cognitive mental spaces my walking method was engendering. Each could be defined by markers, regardless of whether or not they were consciously or subconsciously set. But beyond pragmatic considerations, and more importantly, a dialogue had been established between the two types of spaces, or what I now commonly refer to as Environs.

Demonstrative of the dialogue was the fact that my method-based walking exercises had motivated mechanical art-making processes, giving form to select imaginative ideas or creative concepts chosen to be acted upon while in a creative state of consciousness. Subsequently, the mechanical art-making processes resulted in the initiation and

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execution of unplanned works of art that included letter writing and envelope making, scrapings, and the collection of and appreciation for odd, but appealing cast-off, art-making materials.

As a consequence of introspectively analyzing this dialogic interplay, I began to thoughtfully reconsider the relevance of notions and certain ideas I had been censoring through my letter writing and envelope making. It became clear that there were certain subtleties in those notions and ideas that lingered with me, even though I had a mechanism for setting them aside. Perhaps there was another way of expressing them in abstraction, as a type of appendix:

Provoked, the question of what I was letting go of with each letter I wrote gnawed at me. A nagging desire to reengage with aspects of certain stimulating contemplations I had sent away impelled me to act. Distinct from the whimsy that accompanied my scrapings, and with a creative capriciousness that similarly motivated the writing of letters and making of envelopes in the first place, I intuitively reinterpreted my petulant, poetic and rhythmic musings as digital Stanzas: interactive visual and textual works, metaphorical and narrative in nature, but characterized as equivocal due to a lack of any accompanying explanation.

Found, or experienced at www.stanzaic.com, each Stanza functions as its own independent expressive act, accessible via an interface structured as a list (as, ironically, all basic navigation systems across the world-wide-web are), in deference to my proclivity for list-making. There is no order to the Stanzas' unordered order, save the moment each one is published. As indicated in the description, read on the site's home page, they are a by-product of the refining, or editing processes, integral to comprehensive methodological research processes.

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In addition to creatively addressing the poetic incantations buried in my letter writing, creating the Stanzas afforded me an opportunity to engage in a type of technical experimental playfulness that had been lacking in my research. I was able to dabble in coding methods and structures, and the procedures required to capture and properly optimize multimedia assets for digital dissemination. These skills, not unlike the colour layering skills a novice painter must master, should be maintained and updated regularly—especially per my job requirements as a vocationally situated professor of the design disciplines. Working on the Stanzas pushed open the door wide on the potential of the methodology to truly benefit all aspects of my practice.

Coming to this realization wasn't immediate. Just as the *Quakies* painting was not instantly recognized as being directly derivative of my earliest research methodological efforts, the Stanzas were similarly dismissed as an indulgence. It was only after developing and publishing my first few Stanzas that I recognized the dialogic dynamic inherent in their creation. In a sense, they represented a means by which I could reconcile the demands of my pedagogical graphic, interactive and Web design related interests and doings with my research and art-making. Seen in that light, several complex, collaborative interactive multimedia projects initiated in my capacity as a vocational instructor and curriculum developer, concurrent with my PhD research efforts, were recognized as also being directly derivative of my methodology going back to my earliest experimentations.

Each project required that I enlist the assistance and input of a colleague with coding expertise superior to my own. This has led to a creatively rich and rewarding workplace atmosphere. Our goal is to use

the projects, or prototypes, as curriculum tools, by which students within the scope of the prototype parameters can design and develop content for the application. As well, the students can improve the app functionality, and in the process learn to apply principles of good user interface and user experience design. The most notable projects include:

- A touch screen application, developed to display illustrations, photography, animations and video via multiple projectors. Designed to function as an installation in a museum, or science centre, the content of the app is focused on providing educational information about the many varieties of moths and butterflies that can be found in Southern Ontario. (see: fig.16)
- A gesture-controlled application, developed to permit a user to use hand gestures triggering a sensor, by which multimedia content being projected on a large surface can be virtually manipulated. Designed to function as an installation in a museum, or science centre, the content of the app is focused on visually and textually illustrating a fable in a classical storybook aesthetic. As well, the app allows a user to play motion info-graphic videos that define what a fable is, and how fables can teach moral principles. (see: fig.16)
- An alternate input device application, developed to play a short film, broken into multiple parts shown simultaneously on three separate screens. Designed to function as an multi-media installation, geared to a variety of appropriate settings, the user is able to play, stop and rewind the movie by riding a stationary bike. (see: fig.16)

In response to developing the earliest versions of these projects, there was a very

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real need to establish a permanent space, wherein my colleague and I could regularly set up equipment and persistently test our prototypes. This can be extrapolated from my revelation concerning my home art studio space acting as an ensconced physical Environs in dialogue with the cognitive Environs my walking method had elicited. The potential that I could establish a third, similarly functioning Environs on my campus, greatly appealed to me. Seeking access to a number of rooms without success, I brazenly squatted in a small studio space that contained 3D printing equipment and that was sometimes used as an ad hoc storage space. (see: fig.16)

Requisitioning a key under dubious pretenses, I quickly set up shop organizing the room in order to accommodate our equipment. Cramped, but sufficient for our immediate needs this small studio space became the third Environs I had been envisioning. Configurable for a variety of purposes and experimentations, the newly named and now fully operational Interactive Studio helped promote a triangulating dialogue between my creative and imaginative thinking enhancing methodological exercises in my home studio-based art practices and my curriculum research and development activities.

FIG. 11



FIG. 12



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FIG. 13



FIG. 14



FIG. 15



FIG. 16



A Return to the Narrative Flow

The previous Section Four allowed for the narrative flow to be interrupted so that my walking method, which led to the development and articulation of a research methodology could be analyzed. In the context of that analysis, in this section (as indicated in Section Four), greater explanation for the motivations and how the peculiarities of each action, specifically per the walking method but also as it relates to the evolution of the sub-methods, can be addressed.

In returning to the narrative flow of the document here, a continuation of the ideas expressed at the conclusion of Section Three can be considered further. Specifically, my conceptualization surrounding notions of shiftiness related to the encounter with the bumblebee. In particular, “what it could mean, from a unique phenomenological and artistic perspective, to be creatively spontaneous, impulsive or impetuous, not in a dispassionate sense, but more pointedly what it could mean to discover, recognize and convey instances of creative caprice, within my artistic practice, that are guided by playful intuitiveness.”

At the close of my commentary in the Secondary Thread concerning the references cited in this section, a list of every research related walk taken, along with transcripts and notes made during those walks can be found. Correspondingly, a more comprehensive outline of the walking method than can be found in Section Four is included under the heading Walking Method Outline found at the close of this Primary Thread. Inclusion of these elements of writing in this section allow for the empirical evidence of my research to be revealed in preparation for the summation of ideas to be disclosed in the follow-up concluding Section Six. But before entertaining these notions, my desire to “convey how strong emotion can capriciously influence and determine which intrinsic interests compel me to create what otherwise might be considered intuitive works of art,” needs to thoughtfully contemplated.

On Inventing and Employing Walking as Method

Anthropologist Tim Ingold, in describing his first field work research experience in the opening chapter of his book *Making*, conveys the trepidation that comes with not

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Plateau and then jump—it's not easy and simultaneously not difficult. However, the perception that it is hard, or conversely straightforward and maybe even simple, is confounding—especially considering, in reality, it's just one more step forward.

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knowing how exactly to proceed with practical tasks. While struggling as a novice active participant in observing the culture of the Saami people of north-east Finland, Ingold expresses his confusion at his colleagues' lack of explicit instruction in helping him get started, as they give their advice in blunt terms: "Know for yourself."⁴⁸

The same question of how to know for myself, and more deliberately to proceed with employing walking as a part of my practice-led research, puzzled me. (see: Remark 8) Despite having enjoyed seminal walking (climbing and exploring) experiences, the question of where to start was paramount. My primary frame of reference came from my exposure to walking practices introduced to me in the MFA seminar mentioned in the Primary Thread of Section Two. That knowledge was augmented by my survey of walking artists and practitioners found in the same section, along with those discussed in Section Four. Nowhere did my surveys uncover a step-by-step guide on how to begin. Nonetheless, my encounter with the bumblebee, coinciding with my investigations into in-between spaces, meant I was emboldened by the revelation that walks close to home, specifically taking advantage to spontaneously wander in and out of the conservation area could produce the results I was looking for.

Returning to Tim Ingold's text, he comes to realize that there is wisdom in his colleagues' blunt instruction. Apparently, what his colleagues truly wanted him to understand was:

"... the only way one can really know things—that is, from the very inside of one's being—is through a process of self-discovery. To know things, you have to grow into them, and let them grow in you, so that they become a part of who you are." (Ingold, p.1)

Specifically, it was my desire to not only know things for myself, but in a manner consistent with my cultural and professional background, which as has been alluded to and outlined in Section One. This led to systematically developing processes to guide my actions. In the next paragraphs, those actions will be codified, while issues of cultural and professional influence will be addressed in the concluding section of this thesis.

Unexpectedly, two unconventional references had a profound effect on the invention and formalization of my methods, methodology and their application in my research

48. Ingold, Tim. *Making – Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*. Abingdon, Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2013. e-book.

Other than the obvious relevance of his thoughts as referenced in the Primary Thread, why cite in this thesis Tim Ingold, an anthropologist? The answer lies in his observations encapsulated in Chapter 7 of his book, titled *Bodies On The Run*. In the chapter, citing Carl Knappett, Ingold declares:

"The presumption is that in the making of [art objects], intentions initially framed within the mind of the artist are projected onto the material: thus, the intention is the cause, the artwork the effect. And the viewer, subsequently observing the work, is supposed to look through the work to the agency within and behind it." (Ingold, p.96)

Ingold's statement is convincing so long as it can be understood in context with his follow-up contention that, "humans do not possess agency; nor, for that matter, do non-humans. They are rather possessed by action." (Ingold, p.97) In other words, Ingold appears to sidestep the question of agency and focuses on action (or in his words form-giving), while also making distinctions between objects as active things. Though it is not possible for this thesis to fully unpack these aspects of his thinking, it is important to briefly point out their relevance, in particular, how they abstractly inform and preface an experience I will recount in Section Six concerning a blossoming bud on a magnolia tree. (See: fig.18, Section Six)

Ideally, Ingold's ideas may be best understood if viewed through an anthropological or archeological lens. Obviously, I am not able to approach his thoughts from either of those vantage points. However, a follow up statement to the ones above does point to how his ideas struck me as pertinent to my efforts as an artist researcher:

"Indeed the entire question of agency rests on a false premise. Assuming that persons are capable of acting because they possess an agency, the question was one of how

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process. In a moment of kismet, my mother-in-law, while cleaning out her basement, had selected a specific children's book, with particular sentimental value, as a gift for my young sons. It arrived at our home at an opportune time. *The Tree and Me*, by Michael Sage is a gently written and illustrated tome on the importance of developing a healthy sense-of-self and personal identity. In it, through a young boy named Eric, the author writes:

“Up where the big branches start, Eric had a secret place for figuring things out. He went there now. Something was puzzling him. He sat down and leaned back against the tree to think. I wish I could figure it out. I wish I could figure out which one is really me.” As the text continues, Eric ultimately comes to the realization that: “The tree is a lot of things, and so am I. But mainly, no matter what anyone else thinks, the tree is the tree—and I am me.” (Sage, no page numbers)⁴⁹

The parallels to my tree climbing ruminations, entertained in response to the felled tree experience with the Boy Scouts on the winter camp, are evident. Internalizing the message of the children's book in that context, it became clear that since that particular incident, while the next two successive and related experiences had accumulatively transformed my thinking on how a method could evolve and what could be accomplished, all of the deliberate inventing being done since that time, though interesting, had not allowed my identity as a multi-faceted artist, and novice practice-led researcher to emerge in a manner that was consistent with my modes of artistic expression.

With the children's book acting as a catalyst, my attention turned to a second unconventional but vital reference, which highlighted the absurdity of investing energy in exploring the development of a method or methodology at the expense of simply acting or doing and allowing practice-led activities to progress intuitively and naturally.

Fatigued by the many academic references I was engaged with and excited by what *The Tree and Me* offered me, one evening I found myself rummaging through our home library of books. After a few minutes, my attention fixated on our collection of Calvin and Hobbes comic strip anthologies by Bill Watterson.⁵⁰ Much of the storyline of the strips consists of the

objects in the vicinity of these persons could nevertheless ‘act back’, causing them to do what they otherwise might not.” (Ingold, p.96)

As stated, in the concluding Section Six of this document, I will recount the impact of my experience with a blossom on a magnolia tree, which occurred near the end of wrapping up my walking experimentations and shortly before beginning to write this document. In that experience, the naturally occurring object (blossoming bud) becomes an art object, or active thing that, in a certain manner, acts back on my thinking, helping me better articulate my research findings.

In continuation of notions on objects, things, agency and action, elsewhere in chapter 7, Ingold further explains his ideas and contentions through story telling. He recounts how he and his students conducted a particular experiment which involved making and flying kites. After summarizing the particulars of the kite making and flying activities, Ingold analyzes the experiment through the lens of Andrew Pickering's philosophy, which asserts that “back-and-forth engagements” between humans and the material world can be considered a “dance of agency.” (Ingold, p.98)

First, Ingold highlights the fact that the person running and the kite are connected by a string. This is important because it establishes that the runner is acting on the kite via the string. And though it may appear the kite, by struggling against the pull of the cord that connects them is possessed of agency, it is not. Rather, it intimates that there is an unaccounted for third party, which renders the dance of agency possible. The air, in and around the kite, though unseen is a third partner in the performance:

“Take away any one partner and the performance will fail. Even in the air, a kite will not fly without the flyer; even with a flyer, the kite will only fly in the air; even if the flyer is out in the air, there will be no flying without the kite.” (Ingold, p.98)

Though I would argue it is not necessarily true that the kite won't fly without a flyer (caught up in a strong wind, as any child who has flown kites knows, it will fly great distances) the thought exercise

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drawn character Calvin, walking, climbing and exploring the woods, presumably near his home, alongside and in conversation with his animate stuffed tiger Hobbes. I couldn't help but imagine parallels between my emerging walking method in the conservation area a stone's throw from my front door. My life-long proclivity for walking and talking to myself was akin to Calvin's (as authored and drawn by Bill Watterson) mature-beyond-his-years deliberations, punctuated by the dialogic interplay he shares with his fastidiously imagined, walking and talking stuffed tiger, acting as best friend and foil to his philosophical ramblings.

Thumbing through the pages of the compilation, *There's Treasure Everywhere*, a particular storyline grabbed my attention. Starting on page 50 of the book, an untitled start to a series of panels, with a narrative spanning multiple pages opens with Calvin seated at his bedroom desk. In the dialogue bubble above him, Calvin petitions his trusted feline companion: "I need some help with my homework, Hobbes." To which Hobbes inquires: "What's the assignment?" Calvin, in the next panel explains: "I'm supposed to write a paper that presents both sides of an issue and then defend one of the arguments."

As I am familiar with the character's personality (again, as authored by Watterson), it's clear that the dilemma for Calvin, is not in picking one particular point of view to defend, or in constructing an argument—it's the potential futility of the whole exercise. In the very next panel Hobbes asks Calvin: "What's your issue?" To which Calvin declares: "That's the problem. I can't think of anything to argue." As a reader wary of Calvin's comically styled petulant nature, it's easy to recognize you are being set up for the delivery of a punch line. Indeed, in the very next panel, Hobbes contends: "That's hard to believe ..." To which Calvin responds: "I'm always right and everybody else is always wrong! What's to argue about?!"

Tim Ingold has constructed above, born of his experimentations, is compelling. Again, this thesis is not capable of fully addressing his contentions with regards to how his thought exercise elucidates his ideas on what he calls, "the spectre of embodied agency." However, the conclusions he derived from his kite flying experiments got me thinking about my own research experimentations—specifically, how I could adapt his scenario as a type of metaphor for better understanding my own circumstances:

The immediate environments I was wandering into via my walking outings are, in a sense, the kite. Obviously, that then makes me the 'runner,' though I am not running. Additionally, my developing of a systematic walking method is the string connecting me (the runner not running but walking) to my immediate environments. But what is the air, or third partner in the performance—is it emotion?

Returning to his ideas expressed in the earlier quote concerning the presumption of intention, Ingold argues:

"... this scenario focuses on an arbitrary starting point (the image in the artist's mind) and an equally arbitrary end point (the allegedly finished work), while missing out all that goes on in between." He then goes on to declare: "The living work of art, however, is not an object but a thing, and the role of the artist is not to give effect to a preconceived idea but to follow the forces and flows of material that bring the work into being." (Ingold, p.96)

It is a curious way to frame the act of art-making, especially in light of my awareness that my practice is durational in nature. There are many works that I start and then leave unfinished and set aside for long periods of time. Again, for example, pointing to my *Rain* poem, now presented in book form as a part of this document (see: *Rain*, Section One), the poem is alive, and that liveness is embodied by my research, or at least in very simple terms, its liveness is embodied in the underlying questions that compel my inquiry, which figuratively is the same question asked in the poem: "If only very soon it would just ..."

This means that, to a certain degree, the rain poem is unfinished, placing me in agreement with

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It's an amusing rejoinder and strangely persuasive. In the sense that Calvin's indignation is easy to relate to—we all feel misunderstood, if not hard done by, or imposed upon at times by circumstances seemingly beyond our control. Philosophically, it was not hard to view Calvin's tone (again, as written by Bill Watterson) as Kierkegaardian.⁵¹ His oft vociferously declared subjectivity is transparent and easy to grasp. It's unabashedly rhetorical. While reading Calvin and Hobbes comic strips as a treatise on existentialist angst could be construed as flippant, the poignancy of the humor, and emphasis placed on the dilemma of human existence and personal agency is unmistakable; rendering the comic strip compelling and providing me something to laugh at and a needed release. While also inviting a different kind of shiftiness into my thinking: why had I let myself get tied up in knots over how to begin and formalize my walking method? It's ridiculous. Calvin would just get out and start walking, or would he? Intrigued by that thought, I read on ...

“Help me think of an issue to debate for this dumb paper,” Calvin continues in the first panel of the next strip. “Well, what issues do you care about?” Hobbes replies. “I don't care about issues. I've got better things to do than argue with every wrong-headed crackpot with an ignorant opinion! I'm a busy man.” Calvin's retort conveys self-awareness in the extreme. The unfiltered honesty of his follow-up comment compounds it: “I say, either agree with me or take a hike! I'm right, period! End of discussion!” This particular strip ends with an eye rolling Hobbes stating: “Um ... right.” And Calvin proclaiming: “There, see? Everybody's happy.”

At this point, Calvin's peevishness could grow tiresome. More ill-tempered banter could lead to the delivery of vapid one-liners. His wholesale dismissal of others' ideas is irrational, despite the fact his attitude is understandable, in the

Ingold when he states that: “to view a work is to join the artist as a fellow traveller, to look with it as it unfolds in the world ...” (Ingold, p.96) Followed by the assertion, “the vitality of the work of art, then, lies in its materials, and it is precisely because no work is ever truly ‘finished’.” (Ingold, p.96)

49. Sage, Michael. *The Tree and Me*. New York, Henry Z. Walck, 1970.

It is fortuitous how *The Tree and Me* was introduced to me and ended up informing my inquiry. It is a remarkable coincidence that my Mother-in-law happened upon this particular children's text while cleaning out her basement bookshelves and delivered it to my home at a time crucial in my research activities. She was and is not aware of my research focus and the potential impact of the book on my thinking. She was simply making a grandmotherly gift to her grandsons, as evidenced by her inscription inside the front cover. Found below a similar inscription to her two sons, from 1975. Her inscription to my two youngest sons reads: “March 16, 2014. To Oscar and Royal with Love, Grandma.”

