PRACTISING CREATIVITY

AN ARTS-BASED INVESTIGATION OF CREATIVITY IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE, WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

by

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I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Charles Sturt University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgment is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Charles Sturt University or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged. I agree that this thesis be accessible for the purpose of study and research in accordance with the normal conditions established by the Executive Director, Library Services or nominee, for the care, loan and reproduction of theses.

John B. Rae
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WEB SITE

The Sea of Creativity web site is dedicated to the artworks and ideas emerging from this study:

http://seaofcreativity.weebly.com/
ABSTRACT

The creativity of health services is seldom a topic of research. Extant models of creativity that attempt to define it, and propose ways of facilitating it in individuals and, in some cases, in organisations, fail to align with health services’ unique nature. This is despite the immense and increasing demands being placed on health systems and the need for new ways of improving health globally, in what is termed ‘public health’. A new conceptualisation of creativity is required; one that can be applied directly to health services, and especially public health services, and also serves as a useful platform for further research. To this end, this study aimed to answer the question: How can creativity be re-conceptualised in a way that is applicable to public health services, and beyond, and what is the impact of this?

Re-conceptualising creativity necessitated looking at it differently, from within, so a creative practice approach was taken. Various generative devices were used as part of this, included painting and, to a lesser extent, sculpture, to facilitate the emergence of new ideas about creativity. Metaphor was also used in conjunction with the artworks, as a further aid to invention and reflection. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight award-winning health professionals who were considered to be entry points for understanding creativity within public health services. Analysing conversations with these professionals, and then playing between all these data-sets - image, object, text - and theorising, provided the basis for a situated re-conceptualisation of creativity.

There were a series of ‘turning points’ in this research, when new knowledge started to emerge and mature. The first arose from a painting and its related metaphor; both called Sea of Creativity. These opened the
way for thinking about a more evolutionary type of creativity, where public health services are seen as more than an environment in which creativity might be found, even facilitated; rather, they are the outcome of creativity, ever-mutating. Another turning point was an appreciation of the tensions that often exist between those actions that reinforce the current operations of public health services and the fresh ideas that call for new operations. A more radical turning point emerged with the realisation that creativity is usefully considered as practice, rather than, as is usual in the creativity literature, a process.

Re-conceptualising creativity as practice helps to foreground its organic nature and account for some key characteristics of public health services, such as complexity, their often-rigid, rule-bound operations, tensions, the presence and place of affect, the goals of public health services and the relationship of creativity with other practices. Also, a practice approach to creativity more easily provides access to, and the employment of, concepts not normally implicated in creativity research, including Aristotelian concepts such as praxis and poiesis. New and helpful formulations have arisen from this, such as the notions of ‘creative implementation’ and ‘creative activism’.

What is proposed in this dissertation builds on the limited literature concerned with a practice approach to creativity and bridges and integrates creativity and practice theory to offer a different way of thinking about creativity. It offers health professionals new, theoretically supported ways of leading and participating in creativity, and it provides creativity researchers with a platform for conducting multilevel (individual, team and organisational creativity) and multidimensional (creativity plus innovation) research. These ways are not only applicable to public health services, but also to other types of organisations that share some of that field’s characteristics.

This research also adds to knowledge in arts-based research, including the productive conjunction of the image and the metaphor, and provides a
visible and viable account of how to work with the key notion of ‘postmodern emergence’. This is likely to be helpful to other qualitative researchers.
SECTION I
CHAPTER 1

CREATIVITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

The changing health care context, with its political, technological and consumer influences, requires health services, in their various forms, to respond not only with astuteness, thoughtfulness and skill, they must do so ‘creatively’. Creativity is considered to be ‘vital to organizational success’ (Dewett, 2003, pp. 432-450), with some evidence at least that ‘teams with more creative environments have significantly higher levels of performance’ (Gilson, Mathieu, Shalley, & Ruddy, 2005, p. 527). But what is the place of creativity in environments like health services, striving for certainty and driven by risk management, on one hand, and invention, on the other? Indeed, what is creativity?1

Samual Hunter, Katrina Bedell and Michael Mumford (2007, pp. 69-90) conducted a meta-analysis of forty-two studies, identifying a suite of climate dimensions that were predictive of creative performance across various criteria, samples and settings. At the organisational level, creative achievement was more likely to be found in horizontal versus vertical structures (p. 83), centralisation apparently restricting creativity and innovation.

1These questions are informed, in part, by the author’s reflection on his thirty-five years experience working in health services, as well as six years teaching health services management.
Surprisingly, group cohesion served to inhibit creativity through what the authors referred to as a ‘not invented here’ syndrome and at the individual worker level, ‘when creativity and innovation are required on the job, and people are granted the discretion needed to do creative work, climate measures are more strongly related to creative achievement’ (p. 82). How relevant are these findings to health services, especially when there is a trend towards centralisation in an effort to yield efficiencies of scale?

