



Recognising creativity in everyday life: a heuristic inquiry

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April 2016

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Abstract

This heuristic inquiry explored the experience of recognising creativity in everyday life. The phenomenological approach (Husserl, 1900/1970) was adopted in order to explore the subjective experience on an introspective and perceptual level. This heuristic research involved thorough data collection and analysis methods outlined by Moustakas (1990). The serendipitous findings explain that creativity is intrinsic within internal and external realities. Subsequently by recognising and engaging with everyday creativity; I consequently contextualized myself within the environment where creativity is embedded. Reflections upon this experience consider wellbeing, tacit interpretation, heightened awareness and interconnectedness between the self and the world. The creative synthesis resulting from this inquiry represents my personal perceptual experience.

KEY WORDS:	HEURISTIC	CREATIVITY	CONTEXTUALISED	SUBJECTIVE	PHENOMENOLOGY
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Introduction

The aim of this research was to gain an introspective understanding of the experience when recognising creativity in everyday life. Before delving in to this study, it must be acknowledged that this is a dissertation piece. However, the traditional dissertation structure is in juxtaposition to the fluid structure practiced in heuristic inquiry. This study shall apply the fluid, first-person format utilized in heuristic inquiry, as it is significantly more appropriate.

When conducting a heuristic inquiry, one must reflect upon previous studies and engage with the concepts to be explored. This is recognised as the first phase of heuristic inquiry; identifying with the focus of the inquiry (Salk, 1983). So, what is creativity? A question that, since interest in the area began in the 1950s (Guilford, 1967), has been subject to much debate (Sawyer, 2004). Creativity is a vast, field-spanning concept, prompting discussions such as;

“Is creativity a property of products or processes or people? Is creativity a personal or social phenomenon? Is creativity common to all people or a unique characteristic of a select few?...” (Mayer, 1990:459)

I think the reality is that there is no singular, exact definition of creativity, something scientific psychology and empirical studies struggle to accept. Barrantes-Vidal (2003) recognised that creativity is multidimensional, as there are various approaches one can adopt when considering creativity, for example; biological, personality and cognitive characteristics of the creative person, environmental and sociocultural circumstances facilitating creativity, and components of the creative process. The word creativity is recognised as ambiguous, though through subjective interpretation, one is able to establish new pathways to understanding, thus innovating and inspiring further research.

This study in particular, focused upon everyday creativity. As Runco (2007) considered, individuals engage in creative practices in quotidian life, though daily actions are not usually perceived that way. Language and problem solving are examples put forward by Runco (2007) that demonstrate everyday creativity. Through experiences one learns, and consequently produces different methods to resolve daily issues and find new ways of articulating.

Though it was not just intra-personal creativity this study was concerned with, as the beauty of creativity is all around. For example; man-made creations like architecture and music, or natural creations such as plants and wildlife, are simply furniture in the world we live in, but how often does one really appreciate their surroundings? Runco (2007: x) elaborated that “It may be that creativity plays a role in all that is human”. Although a grand statement, it’s very profound, suggesting creativity is ingrained in circadian life. It is this statement that really sparked an interest in me, thus describing the creativity I was curious to explore and recognise in the everyday world.

Henceforth; one began to contemplate what creativity research discusses. Historical creativity research often focused upon creativity and mental disorders, such as depression, madness and substance abuse (Post et al., 1994). However, much of the research connecting creativity and madness is plagued with methodological

limitations, due to weaknesses regarding definitions and measures (Schlesinger, 2009). Nonetheless, research suggests cognitive and personality similarities between creative individuals and those with mental disorders, including mood disturbances, tolerance to irrationality and particular thinking processes (Neihart, 1998; Fink et al. 2012). Mumford and Gustafson (1988) discussed the complexity of creativity, as various descriptions have been suggested due to the lack of a universal definition such as; creativity as a production of ideas (Guilford, 1967; Kris, 1952), creativity as recognising possibilities (Tyler, 1978), creativity as a personality trait and response style (Mackinnon, 1962) or a cognitive ability (Cattell, 1971).

Following this; Jamison (1993) found that creativity is frequently followed by enhanced mood-state. It has often been acknowledged that artistic and creative practice is beneficial for those with or without proposed 'madness'. Various forms of creative expression hold therapeutic value, such as writing, composing and drawing, enabling one to understand and rethink pain or thoughts invoked by madness, whilst encouraging emotional stability and self-understanding (Neihart, 1998). In addition to this; Ludwig (1995) stated that creativity is crucial for emotional strength.

Furthermore; research examining the relationship between creativity and the individual centres strongly on wellbeing. This may be due to findings frequently indicating that engagement in creativity promotes wellbeing (Reynolds and Prior, 2006; Brierley, 2014; Thompson, 2015). Furthermore, Cropley's (1990) study indicated that if creativity in daily life was enhanced, mental health would be enhanced also. So at face value, this suggests recognising everyday creativity will have a positive influence upon my wellbeing.

After exploring creativity individually and its connection with wellbeing, this provoked one to consider what wellbeing research discusses. The New Economics Foundation (NEF) reviewed wellbeing research and proposed Five Ways to Wellbeing (Thompson, Aked, Cordon, Marks, 2008). The first is to Connect with all those around; thinking of others as 'cornerstones' in life and spending time strengthening relationships was found to be supportive and elevating. The second way to wellbeing is to Be Active; taking part in physical activity one enjoys improves mood, insinuating the saying 'healthy body, healthy mind' has some truth to it! To Take Notice is the third suggestion, describing how being curious, being in the moment and reflecting on experiences encourages appreciation of what matters to the individual. The fourth suggestion is to Keep Learning, which can increase confidence and is fun to do, be it trying new things or reviving past hobbies. The last way to wellbeing is to Give; acts of kindness, volunteering and connecting with ones' community is found to be very rewarding.