In the text, a boy named Eric is both in conversation with himself and through his imagination with the tree he is climbing. Unexpectedly, Eric conceives the tree telling him: “See that bee buzzing around. He thinks I'm just a place for the sweet nectar he gets from my blossoms ...” (Sage, no page numbers) Not having read *The Tree and Me* prior to my experiences on the Scout winter hike, recounted in Section Two, or the encounter with a bumble bee as recounted in Section Three, I had to wonder on the synchronicity of ideas expressed.

Ultimately, the book is speaking about personal identity, and how one sees oneself in light of the way others potentially see them. Which, partly speaks to the division in my mind, with regards to my practice, spoken of in Section Three, but it also speaks to the cultural influences I have alluded to throughout this document and that will be discussed in greater detail, in the first segment of writing in concluding Section Six. And though I am not assigning divine intervention to the events that led to me reading *The Tree and Me*, it is an

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sense that there is a real quandary in being wrapped up in the maneuverings of others—their ideas and experiences—while neglecting one’s own gut instincts and inclinations. Fortunately, the narrative takes a turn towards the ridiculous, but with narrative aplomb. The next series of panels reveals the playful and capricious nature of Calvin. He stumbles upon an idea, which leads to an invention, designed to enhance his imaginative thinking and creative process capabilities. An invention that, ideally, will help him better address his essay writing dilemma—and ostensibly act as a metaphor for the invention of my methodological mechanics.

“What am I going to write about?” Calvin laments. “Hmm ... We’ll need to put on our thinking caps,” Hobbes proffers. To Which Calvin exclaims: “HEY! Thinking caps! That’s what we need! C’mon.” The next borderless panel, on the next page sees the two characters sprinting in the direction of what can only be construed as the necessary items, materials and tools required to construct a literal ‘thinking cap’ ... “This is a GREAT idea! Boy, where would I be without you?” Calvin gleefully comments. To which Hobbes wryly observes: “Conceivably, you might be working on your assignment.”

In the first panel of the follow-up strip we see Calvin sporting a colander on his head: “We’ll use this colander for the thinking cap! Its metal surface can conduct electrical brain impulses and reflect brain waves!” The successive panel shows Hobbes holding some string: “Next we’ll need to attach those input and output strings and a grounding string.” The strip continues with Hobbes asking: “A grounding string?” To which Calvin replies: “It’s like a lightning rod for brainstorming ... I want to keep my ideas grounded in reality.” “I think you’re too late,” Hobbes retorts, as he dutifully attaches the strings. The panel closes with Calvin surmising: “We’ll also need to build a transformer for the atomic cerebral Enhance-O-Tron ...” a cardboard box flipped upside down, equipped

interesting quirk occurrence for me to contemplate. Begging the question: Would I have stumbled upon the text regardless the confluence of events that brought it to me? Unlikely, considering it is obscure and out of print. Which then leads me to ask: how might my research have evolved, had it not been delivered to me when it was?

That’s hard to say, but I imagine my research activities would’ve followed a similar course regardless. Plainly though, the text was a welcome addition to my readings, and its introduction was timely. Therefore, it cannot be ignored as an important influence on my thinking.

50. Watterson, Bill. *There’s Treasure Everywhere: A Calvin and Hobbes Collection by Bill Watterson.* Kansas City, Missouri: Andrews McMeel Publishing LLC, 1996.

As illustrated by Bill Watterson, childhood offers a valuable vantage point from which to examine the issue of agency, emotion and the randomness of existence. Calvin and Hobbes is existential angst personified, through the eyes of a six year-old boy and his stuffed tiger, which comes to life only for him. Much of the narrative centers on the dilemma of existence preceding essence. Are we the sum of our choices; affected by the whims of other’s actions and the accidental nature of life? Or is the very nature of who we are, what we will become and ultimately our life’s work predetermined? (see: Remark 9)

It is no coincidence that I love these comics. After all, the main characters are named after a theologian and a philosopher respectively. In context to my thesis, engaging with the Calvin and Hobbes narrative was instrumental to my inventing methods and a methodology. One side of me (the faith sensitive side) is tempted to argue and ask how accidental is it that I first stumbled upon *The Tree and Me*, which in turn led me to this particular Calvin and Hobbes narrative? Of course, such supposition must then transform into a discussion about belief systems and how supplication of the divine works in that context. And truly it is hard to argue against Rob Pope’s assertion, read in the Secondary Thread of Section One, that an

REMARK 9

There are two types of intelligence in this world, intelligence that is aware and intelligence that is both aware and enlightened. Objectivity is merely subjectivity by another name.

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with Tinker-Toy spools and rods as receptors for the strings.

Harkening back to and adapting from the existential philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre, it could be argued that Calvin has fully engaged his “imaginative consciousness.” (see: Verse 11) He has rendered everyday household objects something consciously different than what they are ordinarily used for. The intent is to change the very nature of his experience with the mundane, by fabricating a device that would ideally render himself smarter and thus better able to conjure up creative, compelling ideas and to write a more convincing paper. It doesn’t work the way he intended.

In the next series of strips, Calvin’s invention swells his brain, creating an abnormally sized cranium. He tries to hide the deformation from his parents at the dinner table by wrapping his head in a towel. They don’t notice. The narrative then devolves into a metaphor for getting sidetracked, concluding with Calvin’s lamentations about frittering away his evening. He is never able to focus his attention on the convincing argument he was truly passionate about: the nature of carnivorous dinosaurs—were they opportunistic scavengers or effective predators?

In reference to my research, the thought occurred to me that this particular Calvin and Hobbes storyline was tempting me to introspectively contemplate the construction of my own thinking cap and cerebral enhance-o-tron. Similar to Calvin, the way I had initially been going about it was not working. In fact, my efforts had been distracting. However, the prospect that I could more effectively engage my imaginative consciousness in order to change the nature of my experiences within the environment of my immediate surroundings (namely the conservation area) excited me. There were colanders and cardboard boxes available to me, which could be reinterpreted as useful mechanisms, essential to a method, and

enlightened, modern view of creativity does not summarily preclude, but certainly is not dependent upon heavenly intercession.

Bluntly, I lack the space, or wherewithal to raise arguments for or against enlightenment as inspired by the divine. Instead, it is more pertinent to determine that there is a simpler explanation for why I was drawn to a children’s book and subsequently a collection of comic strips. The Tree and Me, and in particular the Calvin and Hobbes storyline I cite, represent catalysts to a profound shift in my thinking and doing because reading through the narrative provided me a much-needed escape from the heady ideas with which I was wrestling.

Simply, and subconsciously, having been familiar with the comic strips, I understood I might well find a story line in the compilation that invited me to step back and laugh at myself, or more precisely, to laugh at what I perceived were my research related predicaments. It is no mystery why, in a certain sense, like Calvin in the narrative, I was creating my own enhance-o-tron. In so doing I should find greater joy in the process. I am inventing something new and exciting, and quandaries, regardless of whether or not they are self-inflicted, are an important part of the process.

51. Kierkegaard, Soren. *Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs: a new translation by M. G. Piety*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Throughout my research process, I was able to employ existential phenomenology as a philosophical discipline to argue with during my research. Though briefly mentioned in relation to the influence of Calvin & Hobbes, Kierkegaard’s *Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs*, reads as a treatise on self-imposed existential suffering, was a particularly influential text. The notion of “repetition” as a rhetorical device illuminates the dichotomy between recollection and repetition:

“He who will only hope is cowardly. He who wants only to recollect is a voluptuary. But he who wills repetition, he is a man, and the most emphatically he has endeavored to understand what this means, the deeper he is a human

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VERSE I I

*There is no start to it, no flip of the switch. A
creative notion just is, because it always has
been—there, just below the surface waiting
to emerge.*

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designed to form the foundational basis for a larger methodology.

Recognizing this as another eureka moment, I set the book down and scrambled to find a journal, in which I had made detailed notes from my first PhD research training seminar. On one of its pages was sketched out, a simple diagram illustrating what I had been contemplating: a triangulation of methods, leading to a comprehensive methodology was the research model I should be striving for. In response, immediately upon setting the Calvin and Hobbes anthology aside, I shelved my deliberations on the maneuverings of others, and with renewed earnestness embraced my gut instincts and inclinations to just walk with renewed vigor and intentionality.

On The Merits of Spontaneity

My first series of walks in and out of the conservation area were highly spontaneous and unstructured. Learning from my encounter with the bumblebee, at a bare minimum I always brought my smart phone with me. Put in airplane mode and perceived as something other than a potential distraction, it served as a vital documentation tool. While the camera could be used to capture interesting scenes more significantly, my thoughts could immediately be recorded using a dictation app. This allowed for a successive narrative of ideas to build, connecting my thinking on a current walk with notions entertained on previous walks, and prescribing a focus for my contemplations on future outings.

Listening to the recordings, it was easy to identify a common thread which existed between prevailing ideas, that kept being repeated (see: www.stanzaic.com/9thstanza). In particular, my thoughts centered on themes vital to my overall thesis and its conceptual structural flow, while at the same time, almost obsessively, addressing my apprehension at the fact that no art work had yet been created, in what is supposed to be a practice-led research process. Leaning on my penchant for creating lists and mind maps, and while applying grounded theory analysis principles in my data collection, a cork board served as the backdrop upon

being. But he who does not grasp that life is repetition and that this is the beauty of life, has condemned himself and deserves nothing better than what will happen to him—death.”

(Kierkegaard, p.4)

In the introduction, the translator of the book posits that “repetition” can be construed as: “... epiphany that sometimes grants the old again, as new, and sometimes grants something radically new.” (M.G. Piety, Introduction) In response, I contend that granting the old again, as new, assigns too much influence to what can be construed as the old. Any radically new new is only coincidentally related to the old, and the radically new new came about, exclusively due to the circumstance wherein the epiphany took place.

That is not say, or to undermine, the influence of old ideas on new ideas. I am simply asserting that new ideas are not always attached to old ideas in the sense that one always begets the other. This is supported by Piety’s following assertion that: “repetition means getting our cognitive and moral bearings not through remembering [but] as a gift from the unknown ...” (M.G. Piety, Introduction)

The first section, or book Repetition is interspersed with poetry and reads like a short story: “After several days’ repetition of this, I became bitter, so tired of repetition that I decided to return home. I made no great discovery. Yet it was strange, because I had discovered that there was no such thing as repetition.” (Kierkegaard, p.38)

The section then evolves into a recounting of letters written between the narrator and a lovelorn young man. Concluding with an open letter to “the real reader of this book,” to which Keirkegaard pens the following: “The book will possibly provide a welcome occasion for an ordinary reviewer to demonstrate in detail that it is neither a comedy, tragedy, novel, epic, epigram, nor novella.” (Kierkegaard, p.77)

In the last section, or second book Philosophical Crumbs Keirkegaard relegates himself to the role of publisher for the author, Johannes Climacus, a favored pseudonym. The section opens with the thought: “Can an eternal consciousness have a historical point of departure; could such a thing be of more than historical interest; can one build

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which a visual map or diagram of my thinking could be laid out. (see: fig.1. Section One) Notably, lying apart from the key words identifying significant ideas, philosophies or concepts, was a lone sticky in the upper right that read, 'the art.'

In my journal, while attempting to establish connections between the visual map on the cork board and my smart phone dictations, my mind—teased by that outlying sticky—stumbled upon a realization.

At some point between my earliest research investigations and this stage of the process, a strong desire to paint on a large scale, had piqued my curiosity. As an illustrator, typically working on smaller, physical and digitally painted illustrations, the need, let alone the procedures for creating large scale physical compositions was reasonably foreign to me. Though tentative at first, my derivation into painting was marked by an adventurous playfulness that not only produced a work of art, but also led to important associations being made between my art-making and my efforts at walking as method:

Oddly, I felt compelled to justify the creation of my first ever large-scale painting by telling myself the reason for doing it was to craft a gift for my wife. She is prolific in remodeling our home: putting up drywall, tiling floors, installing lighting and even fixing the plumbing. Fully supportive of her efforts to redecorate our bedroom, I felt the one thing I could contribute, beyond brute labour, was to create an aesthetically pleasing work of art to hang on the wall above our bed. At least, in my mind, that was how I could justify spending a considerable amount of time in my studio, experimenting with familiar but unfamiliar painting techniques.

Despite the fact a large part of me felt guilty for indulging myself, in place of investing more energy in reading about philosophy, or theories on art as research. Taking the opportunity

an eternal happiness on historical knowledge?" (Kierkegaard, p.83) Climacus is a decidedly subjective voice presented in a series of small chapters. In particular in the first Propositio, the voice questions: "To what extent can the truth be taught?" (Kierkegaard, p.88)

Again, the poetry, storytelling, letter writing and overall dialogic interplay of Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs serves as a significant influence, specifically with regard to this thesis, as well as the secondary methods in my methodology to be outlined in the

next section. Beyond serving as a stylistic influence,

Kierkegaard's text

also invited me

to question: To

what extent

can the 'truths'

of my research,

found in this

documentation,

be shared and in

turn understood;

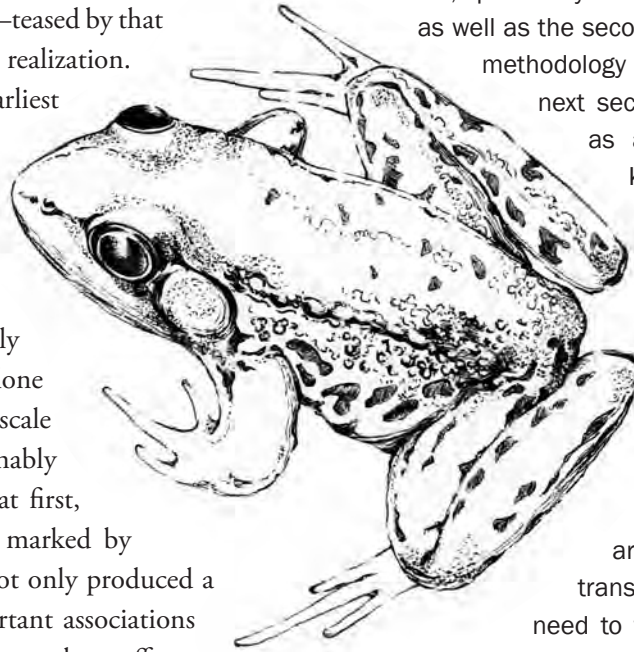
are such truths

transferable? If so, I will

need to think carefully about

how to thoughtfully spell them out in

my writings.



52. Noë, Alva. *Experience and Experiment in Art*. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 7 No. 8 - 9, 2000, pp. 123-35.

"The central thought of this paper is that art can make a needed contribution to the study of perceptual consciousness." (Noë, p.123) Noë, then goes on to declare, that "some artists' work can teach us about perceptual consciousness," (Noë, p.123) leaving me to ask, why only some? Obviously, it is self-evident to Noë, who further clarifies that the 'some' he is referring to are those works of art that "furnish us with the opportunity to have a special kind of reflective experience." (Noë, p.123) But even still, I have to wonder if all works of art, by their very nature, can elicit a special kind of reflective experience, and is it only a matter of personal taste that differentiates them?

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to act creatively and paint, in particular on a large scale, struck me as fundamental to maintaining my mental well-being. It was, in its deliberateness, a way to break free and seek relief from my contemplations on the whys and hows of walking, as they relate to artistic practice. Ironically, this desire to break free is wholly similar to my need to instinctively draw or paint as a means to ease my restlessness in moments of mental stagnation, while writing this the text of this document.

As a creative practitioner who strongly advocates relying on good reference material for any drawing or illustration, such as on-site sketching or using good quality photographs from which to draw, the painting just seemed to happen, whimsically, and absent my typical, ardently adhered to pre-production processes for laying out a composition. The panorama, though not representative of one specific setting, is an amalgamation of multiple pastoral scenes of remote, high mountain meadows, peppered with sagebrush under towering autumn tinged quaking aspens. (see: fig.17) It is an image permanently etched in my mind and is associated with very fond and powerful childhood memories. The underpainting and brush techniques I employed to convey my imaginative impressions were loosely derived from tighter more stylistic illustrative techniques of which I was familiar. But honestly, the deftness of my hand in rendering the image in an impressionistic style surprised me.

Aiding the task of capturing the ruggedness of the scene, is the plywood panel that serves as the substrate upon which it is painted. Battered, worn and weathered, interestingly it had been removed from the floor of a good friend's trailer, used to carry the gear of many Boy Scouts to and from a variety of camp sites over many years. I personally replaced the panel a couple of months following the Scout winter camp adventure shared in Section Two, as a way to say "thank you" to that friend for his generosity.

To wit, later in his paper, Noë prevaricates by declaring "now there is of course a sense in which one could say of any object (and certainly any work of art) that it provides its viewer with an opportunity to reflect on what it is like to perceive it." He follows with the declaration that "not all forms of art, and not all artists, undertake their activity in this vicinity." (Noë, p.133) Interestingly, Noë makes this argument while discussing the sculptures of Richard Serra, to which I have also referred. As also noted when writing about the art of Joseph Bueys in the Secondary Thread of Section Three, there is something to be said about walking among large, imposing works of art, situated in a space large enough to accommodate their size and grandeur.

Such circumstances do perhaps offer a greater opportunity to have a unique reflective experience, one which urged me to think hypothetically on the conditions that may be necessary for someone else to duplicate or apply my methodology, within the context of their own practice. Plainly, how could my perceptual consciousness, outlined in this document and reflective of what I have achieved through my research activities translate to someone else? An answer to that question definitely falls outside of the scope of my inquiry. However, pondering a response did get me thinking and even anticipating, in a post-doctoral sense, what avenues of inquiry I might pursue upon completion of this thesis.

53. Dōgan, Zen Master. *Moon in a Dewdrop, Writings of Zen Master Dōgen*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995.

In regard to my reference to Dogan's writings beyond the salient nature of the quotes found in the Primary Thread, I want to add a few thoughts on his text as recorded in my research journal. Dogan is equal part philosopher, instructor and poet, which alone is inspiring and worth the investment of my time and attention. Though at times his writings seem impenetrable, on the whole his ideas deliver a sense that there is great happiness to found in the journey rather than in fixed states of being. To be in motion, or on a path with the aim to arrive at a destination is in fact to be somewhere; journeying is a desirable destination in and of itself. Most of

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I can distinctly remember, upon lifting the old panel out of trailer, being overcome with a sense that, though heavily distressed and in rough shape, it needed to be set aside and not marked for disposal.

Vaguely aware that the panel's eventual purpose was to serve as substrate for a painting to compliment my wife's home improvement labours, I was even more oblivious to the larger correlations that could be made between the painting's inception and creation, and my research efforts. Completing it with an uncommon zeal I barely gave it a second thought after it was hung in our bedroom. At least not until I began connecting the dots between the dictations made during my first conservation area walks, the notations made in my sketch journal, and notably the visual map of my thinking, affixed to the cork board hanging in my office. (see: fig.1, Section One) The painting, quite literally, was 'the art' sitting apart from everything else indicated in that diagram. It was an actual artifact of my research efforts and tangible evidence of my notion of creative caprice.

Not dissimilar to the distinctions I had always made between the fine art and design aspects of my practice, I recognized that the same tendency to compartmentalize my creative activities had afflicted my research activities. Undoubtedly, the painting had been influenced by my research efforts—but when, how and why? Eager to dismantle the distinction, arrive at and begin to answer those questions, I carefully analyzed the painting, ruminating on my motivation for making it, while also attentively considering its layout and design. This led me to meditate on the emotional conations of the work. But at the same time, it also invited me to ruminate on theories concerning perceptual consciousness and phenomenology I had been investigating, signifying that the painting, held the potential to speak back to and inform the research.

all, my walking method taught me that the instance when I was able to let go of needing to be someplace else, was the instance when I recognized many of my innate creative needs could be met right there in that moment as I was focused on thinking about an imaginative idea or concept.

Essentially, it was important for me to find an alternate voice, representative of a belief system that espouses ideas similar in outlook to those I derive from my own faith tradition. Surveying master Dogan's writings became a valuable mirror through which I could examine and critique my own meditative mannerisms and practices, and as indicated in the Primary Thread, look on them with fresh eyes, which was duly beneficial to my overall methodological practice-led research approach.