Clinical or managerial teams cannot be rearranged periodically just to avoid complacency, not when the highly specialised nature of many aspects of health care is taken into consideration. It is not a matter of simply asking for greater creativity, either, as the need arises. The constant demand for health care does not often leave time out for things like creativity, or so it is thought. In most cases, team members cannot be given complete discretion in performing their work either. The very justifiable governmental, professional and community demands for evidence-based practice preclude this. I certainly would be less than willing to submit myself to a potentially harmful treatment regime if I knew that there was insufficient ‘proof’ that it worked as advertised. Are the findings of creativity research of importance to health services, or is health care so unique that they cannot be applied? Another way to think about this is that health services are struggling to meet demand. According to the World Health Organisation (2008, p. xi), in its report on primary health care: ‘Few would disagree that health systems need to respond better – and faster – to the challenges of a changing world’. Surely creativity is required here. The World Health Organisation (2013, p. 35) seems to think so; in its subsequent report, this time on research for universal coverage, the word ‘creativity’ was mentioned seventeen times, and even referred to as a ‘leitmotif’ in their report (p. 35). There are, of course, many creative ideas that might be applied to health care, but not all these get implemented (Berwick, 2003, p. 1969), and this is probably because they must not only be adapted locally, but adapted locally (Berwick, 2003, p. 1971). Adaptation also requires creativity. So while the notion of creativity in health services can be considered problematic, both practically and conceptually, we really cannot do without it.
Calls for creativity and innovation to help resolve some of the serious issues facing health services, especially in low-income countries (WHO, 2007, pp. 18-20) might at first glance seem to be in conflict with the necessity for standardised and the risk-aversive practices of health services. These practices are, of course, crucial for the safety and effectiveness of treatment and care. Another view, however, would be that it is not so much the need for creativity that is contested, but rather that the current conceptualisations of it are inadequate and do not match the pragmatics of the role and distinctive challenges of health services. It is no wonder, then, that the topic of creativity has not been fully embraced by health service researchers. This is unfortunate, not only for health services, but also because inquiry in this area could inform creativity in other industries that share some of the characteristics of health services.

In the absence of a noteworthy body of work on health service creativity, a look at organisational creativity more generally provides us with something of a platform for this discussion, even if organisational creativity, is, itself, an emerging field. Jing Zhou and Christina Shalley’s text, Handbook of Organizational Creativity (2008b, pp. 3-393), provides a very good overview of organisational creativity, and helps to identify some of the keys topics in this discipline. Leadership, performance, teams, culture, and change are dealt with, which is of course no surprise since these are the topics covered in most organisational behaviour texts too, and for that matter, these topics would not be out of place in any health services management text either. Some clarity comes from the definition of organisational creativity cited by Colin Fisher and Theresa Amabile (2009, p. 13): ‘the production of ideas for novel and appropriate (useful and valuable) products, services, processes or strategies in an organization’. This is an organisation-wide take on a definition of creativity that was first published in 1953 (Stein, pp. 321-322) and which will be referred to throughout this dissertation. Ajit Nayak (2008, p. 421) also offers a managerial perspective on creativity by describing it as more like ‘something that gets the job done’. These definitions suggest that there is indeed something different about organisational creativity, compared with individual creativity, where
the emphasis is on ideation (Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, 1996, p. 1155). Taking this a step further, creativity can also be considered as something that occurs either in or of an organisation. This is the difference between seeing creativity as a series of events that occur within the bounds of the organisation, compared to where the organisation, itself, brings forth new forms. In this dissertation I refer to creativity of organisations, taking Fisher and Amabile’s products, services, processes or strategies, and Nayak’s ‘getting the job done’, not so much as inspired actions of clever and hard working people or teams, but as the result of organisation-wide coeval processes. Even this broader perspective on creativity is not all that illuminating for health services, given their particular characteristics, and we (the second-person plural pronoun ‘we’ is used in this dissertation to acknowledge that the reader is not impassive or removed from the discussion) have already said that the empiric-based studies have not been that helpful either. So, a more holistic approach is needed and a whole new way of thinking is required.

Rationale for the research

The health system that many of us rely on is under stress and globally there are calls for creativity and innovation to help resolve this. In the United Kingdom, for instance, creative artists, health practitioners and academics engaged in the delivery of, and education for, health and social care have been asked to actively use and embed creativity into all aspects of their practice (Cayton, 2007, p. 11). In Australia, there are calls for a ‘greater focus across the system on effectiveness of care and innovation’ (National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission, 2008, p. 21); for instance, innovation was recommended for nursing and midwifery workforce as part of the Review of Australian Government Health Workforce Programs (Mason, 2013, p. 22). In the author’s home state of New South Wales, where health care has been described as being in a ‘period of crisis’ (Garling, 2008, p. 3), there have been recommendations for ‘constant innovation across the whole system’ (Garling, 2008, p. 4), and requests for creativity, that is, creative partnerships, in the current NSW Health Plan:
Towards 2021 (NSW Health, 2014, p. 1). From a public health perspective, with its emphasis on preventing disease and facilitating wellness, there is no more poignant a reminder, especially in Australia, of the need for creativity and innovation than the knowledge that ‘[d]espite improvements in Indigenous death rates, the overall gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates appears to be widening’ (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2008, p. 62). Even though there have been gains in performance against some process indicators, such as recording birth weights (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2014, p. viii), this remains a very serious problem receiving international attention (Pincock, 2008, p. 18).

What is notable here is that this notion of ‘innovation’ is frequently highlighted as being important to public health (Vaughan, 2008, p. 1353). It is this term, rather than the closely linked concept of ‘creativity’, the precursor to innovation (Amabile et al., 1996, p. 1155), that is frequently referred to in reports such as those mentioned above. A possible explanation for such emphasis on innovation, rather than creativity, as Deborah Munt and Janet Hargreaves (2009, p. 286) suggest, is that creativity is something that the health sector is less comfortable with, and this may very well stem from what we have already identified as concerns about standardisation and certainty.

The lack of attention to creativity in health services should not be unexpected for a system, as we have said, focused on information, control and the development of sophisticated ways of avoiding surprise and risk. Nevertheless, the routinised system that we have built may in fact be constraining the development of a fairer and more responsive system, the type of system that arguably is required to meet current and future public health demands. Of course, surprise and creativity are not necessarily synonymous with disorganisation and risk. It is, perhaps, more a matter of how surprise and risk are understood and managed by health services, or as Munt and Hargreaves (2009, p. 286) put it, how these things are ‘recognised and owned within the sector’. Certainly, in a more general (non-health) sense, creativity seems to be better recognised: ‘Given the
challenges faced by today’s organisations, the relevance of creativity to problem solving, decision making, and research and development is clear’ (Williams & Yang, 1999, p. 374).