The main aim of this study was to recognise, mirroring this is the third 'way'; to take notice. When recognising everyday creativity I was learning, the fourth 'way'. So with consideration to the five steps to wellbeing, and the associations between creativity and wellbeing, it has become apparent that previous research implies that during this inquiry, it's possible my wellbeing was positively enhanced.

So, just *how* creative experiences influence wellbeing has been proposed by Csikszentmihalyi (1998), who founded the concept of 'flow'. Described as a psychological state, Csikszentmihalyi elaborates that flow involves strong focus and

complete engagement in an activity. Flow-inducing activity varies from person to person, be it exercising or painting, what remains the same is the reported feelings of flow; full experiential consciousness assisting the elimination of negative feelings (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). This proposes the notion that fully engaging with surroundings and internalising experiences (exactly what I intended to do!) can encourage feelings of flow.

With regards to research concerned with experience; Schroeder (2012) discussed how quality of life is intrinsically related to individuals' experiences, be it of their lives, selves and environment. He cited natural aspects of the environment as particularly important in daily life. Individual perception is therefore a vital ingredient in the recipe of experience.

Eudaimonia is an interrelating concept with perception. Eudaimonia considers individuals', in-depth engagement with life and self-realisation (Ryan & Deci, 2001). This engagement is culturally specific and dynamic, combining learning and creativity, resulting in mindful sensation. Thus "both being and becoming, pleasure and process are linked in terms of flourishing" (Geurts and Adikha, 2006:296, cited in Wright and Pascoe, 2014). Therefore this study has a eudemonic aspect due to the nature of in-depth connectivity to environment and interpretation.

How does all this link with phenomenological principles? It is apparent that perception is crucial in wellbeing, and my own perception was a key component of this exploration recognising creativity in everyday life. Hence, adopting the phenomenological approach for this heuristic inquiry was appropriate and rather essential. As developed by Husserl (1900/1970), the phenomenological philosophy aims to describe and understand the human experience from a first-hand perspective (Zahavi, 2003). This enables one to gain awareness of individuals' subjective realities and understand their perceptions, exploring consciousness, existence and the nature of being.

The findings produced during my experiential exploration with creativity in daily life provided phenomenological insights in to my perceptions. Subjectivity was fundamental, so by inquiring in to my own interpretations, knowledge of experience was constructed (Moustakas, 1990).

Phenomenology derived from dissatisfaction with psychologism and discusses an experiential level (Husserl and Zahavi, 2003), therefore it would have been a conflict of interests to conduct this particular heuristic inquiry condensing and combining individual experiences. Subjectivity is considered a fundamental condition of the real (Douglass and Moustakas, 1985), hence for this study to be an accurate phenomenological, heuristic inquiry, I was the only participant, looking to explore my inner perceptions and discovering personal meanings when recognising and immersing myself within the creativity of everyday life.

In order to assist with the understanding of my interpretations, my personal background shall be detailed during the initial engagement and reflexive aspect of this study. This will provide additional context, furthering the audiences understanding of my internal frame of reference.

With regards to methodology; the phenomenological approach is intrinsically connected with heuristic inquiry. Heuristic inquiry involves the researcher actively seeking an answer to a personal question they find confusing yet intriguing, consequently leading to an experiential understanding of themselves and their world.

So although it may seem that the findings of this study could be inadequate in terms of generalizability and replication, those who believe that are simply missing the point. As Galliers (1992) stated, a case study depicts reality in fine detail, highlighting many variables for discussion, in contrast to other methods. Heuristic inquiry is authentic and delivers unique material (Stake, 1983).

It is the researchers' responsibility to provide adequate, relative information which enables a reader to decide whether a certain case study is to be generalized or not (Ruddin, 2006), suggesting the case study to be empowering and inclusive to readers. Flyvberg (2001) recognised how case studies are seemingly debatable, but argues that case studies produce knowledge that is tangible, real and contextually dependent. A point to acknowledge is how within the law, making generalizations and comparisons, applying facts from one case to another, is standard practice, but in psychology it is disregarded, despite evidence of its value (Hersen & Barlow, 1997; Gomm, 2000).

Nonetheless, generalization and replication was not of relevance in this study. What was of interest was experiential research and perceptual understanding. This study was open-ended, so although previous research has been considered, any understandings that become evident will ultimately be serendipitous.

Methodology

As previously mentioned, the methodology of this study is that of heuristic inquiry, outlined by Moustakas (1990). As I was the researcher as well as the participant, due to the self-directed, personal nature of this research; ethical considerations and risk assessments were all resolved.

The particular method of heuristic inquiry focuses on;

“a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meanings of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis” (Moustakas, 1990:9)

In order to conduct an in-depth study, this inquiry utilized the seven concepts and processes outlined for data collection which are as follows;

1. *Identifying with the focus of inquiry* involves engagement with the open-ended inquiry in to the research area, reading about the topic of interest, and discussing previous research, which is referred to as ‘the inverted perspective’ (Salk, 1983).
2. *Self-dialogue* refers to the honest interactions and discussions one has with them-self when exploring the phenomenon and experience, so in this circumstance, creativity in everyday life. This method promotes knowledge derived from experience and self-inquiry.