My fear in referencing Dogan is that I have obscured my identity by appropriating another cultural tradition without fully appreciating that to do so may well be considered insensitive. In certain circumstances, I have met considerable resistance (whether merited or not) to my manner, seemingly for no other reason than I profess to be religiously devout. I have found that in the arena of fine arts, to admit devoutness is troubling for some. While I can understand why to a certain degree, it is peculiar to me that that aspect of my identity renders me a caricature and seemingly inauthentic as an artist. Dogan's writing represents an opportunity for me to appreciate and learn from another equally devout voice that perhaps isn't as threatening.

54. Saitzyk, Steven. *Place Your Thoughts Here, Meditation for the Creative Mind*. Los Angeles, CA: First Thought Press, 2013.

It would be imprudent to cite Dogan's Buddhist teachings and not, in a cursory sense, examine how another artist chooses to employ Buddhist teachings in his creative practice. *Place Your Thoughts Here, Meditation and The Creative Mind* is a pocket book sized manual of sorts that explores Steven Saitzyk's contemplations on the very subject. At the close of his Note to The Reader, he states: "Creativity and the creative mind are integral to our lives. Therefore—regardless of how we see ourselves—all of us are, in fact, artists."

Constructed Memories

Alva Noë in his essay, *Experience and Experiment in Art*, addresses the question of how challenging it can be to describe what lived experience is like. His paper examines how art can “make a needed contribution to the study of perceptual consciousness,” by acknowledging that the work of “some artists can teach us about perceptual consciousness by furnishing us with the opportunity to have a special kind of reflective experience.” (Noë, p.123)³³ In some measure that evidently was what had happened with regard to the creation of my first large scale painting.

In retrospect, going all the way back to the winter hike with the Boy Scouts, each walking outing I had engaged in not only led me to adopt walking as my primary method, but also subconsciously brought to the surface powerful memories, from which I was able to construct a tableau descriptive of scenes representing a snapshot in time of my childhood. In other words, for me uniquely, the Quakies painting provided me, using Noë’s terms, a special kind of reflective experience.

In execution, the painting depicts multiple significant lived experiences I had subconsciously hoped to re-live through their realization as a work of art. However, as Noë points out in his essay in relation to his analysis of Ernst Mach’s drawing *The Visual Field*, my painting similarly “mis-describes what it is like to see,” (Noë, p.126) and in turn fails to render the wholeness of the visual field of these constructed memories, despite attempts at conveying the scene accurately in visual form. The question of why, is an interesting one to contemplate.

Despite acting as the embodied amalgamation of many perceptual conscious experiences, both remembered from my childhood and experienced during my research related walking excursions, the painting, as an accurate, impressionistic visual depiction “will confine itself to those objects whose presence is guaranteed by the experience itself ...” (Noë, p.124) In other words, relying upon Noë’s terminology, there is no ‘transparency’ in the image, permitting the viewer to see beyond the objects as illustrated.

Based on my understanding of what Noë means by transparency, while my Quakies painting on distressed plywood panel can be considered a true representation of

(Sitzyk, p.xiv)

Overall, Saitzyk’s notions speak to the power of creative thinking as a meditative process in and of itself. This permits me to see Buddhist philosophy in the context of an artist making art, and also allowing me to compare and contrast what I intimately understand concerning my own long-standing faith-based meditative practices in the context of my methodology as a newly incorporated and essential part of my creative practice.

Bluntly, while appreciating Saitzyk’s other ideas I am not enamoured with his conceptions on the whole. They do not speak to me and my phenomenological experience. However, relating back to my thoughts in relation to Zen Master Dogan’s philosophy previously discussed, understanding how Steven Saitzyk relies on Buddhist teachings to augment his practice, helped me train my focus on breathing in particular, as a meditative technique rendering it a vital aspect of my walking method.

Beyond what I could learn from Saitzyk with regard to breathing, there was one conception in particular that spoke to me. In chapter seven of his book, Saitzyk offers an indented quote by Henry Miller that declares, “now and then, wandering through the streets, suddenly one comes awake.” The quote then goes on to declare that he, the one wandering, “is moving through an absolutely fresh slice of reality ... it is as if the eye itself had been refreshed.” Saitzyk then explains that being ‘awakened’ or ‘refreshed’ can be considered as experiencing a moment of “nowness.” (Saitzyk, p.55)

In drawing a comparison to my research and borrowing Saitzyk’s words, my walking method was permitting me to experience ‘nowness,’ with some consistency. I was, using Saitzyk’s terms, and importantly in my own way according to my own sensibilities, arriving at original but known spaces, or landing zones where something original (i.e. creative/ imaginative) could surface.

Walking Index:

The ideas offered above conclude my thoughts concerning the references cited in this section. As declared at the opening of Section Five, at the

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my memories, to a viewer who is not privy to my memories, it is nothing more than a lovely depiction of aspen trees. I can never make the painting transparent enough to ensure anyone other than I, can look on it and comprehend the whole lived experience associated with the scene as depicted. Or, as inferred by Noë, in his use of a quote by Ludwig Wittgenstein,

“The danger that lies in describing things as more simple than they really are is today often very overestimated. This danger does actually exist in the highest degree for the phenomenological investigation of sense impressions. These are always taken to be much simpler than they really are.” (Noë, p.123)

Intrigued by the above revelation, my attention focused on the painting and in particular my deliberate choice to define a border or boundary and not push the pigment to the very edge of the panel. Was there reasoning, that speaks to Noë’s ideas, in my aesthetic decision-making? Possessed of an affinity for the aesthetic of borders, reflectively going back to my earliest attempts at art-making as a child, it became clear that there was subconscious reasoning in my decision-making beyond exercising artistic license which compels the demarcation of borders or boundaries, distinct from the edge of substrates upon which I create images.

As a narrative focused artist, my implicit goal is often to intimate to a viewer that there is a larger story being told by my works of art—stories that can’t necessarily be read while only looking at what is actually being depicted.

Similarly, as cited in Noë’s essay, while Ernst Mach’s drawing fades to white and fails to convey the wholeness of the visual field, my Quakies painting, through the delineation of border or boundary, also fails to convey the wholeness of the visual field. In essence, the border or boundary is proclaiming to a viewer: there is more to this scene I wish to tell you about, or show you, but can’t as it is currently conceived and constructed. In response to this revelation, for the first time it truly felt as if my research was in dialogue with my art-making. Hungry for more, I eagerly reengaged with my methodology.

The Mechanics of the Method

Excited by my contemplations and anxious to get to the

conclusion of my thoughts in this thread a list of every research related walk taken, along with transcripts and notes made following those walks will be offered. The lists were transcribed from the jot journals which can be seen in Fig.11 found in Section Four. There is no commentary offered on the transcripts, but a close reading of the transcripts reveals shifts in the kinds of walks undertaken.

This is consistent with descriptions provided elsewhere in this document where experiments with timing the walks instead of recording the number of steps taken, or walking with a specific destination in mind were conducted. The aim of such experimentations was to alter the methodology slightly in order to analyze observations made, and noted in Section Four, that an optimum range of steps resulted in my ability to enter an Environs and initiate creative states of consciousness.

In part by presenting the list here the aim is to extend the conceptualization entertained in this thread not only in this section, but in each of the preceding sections. The list and record of the many transcripts made represents a culmination of thinking and contemplation put into action; it is effectively the empirical data produced by my research:

- **1116 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**
 - Contemplations on my questions; radial graph(ic) identifying my focus
 - Repeated thoughts ... on consciousness: Bee dilemma (vin diagram?)
 - The sound ... am I, or do I exist) in the bee’s space, or is the bee in my space—awareness
 - Four wall projection; a swarm of sound, of movement
 - A deer trail? A sunny spring day
 - Slight movement almost negligible
 - The bee is a the Sartrian object “not sure of itself,” pg. 17
 - The bee is consciousness—iconic surrealist imagery (Dali)?
 - The relationship between madness and creativity—to be creative is to be mad?
 - The notion of a stone’s throw away ... from one’s front door; ones’ self ... with in our grasp
- **648 steps - Rail trail path (Groomed, walking, biking, ATV) ...**
 - Known and unknown places ... we walk by regularly but rarely if ever frequent them ... or go where we can, but don’t
 - Climbing into the structure of the bridge at Fenelon

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rest of the Quakies story, it was tempting to linger in my studio with the art work. A nagging inclination, however, held me back. Despite being enamored by the insights Alva Noë's theories helped reveal about the painting, a pressing desire acted on me to find my way back to the cognitive, imaginative or creative spaces, wherein the motivations and my aspiration to create such a painting in the first place.

As stated, my first series of method motivated walks into the conservation area near my home had allowed for the Noë informed revelations to surface. They were spontaneous and unstructured. Ideally, more walks would permit me to consistently as needed gain access to what I now conclusively identified as creative states of consciousness. But how could I initiate more of them and still maintain my spontaneity? (see: Verse 11)

In order to achieve the above stated goal, I was determined my approach to future walks needed to be progressively more calculated. Having already outlined an acceptable use policy for my smart phone during walks, my attention was drawn to the simple act of turning it on and putting it in airplane mode. Being aware that that innocuous action served as a prompt to signify a deliberate, research focused walk was commencing. My goal was to find a way to ameliorate the prompt through some additional mechanism, the purpose of which would be to further cement my outings as deliberate research motivated acts, while maintaining the impulsiveness that compelled their undertaking.

Having latched on to a recent health trend of counting steps, my wife, coincidentally, had purchased a set of rudimentary battery-powered pedometers for the each of us. After wearing it on occasion, this simple, easy to use device struck me as a potentially valuable tool to be used in conjunction with my smart phone. The addition of the pedometer, lent a greater sense of certitude to the commencement of each walk. Retrieving it, resetting the counter to zero, and clipping it to my waistband, or a pocket at my hip plus putting my smart phone in airplane mode, became the critical routine-like physical prompts that ratified my walking exercises as the cornerstone method of my research methodology.

Perceptually, the use of the pedometer in the instigation of a method-based walk allowed me to differentiate

Falls

- Sitting on the bench looking at the locks
- Took some photos to consider
- Clear blue sky, summer day
- A piece of art to climb on—a tree to climb
- Eyes closed, awareness of the breeze as it moves leaves and branches above, hiding and showing sunlight
- Think of waiting ... doing things manually
- Turning cranks
- Rolling down a window
- Turning a dial on a tv or old radio
- Doing things with your hands
- A gallery of hand-cranking items?
- A gallery of pre-loaders ... the graphics; just the pre-loader bars themselves etc.

• **172 steps – Exploring my front and back yards of my home ...**

- Yard work (service)
- “mind the gap” ... thinking of spaces where you can squeeze through ... a barrier: not cross through but escape into and out of
- The gap between the widows yard and her neighbors at the back
- In-between spaces
- Partly cloudy, sunny, warm
- The small places that allow us to squeeze from one space to another
- Sliding down a laundry chute memory
- Being in the moment was reinforced by the gnats in the cedars in the widows back yard
- More than just places we cut through, or cross through—gaps we could go through but don't or wouldn't normally
- Photos of nature in the dark—are leaves (flora & fauna) filled with colour in the dark?
- Does their colour exist in the dark?
- Photos of nature lit by artificial light ... in the dark, lit by a street light: is that the origin of colour?
- Connections between “Mind the Gap” and “What do You Make.”

• **292 steps – Cutting the grass at the cottage Row after row: the overlap ...**

- Watching the boys play their cottage version of ‘Calvin Ball’
- Making up games:
- A game of “foot”
- Kick the can
- Man hunt
- Not to forget the driving we must often do to get to the trees
- Short story ideas?
- We've got to get to the tree (a particular tree blossoming in our neighborhood)
- “Space” a master list of terms
- A library of excursions—recorded on a map?
- Corner of Wilson and Rossland—empty grass with barriers at driveways
- Often while driving I think about what is on or just beyond the horizon—stories of journeys to the

VERSE I I

*There are a thousand dandelions in the spring
rather, maybe millions upon millions?
With seeds on needling stems
growing out away from the center
reaching for far-reaching breezes ...
What's the point of fighting their flight?
You'll just kill the bees, and then the birds
and the trees will sway, empty
voiceless, and no longer timeless;
silent, soulless sentinels
vestiges of a dream.*

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between jaunts designed to wander into a creative state of consciousness, versus short walks to pick kids up from school, weekend hikes with the family, or the need to take the dog for a stroll. As well, the dumb apparatus allowed me to measure my steps, introducing the possibility that a certain length of walk could be noted as particularly effective in helping me enter into a creative state of consciousness. But before greater scrutiny of that hypothesis could be entertained, it became clear that use of the pedometer wasn't enough to help me fully contend with the need to maintain a certain focus in the face of a myriad of distractions experienced during any given outing.

As highlighted under the heading *On The Science of Walking* in Section Two, it is noted participants in the Opezzo and Swartz's study, who while walking outdoors were notably distracted in some way, had the results of their creativity testing disqualified. While the scope of my efforts did not demand the same rigor, getting distracted while walking could seriously undermine the efficacy of the method in allowing me to enter into, cognitively explore, and remain in a creative state of consciousness.

The addition of a meditative technique to calm myself and prepare my mind at the outset of a walk, as well as to reset my corporeal awareness, in an instance following a significant disruption endured during a walk, was merited. Religiously devout, it was familiar to me to set aside time each day to pray, or commune with deity, not just individually, but with my family. Not wanting to conflate aspects of my daily religiosity with the mechanics of my methodology, I sought out other sources concerning mindfulness, or the act of engendering mental states wherein one can focus their awareness on the present moment.

Instantly, it became apparent to me that investigations delving too deep into trendy beliefs and ideas surrounding the practice of mindfulness could confuse my efforts. My objective was to deliberately avoid theories regarding focusing one's awareness on the present moment for therapeutic purposes, or to improve an individual's academic or business acumen. Rather, my energy was directed at exploring the ideas of another religious tradition, which could readily compliment my life-long understanding and experience with meditative techniques, per my own religious traditions. Thus, providing me with a means of maintaining my understanding that walking

horizon ... a collection of short stories

- The twinkle of sun peaking from behind tree leaves ... the dancing light falls on you (drops on you). It's playful and mesmerizing

- **1889 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- Light rain; cool, damp
- "Rain" ... use the word thirsty
- "Bed" spring flowers in field of green
- JCMZ: philosophical treatise ... Sartre:
- Conversations with a bee
- With rain
- Falling, or being acted upon ...
- "Forced"

- **3903 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- Walking the dog
- The conversations I am not allowed to have
- I have a voice that is not allowed to speak
- Clear blue sky, summer day
- In considering the (my) creative process there appears to be a duality?

- **12 steps – Pacing on the front porch of my house watching the world go by ...**

- Bouncing a ball while walking around campus. Each bounce of the ball
- Represents a thought for each breath
- Folded paper animation—a ledger?
- JCMZ sculpted head with the body drawn ... as philosophical commentary
- Exactly when do we get to the art?
- Two competing angels, or two consciousnesses trope
- Saber-kats, Sandyogre and Johnny ... childhood imaginary friends:
- A continuation of conversations I am not allowed to have
- Stories I am not allowed to write
- Drawings I am not allowed to draw
- Imaginarium
- Moth in bathroom
- Red wall is a portal: different beings—political ideals
- Imaginarium
- L-Wing red wall as an exhibition space

- **842 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk around our crescent ...**

- Walking the dog with the aim to generate ideas for the red wall in the L-Wing
- A portal or door; a window opened to an imaginarium
- The moth in my en suite bathroom
- The red mums on the front porch
- Fantastical curiosities
- ... that is actually a very old idea I entertained long ago
- Inspired by my student's guerilla art installations
- Drawers containing specimens—life sciences—

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in and of itself was the primary meditative mechanism, scientifically verified as effective in providing a “simple and robust solution to the goals of increasing creativity.” (Oppezzo, Schwartz, Abstract) As well as, per my previously noted experiences, it was an effective means of establishing consciously creative states of mind.

Buddhist Zen Master Dogen writes under the title, *Actualizing the Fundamental Point*:

“3. When you see forms or hear sounds fully engaging body-and-mind, you grasp things directly. Unlike things and their reflections in the mirror, and unlike the moon and its reflection in the water, when one side is illuminated the other side is dark ...

6. When you ride in a boat and watch the shore, you might assume that the shore is moving. But when you keep your eyes closely on the boat, you can see that the boat moves. Similarly, if you examine myriad things with a confused body and mind you suppose that your mind and nature are permanent. When you practice intimately and return to where you are, it will be clear that nothing at all has unchanging self.” (Dogan, p.70)⁵³

Aspiring to capture a measure of Dogens’ actualized awareness, but with expediency so as to maintain the spirit of my spontaneity, a deliberate pause, breathing in through my nose and then out through my mouth was instituted, shortly following the prompt of putting my smart phone in airplane mode and resetting then clipping the pedometer to my waist. However, diagnosing that the pause in and of itself was not wholly sufficient in effect, it struck me as natural to place more emphasis and attention on my breathing, allowing me to linger longer in a pause without feeling my impulsiveness was being impeded.

In the Buddhist meditative tradition, Steven Saitzk, in his book *Place Your Thoughts Here—Meditation for the Creative Mind*, asserts: “We [can] gently focus on our breath because it is something we can rest our minds on, but it cannot be held on to physically or psychologically.” This reinforces the idea that the act of attentive breathing could provide an effective means following my choreographed physical prompts, of introducing a cognitively focused prompt, preparing my mind for the reflective totality of a walk. Additionally, Saitzk’s also notes, “when we practice resting our mind on our breath, we are training our mind

collections

- Record in the ledger, at or shortly after a moment of inspiration:

- When in a stupor ... a burst of creativity ... an idea, that becomes a viable concept:

- To have to know, to insist on knowing what kind of art I could create undermines the entire purpose of my methodology (slippery eel). Furthermore, it undermines my purpose and the whole premise of my ‘being.’ Also, by demanding I contextualize it by demonstrating and acute understanding of others perspectives, you bind my work to that work—to that ideology, to that way of ‘being’ and ‘knowing.’ Why then is what I have to offer only valuable in the context of what others have offered? Is what I have to offer valuable? Anything I choose to create then becomes the sum of multiples parts of which I do not feel I have a part; rendering me a part of a grand equation over which I have no control? Rendering my existence futile and potentially unnecessary, because the work I could produce will inevitably be produced regardless and independent my existence. I don’t necessarily believe that. I don’t accept it. And I refuse to be bullied into embracing the idea except on my terms. I am not someone else; I will never be someone else.

- Please do it your way, my way. And remember you can do anything you want, so long it is my way ...

- Because then it becomes something other than what it could have been. And that something could be great. But ultimately, I am not interested in that something great. I am interested in discovering something greater. The works are something that just needs to happen. Their context will then be determined. By virtue of their existence and not due to the existence of something that already exists.

- Stop worrying; have faith it will happen. Have faith it will be contextualized. Have faith it will be understandable. Wait for it to rain. Put on your galoshes—or not—and wait with me. Be prepared to get wet without being prepared for it.

- “Those are they who die with their music still in them.”

- Can I find an object to give the Environs three-dimensionality?

- Can I then construct (metaphorically) a club house, bunk house, cottage, cabin, fort, palace?

- Each time I create a work of art in relation to the environs, I build a wall

- The works should be random

- The works also represent a layer of meaning; a layer of consciousness as it relates to the initial idea or concept.

- Each time I go back to that initial idea and it environs I come away with a new work? A new story! It’s a new take away

- I take away a new awareness; a new consciousness

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to be where we place it.” (Saitzk, p.19)⁵⁴ This precisely describes my objective in aiming to return to the creative state of consciousness, wherein the desire to paint on a large scale was birthed in the first place.