Alf Rehn and Christian De Cock (2009, p. 222) make the point that ‘traditional discourses and theorizations of creativity have unconsciously limited its very nature to a set of preconceived ideas’. A (re)conceptualisation of creativity, then, would seem to be important if the notion is ever to be considered useful to health services. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990, p. 198) suggests that: ‘one finds that it is impossible to define creativity independently of judgements based on criteria that change from domain to domain and across time’. Peter Petocz, Anna Reid and Paul Taylor (2009, p. 410) refer to this point of Csikszentmihalyi’s and observe that creativity, being a social construction, ‘can only be understood as creative by people who share the same sort of experience and culture’. This is a view shared by Min Han (2010, p. 166) too: ‘In order to understand creativity, understanding the community in which creativity can be observed should be of primary concern’. Our primary concern here is with health services, especially public health services, which are aimed at improving the health of communities or populations, and their creativity. This takes us to the aim of this study.

Aim of the study

This research aims to illuminate creativity in public health services by answering the question:

How can creativity be re-conceptualised in a way that is applicable to public health services, and beyond, and what is the impact of this?

An answer to this question does not already exist. Rather: ‘it is not always clear what creativity might mean in [health care] practice and how it might be facilitated’ (Brodzinski & Munt, 2009, p. 280).
The starting point for answering this question is to think deeply about the direction of the inquiry, or what Narelle Patton, Joy Higgs and Megan Smith (2009, p. 184) refer to as the researcher's 'horizon'. This will be elaborated briefly in what follows.

The researcher's horizon

Identification of the researcher's horizon calls on qualitative researchers to recognise and appraise what they currently know or understand regarding the phenomenon under investigation. Depending on the phenomenon, this may include professional experiences, personal experiences, literature, and current professional discourse. Identification of our researcher horizon allows us to pursue an appropriate direction of the research through the formation of relevant research questions and aims (Patton et al., 2009, p. 184).

To achieve what Patton, Higgs and Smith suggest, above, I worked with what will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, Margaret Somerville's (2010, pp. 339-341) concepts of emergent arts-based methodology and postmodern emergence (2007, pp. 225-243). Emergent arts-based methodology, explains Somerville (2010, p. 340), has an emphasis on undoing dominant stories of place (decolonisation) and the collective and relational making of new place stories (re-inhabitation)' (p. 340), where these stories are 'local and responsive' (p. 340). Arts-based methodologies allow the researcher to 'encompass the multiple forms in which alternative representations of place are possible' (Somerville, 2010, p. 340).

A section from Somerville's (2007, pp. 240-241) description of 'postmodern emergence' is reproduced here, in its entirety, so as to keep the original meaning intact:
I argue for a methodology that moves from deconstruction to creation and conditional representation. I allow a different sort of writing to enable me to begin to articulate intangible concepts that are not quite there. This writing enacts the process of these concepts coming into being .... an idea begins to emerge in which an epistemology of postmodern emergence conceptualizes research as an assemblage of representations, each element of which is a pause in an iterative and cyclical process of representation, engagement and reflection. In this conceptualization, time is disrupted and circular and the linear determinism of causation is seen in relationship to other modes of becoming. A strategy of writing as assemblage using multiple forms is suggested as a means to enact this circular time of coming into being.

For many years I have been immersed in health services, and, more recently, in the creativity research literature and arts-based research. Now, I draw on the notion of postmodern emergence, as well as my experiences, to offer, below, my own frank and somewhat ‘raw’ views, in a form of ‘free writing’, about health services, creativity and arts-based research. This, my horizon, is then followed by a brief explanation, culminating in a discussion about research methodology.

Health services are vital – and you know exactly how vital when you look for them and they are absent, or if you look for them over the fence, in someone else’s backyard, but not your own. This is not just health services, but good health services that I am thinking about. A dysfunctional health service, even a ‘good enough’ one can be a misery – to colleagues, and at the end of the day, to real people and their communities. So I want to see high quality health services, creative health services.

Of creativity – I just love new tasks. New tasks ask me to play with ideas, many at once, quickly, and to identify ways of doing the task, hopefully simple ways, elegant ways, ways that work – and when they work, these ways become pasted to the environment in which similar tasks are performed, as if it is collage, because it is obvious that that should occur. New tasks allow you to say farewell to old tasks – not enough space for them all.
I confess that I am not very good at tasks where the way forward has already been decided – that means that it is ‘their’ way, probably a very good way; then again, if it is their way, maybe ‘they’ should do it.

Of arts-based research – I don’t want to merely shine a torch light on this context – health services – I want to illuminate it, and only a spotlight will do. The spotlight has a better chance of exposing the real thing – the phenomenon unencumbered by the layers of dust, and varnish, painted on expertly at workshops, during meetings, and at university, and through performance management, performance indicators, reinforced by what comes to be known as good performance.

Here, I am attempting to set aside some of the usual ways of defining the concepts of health services, creativity and arts-based research. It is an effort to ‘get to’ and communicate something that is close to my beliefs about them. Of course, it is entirely possibly that far too much importance might be conferred upon these jottings, nevertheless, the value in uncovering questions, ideas or synergies that might otherwise remain in the dark, seemed to make it worthwhile.