3. *Tacit knowing* involves four subsections as outlined by Polanyi (1969). The first is *skill*, which involves integrating and focusing on the research area. The second is *reading of a physiognomy*, this requires the individual to take note of mood, potentially adding depth to their understandings when exploring outlook and attitude. Thirdly, *gaining a sense or meaning of our environment*, which Polanyi compared to the methods individuals use to make their way in the dark, 'feeling' their way. The fourth is *speculative skills* in the tacit dimension, which enables one to figure out the next move or exploration of the research.
4. *Intuition* describes the connections made between knowledge gained in the tacit dimension and explicit knowledge, delving in to personal perceptions and looking at the concept from different angles.
5. *Indwelling* explores intra-personal meanings and patterns of experience in order to discover qualities and conditions perceived, and re-visiting those ideas produces a deepening of understanding.
6. *Focusing* requires inner attention and sustaining a connection with an experience to discover in-depth meanings and perceptions.
7. The *internal frame of reference* describes an individuals' original framework and standing point from which they perceive the experience and discovers its meanings. It enables the sharing and understanding of individual experience from a subjective point of view, providing contextual background.

Data collected was obtained via these heuristic concepts and processes, with experiences, reflections and perceptions recorded via journaling. Journaling is a useful tool, considered effective for personal reflection and discovery (Woodward, 1998), and was invaluable in for this inquiry. The mobility of journaling enhanced authenticity of my experience, as I could document the present feelings and perceptions in the precise moment. As well as the production of journals, I additionally recorded my experiences of creativity in everyday life through various forms of media, for example; drawings, paintings and photographs. By utilizing these various techniques, my involvement in this inquiry became increasingly immersive, for example; drawing provoked me to really consider what I was experiencing in detail. By collecting data in different forms, a dynamic representation of my experience was produced in preparation for; analysis, examination and exploration from different perspectives; thus presenting an expansive understanding of my subjective experience.

Data collection and analysis are interrelating during heuristic inquiry, as it is a constant process of sense-making and reflection. Processes and concepts correspond to phases of data analysis throughout the inquiry, consequently contributing and inspiring a creative synthesis of the individual experiential findings. Douglass and Moustakas (1985:39) describe heuristic inquiry as:

“...passionate and discerning personal involvement in problem solving, an effort to know the essence of some aspect of life through the internal pathways of the self... When utilized as a framework for research, it offers

a disciplined pursuit of essential meanings connected with everyday human experiences”.

It has been suggested by Valle and Mohs (1998:96) that Moustakas created heuristic research in response to dominant quantitative psychology during his time of study:

“His humanistic (or ‘third force’) approach was both a reaction to, and a progression of, worldviews that constitute mainstream psychology, namely behavioural, experimental and psychoanalytical psychology”.

This suggestion indicates how the methodology of heuristic inquiry is in itself a critique of dominant psychological methods. The principles concentrate on studying deeply in to the rich and complex human experience. Typically psychological research does not seek to understand subjective experiential knowledge, thus most studies lack such an in-depth exploration of lived experience, as is produced in heuristic inquiry. It must be noted, however, that not all research is best suited to such a qualitative approach, such as statistical surveys (Etherington, 2004). However, regarding human phenomena, heuristic inquiry is necessary in providing vividly detailed understandings. These understandings uncovered in the processes of inquiry are expanded upon during the phases of data analysis, continually adding to the richness of the study. Phases of data analysis within heuristic research are as follows:

1. *Initial engagement* involves the discovery of a strong interest or curiosity which the researcher wishes to pursue. Initial engagement has somewhat already occurred during this inquiry, as research and investigation in to my interest of daily creativity has taken place. Self-dialogue and journaling has begun, as I consider my own context and curiosities surrounding the study, exploring various definitions of creativity and furthering my understanding of the phenomenological approach. Tacit knowledge is also involved, creating multi-layered interpretations.
2. *Immersion* is where I, as the researcher, focus and entangle myself within my area of interest. In this case, becoming aware of creativity in quotidian life, exploring different ways one could perceive and understand surroundings. Becoming engrossed in the research phenomena, constantly aware and focussed of its occurrences allows for tacit knowing, providing opportunities for knowledge. Immersion coincides with the focussing aspect of data collection.
3. *Incubation* requires detachment from the research. This enables expansion of knowledge to take place, without awareness. By taking time away from the topic, new perspectives and ideas develop. Polanyi (1964) noted how discovery often occurs spontaneously through the uncontrolled, reorganization of mental operations.
4. *Illumination* is a “breakthrough into conscious awareness” (Moustakas, 1990:29), naturally occurring via openness to tacit knowledge and intuition. Thoughts may become distorted or moments of clarity may occur, invoking new ideas and interpretations. Reflections upon

perception help uncover meanings. Misunderstandings and corrections provide the element of reality to an experience.

5. *Explication* involves a much more in-depth study of the themes, qualities and meanings derived in illumination. A full examination of the experiential consciousness takes place, corresponding with indwelling. Comprehensive discoveries are collated, in order to grasp the full meanings of the experience.
6. *Creative Synthesis* is the final process of the inquiry, undertaken once the researcher is completely familiar with the data. The researcher collates and examines the core themes to develop a creative synthesis, such as a poem, story or painting. The understandings discovered in the data provide inspiration, along with reflection and meditation, for the researcher to express the experiential essence developed by the study.

Analysis, Discussion and Reflexive Analysis

Initial engagement

Throughout initial engagement; data collection methods of self-dialogue and tacit knowing were utilized. The initial engagement within this study provides an insight in to my internal frame of reference and curiosities regarding everyday creativity.

I am a twenty-two year old, white, female psychology student. I'm originally from Worcester but studying in Manchester, and have been living here for 3 years. I have always been interested in phenomenology without realising it. For as long as I can remember I have been aware that everyone's experience is subject to their own perceptions. When listening to music or eating a meal, I was always perplexed by the varying opinions of others in contrast to my own. Maybe it's a matter of preference, but what is the drive behind this preference? Perception, I suppose- an extraordinarily fascinating concept.