While experimenting with the newly adopted breathing aspect of the method, and with the intent to heighten my concentration and maximize its effect, the performance of slowly pirouetting in place three-hundred-and-sixty-degrees, with my eyes closed, allowed me to lucidly sense my chest rise and fall as air entered into and then exited my lungs. Consequently, my concentration became fixed on my heart beating in my chest. The resulting calm that came from an acute awareness of my autonomic somatic reflexes, permitted my mind to isolate and set aside nagging anxieties related to work or family life, while also providing a means, throughout the duration of a walk, by which any distracting annoyance could be counteracted simply and efficiently.

In other words, and to clarify, if distracted by a loud noise or random conversation with a neighbor, I could pause the walk and step outside of the creative state of consciousness for a time. When the distraction passed, I could then re-initiate the walk and re-enter the state of consciousness by first repeating the breathing exercises, including, pirouetting in place.

Throughout my next series of walks into and out of the conservation area, the breathing technique proved particularly effective in promoting a consistent ability to focus my creative thinking. However, while the determined ideal for the method is to walk in seemingly wild and untamed settings allowing for the pirouetting and attentive breathing to sufficiently quiet my mind, the question of not always being at home when the urge to wander and engage my method meant that there were instances where finding a reasonably untamed environment to walk in wasn't possible. Additionally, living in a corner of the world where inclement weather conditions are prevalent, heavy rain, snow and ice could preclude walking outdoors in wild spaces, over periods of weeks if not months. The need to consider interchanging neighborhood sidewalks, or indoor pathways with meandering trails in fields or forested areas was evident. (see: Verse 12)

Thus the need to refine my experiment with walking along

- 3 – 4 main environs I wish to explore
- There's an object (token = [trigger])
- To give it three-dimensionality and form
- An artwork: painting, drawing, sculpture ... something equally physical and tangible
- A story; in written or spoken form ... words on a page
- Philosophical détente: “The bee anomaly”
- Represents (looks back into) the genesis of my philosophical inquiry—where it began; where or when I first asked the question
- Vermeer's “the art of painting.” Norman Rockwell's self-portrait
- But I am not allowed to discuss his work—he's not a serious artist.
- Environs:
- Bee anomaly
- The space in between
- Conversations I am not allowed to have
- Rhythm of the ball as it bounces—a thought for each bounce; a fleeting moment
- Stanzaic
- **1581 steps – Dear trail nature path**
- Bee dilemma ...**
- Am I a part of its world or is it a part of mine?
- How long it took; how hard it was to quiet my mind
- Passing through the cedars and the end of the path marked by an orange cone by someone else
- Unable to find my way back through—a metaphor
- An icon for each environ—the folded paper to a spinning triangle
- An interface
- My methodologies are a codex; a visual glossary of actions
- It starts with something physical—a walk, hike, climb
- You need to be able to feel yourself breath; to hear yourself breath; to slow your mind and to quiet your mind in order to get back to that creative space or “safe” environs
- **1950 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk**
- Overcast, sleet ...**
- An in-between space itself (the sidewalk)
- Each environs needs a ledger in which to collect data
- I need the certainty of the letter; I needed the routine
- Rolling up a window manually; dialing a rotary phone; turning the dial on an old radio
- Doing things manually instead of just pushing a button or clicking a mouse
- That's why a part of me longs to draw again
- Portraits of anger
- Cracking open and eating nuts

VERSE 12

*I marvel at the pace of clouds
And the relentless determination of jet streams
Not to mention storm systems
Which roll in and over the earth above
The very spot where I am standing
though it is understood they can't be anticipated
Or, perhaps even seen
But rather, at the very least
They can be comprehended
Once they are upon you
Experientially ...
And pragmatically speaking:
What does one wear in order to contend with
the elements
And what they bring with them?*

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neighborhood sidewalks or indoor paths, where invariably there were many more distractions to contend with than might otherwise be encountered in the conservation area was warranted. In conjunction with my physical and cognitive prompting actions, bouncing a bouncy ball, at the outset of a walk, extended the meditative effects associated with the pirouetting attentive breathing. The bouncing of the bouncy ball, specifically the effort required to toss it down with the necessary force and precision to easily catch it with one hand, heightened my concentration and permitted me to establish a cadence, against which my walking motion could be set. In the context of an onslaught of sounds or commotion the attentiveness required to bounce and then catch the ball rhythmically, if not hypnotically matching my steps to that action, helped me to maintain my focus on walking, and attempts to enter into conscious, creative states of thinking and being. (see: Remark 10)

Walking Method Outline:

As indicated at the opening of this section, a more comprehensive outline of the walking method is offered below. The aim is to position the prescriptive steps adhered to per each research related walk engaged in and listed in the Secondary Thread. Adapted from Section Four, the materials, considerations and steps of my walking method are thoroughly outlined below with the following caveats:

1. All walks undertaken (listed in the Walking Index) as the result of the development of my methodology, were preceded by many unrecorded preparatory walks. The purpose of preparatory walking was to increase familiarity with safe and convenient walking routes. Though my typical walking routes were not fixed, it was important that any potential path I took, while engaged in a method-motivated walk, was amenable to bi-pedal travel. This was to ensure the focus of the outing was to fully engage in the method as a creativity boosting mechanism.
2. Regardless of how the materials, considerations and steps below can potentially be adapted all method-motivated walks engaged in, per my experience, were most effective when they were truly spontaneous in nature. Therefore, all materials listed need to be readily on hand, at all times, or so long as the walking method

- Pistacios
- Peanuts
- Coring an apple—eating it with a pocket knife
- Peeling a banana
- Peeling an orange
- Getting in and out of an in-between might represent the amount of time you have to say what you are not allowed to say
- It's transitory; an exchange; a transference?
- I am mapping my way back to each environs
- But what am I bringing back and what "object" am I taking to (in with me)
- Building a "fort" at school in the classroom
- Each artifact is a wall
- Drawing is like unto the most basic physical acts
- Tying shoes
- Flushing a toilet
- Locking a door
- All of the above is being automated
- The more I want to do something physical
- Work with my hands

• 1756 steps – Walking trail through unfarmed fields ...

- A field ...
- Back pack is my object for conversations I am not allowed to have
- Pocket knife is another object "token" [trigger]
- Jabberwocky flying a kite
- Dog with a hat
- Felled trees
- Every time I check my email I turn a crank ... a dial, roll down a window
- My Quakies painting is a constructed memory

• 1011 steps – City sidewalk ...

- To walk on a sidewalk is to walk in-between spaces ... to walk where it is permitted
- Am I there and here all at once?
- How much of my memories are constructions?
- Give myself a merit badge as I complete the journey to an environs and return with something

• 508 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...

- Memories always only ever are a stone's throw away
- Round out each diorama with as many simple, animated objects
- What did I bring back this time?

• 1647 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...

- Experimentation with 'mountain spring' painting (Aurasma app) preparatory for more complexity
- With each environ what am I building?
- Constructing memories

REMARK 10

Reality changes with the moment, but how much does that moment change outside of that reality which can be argued—exclusively—resides within the dominion of the mind? Therefore, is the ‘moment’ necessary to the perception of the ‘reality’ even as a construct, or mechanism of measurement, considering the reality is its own construct possessed of an ideality that can be measured through external moment independent sense perception? In other words, how much is time, represented as an instance, useful to a reality, which could in fact be possessed off its own time, outside of time measured as moments?

SECTION FIVE

is being implemented as a part of a practice.

3. In deference to the proviso to be discussed in Section Six, my methodology found here in the section is not designed to offer a reader a cathartic means of dealing with strong emotions and feelings. Emotion, in an Aristotelian sense, is a tempest that can be difficult to contend with and is best done so at an aesthetic distance.

Items needed:

- Smart phone or recording device (you may also want to have a small camera with you, if not built into your device)
- Pedometer or like device
- Jot journal(s)

Environmental Considerations:

- Know the routes you plan to walk in advance. If you are in a foreign location, do preparatory walks to plan out your walking routes
- Experiment with both wild and urban settings.
- Designate walking routes, both close to home and where you work, or spend your leisure time.

The Steps:

1. Spontaneously engage in a walk, preferably in a feral or reasonably untamed environment/setting, but not exclusively, and dependent upon living circumstances.

NOTE: Per point one above it is advisable to have familiarity with walking routes regularly accessible to you. The term “spontaneously” used here in step one refers to a willingness to submit to any sudden urge to go a walk regardless the starting point and route taken.

2. Bring with you a recording device such as a smart phone and a pedometer.
3. Serving as a choreographed physical routine and

- **2110 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk ...**

- What happens if the letters I write don't return?
- There's a certain risk, or gamble
- They transcend you by leaving you with the hope they will come back to you

- I got a sliver working on my most recent painting ... how hard it is to get out ... how small it is—it's an invasion, intrusion; how much energy it consumes ... like an idea

- Memories that may only be seen at a specific angle ... we let other see what we want them to see of that memory

- **1058 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- Monotony on a string ...
- Is there a limit to the number of times you can return to an environ with constructing a wall or something?
- Portraits of rage ... can I put everything into that image or avatar and give it a story that takes it away? ... sends it away?
- A vignette ... a play?

- **1031 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path, along creek ...**

- 4 images of tall grass need to be connected by the overlaid mapping lines
- My fringe grass pieces are topographical pieces ... a (the) map ... the graphics
- Need to get to the other side of the creek?
- The pace of art vs. the pace of life ... taking time to “write” a letter
- Do objects have memories?
- Do spaces (places) have memories?

- **1713 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk
The utility of technology ...**

- When pigs fly
- Utilities in general—what is a utility?
- Mapping my media consumption, or tracking back to potential sources of inspiration—the ledgers
- New ways of sharing narratives

- **2299 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- Snowing
- Going back to creative environs
- Dioramas
- Need to listen to my voice memos again?
- Each item along the way is a marker ... a sign post ... a trigger ... a way back

- **2355 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- In deep snow
- Melancholy
- The left-over paint while working on my second ‘constructed memory’

SECTION FIVE

functioning as a prompt to signify a deliberate, research focused walk was commencing:

- › Put the smart phone (or similar device) in airplane mode, or non-signal receiving mode to avoid it serving as a distraction.
 - › Set the counter to zero on the pedometer (or similar device) to record the number of steps, or bodily movements made while on a walk.
4. Engage in a deliberate pause, focusing on your breathing. Consciously breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth 3 to 5 times or more. You can augment the effect of focusing on your breathing by pirouetting in place, three-hundred-and-sixty degrees with your eyes closed (do not do this if you are anaemic, or prone to dizzy spells).

NOTE: the pirouetting in place serves as a cognitive prompt, preparing the mind for the reflective totality of the walk. If you cannot pirouette in place, you may try deliberately shifting your weight from one foot to the other with your eyes closed.
 5. When walking on a neighbourhood sidewalk, or on an indoor pathway where distractions are more prevalent, deliberately bounce a bouncy ball, with the intent to establish a walking rhythm to provide a means to extend or re-establish the meditative effects associated with the pirouetting attentive breathing action instigated in step 4.
 6. While on your walk, make voice memos on the smart phone (or similar device), capturing your creative and imaginative thinking entertained during the walk.
 6. Take photos of arresting scenes or interesting objects observed during a walk, when and where appropriately relevant to your method-motivated walking goals.
 7. Upon returning to the starting point of the walk, record the number of steps taken and in what circumstances, i.e. along a feral path, city sidewalk, or in-door pathway.

- Each layer of rage—cut a hole in it to reveal another soaked strip of paper, with paint

- Can I create experiences with other bees ... I need to go and experience other(s) states of consciousness as I did with the bee ... in a crowd at union station? Seated in a public space?

- What role do leftovers play in my dioramas (research)

- The ink, paint, extra prints—the drawings, the writing?

- That sense of duality led to corporeal or somatic awareness versus mental awareness

- Action: chasing the Quadrantids meteor shower

- Can't escape the glow of civilization ... of the city

- On the horizon ... the horizon is something we can never arrive at—it is always there but at a distance

- The barn and the glow of the night sky ...

• **1386 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- Again, a stone's throw away ...

- Assemblage art at Hishorn

- Pistachio shells

- Other found objects

- Map graphic (in abstract)

- In a frame

- Showing markers and landmarks

- Bee drawing

- A stone

- My advisor ... or Rauschenberg

• **1452 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- The pedometer is important, in the sense that it is a trigger

- It starts the process—a visual and hand manipulated cue (prompt)

- The walk into the environs does not initiate in the sense that it starts the state of consciousness ... it's a place where the ideas I've been having prior to are formalized, but the consciousness started elsewhere

- The meditation exercise was important to help focus the mind

- Memory is a prayer of sorts

- Folding paper: conversations (opening and closing)

- Striking scenes: snapshots

- Need to get to my other environs

- Can I make the shift?

- Simple acts (glossary)

- Writing down

- Clipping on the pedometer

- Dictation—taking photos

• **2848 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- Striking scenes can't be manufactured or forced

- Keep writing the letters to see what they reveal

- Need to get climbing

SECTION FIVE

NOTE: making a note of the number of steps helps establish parameters for your walks.

Recording the number of steps establishes a time-frame for your walks, without tying your walks to durational limits. This in turn can help you utilize the method in more diverse, foreign locations if you desire.

8. Promptly review the voice memos and jot down the important points of your creative and imaginative thinking in list form, with the intent to refer back to the jot notes at a later time when needed or when appropriate to art-making in the context of your creative practice.

Setting Markers:

Once you have instituted a regular routing of walking using any variation of the steps above and get a feel for the number of steps that work well for you and your circumstances, begin to establish visual markers along your chosen paths. Per my practice, I set three markers:

- One at the outset, roughly after my first 50 to 100 steps
- One in the middle of my walk, usually at some distance from the first marker
- One well into the walk where I have begun the return journey back to my starting point

The visual markers can be anything: a fence post, brick wall, or bend in the road; each should be a fixed feature that is permanent to the routes you walk regularly. The purpose of the markers is to designate within the walking experience where you feel you are entering into and lingering in a creative state of consciousness (what in this thesis I have called an *Environs*). In my experience, for me, this occurs somewhere in-between arriving at my first and second markers.

• 2246 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...

- The difficulty of finding a new (establishing a new) environs ... the old ones are more appealing; more comfortable
- Again, the need for a meditative element
- Inspiration coming from all directions
- Striking scenes
- Striking conversations
- Striking situations
- Made it hard to focus
- There is a certain fondness for one environs vs. another

• 3862 steps – City sidewalk ...

- The ball is an object (my object) or what I wish to focus on while in the environs
- Need to write more letter to the flesh out these ideas
- The simulacra is a concept that is intangible
-
- Action: drive in the country to the cottage (walk to town)
- Bringing the markers into the classroom
- As an exhibition?
- What can these ... what have these objects taught me?
- Classrooms where the desks and chairs can be removed
- ... or not?
- The felled tree
- An old fence post
- A pathway made of dirt and rocks
- Replacing the piles found in my home with the piles found in (an) environs and vice-versa ... taking the mess of the everyday outside into the environs?
- Changing the scale of the explorations ... a need to reorganize

• 3005 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...

- Does my desire to increase the scope or scale of my explorations coincide with a the increased scope or scale of my art making vis-à-vis the project on the whole?
- Everything connects back to the original environs and the three distinct markers
- The pedometer is a still an important aspect—it grounds the exercises
- What do the markers mean?
- Psychogeography: regardless of the walk or where I am, I can authentically return to the markers
- The role of emotion:
- What is the emotional value of the works I am creating?

- Need to better organize my projects

- Can I introduce an external project into the method?

- “Bees”

SECTION FIVE

- There is great value in applying the methods (using the methodology) with regards to a pragmatic project
- What happens when I increase the scale of the research—trips to the cottage; a trip to Paris, tacked on to my trip to Berlin ... what role does that kind of scale play?
- Anger; frustrated and alone—self-pity drives me in part
- Introduce a regime
- Conflation of climbing with exploring?

- The voice memos as an artifact ... a work of art?

- The power of pragmatic demands on the process ...
- There is an emotional need to introduce what I do professionally as part of the process
- It validates what I am doing (differently)
- Everything starts with that initial method ... especially if the work is emotionally motivated:
- I am at my best when I am emotional (joy and anger)

- The method:
- Meditative element
- Physical activity element
- Mental element
- Focus on the objects of my desire

- **1977 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**
- The first method isn't about generating ideas, it is about developing them—teasing them out slowly and carefully ...

- The second method is about talking it out (writing it out) having conversations with one's self—it's essential to have someone to speak to: so if it's important to have a quasi-scientific device and meditative process for the first method, it is essential to have a to read to read?

- I am convinced the physical nature of the methods is essential. You just can't go there in your mind, you must physically get there (again, what happens if I change the scale?)

- The third method (if it can be called that) needs to evolve beyond GTA analysis (a visual glossary)
- Maybe all these visual I am bringing together?

- Starting to see a formulization of the whole thesis

- I am still in the space (place) psychogeographically, even when I arrive back home

- **3416 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**
- Sound effects
- Bees (Sartrian objects)
- Animated postcard
- A need for each postcard?

SECTION FIVE

- Also maybe begin thinking about an object ... the whole letter writing is a performance
- By increasing the scale of my walking, climbing etc. will I discover the emotional factor that drives this particular intrinsic interest?
- How do the three paintings intersect ... the poems and what are the stories that motivate them?

- **1786 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk ...**

- The method; finding an cultivating an environs takes time and patience
- The meditative method is essential to thinking about the markers ... the markers are paramount
- What is the emotional value of each project I am currently working on?
- The aesthetic of the letter gives way to the aesthetic of the illustration
- Alps, spring time
- Chicago alley way
- Lake at night
- Letting the letter go further liberates my conversation; my thinking in the letters
- Time becomes even more important
- **1461 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk**
- To get back into the environs, need to climb and walk without distractions
- No music
- No company
- Solitary

- **1575 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk ...**

- Do I need to be constantly in those imaginary worlds?
- As an adult I am just not—I am forced to inhabit too many other types of worlds
- In essence I long to recapture a certain innocence lost
- I need to draw and sketch more; and relearn to trust my hand
- Subject myself to an image search in my own mind—animals and amalgamations etc.
- Is this the start of the development of a new method?
- Into psychogeographic spaces?
- Into the theatre of the mind
- In to loops ... looping thoughts
- Old sketchbooks and journals

- **1835 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- An additional method that deals with Merleau-Ponty's ideas on doubt and failures ... in his essay on Cezanne
- Scouring my old journals for concepts or ideas that I set aside
- Accidents and mistakes and what role they can play?
- Allowing for greater freedom in my practice
- Capturing my thought images in a sketch book that is only meant for drawing and sketching—no writing
- Friday night experiments
- Loosening up

SECTION FIVE

- Careful of duration or time spent
- Action: chasing the Camelopardalis meteor shower
- The scale of my explorations
- Versus the scale of my projects
- Bursts of inspiration
- Daydreaming
- Imagination
- Re-encouraging day dreams
- Exercising my imagination like a muscle

- **1642 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- Conversation with Klaus
- Life—wishing him the best
- We are eternal beings
- There is always hope
- Hope comes from a knowledge ...
- I want him to know he is beyond beloved
- **1876 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path**
- I am an agitated thinker who needs to move around a lot in order to help me think
- Almost as if I am psyching myself up before entering into a state of consciousness
- Messy environments: what role could they play?
- How does this particular environ (the one I am in now) get extended—can it be extended
- It is the markers—they extend it
- All walking and exploring are extensions (rooms of a sort) of the first environs
- It's three distinct markers that allow me to psychogeographically go back to a place I have been before even when I am physically somewhere else
- The environ is a state of consciousness
- Ways to designate an environs:
- Safe place, nearby (a stone's throw away)
- Solitary, quiet (but not always quiet)

- **4159 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- What happens when I try to stay in a state of consciousness ... I almost become hyper creative
- Too much swapping out of one idea for another
- Mess of the everyday
- Swapping items (mind objects) on the periphery within my home and my environs
- Interchangeable?
- Small butterfly videos

- **1447 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- Proximity: a stone's throw away—makes it possible for me to transpose:
- Markers in my mind
- Home with markers in/along the nature path
- What's on the periphery?
- It will be curious to see what happens when the scale is changed
- Paris ...
- It's physically easy for me to access and therefore psychologically easy for me to access

SECTION FIVE

- There is a messiness to the order of things
- Focus gets easier
- With repetition
- Everything starts at my home: a place of emotional stability

- **2907 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- Aesthetics: the ideal vs. doubt, fear ... whereas the first method is about grounding myself
- My emotional home
- Perfect conversations ... no real threat of any one challenging my ideas ... but it's also the ability to just let the ideas go ...
- To let words fly ... to say things I might not otherwise say
- The appeal of poetry:
- It allows me to obscure meaning/feelings
- To a certain degree at least
- Wordplay
- It fits with the letter writing
- It (the letter writing) has a bit to do with make believe; day dreaming; a neverland
- And so how could that contrast of correlate with the methodology?