An initial plan for this research was to focus on health service management, but that soon changed in order to broaden the discussion and context of the research; it is, rather, the health service in its entirety that can do such good, or, as I have suggested, be such a misery. Another early thought, this time about creativity, and not included above, was that creativity is not about structure, nor outcome; the conversations are about process. ‘Process’ is a term that is commonly used to describe creativity and focused on in creativity research, but less so in health services; the emphasis for health services is now more on performance and outcomes – see Khayat Saeed, Tabatabaee Saeed and Asadi Mahboubeh (2014, pp. 1131-1132) as an example. My reason for not referring to this above, a decision I still hope was correct, is that we will eventually conceptualise creativity as a practice, not a process, and that particular ‘turning point’ in this research will be discussed at length in Chapter 5.
Another component of most definitions of creativity is novelty, which has some concordance with my words: ‘identify ways of doing the task, hopefully simple ways, elegant ways’. This raises questions about how to approach novelty, and, as a researcher, does one start with novelty, working to creativity, or is it better to start with creativity and follow the path to novelty? Another approach is to explore novelty, and a range of aspects of creativity, together, from within, so to speak. I eventually chose the latter and this too will be explained in detail in Chapter 4. In thinking about creativity, I sometimes come back to the work of Csikszentmihalyi and his systems theory that, like most conceptualisations, requires ‘value’, not just novelty, to be present in a creative act, or, to get back to my narrative: ‘ways that work’. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1996, p. 28), value is determined by the field, say a professional body, and then accepted by the domain, say a professional discipline. This is akin to ‘to the environment in which similar tasks are performed, as if it is collage’, as I wrote, and in my mind, although not necessarily Csikszentmihalyi’s, this occurs, I thought, with some confidence, that is, it is ‘obvious that that should occur’.

I have pondered, and do so even now, about ‘new tasks allow[ing] you to say farewell to old tasks’. At first glance this seemed to be a reference to the so called ‘investment theory of creativity’, which comes from Robert Sternberg and Todd Lubart (1999, pp. 683-686). The investment theory focuses on ‘buying low and selling high’, where ‘[b]uying low means pursuing ideas that are unknown or out of favour but have growth potential’ (Sternberg, 1999, p. 10). The creative person reaps the rewards and then moves on. Now, however, I think more about the tasks of practices being replenished, or replaced, as part of a social conceptualisation of creativity. Nonetheless, that was my starting point.

To ‘love new tasks’, as I wrote, takes us to individual-level creativity; love being such an individual, personal, emotion. This reminded me that much earlier research on creativity had been conducted within a psychological frame, or from a social psychology perspective. In fact, Amabile (1996, pp.
90-93) identified that task motivation, an individual trait, surely, and a more apt term than love, is an important ingredient for creativity. We will return to the role of affect in creativity in subsequent chapters.

The importance of this research is underscored by the terms ‘vital’ and ‘real people’; these terms are meant to highlight the fact that health services are places for treating and caring for people, and in public health, for preventing disease and facilitating wellness, especially in communities. Of course, what is not mentioned can sometimes be as revealing as what is, and this is that the work of health services is becoming increasingly difficult and, as we have seen, terms like ‘crisis’ (Garling, 2008, p. 3) are being used to describe health systems. The reaction to this by many is to reorganise structures and, again, ‘processes’. Yet, my own narrative paid little attention to organisational structures or processes, or even roles and performances. In fact, there may be real benefits in steering away from established methods for studying health services and their ‘creativity’, for fear of being swept along by the status quo and not seeing the fresh ideas, or losing contact with the ‘real people’. This is where the notion of postmodern emergence fits in as a means for thinking differently about health services and creativity. Unless this research is attuned to the possibilities of emergence, opportunities for generating new knowledge may be missed.

The phrase ‘only a spotlight will do’ and ‘exposing the real deal’ is a clear message about the need for powerful research methods, methods that will not collapse under the weight of the ‘layers of dust, and varnish, painted on expertly at workshops, during meetings, and at university’. It reinforces the value of an alternative method of inquiry.

We can say then, thus far in this introductory chapter, that there is a call for creativity in, and of, health services, and a need for it, especially if we take a broader public health perspective. However, as we have noted, there is some resistance to this, or at least to embracing it more fully. As we have also seen, this resistance is not surprising because current
conceptualisations do not align well with the characteristics of health services. This is not to say that accepted definitions of creativity should be dismissed outright. In Chapter 2 we will examine the long-standing ‘standard’ definition of creativity, originating in the 1950’s, and even though a task of this study is to question this very definition, the fact that it is available for problematising, is, in itself, potentially generative. It certainly represents a useful starting point for our discussion and a very good point of reference throughout this dissertation.

So, what might a re-conceptualisation of creativity for public do, and what might we hope for? Perhaps the first question to ask is what one might not hope for, and that would be a reconceptualisation that purports to replace current models or definitions, which, although of some use, would not necessarily advance the field in the way that is hoped for here. One more, alternative, definition of creativity, albeit tailor-made to a particular context (health services), would be limited in value. What seems to be required, as we have already noted, is to think of creativity in a completely new way. A good place to start thinking about this, which has been alluded to and will be discussed fully in Chapter 2, is that creativity is a heterogeneous concept, that it ought to be expressed differently in different contexts, including health services. There may even be differences between the creativity that is seen on, say, hospital wards or departments, compared with public health services, or, even between public health services. So, we need an account of creativity that does two things at once. Firstly, the account should be new, cohesive and self-supporting, and it should have its own recognisable logic. Secondly, and because of this logic, the new account should be flexible and so applicable to the specific. That is, we need a platform that is rich enough and robust enough to transcend context, and flexible enough to be applied across a range of contexts. In Chapter 6 we will see that this range of contexts is broad indeed, even within public health – from adolescents affected by cancer, to frail older people, and people with mental illness. We will consider such things as the spirit in the land, out of respect for Indigenous people, and the needs of people stripped of all capacity to seek health care themselves, as well as
the need for a better system in which treatment and care can operate, where better health is made possible, as well as other contexts. The complex nature of the contexts that will be discussed, which also includes, as we have said, a friction between certainty and invention, makes public health an ideal arena for thinking differently about creativity – the ideas emerging here are likely to be well tested.