Pertaining to the initial engagement of this inquiry, I spent a long time thinking and reflecting as to what I'm curious about. In the past I have had anxiety and depression, always turning to drawing and painting as a means of solace and expression. Why did I find it so useful, and continue to feel that way? I'm not artistically gifted, but I have always found art enjoyable. Art is also a useful example of subjectivity. It can be perceived and interpreted in a variety of ways, with no definite answer; it is what you make of it.

In this sense, art can be used as an analogy for experience. We all perceive differently and create in our own way, whether we observe or participate. So I started to think about everyday experiences. I thought about how much I really acknowledge my surroundings.

After further reflection, recognising creativity in the quotidian was an idea I really wanted to explore. How to do that was another aspect to discover. After discussing with my dissertation supervisor about my interest in phenomenology and creativity, the methodology of heuristic inquiry was mentioned and subsequently investigated.

Inspired by Moustakas' method and research such as Varanis' (1985) *The Experience of Mystery in Everyday Life* and Snyders' (1989) *The Experience of Really Feeling Connected to Nature*, a heuristic inquiry seemed the most appropriate method, and a study exploring the experience of recognising creativity in everyday life is absent in research.

As I delved deeper in to heart of this study, my thoughts became increasingly immersed in the idea of everyday creativity, I felt as though I was almost drowning. The accumulating mass of heightened awareness came crashing upon me. Throughout my day, my observations were growing richer, branching out and blossoming. Whilst distinguishing between all of this sensory experience, I tried to fathom what individuals were thinking and feeling about their environment, are they aware of their surroundings? Am I aware of my surroundings? Are they distracted by their own personal thoughts? What do they see that maybe I don't?

Immersion

Subsequent to initial engagement is immersion, which lasted over three months. Immersion utilizes focusing and tacit knowing. I documented the experience of recognising everyday creativity via the data collection methods of; journaling, photography and drawing. Approximately 1500 words were written during journaling, however due to restriction, the immersion aspect of this inquiry shall represent a summary of the experience, with concepts to be further explored following incubation. Please see appendix 1 for the complete journaling account and appendix 2 for the complete pictorial data.

As I began the immersion stage, I found myself intrigued by all aspects of the seemingly mundane. The amount I discovered when I really focused amazed me. The painted lines edging roads were now stitched seams guiding ones journey (figure 1). Chewing gum littering the streets imitated splashes of paint. Further consideration cited this as a demonstration of individuals' interactions with their environment. I noticed various patterns of the pavement (figure 2), seamlessly changing throughout the city. These tessellating puzzles are not only visual, they physically influence ones walking; be it slanted, or a slight wobble over an unstable slab. Further scrutiny generated fascination with how the rain derives from rivers, lakes, etc., and as raindrops fell I felt inherently connecting to bodies of water far away. When I closed my eyes, the metropolitan rhythm of traffic sounded like waves. Ripples in puddles were simply hypnotic.

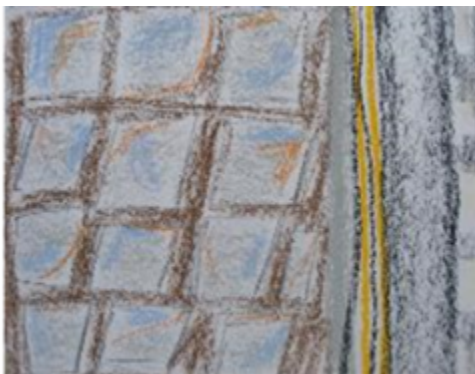


Figure 1 Stitched edging of roads



Figure 2 Patterns of the pavement

Thus, my first interaction with immersion was extremely interpretive. By using metaphorical language, I unconsciously gained deeper perception when recognising creativity in everyday life. A further example of my metaphorical interpretation was clouds, acting as curtains, translucent and occasionally opaque. When streams of sunlight cascaded through the clouds, their shadows mirrored the patterns of the clouds (figure 3).



Figure 3 Mirroring of cloud shapes

As the immersive period continued, further observations of creativity highlighted the notion of sanctuary. Windows reveal the subjective havens individuals' have created in their homes (figure 4), a snippet of one's materialistic reality. Additionally, windows are significant in connecting us to the outside world (figures 5, 6), as one can witness their environment, but are unable to feel the immersive experience of being *in* the environment.

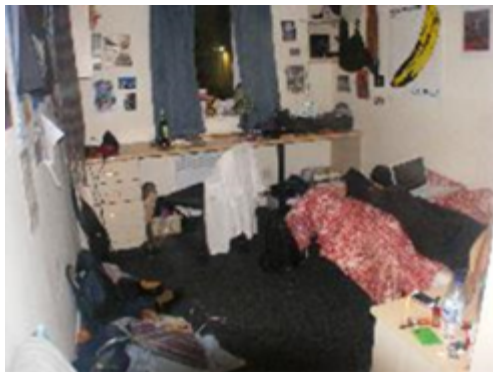


Figure 4 Materialistic Reality



Figures 5 and 6 Windows connecting one to the outside world

The contention between natural and man-made creations captivated me. Nature is a creation of the world as a living entity. Man-made creations facilitate practicalities for society to function, such as homes. Though there are similarities as the constructed city skylines (figure 7) mimic trees striving for the sun, demonstrating juxtaposing forms of creation.