- **5736 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- Environs of a sculptural practice
- JCMZ connecting to the aesthetic of the letter
- Changing the perspective of paintings
- Floating
- I am looking at layers of meaning
- 3 markers and the transposition of items
- 2 steps forward taking 3 pics
- Eye level
- 1 (minus 1)
- Cartooning JCMZ
- Cutting away at the layers of meaning
- Environs in season at mid-day

- **776 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk ...**

- Get organized
- Methods kits: deliberate instructions
- What are the emotion origins for the walking/ exploring?
- Bird on wire etc.
- Is all about looping ... looping back into the environs
- Permanency of the markers is important when choosing a space within which to develop an environs
- Unknown steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path
- Really had to focus—lack of discipline sets in without the ball and pedometer prompt
- Sound is missing in my investigations
- Sponge Bob's box
- The mouse and motorcycle
- Ralph Phillips
- Calvin & Hobbes
- Lion, witch and the Wardrobe
- Simulacra

SECTION FIVE

- Icarus
- The Odyssey

- **2328 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- By changing the scale of the explorations—to Berlin, Basel and Paris I changed the focus ...
- I am no longer scratching at every itch; only the itches the supposedly matter
- The postcards represent that shift
- Triangulating my wandering or scaled exploration ... mapping it?

- **1696 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- Formalize the writing: “that which we engage”
- Find reference pics of a fresh water spring, or of fresh water springs from my own image library
- Find pics / take them
- Where
- This time of year?
- Trip to Yellowstone with my family?
- Develop a process for painting ... scale and proportional
- The natural evolution of the walking method:
- Apply it pragmatically
- To initiate imaginative thinking and to spur creative processes
- Writing curriculum
- Art for charities
- Derivations
- Using the ball bouncing more effectively ... to maintain focus

- **2670; 4934 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- Focused
- Task lists; organization; order:
- In this instance the analysis, or type of analysis must/has come first
- Accumulative walks—no just one at a time
- Multiple walks and allowing the ideas to germinate
- Structure needed to best address the idea of structure
- Pedagogical structures
- Adding order to inherent order
- Data; info
- Needs
- Pragmatic needs
- Student, teacher, school, curriculum

- **3484; 2211 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- Focused
- Demands and requirements
- Maintaining focus is especially difficult—too many competing demands
- Whereas the art created is (sits apart) almost stand alone
- How do I prioritize?
- That’s where and why the analysis came in
- It’s easier to conquer and divide ... to codify and

SECTION FIVE

- compartmentalize
- I am not truly (completely) in the creative space or environs until I have written (these) jot notes, and written to the philosophers (myself): letter writing (aesthetic of the letter)
- To walk and get wrapped up on it ... to (in a sense) obsess over the ideas and do more than just formulate ...

- **3089; 4721 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- Who am I speaking to on these walks?
- How do I better engage the mental / creative space?
- Early on I was just walking:
- Each walk (most) wasn't separate, but an accumulation
- The walking alone doesn't guarantee the creation (development) of an environs
- Requires:
 - The jot journal
 - Letter writing
 - The analysis
- Lists:
 - Aristotle
 - Plato
 - Dewey
 - Kierkegaard
- Surfing through my back up of pictures ... stanzaic:
 - I am going to do something about it
 - Add to the links
 - Flipping through the images
 - Tumbling "connections"
 - Building, adapting, fragments
 - [Lego kits]
 - Building design & production kits:
 - Focused on processes
 - National park survey
 - Interactive story with leap motion sensor
 - Aesop's Fables
 - Portfolio health matrix
 - Digital tools for documentation
 - Field trip—get out doors
 - See; record; document; research
 - Order out of chaos
 - Creating a comprehensive package / paquette
 - Why?
 - A booklet per each project
 - Settling on each project and their parameters
 - The conceptual
 - Ideation, brainstorming, mind-mapping
 - A statement (project abstract)
 - Intent
 - Project brief (outline)
 - Marketing brief
 - RFP
 - Proposal
 - Portfolio health matrix ... use to follow the same process: a body of work; what is its health relative to the goals laid out by the student ... fundamentally the goal is to move on to
 - Discipline
 - Following year

SECTION FIVE

- Within, without the same school
- Pre-production
- Thumbs, roughs
- A comprehensive package
- The means by which it is managed
- Different types

- **3110 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- Focused
- Whimsy; playful; a little absurd
- Elements spanning a long panel
- Elements in parts animated at intervals
- The internet of things?
- “Tripping, flipping, losing a shoe”
- What comes next
- Tablets fly
- Birds wearing google glass or VR glasses
- Gestures
- Watches
- Pigs flying
- Drones
- A graffiti wall – illustration

- **2323; 2410; 2385; 2418; 2440 steps - Rail trail path Cottage Country ...**

- Can I spend an entire summer (months) in a creative state of consciousness?
- Been stuck on the pedagogical issues
- Need to find a balance
- Analysis on how it is all related
- 3 new markers on the path
- Oscar and Royal frog hunting
- “on the hunt for frogs: green, bull and leopard, Oscar and Royal ...”
- The role overall Zoe has played in the walking (as intro?)
- Truly flipping the classroom
- Ideation (study) tied to walking
- Implementation
- Three short stories written as a group:
- Mouse and tin
- Grandpa’s wrench
- Kite flying Jabberwock

- **2271; 2565 steps - Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path; Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- “My mind tells me it is real, but what or whom tells my mind it can make that determination ... I suspect it may be the wind.”
- Quotes to start my thesis? pay homage to the role of Zoe
- No matter how many times I employ my methods, regardless location and new markers that first environs and set of markers is the most powerful in initiating a creative state of consciousness
- Again: the emotional connection of the three shorts stories
- Reading Rikki Tikki Tavi to my children while at the cottage
- Is there an important need to pull back and do

SECTION FIVE

some analysis: to make lists and mind-maps; to reorganize; to see it in one large snapshot

- ... the song of the trees, which call me home
- Finding my way back to the original environs and markers is like hitting the reset button
- Just as the scrapings are autonomous
- Stanzaic is an autonomous response to the digital things I do
- Autonomic output
- Once I get back to the original environs and markers I become anxious, agitated even ... to get back to the studio and work

- **1979 Steps - Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- Analysis:
- Organization
- Projects laid out and linked
- What are the links?
- The song of the trees call me home ... overhead—above it's the wind on the leaves

- **3412 steps – Various paths, Salt Lake City, Utah ...**

- Finding my way back to the original environs is like hitting the reset button
- Look up, look down, look all around: gee you're a clown (interactive piece)
- A pedagogical encore

- **3018 steps – Various paths, Salt Lake City, Utah ...**

- Advantage of four months away is:
- Summer wrapped up in (an) environs
- No superfluous deadlines
- Recognition that the methods (methodology) are their own deadline
- 4607 steps – Berlin city streets
- 2284 steps – Berlin city streets
- 3112 steps – Berlin city streets
- 2201 steps – Berlin city streets
- 2862 steps – Berlin city streets
- Walking to walk ... repetition, looking for crumbs ... practice practiced

- **2248 steps – Various paths Paris, France ...**

- The length of each walk
- There is a sweet spot ... just the right amount of time?
- Duration ... to get out, think, record (visit an environ) then have enough time to get back and have it fresh in my mind, to write it down
- If walks are too long, too much thinking results, and the result is a lack of focus
- Various paths means I was able to successfully take the environ with me—to a variety of settings, and still enter or re-engage with it

- **4112 steps – Various paths Paris, France ...**

- Jot journals and walking dictations need to be included in the thesis
- How is it catalogued: lists, organized ...?

SECTION FIVE

- As a result, I have an inherent need to produce output: to create something ...
- The order of employing the methods to get to the environ is irrelevant—each initiates the process ... can start with
- Walk
- Letter writing
- Analysis
- It's not enough to do one thing ... there is always a bi-product
- Scrappings
- Stanzaic
- Drawings (doodles etc.)
- Going back and forth between detail of the research, writing, illustration, coding and abstraction ... need to explore the abstraction a little more

- **2232 steps – Various paths, town of Fenelon Falls, Ontario ...**

- Applied the methodology to a YLC presentation
- How applicable it is to a variety of needs ...
- It's what I have always done, but now formalized, as a result of my research ...

- **3006 Steps - Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- Structured time vs unstructured time
- Trying to stay in the environ all summer vs. going back to a regular work schedule
- Time intervals:
- Structured schedule and the need (of) the method (walking) to rest one's self from one schedule to another
- Patterns within patterns; structure within structure
- Getting back to the markers
- Losing focus on the environ makes it that much harder to get back to it
- Need analysis: list / connect / visualize
- Connections made during, and the effect had on my pedagogical responsibilities:
- What the methodology wrought with regards to my teaching
- The jot journal ...
- Stanzas
- Envelope from:
- Letter writing
- Animated paintings
- The derivation
- Are chaff (offset)
- Scrappings
- Bi-products from the methods
- Catalogue the analysis?
- The tailings: saw dust, petroleum coke
- Derivations
- Perturbations
- Successive approximations
- Small corrections
- Is each walk, letter written a type of analysis ... perturbation?
- Doing thing in parts (modular – Lego kits): segments (sections)—multi-part ...

SECTION FIVE

- **2833 Steps - Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- Re-emphasize ... the need to organize the letter writing and analysis
- The markers as an installation?
- At least the felled tree maybe?
- Classroom or hallway ...
- Part of the guerrilla installation
- The walking method ... part of project work?
- Publish the stanzas

- **2281 steps – College campus, in and out of buildings ...**

- More challenging than usual to find focus and to concentrate
- Had to focus more carefully on the ball
- Worried about my students ... the project work I have and will be assigning
- The pragmatics
- Worrying about the lists of things to do
- When my mind came into focus?
- Art works I have conceptualized but haven't yet started (conversations I am not allowed to have)
- Cottage-life drawings and images / prints
- I should sketch it all out to help make them seem more real ... ?
- Walking past classrooms, I marvel at how few students are paying attention while in class ... playing games or watching videos
- There was a scene, or image that caught my eye – texture, pattern etc.
- Take a photo? ... tall grasses ...

- **2845 steps – College campus, in and out of buildings ...**

- Was acutely aware of sounds-nature
- The birds were particularly chirpy
- The crickets (cicadas)
- The water dripping into the retainment pond
- Making the sounds of the cottage with my voice ...
- Lap of the waves at the shore
- Distant motors
- Cicadas, crickets, frogs
- The breeze in the leaves
- Splashes and splotches

- **4060 Steps - Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- After four months off the walks have become even more important
- To get me back into the environs associated with my research
- Without the walks I just am not able to get back into it
- What is the path going forward?
- What does that mean?
- Is it a cliché ... a platitude?
- Calendaring and creating a schedule
- Charting and mapping things out
- Analysis (list-making)
- Refocus

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- Difference between shorter walks and longer walks
...

- **2200 vs 4400 Steps - Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- The average vs larger, aimless walks
- Highlight the difference in the thesis
- What does it mean when I have changed locations
- Campus
- Neighborhood
- Cottage
- Paris, Berlin ...
- Zoe ... she just wants to walk

- **3987 steps - Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- You can really feel it when your hips start to swivel ... and you begin to glide across the earth ...

- **2853 steps - Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- Not walking, climbing and exploring enough
- Haven't applied the methodology ... too much time spent sitting and writing
- Why have I gotten away from the methodology when I write about it ... use to help get over the writers block ... ?
- Analysis is needed
- Organizing my thoughts, and make sense of all the projects?
- All of the projects with their full outlines and parameters
- Need the methodology to help focus (re-focus)
- Include with the writing?
- In the preface?
- Number of steps
- Where
- Jot notes
- My mind is awash with things to do
- Need to find focus (re-focus)
- A segment of writing about Zoe ... start there?
- The phenomenology
- Fountains is a durational piece
- Open ended; lot's of possibilities
- Mosaic ... small bits representing many things
- Pedagogical but extensions
- Need to spell out what it is
- Her indifference ... Zoe just wants to walk ... and enjoy the experience
- For her the walks are purely experiential
- There's a singular focus and purpose to her walking (the Zoe effect)
- Sub methods
- Didn't realize how much I've learned from them
- Birds overhead
- Like voices
- Can be expressed at stanzaic.com
- Alter writing about Zoe
- I need to find a break from work responsibilities
- The emotional connection is very clear: I love my dog, she loves walking
- Going back to that first walk and that first environ

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- **2546 steps - Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- Got to get back to the markers—back to the environs
- Once reintroduced it's hard not to be re-motivated
- To hold back and jump ahead
- Long way (into the) back into the projects again
- Got to remember those moments when you really feel yourself breath
- Because you are moving—walking, hiking, exertion, using energy
- That's when you know you are entering an environ
-
- "Zoe, come!" I've known this place
- I know this place
- I've known this place ... I've known it my whole life. That's why I keep coming back to it again and again
- It is emotion
-
- 3067 steps - Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path
- Better manage my instincts
- What can be done
- What can be accomplished
- The form of the thesis as I see it vs what can be presented (pragmatic)
- Vs the desire of advisors—expectations and worries
- Revisit and continue to write sections (the Zoe effect)
- Need to get to the larger analysis
- Planning an execution
- Revisit the drawing pieces ... what do I other than fishes
- The verses and statements (remarks) ... need to invest more time
- Write more about creativity
- When is enough enough ... ?
- Try to determine what comprehensive means?
- Do I follow the trail or the path cut for me ... is there a difference between the two?
- Two different ways of traveling; learning and arriving—from one place to another
- Do I walk under the same stars they walk; can I see the same constellations; are we at the same location in the universe, with the only distance between us being time (my ancestry)
- So much to include—what to edit?
- "Zoe, heal!"

- **3029 steps - Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- Some days it is just harder to focus; to focus on my breathing
- There are some many works I want to get to, but the words get in the way ... words are not works, not in the same sense, but are they (the conversations I am not allowed to have)
- Agitated and angry ... a little ... not sure how that affects my mood, despite the fact it might seem obvious
- I am just angry, and I am walking with a different

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purpose today

-
- My arms and hands are heavy and they swing back and forth at my side
- The walk wasn't effective; I didn't look for my markers ... I didn't want to

- **3808 steps - Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- Chronicle the growth of the bud on the magnolia tree, around the corner from the house
- But why?
- There is a certain beauty to the monotony, or the pattern; the repeating pattern
- Repeats again and again ... and again
- The walk as a jumpstart
- The need for jumpstarts
- The one problem with this is there are just too many ideas: I am flooded
- I am overwhelmed ... have to reign it in
- Keep doing the small things
- The methodology does not advocate boundary breaking in the sense of doing something illegal; it does advocate breaking boundaries: crossing over (liminality?), overlapping between disciplines

- **2766 steps - Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- My handwriting improves after a walk— I am calmer and work at an even more even pace
- The sounds
- Sometimes you just need to go a new way
- Need to find a way to get myself out of this creative frenzy
- Getting back to the letter writing
- Awareness piece
- I am writing to Lisa & James
- The Magnolia tree and bud
- Sherbet (canary) awareness
- A more formal but not finished method of presenting the writing
- The method is highly discriminatory ... you have to be able to walk in order to employ it.

- **1403 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- I've been away from the methodology for too long
- A need to move—and wake up my body, after just writing
- Lethargic
- In a rut
- Malaise
- Didn't want to do anything
- Almost immediately upon starting the walk I wanted to create something—to get back to the art-making, while previously I lacked motivation
- Back to assemblages (simulacra)?
- It's amazing how quickly old paths change ... become overgrown and you can't recognize them anymore since abandoning them
- Will I engage in this methodology the rest of my life?
- I have to ... when I am stuck ... I already have spent

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- a lifetime with it in a sense
- A need to refer back to my prospectus
- To check my progress
- It's a good place to return to
- Where have I used the ideas?
- Where does it still need to be addressed
- Need to loop back to my original markers
- All those other paths are sufficient for a time to remind me of the markers and original environs—or to take me back there; the need to get back to the 'original' seems paramount

- **2381 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- About 2200 steps is the maximum (the sweet spot)
- It's amazing how old paths change ... how overgrown ... and you almost can't recognize them any more ...
- Assemblages (simulacra)
- All of the other experimentations in other places: Paris, Berlin, cottage, school, house ... dirty dishes are good but are no substitute for original markers and environ
- The helped extend and maintain a link
- But ultimately, have to—at some point—get back to the original markers
- A pattern
- Shorter walks ...
- Start the ball rolling again ...
- Followed by longer walks in the neighborhood
- Expand to far flung (exotic) locations ...
- How to concentrate ...
- How long before I am in a creative state of consciousness ...
- During the longer walks ...
- There is a short stretch where I cut through the conservation area
- It's a unique moment ...
- The breeze in the trees ... the leaves songs I can listen to all day ...
- There's a point when my body just knows it's time to return (2200 steps)
- At times the walk just 'spurred' on the creation of certain art works
- I just have to get things to the point where they fall in to place
- An urgency to getting back
- The methodology is inherently discriminatory
- Compelling interest in the gesture controlled technology per my teaching

- **1473 steps – Conservation Area, well-worn natural path ...**

- There is a time and a season for each work of art
- I'm not just looking up at the trees because they are beautiful
- They remind me of the times, and seasons for many things
- Just as there can be a need for new markers and new environs
- Old pathways are sometimes closed to us (or become closed off)

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- We can't always go back, and must embrace the new

• **1417 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- It is the art that has drawn me back in
- That will lift me out of a malaise
- Especially, the mash-up of the art I create and develop for vocational purposes
- Something appealing about more than just static forms
- There is a sweet spot ... or certain length to a walk where I feel my hips swivel and my mind start to let go of the cacophony of life
- The worries
- The many things that 'need' to be done
- It is then I start to focus on the art (ideas); creative thinking
- My research and specifically my methods have been very systematic
- Can represent that in my writing
- Not convention, but an invention of unique and customized systems—systematic to me and my circumstances
- Bouncing the ball the entirety of the walk helps to maintain focus (when needed) on a particular idea
- Not just ideas in general

• **2218 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- Have I been dreading having new conversations?
- The more visual the writing the better?
- The more it reflects many voices
- And how it represents being caught in a rain shower
- You just get wet
- When rain falls how do I catch and focus on a certain refreshing drop
- Specific drops
- Is that what it means to climb into a creative state of consciousness?
- To be focused
- Each letter captures such an instance (in a sense)
- Emotionally powerful ideas—my art is a response
-
- Shorter more focused walks can be more effective than longer ones ...
- The shorter walks have helped while writing the thesis
- Zoe's declining health mirrors the decline (wrapping up) of my research ... coming to a conclusion
- Much of the earnestness has been lost

• **2290 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**

- There are deep religious and cultural undertones that underly why I long to walk ... in the woods etc. ... significant meaning
- Joseph Smith "retiring to the woods to commune with God"
- There is a conflict in me between wanting to walk and enter a creative state of consciousness, then create art vs. having to write my thesis ...