If this is what we hope for in a re-conceptualisation of creativity, we might then ask: Who might participate in creativity, or even, who has responsibility for creativity? Indeed, if creativity is not something that can simply be requested and supplied, as we have noted, leadership, alone, may not be the answer. If an organisation, such as a health service, is considered not very creative, is this a failing of leadership? If, alternatively, creativity is more likely to emerge through practice, and therefore practitioners, should practitioners be held accountable for an organisation’s creativity? Why, then, is creativity not more prominent in continuing professional development activities, or even undergraduate training programs? A more useful answer to these questions might be that creativity is the concern of all who participate in an organisation; but how would that be possible? Perhaps this represents another hoped for outcome of a re-conceptualised creativity, that is, creativity is framed in a way that it is understandable, relevant and equally important at all the various levels and sections of an organisation.

There is a tendency in the research literature to codify creativity, and separate out its ‘types’, and as we have already noted, to focus on different levels of creativity, including individual creativity, team creativity and organisation creativity. Only recently have there been calls to conduct so-called ‘multilevel’ (Zhou & Shalley, 2008a, p. 348) research, that is, research that crosses these levels. We have also noted that there is also a separation, at least conceptually, between creativity and innovation, with creativity associated with ideation, and innovation with implementation (Amabile, 1996, p. 1155). Chapter 2 provides a full discussion of these and other ways in which creativity has been classified. Here, it does raise the
question that, if new ways of thinking about creativity are sought, might these ways account for such separations, or even go beyond them and offer a means of dealing with creativity in a situated and holistic way, conceptually, in research, and also practically? The codification of creativity can be misleading because it assumes an orderly enactment of creativity. Formulaic responses run the risk of ignoring the complexity of a situation and so we should indicate at this early stage in the dissertation that any re-conceptualised notion of creativity needs to look beyond modernist perspectives and also account for, even build on, the notion of complexity, or what will be introduced in Chapter 2, the notion of complex adaptive systems. We might also hope that this study gives consideration to, not only organisational performance and outcomes, but also the needs of organisational participants and their own response to creativity; after all, creativity can be a joyful experience (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 76) and it is possible that attending to such affective responses would have far-reaching effects on health services.

The starting point for this research has been my own experiences and understandings, and my own practices, so as to know creativity from within. Of course, this approach does need some ‘checks and balances’, or to use the more appropriate term in qualitative research, ‘reflexivity’. There needs to be a way of not only facilitating reflexivity in this project, but to do so in a way that fits with what we have already placed in the foreground – arts-based methodology and postmodern emergence. We need to address reflexivity in a way that suits our theoretical and methodological approach, is relevant throughout the various stages of the study and also fits with our context – health services. This means thinking differently about reflexivity also, and the product of this thinking will become apparent in Chapter 4.

These preliminary thoughts about what a new understanding of creativity might do require the advancement of a new line of inquiry, and, as we saw, this can usefully start by appraising the researcher’s initial reaction to, and understanding of, the topic. This helped me to clarify the scope of the
study (public health services and their role in improving health, not the management of health services), question the usual emphasis placed on the ‘process’ of creativity, raise the possibility of studying creativity from within, and alert us to the role of affect and the potential of a social view of creativity. The question of how to study creativity also became clearer as I wrote my ‘horizon’, reinforcing the need for this alternative conceptualisation of creativity, using an alternative methodology. That is, here, creativity needs to be studied through creativity.

The literature reviewed in the next chapter serves to summarise current understandings of creativity and highlights gaps and ‘blind spots’. Importantly, and as is often the case for practice-based research, the literature also raises questions (Barrett & Bolt, 2010, p. 189), and this broadens the topic (Barrett & Bolt, 2010, p. 188) so that the inquiry enters the unknown and moves to the known (Sullivan, 2009, p. 48), which is different from other approaches that start with what is known. Every attempt will be made to document this movement, its twists and turns, and to that end, Chapter 5 is dedicated to explaining how new insights emerged and become transformational in this research.

To summarise, this study aims to develop a new conceptualisation of creativity that is intelligible and recognisable in its own right, and applicable across a range of levels and sections of organisations, with specific reference to public health service, and all their participants. This will help to address the misalignment between current conceptualisations of creativity and the characteristics of health services, and other organisations with similar characteristics. We must aim for a conceptualisation that challenges binaries and boundaries, such as the difference between creativity and innovation, one that is organic, responsive to the needs of organisational participants, not one that is mechanical or formulaic. For this, a new line of inquiry and a new approach to reflexivity is required. The next step, then, is to raise the questions, broaden the topic, boldly enter the unknown, and so we now turn to the literature.
CHAPTER 2