Figure 7 Construction as man-made creativity

Though what does this have to do with recognising creativity in everyday life? I came to perceive that all aspects of the everyday are a form of creation. Thus my appreciation of the quotidian rapidly increased as creativity is inherent in the world; embedded in the environment and human nature. All aspects of the man-made are a development, an idea, but a creation nonetheless. When indoors I constantly noticed how everything in the room was someone's idea; the layout, the shape of the chairs, the design of the flooring (figure 8). Conversely; I perceived the natural environment as an alive, nurturing form of creativity. Further in-depth consideration lead me to see fingerprints as individual traces of environmental interaction (figure 9).



Figure 8 Ideas as a form of creativity



Figure 9 Fingerprints as a representation of environmental interaction



Figure 10 People as a form of creativity

Moreover, recognising internal creativity engrossed me, I realised that as individuals we create who we are, our relationships, our appearance, our interactions. When walking through the city I became fascinated with the infinite variety of people (figure 10). People are instigators of creation. Choice became a fundamental debate, are we choosing to create or is this accidental or inevitable?

The experience was completely absorbing, fusing me within my environment. But was it truly creativity I was recognising? I believe so as I recognised creation was innate within all aspects of the world.

Furthermore this introspective experience was overwhelming. The method of focussing rapidly became an encompassing, sensory experience. This intense process caused me to perceive in an abstract fashion, the shapes and patterns of the environment were distorting as I zoomed in and out of focus on particular surroundings (figures 11, 12).



Figure 11 Zoomed perspective of woodland



Figure 12 abstract interpretation of a park

In-depth focus upon the environment exposed features of my surroundings I had never noticed; for example distant views of the moors and intricate architecture (figures 13, 14). As I opened up to truly recognising the creativity of the everyday, the creativity was opening up to me.



Figure 13 View of the moors



Figure 14 Complex architecture

Throughout journaling and pictorial data, the weather was mentioned frequently (figures 15, 16, 17) Weather influences interactions with the environment; such as mood state and movement, as snow causes people to walk slower. I perceived this positively because experience is enhanced when we co-operate with our surroundings.



Figure 15 Snowfall in Hulme



Figure 16 Sunlight in New Islington



Figure 17 Sunset in Hulme

A further dimension of recognising creativity was the specific and contextual soundscape of the environment. By sound-tracking my experiences, I found the noise of the city to be overwhelming, yet comforting. It was strange realising I did not feel comfortable walking around the city at night when it was quiet. Additionally; nature is not as silent as one would presume. There are many noises such as; bird song and rustling trees and leaves. Sounds you associate with an experience are subliminal yet hold tremendous personal value. For example; if I hear a woodpigeon in Manchester, it is significant to me as it is a sound I associate with home, as there are many woodpigeons in my garden in Worcester.

I developed feelings of peace and contentment as I increasingly connected to the quotidian creativity. There was beauty in parts of the environment I had previously ignored. Recognising creativity became a mindful practice to me as I concentrated on being in the moment and the sensory phenomena around me.

Conversely, after a few weeks I began to notice how my mood influenced my perceptions and interaction with the environment. As moods and circumstances changed, experiences were inadvertently affected. I either felt within the environment, or completely separate. I realised that when feeling sad I failed to immerse within my surroundings. Thus personal anxieties acted as obstacles to experience.

Incubation

The next stage of this heuristic inquiry was the incubation period, lasting two weeks. This is where I, as the researcher, completely disengaged from the experience of recognising creativity in everyday life. The purpose of this was to allow for the development of unconscious knowledge. Despite the intentional withdrawal from this inquiry, it was extremely difficult to disconnect, as during the immersion stage I found that creativity is innate within everyday life. To entirely detach was challenging, representing the intensity of this experience. However, I refrained from focussing on the environment to ensure the incubation period was as genuine as possible.

Illumination

After incubating myself from recognising creativity in the quotidian, I reengaged with the inquiry for the next stage of data analysis; illumination. Utilising tacit knowing and intuition, I reflected upon my perceptions in order to invoke new interpretations and meanings to the experience.

Following the struggle to detach during the incubation period, I began to ponder; are there any other ways we can recognise everyday creativity? I spent a lot of time walking and observing the environment. Thus; it became apparent that the research method of psychogeography was relevant and practiced throughout my experience. Psychogeography, founded in 1950s Paris by Debord (Coverley, 2010), acts as a method and study, facilitating individuals with innovative ways of understanding and experiencing their environment. The central psychogeographical method of walking was fundamental in this heuristic inquiry, with Bridger (2010) acknowledging the engaging quality of walking. Furthering this, psychogeography values the subjective, an approach central to this inquiry, encouraging the consideration of phenomenological experiences (Coverley, 2010).

During journaling I ensured authenticity, demonstrating honesty when faced with difficulty in recognising creativity due to my mood state. When my head was full, my eyes were blinded, my senses limited, I did not feel the rain, I did not feel the wind, I only felt the cold. This relates to the experience of flow (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2002), as difficulty to engage in full experiential consciousness obstructed my ability to eliminate negative feelings. From this, I realised the inter-connectivity with the inner-self and the outside world. One must be able to open up and welcome in the environment in order to experience everyday creativity. Thus the eudemonic aspect of this heuristic inquiry was evident as I thoroughly connected with the experience and self-awareness (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Regarding how mood-state affected my experience, hindering focus and thoughts, I realised the days where I did not notice anything, I was running on automatic, but not in a state of flow. Therefore, when I was open to the experience my wellbeing was increasingly enhanced due to an openness and connectivity to the environment. This pertains to the five ways to wellbeing, as recognising ones environment has a positive influence upon the self (Thompson et al., 2008).