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- Wanting to do something in the moment vs having to have to write
- Is it a coincidence that things that inspire me just happen to be in my path?
- Are they calling to me?
- To work with the things I find but can't, because I am stuck somewhere writing?
- Need to and want to go back to the woods—to commune with deity in a sense; to commune with my creative capacity
- Could walking mail carriers be the most creative persons on earth
- I knew I should've listened to my father and become a mail carrier
- When I get to the third marker my body knows I am done, in the sense it is time to head home (to the home point)
- I have hit and surpassed the sweet spot—it is all downhill from here
- I am a downhill horse
- I've got time today—I've always got time
-

- 22 – 34 minutes ... Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path (x3)
- 22 – 38 minutes ... Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path (x2)
- 15 – 24 minutes ... Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path (x2)
- 44 – 48 minutes ... Walking to work
- 44 – 48 minutes ... Walking to work

- Jan. 9, 44 – 48 minutes ... Walking to work
- Jan. 10, 44 – 48 minutes ... Walking to work
- Jan. 12, 44 – 48 minutes ... Walking to work
- Jan. 17, 44 – 48 minutes ... Walking to work
- Jan. 19, 44 – 48 minutes ... Walking to work
- Jan. 24, 44 – 48 minutes ... Walking to work
- Jan. 30, 44 – 48 minutes ... Walking to work
- Jan 31, 44 – 48 minutes ... Walking to work
- Feb. 7, 44 – 48 minutes ... Walking to work ...

- The major difference between walking towards an environ and walking to work ...
- Needing to get somewhere (a specific destination)
 - Thinking more deliberately about the route
 - Fixed on tasks to be completed when you get to your destination
 - Things that have to be done
 - There is not enough space “mental space” for the mind to wander ... there is no time for wandering
 - What role could allowing yourself to be bored play into all this (beyond the scope)
 - When there is no task to complete your mind can be “still” and then permitted to wander
 - Allowing the mind to let go of the business of everyday (things to do)
 - It's a very different thing
 - “time” is the key factor—time, not steps becomes the measure
 - As compared to other walks where time doesn't matter
 - You just walked, and your body told you it is time to

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- be done
 - Comparatively, the walk to work is governed by time
 - It becomes physical exercise (changing the purpose and focus of effectiveness)
 - A focus on time creates worries and draws me away creative thinking and art making
 - Far less observant of my surroundings
 - A priority on walking straight lines—getting from point A to point B
 - Straight lines to save time-to get “there” faster
 - Worrying about the shortest distance between points—not environs, or letting my mind wander
 - I do try to think about art; to engage in creative thinking, it just all becomes jumbled together with:
 - Teaching
 - Coaching
 - Family life ...
 - With walking towards and entering an environ, I am actually stepping (climbing) outside of time ... whereas with a walk to work I am beholden to time
 - Which means I am not beholden to creativity, or the research
 - There is no quieting the mind ... or quiet
 - Always checking the time
 - Worried about keeping pace
 - Need to get to work on time
 - Counter-productive
 - I am more prone to thinking about the weather and how it could affect my mood
 - And the walking conditions
 - Whereas I should be entering an environ and allowing my to wander, unbothered by such things
 - I don't have time to stop and observe
 - If I have to stop and tie my shoe, I am forced to consider how much time I have lost, and whether I need to walk faster
 - By the time I arrive at my destination I am fatigued and too tired to make notes
 - I have exercised the body, but not necessarily the mind
 - My body is overwhelmed resetting itself following the excursion
 - Longer walks rob me of time to pause, reflect and write down ... robbing me of other time
 - Can pinpoint dates on a calendar—there is no spontaneity
 - Instead need to climb outside time
- **2804 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**
 - Teaching – project work
 - Single page scrolling Web site—info-graphic
 - Pure illustration
 - Similar as seen in some news sites (National Post, South China Sea infographic)
 - Composers and their significant works
 - Philosophers
 - Blossoms, when each one blooms
 - Each type in the spring
 - Musicians and their significant works
 - Birds
 - Fall: what time do certain types of leaves change colour

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- Artists
- Historical figures
- Assigned to a timeline—outline their arrival
- Sequential events down the page
- Building the animations for a whole interface
- ... for an app
- Boxes site w/folding paper animation
- Gif, interface, video clips
- Interactive video
- Focus on circle of friends ... how their lives inter-relate
- Info-graphics focused on mental health
- Profiles of each student

- **854 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, around our crescent ...**
- Stay focused on writing
- Not enough time to let my mind wander at this point

- **576 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, around our crescent ...**
- Stay focused on the writing
- 500 words at a time ...

- **2804 steps – Neighborhood sidewalk, wooded area and park path ...**
- Teaching – project work
- More retail, signage focused
- Content focused
- Needs to be done at the beginning of the semester
- Collaborative, teamwork
- Small teams
- Similar, same story based on theme
- 3 – 4 students; outdoor equipment (apparel)
- May need to provide some gear
- Capture footage
- 4 screens – database – touch screen – projections
 - physical object triggers
- Conductive ink
- Touch wall
- Mapping projections
- Gesture activated
- Depth

FIG. 17 - Acrylic on distressed plywood panel; Quakies: 55x22", Hobble Creek: 47x42", Sparrow: 14.5x20.5"



A Weaving Together of Threads

As indicated in the Preamble, this section represents a weaving together of the Primary and Secondary Threads. The aim is to identify the contribution to knowledge, examine gaps for future researchers and clearly layout my research findings. Additionally, this section concludes the primary record of my research process by addressing ideas alluded to in earlier sections related to autobiography, phenomenology and emotion, and that have emerged in the course of compiling this document.

Concerning A Contribution to Knowledge

Per standards set with regards to practice-led research, the new knowledge that has operational significance for my practice is the development of a methodology. The methodology includes walking as primary method. Upon engaging with the walking method, the development and origination of triangulating, practice related sub-methods were introduced to my practice. The walking method and sub-methods were underpinned by an innate autobiographical method which buttressed an auto-ethnographic voice manifest in my research.

Again, per standards set with regards to practice-led research, the primary focus of the research was to advance knowledge about and within my practice. The methodology developed and introduced as new knowledge has, referring back to my abstract, invigorated my art-making both personally and in my role as college professor.

It is important to affirm that the methodology can represent a refinement on the plethora of walking practices, tacitly or implicitly engaged in by myriad walking artists, practitioners and researchers. My methodology is unique in its application due to a significant insight into how incorporating wayfinding techniques by setting markers in the landscape, as well as adapting individualized meditative techniques to help deal with distractions, can enhance a walking practice as a method to facilitate and enhance creative thought. This significant insight adds to the research findings of Marily Opezzo and Daniel L. Schwartz, as indicated in their report: *Give your Ideas Some Legs: The Positive Effect of Walking on Creative Thinking*.

As an extension of new knowledge outlined above, artefacts were produced as a result of the research process. First, inspired by the research an emergent painting practice was introduced as an important aspect of my creative activities. The result was the creation of several paintings using a variety of techniques on a variety of substrates. Second, the research process led to important insights with regards to my pedagogical practice; specifically, the creation of projects designed to demonstrate key concepts and principles integral to the delivery of a particular curriculum.

In reference to the standards of practice-led research, the artefacts are not required to be included as a part of my findings. Their reference here, and included as figures in this document, support assertions concerning the unique focus of my research and the implicit impact the research had on my practice. This is important to consider as my practice-led research was conducted in the general area of action research which represents an intent to conduct a disciplined inquiry aimed at improving and refining actions; in particular, in context to this inquiry, my creative actions. Furthermore, it is also important to affirm my findings set out in this document are devised to

be shared with the expectation they could be duplicated, verified and challenged.

Gaps to consider for future researchers

Walking related philosophies, actions, performances, practices and art-making most relevant to this practice-led inquiry have been referenced and discussed throughout the document. Per my review of these references, an area of inquiry that is under-examined is the explication of walking as method which is prescriptively outlined as a series of easily repeated steps. Also under-examined and integral to the effectiveness of a walking method so outlined, is the performance of using wayfinding techniques to set markers in the landscape and to adapt individualized meditative techniques to deal with distractions. All of which is, per my research findings, vital to employing walking as a mechanism for facilitating and enhancing creative thought.

There are practices and methods cited in this document that demonstrate either tacit or explicit similarities in construct. Namely, Paul Fabozzi's use of a pedometer in the creation of his Spectral Variants artworks, Jeremy Wood's GPS drawings which self-evidently require considerable planning and the use of a GPS tracking device, and Clare Qualmann and Claire Hind's prescriptive wanderings.

Additionally, all of the artists, thinkers and practitioners referenced in this document also provide indications of the importance of walking to their creative practices. For example, as recorded in Section Two Jean Jacques Rousseau ruminates: "there is something about walking that animates and activates my ideas; I can hardly think when I am still; my body must move if my mind is do the same." (Rousseau, loc.212) As another example, in that same section it is recorded that Hamish Fulton declares: "If I don't walk, I can't make art." (Fulton, www.parafin.co.uk) Regardless the source, links drawn between walking, creative thinking and practices are almost exclusively discussed in abstract. The exception being Marily Opezzo and Daniel L. Schwartz's who per their research argue: "four experiments demonstrate that walking boosts creative ideation in real time and shortly after." (Opezzo & Schwartz, Abstract)

In preparation for identifying gaps, it is important to identify the gap wherein this inquiry is situated. In turn, it is also pertinent to contemplate on the term gap in context to the practice-led research conducted. In one sense a gap can be construed as representing a void that this research is situated to fill. Potentially implying that references cited are ignorant or mistaken with regards to the issues examined. This is misleading and could result in the insinuation that this research is superior to that which came before.

Because it is acknowledged that the contribution to knowledge born of this inquiry can represent a refinement on the 'plethora of walking practices, tacitly or implicitly engaged in by myriad walking artists.' It can also be acknowledged that the issues identified below represent—to the benefit of future researchers who wish to reference this thesis—the opportunity to consider and propose refinements germane to the research findings unveiled in this document. In that sense then, the gaps addressed below may best be contemplated as questions that can be raised with regards to issues or dilemmas that this examination was not equipped to tackle.

Before getting to the questions, one critical insight drawn from the many readings and upon engaging in the research must be addressed. Bluntly, persons who engage with walking must be

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possessed of the ability to move about the earth bipedally. Later in this segment of writing that insight will be more carefully analyzed. Prior to examining that analysis another consequentially, and directly related insight must first be considered.

One area of inquiry that this thesis did not explore are practices that include long or extended durational walking endeavors or excursions. Though the peripatetic actions of artists such as Richard Long and Hamish Fulton are neatly addressed in Section Two, the ramifications of fully embracing the types of walking exemplified by such practices were not fully assessed; except to say long durational walking outings and adventures in that vein were eliminated for incorporation in my burgeoning walking method.

In taking a closer look at the issue, the operational parameters of this inquiry did not allow for extended walking focused trips such as Fulton's "guided and Sherpa-assisted expedition" (Fulton, www.parafin.co.uk) to the summit of Mt. Everest, or Richard Long's "Walking a Line in Peru." (Long, www.richardlong.org) Correspondingly, the operational parameters of this inquiry also did not allow for the type of longitudinal focused look at walking completed over several years by an author such as Rebecca Solnit in preparation for writing her book *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*.

However, there is a noted exception that is discussed in Section Four. Currently living in Oshawa, Ontario my walking activities and method were employed in Berlin, Germany, Basel, Switzerland, Paris, France and Salt Lake City, Utah. Again, as indicated in Section Four, the plan to engage my walking method in the first two locations could only be arranged due to the requirements to attend research training residencies in Berlin. And employment of my walking method in Salt Lake City was a bi-product of a planned trip to visit family in Utah.

The distances travelled and destinations chosen were pragmatic decisions. However, it is pertinent to note there are emotional connections that can be made between each location that speak to the autobiographical method that underpinned my walking method and emergent auto-ethnographic voice. A potential fruitful area for post-doctoral inquiry could be to further examine that dynamic. But setting aside more discussion on that idea, it should be noted that I am possessed of the necessary means to travel to those places. In other words, I have access to the economic buying power or personal credit to pay for accommodations, food and to afford the time required to indulge in walking, say in the streets of Paris.

To varying degrees, all of the contemporary artists cited in this document also operate in circumstances where the political, social and economic environment permits them to create art and propose that their art is walking, or walking related. It is a curious realization to contemplate. This thesis however was not positioned and lacks the latitude to address these ideas beyond their mention here. Regardless, it should be noted that the privilege of being able to engage with walking in a manner consistent with my research suggests a researcher must be blessed in their lives by a certain level of stability and wealth. This is in stark contrast to the circumstances that faced my ancestry, as well as in modern contexts, the circumstances that face many refugees who must walk long distances in order to escape war and abject poverty. Again, it should be noted that these insights also represent another potentially fruitful area for post-doctoral inquiry.

In circling back to the essentiality of walking, another significant issue that bears repeating is that researchers who wish to duplicate, or apply the methodology outlined in this thesis as a

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part of any future inquiry, must be capable of bi-pedal movement. Walking is integral to the application and effectiveness of the methodology. The following thoughts and questions have been formulated to ruminate on this dilemma.

What if a researcher who wishes to engage with the method is confined to a wheel chair? A potential post-doctoral area of inquiry could focus on the dynamic of a person who does not have use of their legs. For example, could the physical effort and focus on traveling over significant distances in a wheel chair offer comparable opportunities for setting markers in the landscape, in order to establish creative states of consciousness with the aim to facilitate and enhance creative thought?

Correspondingly, what could the impact of the methodology be on persons faced with physical challenges, but who are still capable of bi-pedal movement in the context of their own sphere of experience? How could this challenge the contention that 'the determined ideal for the method is to walk in seemingly wild and untamed settings?' What if the walking was exclusively done on neatly groomed or paved paths, or in circumstances of restriction where an individual is confined to a hospital or rehabilitation facility? The research and experiments of Opezzo and Schwartz appear to support such conjecture.

Continuing with this line of reasoning, another quandary worth consideration is the biographical background of other researchers. Does a researcher who aims to duplicate the methodology also have to be a victim of sexual abuse? How might other persons who are victims of abuse, in context to their life-experience, react positively or negatively to the methodology? What controls could be put in place to account for the range of human experience in dealing with strong emotion associated with instances of abuse?

(The issue of controls put in place with regards to dealing with strong emotion in context to my research are addressed in the segment of writing below under the title Conclutory Considerations.)

Could there be therapy (or art therapy) related applications for the methodology? In avoidance of generalizations and placing too much focus on victims of abuse, a gap to identify for future researchers is the potential of the methodology to overlap with therapeutic focused areas of research; to the benefit of the plurality of trauma related challenges that afflict humankind. Further, how could the methodology be ameliorated by culture, race, ethnicity and gender in this context?

In continuation of a consideration for the biographical background of other researchers, must a researcher who aims to duplicate the findings related to successful application of the methodology also hail from a personal identity and culturally formative religious upbringing? Is the methodology uniquely effective among individuals who align their sense of self and personal identity with the dogmas and influences inherent in faith traditions? What understandings could be gleaned from persons of differing religious backgrounds, versus understandings that could be gleaned from persons with little or no background with religion or a religious upbringing? Is an understanding of seeking spiritual influence and guidance important to the understanding of the concept of creative caprice? Moreover, what could happen if there is an intersection between a religious upbringing and instances of abuse? How could each of these considerations influence whether or not an innate autobiographical method is revealed and an auto-ethnographic voice

emerges as an aspect of the research?

The issues and dilemmas offered above represent particular introspections the author of this document has entertained while engaged in this arena of research. Though the privileged bipedality of the author and how he is marked by trauma is aptly acknowledged, the methodology is offered as open to being adopted beyond those specific concomitances. And while the phrasing of the questions above could be construed as hedging the potential applicability or future potential of the project by making the autobiographical the frame by which the methodology might be further developed. The autobiographical nature of the research is acknowledged as an important ground and context for the research, but it does not determine all meaning or reading of the findings.

Conclusory Considerations

As a lead-in to the addendums, it is prudent to circle back and add further understanding concerning the methodology and how it has become instrumental in my practice. Fundamental to any understanding is the answer to the question: why choose walking as a research method? That answer can be found in elaborating on specific points made and thoughts shared earlier with regard to Rebecca's Solnit's book, *Wanderlust, a History of Walking*, as surveyed in the Secondary Thread of Section Two.

As previously stated, my response to reading Solnit's book was highly emotional. In fact, my initial comments in surveying Solnit's text could be considered visceral in nature. Upon the first editorial review of that segment of writing, my PhD advisors recommended tempering the aggressive tone in my response. It is not that I do not esteem Solnit's book. On the contrary, I found her text insightful and useful to my inquiry. However, stated plainly, the omission in her book of my Mormon ancestry's pilgrimage west from Nauvoo, Illinois to the Great Salt Lake Valley acted as a trigger.

Triggers, as described in my MFA performance text *How Deep is Deep Enough*, prompt self-preserving or self-destructive behaviours. My understanding of triggers comes from having read the book *Breaking the Cycle of Abuse, How to Move Beyond Your Past to Create an Abuse-Free Future* as a teen. In it psychologist Beverly Engel writes: "triggers can include anything that touches off stored up anger, fear or shame, [as well as] resentment, regrets and insecurities." (Engel, loc.922)

In retrospect, Solnit's text triggered me to pointedly contemplate the question of why I defaulted to walking. While it is an immediate, convenient and evidently widely used method for helping a variety of individuals in their creative thinking or art-making processes, for me, walking was more than just a clever mechanism I could easily adapt to my circumstances. Not immediately, but eventually as my research activities evolved, I have come to realize that choosing walking was an intuitive response to, and consequence of my learned routine of metaphorically putting on boots and subconsciously journeying and reconnecting with my sense of self. (Evans, 2011, p.9)

In her expert commentary report at the project proposal stage of my research, artist and researcher Dr. Laura González posited: "working with strong emotion may become problematic at some point, as it can be linked to trauma. Do some safety and control mechanisms need to be

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considered as the project's practical elements develop?" Over the course of my explorations early on, I perceived that there wasn't a need. The focus of my examination was on formulating the methodology and contextualizing my efforts. However, as my inquiry progressed to its current state, I have sought out psychotherapy to help me process and manage my emotional well-being while writing this thesis. The therapy sessions in turn have revealed just how self-preserving choosing to walk as a method has been and why.

In essence, establishing walking as the primary method in my methodology has permitted me to metaphorically reconnect with a deeply imbedded sense of self; I have figuratively set myself on a pilgrimage in search of past ideas and creative, artistic actions related to my present identity. Currently, I live nearly two thousand miles from the place of my birth and where I was raised. While I am active in my faith and enjoy the blessings of many good friends and association with a large, supportive congregation of fellow Mormons in my immediate community, at times I feel oddly distinct and isolated. This is not to suggest I am unhappy or dissatisfied with my current life circumstances, but rather and more pertinently, to highlight the fact that my choice of research methods, in their peculiarity, was influenced by strong emotion attached to profound memories. My very identity, not only religiously, but as a man, husband, father, artist and educator is in part wrapped up in cultural constructs instilled in me as a child and young adult. On Sundays at church as a child in my primary class, I can recall singing a favorite children's song called Pioneer Children Sang as They Walked. At times while engaged in my walking method I found myself humming the tune and even singing the words aloud:

*"Pioneer children sang as they walked and walked and walked and walked
Pioneer children sang as they walked and walked and walked and walked
They washed at streams and worked and played. Sun-days they camped and read and prayed.
Week after week, they sang as they walked and walked and walked and walked."*

(Bates, Elizabeth Fetzer, B. Children's Songbook, p.214. LDS, 1957.)

The repetitive refrain evokes the near autonomic, if not automatic nature of my regular wanderings, in the sense that, once my methodology was fully incorporated into my living and working routines, my method motivated outings at times almost seemed involuntary. (see: Remark 11) Intuitively, I chose to walk because culturally speaking my identity is wrapped up in a heritage that revels in my ancestors' life and culture preserving act of walking to escape persecution. As a child and even now, I can imagine the children noted in the song talking to themselves and in conversation with their God as they trekked their way across the American continent. This simple, but insightful realization led to other interesting revelations. For example, why did I default to letter writing as an aspect of the walking method? Quite literally, that is how I maintained contact with family and ultimately wooed my spouse.