UPSHOTS, BLIND SPOTS AND SPOTTING THE UNKNOWN:
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Frequently used terms, which by extension hold common meanings, often prove to be much more complex when put under scrutiny. The term ‘creativity’ is no exception: ‘Creativity is one of those concepts that has pervaded our daily vocabulary, yet it lacks a precise meaning’ (Gilmartin, 1999, p. 2). In this chapter we will explore the different ways in which creativity is defined and open up discussion about how creativity might otherwise be conceptualised so as to offer new prospects for understanding and enhancing it, and also for researching it. We will resist any inclination to generalise, in a positivist sense, or hold fast to privileged and authoritarian knowledge, preferring to use knowledge as a means to emancipate, rather than control (Hatch, 1997, p. 366). Creativity will be explored within a range of contexts, by referring to various scholars and the lenses of their disciplines and epistemologies, and we will keep in the forefront of our minds our own context – public health services. We will start with a discussion about creativity more generally, before moving to an analysis of the literature on organisational creativity, and then to the place of creativity in health services. Our discussion will identify areas of agreement and synergies, or ‘upshots’, and gaps and blind spots in the literature, as well as areas that are seldom explored. It is this space of the unknown, in particular, that will be considered as having potential for development.
The standard definition of creativity and its derivations

Todd Lubart (2001, p. 295), in his examination of conceptions of the creative process over the past century, writes of ‘[t]he creative process – the sequence of thoughts and actions that leads to a novel, adaptive production’, where ‘adaptive production’ is usually considered something ‘compelling’ (Sternberg, 2006, p. 2), useful and valuable (Amabile & Kramer, 201, p. 49). These are the typical signposts of creativity and the way in which it is usually defined. While we have already touched on these, we now bring them into focus. Firstly, creativity can be considered a process, leading to novelty, and there is value consigned to the novelty. Keith Sawyer (1999, p. 449) explains that value is determined through a selection or filtering process, and according to Csikszentmihalyi’s (1996, p. 42), as we have noted, this occurs by the field, for example, by a discipline. This view of creativity as a ‘process’ involving both novelty and value has been adopted by most creativity researchers: ‘versions of it are included in almost all publications in the prominent Creativity Research Journal’ (Runco & Jaeger, 2012, p. 92). The origins of this standard definition of creativity go back to the mid-1950s, which we noted in Chapter 1, and is attributed to Morris Stein in 1953 (pp. 311-322) and Frank Barron in 1955 (1955, pp. 478-485). Because Stein’s definition came first and was, as Runco and Jaeger (2012, p. 95) point out, entirely unambiguous, we will take his to be the original. Not surprisingly, and despite the overall resilience of Stein’s definition, it has been adapted by numerous scholars. Some of the more useful derivations will now be discussed.

Margaret Boden (2004, p. 2) extended on the standard definition by noting that creativity ‘is not an all-or-nothing affair. Rather than asking Is that idea creative, yes or no? we should ask Just how creative is it, and in just which way(s)?’ [original emphasis]. Boden (2004, p. 2) also differentiated between psychological creativity and historical creativity. The former, she says, refers to ‘coming up with a surprising, valuable idea that’s new to the person who comes up with it’, similar to what Ronald Begetto and James Kaufman (2007, p. 73) referred to as ‘mini-c creativity’: ‘the creative
processes involved in the construction of personal knowledge and understanding’. This is regardless of how many other people have independently come up with the same idea. This manner of creativity is likely to be important in, for example, educational contexts where an end point might be a knowledgeable and ‘creative’ student. Historical creativity refers to creative ideas or activities that nobody has had or done before (Boden, 2004, p. 2), which might be considered as ‘eminent creative contributions (referred to as Big-C creativity)’ (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007, p. 74), and this is different again from so called ‘everyday creativity (referred to as little-c creativity)’ (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007, p. 74). Everyday creativity is concerned with ‘human originality at work and leisure across the diverse activities of everyday life’ (Richards, 2010, p. 190).

In what would seem like a useful exercise in questioning such divisions, Shakuntala Banaji, Andrew Burn and David Buckingham probe the separation of Big-C creativity and little-c creativity. For example, while the creativity of art and culture might normally be considered Big-C Creativity, Banaji, Burn and Buckingham (2010, p. 28) ask if this is always true, suggesting that creativity or art or culture might be considered as: ‘something that adds a special quality to life’. Thought about this way, art and culture would fit equally well with little-c creativity as: ‘an ability to be flexible in meeting the demands of life (Banaji et al., 2010, p. 20), or as Csikszentmihalyi (1996, p. 8) puts it, an ‘important ingredient of everyday life.

What is becoming more obvious as we start to come to grips with the term ‘creativity’ is that we need to go beyond the usual signposts to appreciate it. The nuances and richness in meaning attached to something that, as Oliver (2009, p. 319) has said, ‘abounds everywhere in the social’, are ‘bound’ to be complex.

A 2009 special edition of the journal, Health Care Analysis was dedicated to creativity and the arts in healthcare. The introductory paper and the six original articles emerged out of a single umbrella project – Creativity in
Health and Care Workshops Program. In introducing the special edition, Emma Brodzinski and Deborah Munt (2009, pp. 278-283) explained how a series of workshops attempted to develop an understanding, or to use their expression, to ‘envision the concept’, of creativity and innovation. That is, participants set out to look in new and different ways at creativity and innovation and some useful points arose from their work. Key amongst them is the place of empathetic imagination:

The creative process through which an individual engages emotionally with a subject, whether that be putting themselves in the shoes of another human being or immersing themselves deeply in a topic or context and then, crucially, responding with imagination to that experience (Munt & Hargreaves, 2009, p. 290) [original emphasis].

Taking this further:

Those who produce creative products must be in touch with their feelings, as well as being able to empathise easily with others ... Without empathy, the creative product is often far poorer. Whether it’s a painting that emotes strong feelings, or a toothbrush that gives a sense of pleasure as its design fits its use perfectly, the ‘emotional value’ of the work is key to success (Munt & Hargreaves, 2009, p. 290) [original emphasis].