As I observed my environment, noticing features I had never seen before, changing my perception incited experiential awareness. I found it helpful to engage with the environment as if I were a stranger exploring a new place. This was a particularly useful method because it is more difficult to appreciate what one already knows (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989). The more I recognised, the more I attended, in awe of my surroundings, grasping everyday creativity as the world in its entirety. Thus using everyday creativity as a framework for the experience; I contextualised myself within the environment as that is where creativity is embedded. Pertaining to this; Baumeister (1992) recognised that emplacing and contextualising oneself and meanings is higher level interpretation. This realisation retracts previous misunderstanding of everyday creativity, as the world is not distinct from quotidian creativity, it is the creativity.

There was a contention between obtaining a natural experience whilst focusing at the same time; as recognising creativity in the everyday was not something I did

naturally. This denotes two broad levels of meaning-making (Baumeister, 1992); perceiving patterns of the environment, and self-control, regulating internal states of being. Nonetheless; as the inquiry continued, recognising quotidian creativity became a natural behaviour and awareness within myself and my experience.

Evident throughout this inquiry was how overwhelming the experience was. Mentioned numerous times throughout journaling; the intense realisation that the whole environment represents creativity; be it natural, manmade or personal, was a concept that occurred serendipitously, and once identified could not be ignored. Giddens (1991) described the embodiment of reflexivity between the self and the body. Awareness of my body within the sensory environment facilitated full experiential, comprehension of the moment (Giddens, 1991) contextualising the self within the integrated whole.

Further introspection derived from this experience was personal appreciation and admiration of creativity inherent in the environment. The experience encouraged a relational sensation of being within my surroundings. My relationship with the environment, particularly nature, intensified with content being a crucial aspect of environmental perception (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989). Henceforth, my instinctual bond with the natural world was enhanced (Kellert and Wilson, 1993; Bratman et al. 2012); inducing psychological benefits within my wellbeing.

Continued introspection acknowledged how I began to perceive everyday creativity in abstract form. For example as my focus distorted, a deeper awareness of shape and colour within the world was captivating. Perspective taking enabled me to understand alternative experiences by imagining another's (Batson et al., 1995). This too was another intense interpretation as I recognised shapes and patterns. Shadows and reflections demonstrated another level to perception and also tacit knowing. I was aware of shadows and reflections frequenting the environment, but did not appreciate the additional, entwining dimension they impose upon perception (figures 18, 19, 20). This experiential awareness represents various perspectives taking throughout the meaning-making process (Schultz, 2000).



Figure 18 Reflections on Salford Quays



Figure 19 Reflections on a canal



Figure 20 Reflections on a lake

Methods of data collection; drawing and photography, enabled access the details of the environment, enhancing perception of intricacies within everyday creativity. Furthering this, I developed increased awareness of the multiple levels (figures 21, 22) and dimensions of everyday creation. Using drawing as a form of meaning-making facilitated re-engaging with the experience (Pringle, 2009). From different angles, physical and experiential, I interacted with my surroundings, creating an encapsulating experience and a sense of oneness with the planet.

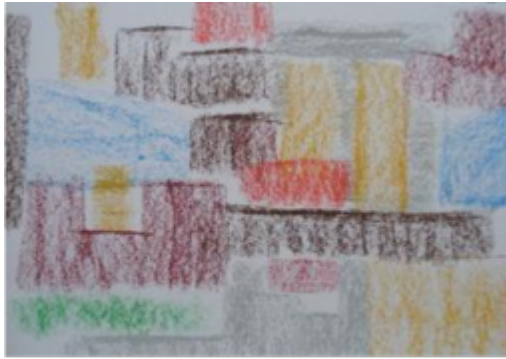


Figure 21 Levels and layers of the skyline.



Figure 22 Layers of a forest

A point to acknowledge is that this inquiry is completely subject to my own perceptual experience. There may be opinions and considerations others may hold that I have not experienced. The definition of creativity has become increasingly ambiguous following my interpretation that all is quotidian creativity. One could propose that developments and progressions within the environment are simply natural process, not creation. Yet the point I am trying to make is that these changes in the world are creations; inventions, ideas, occurrences that have been *created*.

Explication

Succeeding the reflexive process of illumination; is the analysis stage of explication. Explication encourages further, in-depth analysis of themes and interpretations discussed in illumination. Indwelling is the fundamental method of this process, as findings from the experience are collated and thoroughly analysed. From this, a comprehensive understanding of the experience is produced.

The notion that we create ourselves and our lives was empowering as my connection between the self, environment and wellbeing increased. Personal experience connects one with the environment through interaction and perception (Angelo, 2012). Although the experience was mindful and calming at times, it was also excessively sensory; chaotic and busy. This can be considered regarding the effect between subjective quality of life and how one experiences the world (Schroeder, 2012).

As previously mentioned; the experience of recognising creativity in everyday life was extremely intense; demonstrating the engrossing effect of connecting and contextualizing with the environment. The mean-making process was complex and central to my focus as I developed an understanding of intrinsic creativity in the

quotidian; on an environmental and personal level. This corresponds with the creative paradigm, derived from research by Bohm (1980), Prigogine and Stengers (1984) and Sheldrake (1985). The creative paradigm describes a holistic perspective of reality, where parts are not distinct but entwined within the world. Thus every aspect of reality and experience is completely encapsulated throughout the whole, and the whole is encapsulated within every aspect.

Moreover; this experience was extremely immersive due to the embeddedness of creativity in the environment and daily experiences. Though I initially felt as though this realisation was straying from the focus, it became apparent that it was true to my experience. I emplaced myself within the environment; removing myself from the individualised position of the modern individual, who is distinct from the environment (Jung and Sabini, 2002).