At the age of nineteen, I applied to serve a mission for my church. I was sent to southern France where I spent two years walking and talking to people about my faith (ostensibly, without purse or scrip). As a part of the experience, missionaries are not permitted to be distracted by pop-culture centered entertainment, nor are they allowed to call home except on Mother's Day and on Christmas Day. This leaves a lot of time for thinking, reading, journal writing, as well as writing letters to family and friends. Those letters, both sent and received, were an important means of maintaining a sense a balance between what one was and what one is becoming during an intense period of time focused on striving to be selfless.

REMARK I I

*I am a methodological being having a
phenomenological experience.*

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As well, as a part of the mission experience, missionaries not only suspend their careers or post-secondary studies, but also their social relationships. The mandate is to focus one's energy seven days a week on seeking out service opportunities. In that context, I met my wife in France as she was also serving a mission. Unable to fraternize, let alone flirt, it was only upon finishing my mission several months before she did that I began writing her letters with the aim to foster a friendship. Over several months, in addition to carefully crafting my words in the letters, I crafted custom made envelopes with drawings and designs on them and sent them to her. In the context of my research, writing letters as an extension of my walking method was also an autonomic response. I simply knew to do it, because that is what I had done, and there was a powerful emotional satisfaction to be found in such actions.

Not wanting to belabour the point, there are other cultural and emotionally significant identity defining markers I can succinctly point to. The constructed memories paintings described in Section Four were born of my early walking outings, as motivated in part by my hike with the Boy Scouts noted in Section Two. The paintings are directly related to my MFA performance text. Determining their place as a part of that work of art has been put on hold while I finish this thesis and have the time to fully evaluate the emotional toll they may exact during the process of bringing the full measure of their relevance to fruition. Interestingly, the fact that they were born of my winter hike experience with the Scouts is not coincidental. As a Boy Scout leader you constantly relive your childhood through the adventures of the youth you mentor. Witnessing them experiencing something new that is not necessarily new to you is rewarding. To me it is part nostalgia, but also a reintroduction to a youthful sense of awe and wonder at the rawness of the natural world.

By way of connection, my involvement in Scouting is due exclusively to my faith affiliation. It has been the mechanism my church relies upon to provide structure for youth activities within a congregation. As a Mormon boy, I was by default also a Boy Scout. I went to many camps and on many hikes. The tenets of Scouting combined with religious principles focused on fulfilling a life of service is in part responsible for helping me prepare to serve a mission for my church as a young adult and continues to inform my devotion to this day.

Notably, it is during that two-year period of missionary service where I first came to terms with the fact I was sexually molested as a child. The support system available to me during that pivotal time in my life was figuratively, if not literally, life-saving. I returned from the two years of missionary service as a mature young man prepared to seek out and take full advantage of professional counselling. Is it any wonder then why walking and in turn letter writing, as spurred by an excursion with the Boy Scouts, became key elements in my methodology? It was while reveling in the moment of the felled tree diversion that I experienced a pause and a heightened awareness affording me the opportunity, unique to this inquiry, to glimpse consciousness, inviting me to seek out, in both a conscious and subconscious sense, methods which formed a larger methodology that provided unique insight into my creative self.

In Follow Up On Phenomenology

My frequent walking companion, Zoe, loves to sit under the baby grand piano at the bay window in our living room. She enjoys watching the world go by—neighbors and school

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children passing our home on the sidewalk. Not excitable, she rarely barks unless startled or concerned by an unfamiliar situation, or when in a playful mood which occurs often while living in a family with five children, all boys. One might argue that Zoe can be best described as happiest when she is playing with those boys. But I would contend that she is happiest when she is on a walk, especially a playful romp through the woods and along the creek in the conservation area near our home.

It is easy to take Zoe for granted as an unconsciously adopted aspect of my walking method. However, looking back on Zoe's presence on many of my walks represents an opportunity to revisit what could be learned from our joint wandering as seen, figuratively, through her eyes. Certainly, I went on many walks without her. However, as my research has matured to its distillation in this document, certain observations I made of Zoe while on method-motivated walks offers the chance to contemplate on the phenomena, in colloquial terms, of being in the moment. Specifically, what might it mean to approach a walk in a manner similar to how a dog might simply enjoy getting out and wandering in the world and not worrying about the number of steps taken, or whether or not one was climbing into and exploring an Environs.

In her book, *Inside of a Dog: What Dogs See, Smell and Know*, Alexandra Horowitz asks: "Animals exist in time, they use time; but do they experience time?" To which she answers, "At some level there is no difference between existing in time and experiencing time: time must be perceived to be used." Succinctly, dogs do experience time, but definitely not in the way humans experience time. (Horowitz, p.211)

I specifically chose to measure my walks by the number of steps taken and not the duration of each outing. This was done for pragmatic reasons. Recording my steps was a practical means of recording my body in motion, accentuating the physical nature of my actions. Recording the amount of time spent walking did not seem important to those intentions, a fact that was underscored, during a specific period of walking exercises, where I timed several walks instead of recording the steps taken. But it wasn't until I attempted to combine my walking outings with walking to work (a specific destination) that I discovered why measuring time was not vital to the mechanics of the method. (see: Section Five, list of walks, p.186)

Outings that were limited in duration, especially those aligned with the need to show up at work on time ready to teach, proved ineffective. I was never able to truly enter an Environs during those walks because it was difficult for me to focus on imaginative and creative thinking while concerned with the amount of time each walk took. In the case of walking to work, it was almost impossible for me to focus on anything other than my upcoming lecture or in-class demonstrations. Because time was a factor, I was anxious about my pace and focused too heavily on the most efficient route I should take as I walked from my home to the college campus where I teach.

Looking back, I did not enjoy the walks for anything more than the boost in mood I got from being physically active. While I could argue that I showed up in the classroom better prepared to teach, the walks themselves lacked a certain in-the-moment joyfulness that my many other method-motivated walks offered me. Engaging in time-conscious walks solidified for me that my method motivated walks required a measure of spontaneity irrespective of time in order for them to be effective. Worrying about time while walking inhibited the beneficial effects of spontaneously getting out, wandering, setting markers, entering into an Environs and

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discovering or re-discovering imaginative and creative ideas of value to me.

Wanting to discern more, again by (figuratively) further considering my walking method from Zoe's perspective, I wondered about her instinctive desire, or seeming compulsion to walk and explore the world around her. Zoe would walk herself if permitted. What could that teach me about my own instinctive desire (which as previously indicated is in part tied to my cultural identity) or impulse to walk?

Obviously, Zoe's need to get out and walk is motivated in part by the three hundred million plus sensory receptors in her nose. As compared to the roughly six million receptors in a human nose, how Zoe experiences the world is markedly different than how I experience it. Simply, Zoe is inclined to follow wherever her nose takes her in search of food. (Horowitz, p.70) But what exactly was I following after?

Horowitz writes: "If we want to understand the life of any animal, we need to know what things are meaningful to it." She follows her statement by prescribing that the first way to discover what is meaningful to a creature, is "to determine what the animal can perceive: what can it see, hear, smell, or otherwise sense." (Horowitz, p.20)

In contemplating the above, my mind turned to a series of conversations I shared with two PhD colleagues that coincided with one specific method-motivated walk, leading to several others. During the walk a maturing bud on a magnolia tree caught my attention and became the object of my direct, focused attention. Having lived in the neighborhood for more than ten years, I was very aware of that particular tree. Its branches hang out over the sidewalk I walk almost daily, either while engaged in my methodology, or while taking my children to, or picking them up from school.

Pruned and evidently well taken care of for as many years as I can remember, the magnolia tree blooms at roughly the same time every year, in early spring. It is beautiful. But until this particular walk it had never before given me pause to the extent that it did that day. (See: www.stanzaic.com/44thstanza)

Part of the answer as to why that specific bud, on that specific tree, at that specific moment captivated me lies in what was going on in my mind at the time. (see: Verse 13) The voices of my two colleagues (James and Lisa) occupied my thinking. This was due to a series of online exchanges we shared as an extension of conversations started at our most recent and final Winter research training residency. Initiated by James, the subject line of each exchange was: Things-in-Themselves.

The discussion centered on phenomenology and in particular Martin Heidegger's ideas as they relate to objects and our relationship as artists and researchers, to them. Often, throughout the exchanges, Heidegger's reference to hammering with a hammer was discussed. A quote from his book, *Being and Time*, helps contextualize our shared dialogue:

"The hammering does not simply have knowledge about [um] the hammer's character as equipment, but it has appropriated this equipment in a way which could not possibly be more suitable ... the less we just stare at the hammer-Thing, and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our relationship to it become, and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is—as equipment. The hammering itself

VERSE 13

*I once stopped to smell flowers in bloom,
and they reminded me of arriving.
Yet, more often than not I seem to have forgotten
the time it took from bulb, to bud, to blossom.*

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uncovers the specific ‘manipulability’ [“Handlichkeit”] of the hammer. The kind of Being which equipment possess—in which it manifests itself in its own right—we call “readiness-to-hand [Zuhandenheit].” (Heidegger, p.98)

Essentially, James’ argument centered around his assertion that knowledge is only ever practiced, contradicted by Lisa’s insistence that, things and people are more than what we see or recognize. There is something beyond the notion that knowledge is only ever practiced. Both James and Lisa are sculptors. Often their interpretations and ruminations on the subject of phenomenology and practice-led research escaped me, primarily because the tools and materials they frequently use in their art-making are distinct from the tools I typically utilize in my art-making.

While the full gist of the discussion is not applicable to this inquiry, my reaction to our exchanges is—specifically in how I felt compelled to find a way to interpret what was being discussed in a manner consistent with my own research-led practice. In my next offering in the exchange, I brought up Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s concept of essences, by recounting my budding (pun intended) relationship with the bud on the magnolia tree:

On my first pass of the magnolia tree, on the outward leg of a method motivated walk, I briefly glimpsed a particular bud ready to blossom. Eager to arrive at my first marker designating the entrance into an Environs, I didn’t pause to consider it. As I walked on listening for my heartbeat, sensing my body in motion, waiting to feel my hips swivel as I prepared to enter a creative state of consciousness, the visual essence of the bud I had glimpsed occupied my thoughts. In fact, the draw of its visual essence was so strong I suspended the walk.

In the preface of his book *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty states: “Phenomenology is the study of essences; and according to it, all problems amount to finding definitions of essences: the essence of perception, or the essence of consciousness, for example. But phenomenology is also a philosophy, which puts essences back into existence, and does not expect to arrive at an understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of their ‘facticity’.” (Merleau-Ponty, Preface)

Immediately, I turned around and headed back to the magnolia tree and studied it. Then with a sense of urgency I rushed home to fetch my camera. Returning to the Magnolia tree, my attention was drawn to a small hole in the concrete of the side-walk adjacent the tree. Stepping up to the tree, I purposefully placed my right foot over the hole in the concrete, raised my camera, set the settings to automatic and snapped one photo of the blossoming bud. (See: fig.18)

Normally in such circumstances, I would have spent several minutes looking for the best vantage point or angle to take several pictures, adjusting the manual settings to best suit the conditions. But in this instance, I didn’t care. My actions were wonderfully impulsive. I resolved then and there to confine my walking exercises to returning to the tree, regardless of the weather conditions, placing my right foot over the hole in the concrete and taking a single picture of the blossoming bud.

For the next twenty days, I returned to the tree and snapped a photo. Returning home, the only thing I recorded in my jot journals was my perception of the time of day I took the photo, versus what the camera recorded in the meta-data, along with the date. In this instance time became a valuable aspect of my walking method. Durationally, I was fascinated by how the bud changed and grew in shape, subject to its environment.

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One way of looking at my magnolia bud experience is from a Goethean observational perspective. In certain regard, the experience I recount above, in tone, can be described as similar to biologist Craig Holdrege's as read in his article *Skunk Cabbage*. In the article, Holdridge offers a detailed accounting of his nearly six years spent studying a plant, of which he is an "an unabashed admirer." (Holdridge, p.1) However interesting, that level of focus and attention, or phenomenological approach to studying the natural world from a biological perspective is out of place in this inquiry. There are more pertinent revelations to consider from an artist researchers' perspective.

In retrospect and to a degree, the circumstances surrounding my fascination with the bud on the magnolia tree can be construed as a microcosmic representation of my methodology. Walking played a critical role in the circumstances. In my mind I was in conversation with diverse thinkers and their writings—though in this instance not only did I write to them figuratively, but Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty wrote back to me through the communications sent to me by my colleagues James and Lisa. As well, eventually in response to taking the photos, I created a painting of the Magnolia Tree (See: fig.19) In fact there are other Magnolia tree related art works waiting to be made. But what could this experience, microcosmically, teach me about my practice and methodology?

Connecting back to my observations of my dog Zoe in response to the question "... how does [an] animal act on the world?" Alexandra Horowitz writes: "Thus, these two components—perception and action—largely define and circumscribe the world for every living thing. All animals have their own *umwelten*—their own subjective realities, what Uexküll thought of as 'soap bubbles' with them forever caught in the middle. We humans are enclosed in our own soap bubbles." (Horowitz, p.20)

Therefore, the soap bubble I found myself in the middle of, and around which I had invented an *Environs*, was the Magnolia tree. Engaging with recording and then creatively interpreting the bud's visual essence or day-to-day changing nature, metaphorically represented the blossoming of my research, leading to the formulation of a comprehensive methodology, and my changed nature as an artist researcher. In Heideggerian terms then, the Magnolia Tree was once a hammer, or 'hammer-Thing,' of which I seized hold and used as a tool to help me understand my life over the past several years as I conducted practice-led research.

What's more, the photos and painting abstractly visualize my contemplations on the issue of whether or not knowledge is only ever practiced. Knowledge of a kind (those artworks) could only have been realized through engaging with all aspects of my practice. Bluntly, the photos and painting represent what I was sensing or feeling at that time in my life—or per Horowitz, they opened a window onto and revealed what is most meaningful to me. (See: Verse 14)

Invariably, to answer the question asked in an earlier paragraph concerning what exactly was I following after, I don't follow my nose, but rather I follow after emotional connections to ideas, situations and objects as they inspire me. The Magnolia bud, among the many other things, became the direct object of my focused attention because it also represents my interactions with colleagues, who over the course of my PhD journey became mentors and friends.

VERSE 14

*The windows are open, there is a world outside.
The windows are open, no need for blinds.
Outside is inside, outside am I.
The windows are open on the street below;
below and outside the windows are open
but the sound is inside.*

*The blinds on the windows are blue as the sky.
The windows are open, and so am I.
Blue like the blinds the windows are open
outside the inside neither need I,
blue blinds or open windows
when the world is outside.
For when the windows are open,
outside am I.*

In Follow Up On Emotion

In his book, *Art Practice as Research*, Graeme Sullivan writes: “The important point, however, is that the plausibility of research findings grounded in observations of real world actions, events and artifacts relies on the acceptance that outcomes can be interpreted as connections between the ‘specific and the specific.’ In other words, what is seen to be real in an observed setting can have parallel relevance in a similar situation.” Sullivan then quotes Elliot W. Eisner, who declares: “‘generalizations made through art provide a heuristic or canonical image with which to see more clearly’ as ‘they give you something to look for or to reflect on.’” (Sullivan, p. 59)

In further reflecting on my experience with the magnolia tree as a kind of microcosm of my practice-led research experience, it is important to more carefully examine the concept of emotion in relation to my inquiry. In deference to Sullivan’s point made above, and his citation of Eisner, it is prudent in this conclusory section to consider texts that elaborate on my emotional responses to theories previously cited, as well as certain events as they have been recounted in this document.

First, I want to point to the plausibility of my having a feeling or sense that the visual essence of the blossoming bud on the magnolia tree had captivated me. Per Antonio Damasio, in his book, *Looking For Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, And The Feeling Brain*, “modern science is revealing the fact: Living organisms are designed with an ability to react emotionally to different objects and events. The reaction is followed by some pattern of feeling and a variation of pleasure or pain is a necessary component of feeling.” (Damasio, loc.235)

Earlier in his text, Damasio, explains, “Emotion and related reactions are aligned with the body, feelings with the mind” (Damasio, loc.171), this helps clarify his even earlier assertion: “Could it be that while emotion and feeling [are] twins, emotion was born first and feeling second, with feeling forever following emotion like a shadow?” (Damasio, loc.147) Seen in that light, the fact that I engaged in physical activity (walking) shortly after engaging in an exchange with my colleagues facilitated an emotional response and in turn a feeling, or sense that the visual essence of the soon to blossom bud on the magnolia tree could both function as a visual representation of our conversations (realized as an outcome, or artifact of my practice), and speak back to my and my colleagues’ shared dialogue. (see: Remark 12)

This modern scientific view of emotions and feelings, espoused by Damasio, is further supported by Lisa Feldman Barrett’s book, *How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life Of The Brain*. In her text, Barrett considers how the classical view of emotion is “embedded in our social institutions.” She posits: “The American legal system assumes that emotions are part of an inherent animal nature and cause us to perform foolish and even violent acts.” She critiques those assumptions with the declaration, “And yet ... despite the distinguished intellectual pedigree of the classical view of emotion, and despite its immense influence in our culture and society, there is abundant scientific evidence that this view cannot possibly be true.” (Barrett, loc.78) Barrett goes on to explain:

“... emotions are not built-in but made from more basic parts. They are not universal but vary from culture to culture. They are not triggered; you create them. They emerge as a combination of the physical properties of your body, a flexible brain that wires itself to whatever environment it develops in, and your culture and upbringing, which provide

REMARK 12

The problem isn't emotion, or logic, it's language. We need to constantly invent new languages, or new methods of dialogue. That's why we create art—which isn't a particularly profound thought, not because it's not new, but because it's easier to come to terms with than it is to accept the idea that emotion and logic are not strange bedfellows. They are lovers, inextricably entwined in a passionate and affirming embrace.

the environment.” (Barrett, loc.101)

Barrett’s views, in her terms, can be considered a “theory of constructed emotion,” (Barrett, loc.101) which is interesting to contemplate, when thought of in the context of my Constructed Memories sub title of Section Four. Under that subtitle I discuss my *Quakies* painting as representing a scene constructed from multiple memories. In light of Barrett’s ideas, is it possible to argue that perhaps that painting and the other two paintings created in response to it (*Hobble Creek* and an untitled depiction of a dead sparrow) do not so much represent constructed memories, as much as they represent an attempt to construct emotions around the events and circumstances they depict?

Owing to the fact that humankind’s understanding of emotion is far from resolved and Barrett’s theory is just that, a theory, the connections I draw above are likely not that simple. Thus, it is important to look at other sources for greater clarification on the subject. In his book *Emotion: A Very Short Introduction*, Dylan Evans declares: “Emotions help etch events more deeply in our memories. Any event that produces a strong emotion in us, whether negative or positive, is recalled more easily and more accurately than an emotionally neutral event.” (Evans, loc.1320) To wit, Evans asserts:

“In the light of the past few decades of brain research, it is now easy to see why talking about traumatic memories is likely to make things worse rather than better. When left unexamined, bad memories do not fester like some untreated wound ... Rather, they tend to fade away, a process known as ‘extinction’.” (Evans, Loc.995)

Again, in the first segment of writing of this section, while I intimate in my abstract the appeal of my research is to investigate how strong emotion influences my creative actions, there is a certain danger inherent in showing a lack of respect for the power an exploration of strong emotion can have on an individual. In fact, over the course of my research efforts, specifically at the point of preparing to write this document, I succumbed to a severe bout of episodic depression. It was unexpected and debilitating.