This is an original and useful explanation of creativity, and we will return to the notion of emotion and affect in creativity shortly. Another imaginative (we could say non-standard) definition comes from James Oliver (2009, p. 325) who offers that creativity places emphasis on improvisation and also openness which:

is about the value of suspending (and challenging the oppositional dichotomies of) the various dominant social and political structures (including hierarchies of knowledge) that can intervene to administer (in an attempt to govern) our daily lives.

So far, some useful adaptations and derivations of the standard definition of creativity have come to light, including that creativity can be present in degrees, that it can take different forms (although some might challenge this), and that creativity is social, and given that, we should note that it can
be studied within a framework of complex adaptive systems. Also, as we
touched on earlier, affect has an important role to play. We now turn to
Von Allen and Emma Brodzinski (2009, pp. 310) who add that: ‘to be
creative is to take a risk’. If we take the perspective of complex adaptive
systems, and we will more fully deal with this concept shortly, risk is
inevitable, so within organisations like health services, actors are faced with
not only the risk of the ‘unknown’, but also the ‘unknowable’. Of course,
one way of attempting to reduce risk is to adopt this so called ‘toolkit’
approach to creativity, or: ‘a template of activity which promises
guaranteed results’ (Allen & Brodzinski, 2009, p. 310). This is about
acknowledging the imperative to be creative, but doing so cautiously. Here
we come across a tension between creativity and not only risk, in itself, but
also what is put in place to mitigate risk. It is a central concern, especially
for the creativity of health services, and one of the areas that we should
earmark for further discussion.

Creativity and innovation

We should also explore an important relational quality of creativity and
pick up on our earlier point that creativity is generally considered a
precursor to innovation. Teresa Amabile, Regina Conti, Heather Coon,
Jeffrey Lazenby and Michael Herron (1996, p. 1155), who in this case write
from an organisational perspective, summarise that creativity is ‘the
production of novel and useful ideas in any domain’, whereas innovation is
‘the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization’.
Hence, ‘creativity by individuals and teams is a starting point for innovation;
the first is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the second’ (Amabile
et al., 1996, p. 1155). Others agree with this. According to Richard
Woodman, John Sawyer and Ricky Griffin (1993, p. 293), creativity is a
subset of innovation (which is itself a subset of organisational change).
Mattia Gilmartin (1999, p. 2) also concurs: ‘Creativity is the basic building
block of invention and thus innovation’. If we now go back to Munt and
Hargreaves’ (2009, p. 291) thesis regarding empathetic imagination, the
difference then between creativity and innovation, as they say, is the
emotional component of creativity. This, as Munt and Hargreaves (2009, p. 291) point out, links with the notion of ‘flow’, described otherwise as ‘optimal experience’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 110), or more colloquially, ‘being in the zone’, which interestingly is perceived as an outcome, not a facilitator, of creativity.

What is emerging here is something of a clash, or a jar, perhaps, between the terms ‘creativity’ and ‘innovation’. We have seen that these two terms are often used in the same sentence, and sometimes they are even used interchangeably. Mostly, as we have just noted, one term (creativity) is considered a precursor or a subset of the other (innovation), and one (creativity) is reported as being more palatable than the other (innovation), in the health services context, at least. Clearly there is a relationship between creativity and innovation, but is it as simple, even linear, as scholars like Amabile and her colleagues suggest? Brodzinski and Munt (2009, p. 286) were able to see something of the complexity, proposing that affect (a complex notion itself) has a greater role in creativity than it does in innovation. There is a view, too, a more recent one by Neil Anderson, Kristina Potocnik and Jing Zhou (2014, pp. 1-2), that creativity and innovation are actually ‘integral parts of the same process’, with unclear boundaries between them (p. 3). Unfortunately, Anderson, Potocnik and Zhou did not explain how they thought creativity and innovation might be considered integrated, or what factors or arguments might support this view, and it is too early to know if the idea will be taken up by other scholars. A similar concept proposed over a decade earlier by Michael West (2002, p. 355), and which also favoured an integrated approach, claimed that the point of difference was how creativity and innovation each responded to threat, uncertainty and level of demand (innovation being more likely to be stimulated by these factors than creativity). This was not taken up either. Shalley (2002, pp. 406-410) was critical of West’s approach and put forward a variety of reasons, many of them about definitions he used, and Paul Paulos (2002, p. 395), also in direct response to West’s paper, made it quite clear that ‘these phases [creativity and innovation] should be separated. Still, Paulus did agree that
in some situations (he suggested naturalistic ones), innovation ‘may be fairly recursive, with a continual cycle of generation and implementation’ (p. 395) and that it can be the ‘problems in the implementation stage that provide the stimulus for the generation of new or better solutions’ (p. 395). This is a useful comment indeed, but on the whole, there is a resistance to an integrated approach to creativity and innovation, not only by Shalley and Paulus, but most creativity (and innovation) scholars. It all raises the question: do the current formulations serve practitioners and researchers well, or are these unfortunate blind spots in thinking about creativity in relation to innovation? Is the current view of creativity in relation to innovation useful enough in its present form, or is it an over-simplification; are there deeper principles at play? Is it possible, for example, that these two concepts do not have hard edges, as Anderson suggested? Might these edges overlap and at some point, and if so, what might influence this, can creativity and innovation even be, at times, indistinguishable from one another, or if they are distinguishable, what might be their distinguishing features (apart from current dogma about the difference between idea generation and implementation). Is affect, demand, or something else altogether different, implicated?