Pursuing this understanding, as acknowledged by Pepperell (2003), the mind and body cannot be completely separate; thus the body and environment cannot be completely separate. Consequently; one can understand the conclusion that consciousness and the environment are inherently concurrent. Ones' perception and experience is within this integrated continuum encompassing the self and the world (Pepperell, 2003).

Implicitly; it is apparent there is no boundary of the human, resulting in the post-human condition (Pepperell, 2003). The post-human condition comprehends the individual not as a separate entity from the external world, but as a being within the fluid world. The concept of the post-human appeared as I recognised everyday creativity due to my personal contextualization and oneness with the environment. Additionally, adopting the nomadic approach was essential for being present in the environment (Braidotti, 2006).

Through continued reflection upon everyday creativity, my perception towards human significance in the world transformed. Prior to this inquiry I felt humans held the monopoly over the planet, with the tools to contort and distort the world as they please. Yet my experience enabled me to recognise that the natural world will continue to grow and create, whether humans are present or not (Jung and Sabini, 2002). Gaia Theory (Lovelock, 2000) explains the world as a living, evolving entity. This explanation resonates throughout my comprehension of recognising creativity, as I was contextualized with the environment, seeking a collective way of being.

When trying to collate an overall representation of my experience, it occurred to me that the environment is an amalgamation of the interaction between individuals and the environment. Synchronicity, described by Jung, explains this meaningful interconnectedness of the internal and external realities (Jung and Sabini (2002), each compromising (voluntarily or not) in order to coincide and exist in (occasionally contending) harmony.

The world is alive, and although this is extremely obvious, it is the infinite creation occurring in the quotidian that may not be so apparent. Time is a construct ultimately at the core of ones' life, thus a fundamental aspect of creation, due to growth and progression. With consideration to the cosmological approach (Peile, 1988); the

world is the absolute of all phenomena in space and time. Consequently I perceive everyday creativity is innate in the reality of which I have contextualized.

Creative Synthesis

Creative synthesis represents the heuristic format of what traditional a journal report considers the research findings. Fundamental within experiential research, the creative synthesis epitomizes a visually phenomenological demonstration of my subjective, real experience (Sato et al., 2007).

Open to interpretation; creative synthesis is an unrestricted method expressing the uniqueness of individual experience (Molenaar, 2007). Conversely; statistical data is restrictive, discounting creative methods of understanding, oversimplifying the complex human mind and experience (Sato et al., 2007). Effective for creating an amalgamation of experience (Bledow et al., 2009; Harvey 2014), synthesis portrays truth from differing perspectives, enhancing understandings (Peile, 1988). A creative synthesis is constructed by adopting various interpretations (Miron-Spektor et al., 2011) restructuring current knowledge (Scott et al., 2005) and acknowledging new challenges to pursue (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Furthermore; creative research enables further discovery of the real (Peile, 1980.)

The synthesis for this inquiry is a hollow, spherical sculpture (figures 23 to 27). The sphere represents the planets, the sun and the moon. Half of the sphere illustrates fingerprints, symbolizing individual interaction with everyday creativity and the environment. The other half depicts tree bark and leaf detail, symbolizing the creative environment. Holes represent glimpses of contextualization within the world. When one opens the sphere, the lit candle represents my perceptual experience of embeddedness in the innate creativity of the quotidian. When the candle is not lit, it symbolizes the difficulty one has emplacing themselves in the environment due to personal wellbeing and societal individuation.

To conclude; this synthesis demonstrates a symbolic growth experience (Moustakas, 1990; Frick, 1990). By recognising everyday creativity my frame of reference has been altered and my perception transformed. Through introspection I have serendipitously contextualized within my environment by means of exploring everyday creativity.



Figures 23, 24 Creative synthesis



Figure 25 Lit candle represents the contextualized self within everyday creativity.



Figure 26 Fingerprint detail

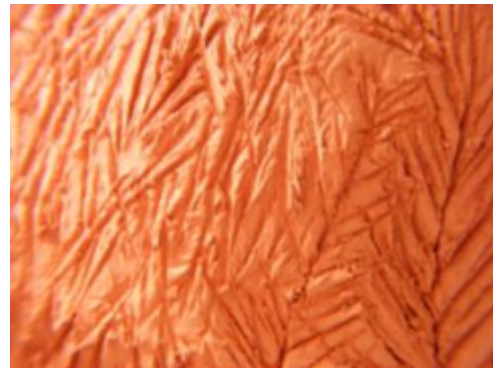


Figure 27 Tree bark and Leaf detail

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Journaling from Immersion Stage

The painted lines edging roads were now stitched seams guiding ones motorised journeys. I noticed the various patterns of the pavement, seemingly changing throughout the city. These pleasant puzzles are not only visual, they also physically influence the way one walks; be it slanted, a slight wobble over an unstable slab or caution over a slippery surface.

Though what does this have to do with recognising creativity in everyday life? My first established perception of creativity is that everything is someone's idea. Chewing gum staining the streets imitated splashes of paint, with further consideration citing this as a representation of individuals interacting with their environment. Litter, dirty rubbish, becomes an art form representing an individual's interaction with society

The task of immersion in this heuristic inquiry was an encompassing, overwhelming, sensory experience. When I closed my eyes, the metropolitan rhythm of traffic sounded like waves. Ripples in puddles were simply hypnotic. Smells of the city were exaggerated, denoting context within the environment, for example the aroma of yeast emitted from the Fosters brewery near to my flat.

All aspects of the everyday were scrutinised, I became fascinated by the fact that rain comes from rivers, lakes, the sea, and as the raindrops fell down I imagined the city was inherently connecting to bodies of water so far away. The rain changes the colour of our surroundings, creating a new colour scheme.