To say my research and the writing of this document is the sole factor and cause for the depressive episode I suffered, is simplistic. There were many contributing factors; the fear and insecurity associated with writing up and revealing my findings is one. Certain emotions and feelings associated with the *Quakies* and *Hobble Creek* paintings, exemplified by the fact the painting of the dead sparrow remains unfinished is another. All told, there is an abundance of factors which contributed to my depressive state. In that sense then, it would be unwise to release my findings without offering the following proviso, borrowing from Dylan Evans:

“If we are caught up directly in a powerful emotion, it may be too overwhelming for us to learn from the experience.” (Evans, Loc.973) Therefore, and again deferring to Evans’ insight, while it is commonly held as prescriptive to, per Sigmund Freud, talk with a psychotherapist and “allow a dangerous build-up of emotion to be vented ... [Entertaining] the idea that talking about your feelings functions as a kind of safety valve, allowing psychic pressure to be vented” is problematic. The potential “cathartic experience” you uncover may not be what you were expecting. (Evans, Loc.951)

Evans goes on to explain that catharsis, as a Greek term, plays “a central role in Aristotle’s *Poetics* ... [it] had a very different meaning then.” Therefore, despite historians’ uncertainty concerning

“what exactly Aristotle meant by catharsis,” the “philosopher Martha Nussbaum has argued that it was a fairly intellectual activity, in which the relation of emotions to human action was clarified by a process of experience and reflection.” And “according to Aristotle, the theatre was the perfect place to practice catharsis.” Insisting that theatrical performance “allows us to experience emotions at ... ‘a best aesthetic distance.’” (Evans, loc.973)

Decidedly, my research efforts were not designed to offer readers access to a cathartic means of dealing with their emotions and feelings. It was designed to help me uncover why I am creatively capricious—in other words, why my thoughts inexplicably jump from one compelling imaginative and creative notion to another, seemingly at random. What I have uncovered is that that randomness isn’t so random and that art-making can offer Aristotelian catharsis, so long as it is understood emotion is a tempest that can be difficult to contend with and is best done so at an ‘aesthetic distance’. (see: Remark 13)

In Summary

To reiterate, my art-making throughout this practice-led research process has been invigorated. There is a sense of excitement and anticipation for the research and project work I will pursue in the future. The development of my methodology has had a profound effect on my practice, permitting me to arrive at a greater understanding of how intrinsic interest, creative states of consciousness, emotion and practice-led phenomenology intersect in my creative thinking and doing. Going forward, all artistic endeavors I undertake will be informed by what I have learned and developed through my Inquiry.

With regards to the research aims and questions, this investigation allowed for a nuanced look at those intentions and queries as posited. Their succinctness could thus be expanded upon and the issues they raise could be considered from a variety of angles consistent with the stated intention to be receptive to what an invented methodology could reveal. Ultimately, it was the subtleties that led back to the concision of the questions and aims which in turn produced valuable insights concerning the impact my personal history, identity and sense-of-self has had on my practice.

In deference to the Graeme Sullivan quote shared earlier in this section, and in context to the issue of transferability, this document offers the reader an outline for the development of a research methodology, with walking as its primary method. Preceding and included with that outline is the requisite background and history behind its advancement. Analyzing that history and background in autobiographical terms and perhaps inviting an auto-ethnographic voice to emerge can demonstrate how another researcher might act similarly in adapting the methodology as an aspect of their own practice.

To summarize, my methodology can be quantified as a viable means for facilitating and enhancing creative thought and activity, with walking (as prescribed) constituting the primary method through which an individual may develop sub-methods unique to their practice. Thus, allowing a reader of this text to experience and comprehend his, her or their own capacity for creative caprice.

REMARK 13

We empower that with which we engage, either to our detriment or benefit. And the consequences are unrelenting.

FIG. 18



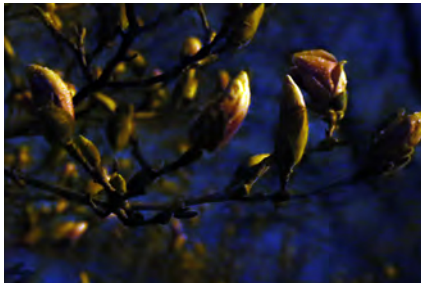
PERCEPTION: 6:09PM - APRIL 22
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PERCEPTION: 5:34PM - APRIL 23
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PERCEPTION: 7:22PM - APRIL 24
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PERCEPTION: 10:34PM - APRIL 25
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PERCEPTION: 5:33PM - APRIL 26
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PERCEPTION: 5:28PM - APRIL 28
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PERCEPTION: 5:17PM - APRIL 29
CAMERA META-DATA: 5:19PM ...



PERCEPTION: 6:02PM - APRIL 30
CAMERA META-DATA: 6:05PM ...



PERCEPTION: 3:15PM - MAY 1
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PERCEPTION: 5:35PM - MAY 2
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PERCEPTION: 5:31PM - MAY 3
CAMERA META-DATA: 5:33PM ...



PERCEPTION: 6:03PM - MAY 4
CAMERA META-DATA: 6:07PM ...



PERCEPTION: 9:31PM - MAY 5
CAMERA META-DATA: 9:33PM ...



PERCEPTION: 5:33PM - MAY 6
CAMERA META-DATA: 5:35PM ...



PERCEPTION: 1:02PM - MAY 7
CAMERA META-DATA: 1:04PM ...



PERCEPTION: 5:56PM - MAY 8
CAMERA META-DATA: 6:02PM ...



PERCEPTION: 5:16PM - MAY 9
CAMERA META-DATA: 5:28PM ...



PERCEPTION: 7:09PM - MAY 10
CAMERA META-DATA: 7:11PM ...



PERCEPTION: 6:37PM - MAY 11
CAMERA META-DATA: 6:34PM ...

FIG. 19 - 39x44" Acrylic on paper



Definition Of The Terms Post-Traumatic Stress

As indicated in Section One, in the segment of writing that addresses my definition and sense for the use of the term trauma, below is a more expansive definition of the terms post-traumatic stress. The definition is offered here as a preface to the following excerpts from my MFA Performance Text: *How Deep is Deep Enough*.

Throughout my life I have dealt with what is commonly referred to as post-traumatic stress. Per the Canadian Counseling and Psychotherapy Association, post-traumatic stress disorder is a potential consequence of childhood sexual abuse. The disorder can result in an individual re-experiencing a trauma event through things such as intrusive thoughts, in addition to dealing with exaggerated emotional responses to triggers. A comprehensive definition for the post-traumatic stress can be found at the website counselingbc.com:

“Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is an anxiety disorder that usually starts within the three months of a traumatic incident. It has been reported that in rare cases, PTSD symptoms may only occur after a number of years.

Three groups of symptoms are present in people with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Increased anxiety / emotional arousal includes anger or irritability, overwhelming shame or guilt, sleeplessness and self-destructive behaviour. The second group of symptoms, known as intrusive memories, causes flashbacks to the traumatic event and upsetting dreams. The third group of symptoms that a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder patient may experience, includes emotional numbing or avoidance. This group of symptoms includes memory problems, poor concentration, feeling emotionally numb, a sense of hopelessness, and an avoidance of activities that the person used to find enjoyable.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms may be present for a while, disappear and then return again. General stress may increase the symptoms, as can reminders of the traumatic incident.” (<https://counselingbc.com/counsellors/practice/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-153>)

A Cuss Word

I vividly remember the first time I used a cuss word. I was with a friend and his sister down by the creek. We had aspirations to build a fort in a large, rangy Cottonwood tree. My friend invited his neighbor, an older boy I didn't know. He seemed intrigued by me. I was quiet and didn't say much. The older boy teased me a little, trying to get me to talk. Suddenly, he cussed loudly. Egging me on, the boy then said, "It's OK, you can say it, it's no big deal!" So I did—I used the f-word for the first time my life.

It felt good. I imagine that's why most people swear. I wonder, however, does it make others feel as good as it felt for me at that moment? Though I didn't understand the vulgar meaning of the word, randomly shouting it for no particular reason was oddly comforting. At the time I didn't understand why. It simply felt justified. It came from the pit of my gut and I delivered it with force. So much so, everyone, including me, laughed loudly.

As a toddler, a young man who lived with my family for a short time sexually molested me. Frequently, I come to blows with the reality of what occurred, and it is always on uneven terms. Victims of abuse, after years of counseling, are encouraged to consider themselves survivors. But I am not a survivor. How can I be when I am left bruised and bloodied daily? No, I am not a survivor, nor am I a victim. I am a combatant.



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Hiking Boots

I own an old pair of rugged, leather hiking boots. They were given to me on Christmas morning when I was fifteen years old. At least a half size too big for my feet, I wore them for many years, often in winter when the snow was particularly deep—and especially in October on the deer hunt. Though they are now too tight to wear comfortably, I cannot part with them. To put the boots on is to literally put on memories—memories that cannot easily be thrown away or passed down, only walked in. What a splendid cliché.

The significance of the boots is more than nostalgia. They are a trigger. A number of years ago in counseling I learned that triggers are both a good and bad thing. They bring about self-preserving or self-destructive behavior. Decidedly, the boots are a good thing. At times, when despair threatens to overwhelm me, I have been coached to put the boots on metaphorically. Wearing them initiates a subconscious journey to the deer hunt. It is a mental exercise that grounds me—a trigger that allows me to reconnect with my sense of self.



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The Deer's Heart And Liver

On the mountain called Mud, I learned the most basic lessons of life and death. It's not difficult to recall the first time I witnessed a deer shot, tracked down, then bled and gutted. Above all else I remember the smell of the entrails as they were ripped from the body cavity and left on the mountainside for scavengers.

Once cleaned, the older, stronger men dragged the deer's body down the mountain. As a boy, my important task was to carry the heart and liver back to camp in a plastic, bread loaf bag. It was the same bag we used to carry our bologna and ham sandwiches, made the night before, for lunch on the mountain. The deer's heart, best cooked fresh, would be eaten for dinner that night. The liver would be put on ice and eventually delivered to my aunt Joann. Every family had an aunt Joann who loved the flavor of deer liver.

Looking back, it's impossible not to reminisce about the first deer I ever shot and killed. My father's knees were too achy to hike the mountain. At sixteen I was old enough to trade in my pellet rifle for his deer rifle. The difference between the two is the kick, boom and felling power of the ammunition. After a long morning spent patiently watching draws and seeing nothing, my brothers, a cousin and I headed down the mountain and back towards camp. Our strategy was to spread out 200 yards or more and perhaps push deer to one another as we walked.

Spry in the mountain brush, I made my way quickly through some tall Quakies. Certain I was a little too far



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out ahead of my party I slowed my pace as I entered a clearing. Up the mountain behind me echoed a gunshot. I paused and looked back. A handsome four-point buck bounded into the same clearing, roughly sixty yards from me. It stood perfectly still. Twitching its ears, the buck tilted its head as if straining to spot the hunter who was chasing him. Obscured by some Scrub Oak, I slowly raised my rifle, chambered a round, aimed and fired.

Following the boom the buck turned and ran straight at me. I was certain I had hit it. Mule deer only run down hill when wounded. Calmly I worked the bolt action on my rifle, chambered another round and fired again. Less than twenty feet from me the animal tumbled to the earth with a thunderous crash kicking up dirt and dust. My heart raced. It was exhilarating. The deer twitched and then lay motionless. Unexpectedly, a sense of profound grief came over me. I nearly cried out, but hesitated. Remembering instructions from my hunter's safety course, I reloaded my weapon and approached the animal from up hill. It was dead. I was in a state of shock.

"I got one," I eventually shouted so that my family could find me. One by one they descended upon the scene. After marveling at the kill and with the instruction of another hunter, whose errant shot pushed the buck to me, I bled and gutted the deer. Now older and stronger, my job was to help drag the deer's body down the mountain.

Back in camp, thoroughly exhausted, I headed to the creek to wash up. In the cold water we stored our drinks to keep them chilled. Before reaching for some soap on a

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plate at the bank, I plucked a can of Black Cherry Shasta soda from the stream. I wanted something flavorful to wash down the dust on my lips and grime between my teeth. On one knee, I popped the pull-tab and raised the container to my lips. The carbonation tickled my nose. As I took a swig, the stench from the dried blood on my hands and from beneath my fingernails mixed with the sickly sweet artificial cherry flavoring.

To me, that is the taste of death. The flavor has stayed with me. The poignancy of that moment cannot be underplayed. Not only does a mental journey to the deer hunt offer psychological relief, but it also provides perspective. There have been times when I have contemplated ending my life. The day I shot the deer offers a permanent reminder of the finality that comes when a life is taken suddenly.

Next to my faith, that reminder is essential to my emotional well-being. I do not want individuals close to me to ever experience such a reality prematurely. It would be tragic to leave behind only those cherished memories and nothing more—for there is more to life than tragic events. There are boots to put on. Bouncy drives to take. Mountains to hike. Lessons to learn and pass on.



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On A Wednesday Night

On a Wednesday night, a Wednesday.

It was unexpected.

I was, where I am always, every Wednesday.
At the chapel, to help coordinate weekly youth activities,

on a Wednesday night.

For nearly twenty years I have dedicated Wednesday nights to youth activities and Scouting. I have played a lot of basketball and dodgeball. I love sports,

on a Wednesday night.

I go because there was always someone there for me, when I was a boy—when I needed to play games, earn badges and learn new things

on a Wednesday night.

I also go to be dutiful, but especially because I believe I can make a difference in some one's life; and I have made a difference,

on a Wednesday night. It was unexpected.

The boys were playing bump, a free throw shooting game in the gym and I was called away for an interview. Interviews are not unusual—with ecclesiastical leaders they are expected. In a volunteer church, we meet often as committees to discuss each organization's needs.



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But, it was unexpected, on a Wednesday night.

I left the gym and was directed to a small, familiar classroom. To my surprise the interview was not with my ecclesiastical leader or a church committee. Rather, a regional official from Scouts Canada that I did not know wanted to ask me questions. Questions he was asking all Scout leaders.

On a Wednesday night.

Across from me sat a friend and fellow Scout leader from the church, beside him, the regional official. It was clear the official wanted to impress upon us the importance of effective Scouting activities. In the church we do our best to be good Scouts, but often lack the zeal for the whole Scouting experience. My hope was that the meeting would be quick. I was anxious to get back to the activity. Reluctantly, I submitted to the formality.

On a Wednesday night.

“How long have you been involved in Scouting?” The official first inquired, after introductions and a handshake.

“Including my time as both a Cub and Scout, close to thirty years,” I answered pointedly.

“Good, good to hear . . . and are you committed to providing the boys with a quality Scouting experience, taking them camping and working on badges?” He asked.

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“Yes, I’ve taken the boys camping twice recently, once in the spring and again this past July,” I replied with pride.

“Excellent, that’s wonderful . . . and are you committed to holding weekly Scouting activities?” He then pried.

“Of course, I’m here every Wednesday. I have five sons. I will be involved in Scouting for many more years,” I answered in a deliberate and slightly incredulous tenor.

“Oh, good,” he responded, smiling, pleased by my tepid responses. And then, rather nonchalantly, from behind that same eager smile the regional Scout Official asked me: “Have you ever been abused?”

It was unexpected, on a Wednesday night.

In the split second it took his words to find my ears the room grew dark. Blood rushed to my face. My eyes focused intently on his. I sat up and nearly said aloud: Who the hell are you to ask me if I have ever been abused? To my surprise, a sense of propriety got the better of me. “*That* is an inappropriate question,” I answered, barely containing my disdain.

The collar and neckerchief on the regional Scout official became noticeably uncomfortable. Taken aback by my response he asked his question again, more forcefully, petitioning for a different response. “*That* is an inappropriate question—I will not answer it,” I replied in a defiant, yet polite tone.

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At this point the classroom was spinning. It felt as though I had been slugged in the gut. Dumbfounded, I resisted the urge to get up and leave. A part of me, however, did separate from my body and float about the room. A room that grew smaller and less familiar to me as my spirit watched my physical body slouch back into its ridged metal folding chair.

After an awkward silence the regional Scout Official persisted with his question. The purpose, he explained, was to help people who have suffered abuse. To, perhaps, get them the counseling they need. His demeanor softened. He was no longer demanding but rather pleading with a strained sincerity. It did little to defuse my emotions. I had stopped listening to him. Instead, my attention was directed at my agitated disembodied self that was now pacing back and forth behind me:

“Help. What kind of help is he offering? and on a Wednesday night, no less. And ... who are *they* that need counseling?” demanded a voice speaking to my psyche.

While pondering those questions my mind stumbled upon a sudden realization. The interview was a ruse with one contemptable purpose. He is not offering help. The regional Scout Official is assessing risk. Volunteer leaders who answer in the affirmative will be labeled as such!

Livid, my incorporeal soul pounded the table in front of me: “Does he know what he is asking?” Cried the voice. Does he realize his question presupposes that

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because I was abused I will abuse ... am I guilty until proven innocent?”

Reduced to a whimper my distraught spirit threw itself to the floor and crawled, cowering in a corner of the room. For a moment I thought I might waver and answer the question. Lying was an option, but I couldn't bring myself to do it. As for the truth, what would be the purpose of sharing such intimate details of my past with a complete stranger and the other church Scout leader seated next to him? Who, or what would be served?

Ultimately, I was determined that this man's ignorance would not define me. I maintained my composure, summoned my spirit to rejoin my corporeal being and responded to his question one last time: “Regardless, it is an inappropriate question and I will not answer it.”

On a Wednesday night.



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Laundry Piles

With this final piece, I hope to create a more visceral scene in your mind's eye. Imagine a pile of clothing in front of you, at your feet. Picture socks, shirts, pants and underwear, indiscriminately thrown together in a heap on the floor in your home. It's not a difficult scene for me to visualize. Such piles figure prominently in my early childhood memories.

I don't know about you, but in my home growing up, my mother made a glorious mess of the house with the laundry. I come from a rather large family of five children, including two adults. Each week's laundry was significant. It was not uncommon to find large piles of clothes in our basement. There was always a clean pile, freshly pulled from the dryer, not far from two larger piles of dirty lights and darks waiting to be thrown into the washing machine. Playing in the piles was always fun, though it vexed my mother to no end.

As a small boy I was often anxious at bedtime. Like many children I had nightmares, but at times I would suffer particularly disturbing dreams. They bothered me greatly, especially their duration. To such an extent, there was a period of time when I truly feared sleep. Each time I experienced the dreams I would suddenly find myself awake and in a state of hyper alertness, literally clenching my teeth as I lay perfectly still hoping that some unseen presence in the room wouldn't notice me. Eventually, after several sleepless nights I came to the realization that lying motionless in bed was the worst possible strategy that I



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could employ to keep myself from being discovered.

Looking back, though it's difficult to imagine being so aware at such a young age, I fully understood that hiding in a closet or under the bed was too obvious. Thoughtfully, I devised a clever plan to conceal my whereabouts in the laundry piles. The mass of socks, shirts, pants and underwear were soft and comfortable enough to sleep in—and the fabric from my PJ's would blend in with the mishmash of shapes and colours.

Aside from the ability to camouflage myself, there were other benefits to hiding in the mounds of clean and dirty clothes ... the body odor of my siblings and parents permeated the fabrics and were wonderfully reassuring. To this day my mother and father tell stories about how they used to find me, fast asleep, in the laundry piles. They didn't understand it and I was never able to explain it to them.

Older and wiser, I am now able to articulate why. At forty years old, I still get anxious at bedtime. Occasionally, I endure those same disturbing dreams. What's more, I find that I am still trying to hide. Only now I bury myself in a variety of important endeavors. I keep myself insanely busy. Often exhausted, I now fall asleep instantly. It's a condition of adulthood and parenting. It's also a blessing.

The truth is I was never hiding from an unseen presence, but rather from a gripping reality. The disturbing dreams are not, nor were they ever nightmares. They are a series of troubling recollections. Memories that

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include images, sounds and smells which, to this day, produce a gag reflex ... a reflex that is brought on by the fact, I desperately do not want to remember gagging on his penis.



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