Clouds started to represent old netted curtains, translucent and occasionally opaque. When streams of sunlight cascaded through the clouds, it created a lovely contrast over the countryside of my train journey, mirroring the patterns of the clouds.

I used to despise the wind, but now I embraced its presence, it is the breath of the earth, a natural force to be respected. Attending to the environment exposed features of my surroundings I had never noticed, such as towering buildings. I realised I had never really looked up at the environment. As I opened up to truly recognising the creativity of the everyday, the creativity was opening up to me.

As the immersion stage continued, my appreciation of the creativity in everyday life rapidly increased. Creativity is inherent in our world. All aspects of the man-made environment are an idea of someone's, maybe a collaboration of ideas, but a creation nonetheless. In the natural environment a tree or a plant is a natural creation, as it grows and develops, shaping its' surroundings.

Feelings of peace and contentment progressed as I connected to the creativity of the quotidian. There was beauty even in parts of the environment I has previously disliked, such as concrete buildings. This was because I began to respect that our environment is the product of one's idea and consequent creation. Recognising creativity became a mindful practice to me as I concentrated on being in the moment and the sensory phenomena around me.

However it was not just environmental creativity I recognised. Creativity within engrossed me, as I realised that as individuals we create who we are, our relationships, our appearance, our interactions. Choice became a fundamental debate, are we choosing to create or is this accidental or inevitable?

When collecting visual data to coincide with my journaling, I realised though photos are useful and objective, they only capture a second of an experience, and are subjective as it is ones choice as to what they photograph.

Sounds created in our environments are specific and contextual. The sound track of my experiences found the noise of the city to be overwhelming, yet comforting. It was strange realising that I did not feel comfortable walking around the city at night when it was quiet. Thus associations of sound created in environments are important. I also realised that nature is not as silent as one would presume. There are many noises produced; such as bird song, rustling trees and leaves, crunch of branches under foot. However these sounds are much more pleasing to the ear than car horns and construction sites.

As this inquiry continued I felt my wellbeing enhanced. Maybe this was due to connecting with my environment or mindfulness in focussing on my surroundings. The experience was absorbing me, fusing me in to my environment. But was it truly creativity I was recognising?

After a few weeks I began to notice how my mood influenced my perceptions and interaction with the environment. If feeling particularly cheerful, all was a wondrous creation, but if feeling sad or negative I rarely noticed anything besides the weather.

Upon further observations of creativity, the notion of sanctuary emerged. Windows reveal the subjective havens individuals' have created in their homes. They are a snippet in to the material worlds in one's home. Additionally, windows are also significant in connecting us to the outside world as one can witness their environment visually, and sometimes the sounds, but not the immersive experience of being *in* the environment.

The contention between natural and man-made creations captivated me, as I personally believed the natural as beautiful and righteous. Nature is a creation of the world as a living entity. Man-made creations were perceived negatively, mere practicalities for society to function, such as roads.

Expanding upon this observation, is the debate whether all of these examples of everyday are of use? And is it important? Does all serve a purpose? Creativity is an essential means of purpose.

Accidental creation became apparent. Though is this a concept? I suppose it is, as rain doesn't intend to create puddles or floods.

Abstract art can represent accidental creation, due the subjective perceptions it invokes.

People are instigators of creation. We create ourselves, our expressions. When walking through the city I was immersed with the infinite various of faces, all created through human growth.

Throughout the experience of recognising creativity in everyday life, I realised that when I am feeling sad I fail to recognise my surroundings. My connection is obstructed. Thus one's personal anxieties act as obstacles to experience. I strived to be mindful and focus on the environment but it become increasingly difficult when personal problems occupied my attention. Life does not permit for all, as unpredictable events can cloud ones present focus.

In depth consideration on human development upon the environment lead me to see finger prints as individual traces of our environmental interaction.

Recognising creativity in everyday life is an overwhelming experience. Everything is creation; the way we dress, think, converse, act, behave, we CREATE ourselves DAILY. The environment is a demonstration of someone's idea or a natural creation/progression, thus creativity is everywhere. It is embedded in the environment and in human nature.

'Concrete Jungle' is an appropriate metaphor as developments of the skyline mimic trees striving for the sun, buildings rust and colours transform, like leaves in autumn. This prolonged method of focussing rapidly became overwhelming. This intense process caused me to perceive in an abstract fashion, the shapes and patterns of the environment were distorting as I zoomed in and out of focus on particular surroundings.

Time was significant as the day transformed into a different world of night, with only artificial light casting focus upon chosen features of the environment. The colours of day and night are completely different.

Man-made environment and nature both use similar colours?

I heard a wood pigeon for the first time in Manchester. This was significant to me as it is a sound I associate with home as there are many wood pigeons in the trees behind my home in Worcester. Sounds you associate with an experience are subliminal yet hold tremendous personal value. I never hear bird song when it rains. Bird song reminds me of when I've stayed up too late or the summer time and fills me with excitement and joy due to its natural beauty as a sound of nature.

Furthering this I began to query; do birds sing when it rains? Do they sing at night? In my experience they did not.

Windows demonstrate the individualised constructs of the environment. One can close the curtains and encapsulate themselves in their own world, shutting out the environment. Conversely, windows can connect one with the outside as they can observe the passing of life.

Humans construct and build upon the world; growth in society is the production of a new office block or housing development, creating forests of concrete. The planet cultivates lush nature.

As our moods and circumstances change, our experiences are inherently affected. Our perceptions may change, we may feel within our environment, or completely separate.

An example of weather influencing our interaction with the environment is that snow makes everyone walk slower. I perceive this to be positive as our experience is subliminally enhanced as we have no choice but to interact with our surroundings.

Appendix 2 – Pictorial data from Immersion Stage