**Creativity as a heterogeneous construct**

Our discussion thus far serves as a handy beginning for thinking about creativity, and to some extent, innovation. The standard definition of creativity based on process, novelty and value certainly serves as an anchor, but, as we have seen, it alone can mask some interesting and potentially useful nuances that deserve attention. To highlight these nuances, we need to remove some of the binaries and other divisions that are portrayed in the creativity literature, as we did regarding so called Big-C and little-c creativity. Creativity can be considered part of everyday life, and it can also change history. An everyday creative act, especially with the passage of time, and possibly in conjunction with other everyday creative acts, might one day have far reaching, even history-making, effects. Also, if surprise is a feature of creativity, as Boden (2004, p. 1) suggests is the case,
how surprising does the creative act need to be, and should we all expect to feel equally surprised when we hear about it? Are affective responses equal in this regard? For how long do we continue to refer to something as creative – at what point does it become routine? If creativity is to be thought of in terms of process, outcome and value, or in the similar formulation, person, process and product, and if emotion and improvisation are variably important, how are these influenced by culture? For example, the standard definition of creativity may be less appropriate to Eastern cultures, which some suggest is ‘focused more on the authenticity of the discovery process than the output of innovative products’ (Lubart & Georgsdottir, 2004, p. 36). The upshot of this is that creativity is a more heterogeneous construct than might be first envisaged, and this is where we now turn our attention.

Sternberg (1999, pp. 83-100) also advanced the notion of creativity being heterogeneous. He identified specific creativity types based on a propulsion model whereby creative contributions represent ‘an attempt to propel a field from wherever the field is in the multidimensional space to wherever the creator believes the field should go’ (p. 87). His seven types of creative contributions include replication (shows that the field is in the right place), redefinition (redefining where the field is), forward incrementation (propelling the field in its current direction), advance forward incrementation (similar to incrementation but moving beyond where others are ready to go), redirection (redirecting the field), reconstruction/redirection (attempts to move the field back to where it once was) and reinitiation (an attempt to move the field to a different, as yet unreached, starting point and then move from that point). Kerrie Unsworth (2001, p. 2) is another who argues against ‘a unitary construct, [which has the effect of] hindering a fuller understanding of the phenomenon’ and she proposes a ‘matrix of four creativity types: responsive, expected, contributory, and proactive’ (p. 2). This matrix has two axes. One is drive for engagement (either external or internal to the creative) and the other is problem type (either open or closed). The intersections yield four creativity types.
Some suggest that creativity is a social construction, as we have noted, where creative activities or ideas ‘can only be understood as creative by people who share the same sort of experience and culture’ (Petocz, Reid & Taylor, 2009, p. 410), or, put another way: ‘In order to understand creativity, understanding the community in which creativity can be observed should be of primary concern’ (Han, 2010, p. 166). We should even consider that creativity cannot always be perceived in a positive light: ‘Often “creative” initiatives are viewed with suspicion and even active ridicule that appears to suggest fear on behalf of the potential participants’ [original emphasis] (Govan & Munt, 2003, p. 2). There are differences between industry types too: ‘creativity in the commercial sector is more prevalent; the public sector has been slow to follow but it is moving in this direction’ (Govan & Munt, 2003, p. 3), which is often not surprising given what we noted earlier about the aversion to surprise in health services, for instance.

Rather than simply adopting any single definition of creativity, there is good reason to consider it as being heterogeneous and also context-specific. This fits with our postmodern position, which we will soon discuss in more detail, where: ‘knowledge is produced in so many different bits and pieces that there can be no reasonable expectation that it will ever add up to an integrated singular view’ (Hatch, 1997, p. 44).

Organisational creativity

Further, much of the research on creativity has focused on the individual (Kahl, da Fonseca, & Witte, 2009, p. 5) and indeed we have already seen that creativity research comes primarily from disciplines such as psychology, and dates back to Sigmund Freud in 1908. However, creativity can also be considered as a collective phenomenon. The emphasis on process, novelty and possibly value can still be retained of course: ‘collective creativity represents particular moments when people’s perspectives and experiences are brought together to bear on problematic situations in ways that create distinctly new solutions’ (Hargadon & Bechky,
Extending on this: ‘We can say that collective creativity has occurred when social interactions between individuals trigger new interpretations and new discoveries of distant analogies that the individuals involved, thinking alone, could not have generated’ (Hargadon & Bechky, 2006, p. 489). Creativity that goes beyond the individual can be explained in various other ways too, including a systems perspective (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, pp. 1-456; Williams & Yang, 1999, pp. 372-391), as we noted in Chapter 1, or an innovation and change perspective (Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993, pp. 293-321). Suzy Gilson and Christina Shalley (2004, p. 454) put a slightly different slant on collective creativity and present it as: ‘members working together in such a manner that they link ideas from multiple sources, delve into unknown areas to find better or unique approaches to a problem, or seek out novel ways of performing a task’.

Organisational creativity, as a topic of research, has grown considerably over the last two decades (Robledo, Hester, Peterson, M, & 2012, p. 711). We have seen that it can be thought of as relating to products, services, processes or strategies (Fisher & Amabile, 2009, p. 13) or, again, simply getting the job done (Nayak, 2008, p. 421). What is suggested here is that organisational creativity is more about supporting, even driving, organisational operations and strategy, rather than just producing something novel and appropriate. That is, organisational creativity is goal-directed. What might stimulate this type of creativity? Some consider that it is relationship strength and network position that influence creativity (Perry-Smith, 2006, p. 89) while others including Kimberly Elsbach and Andrew Hargadon (2006, pp. 470-483) focus on the design of entire workdays and ‘mindless’ work as factors of organisational creativity. David Harrington (1990, pp. 143-169) takes an ecological view and Jay Seitz (2003, pp. 385-392) makes the case that the distribution of power and resources, through censorship and economic constraints (p. 385), is a factor. These are all notions that go beyond the individual and towards a collective and an organisational conceptualisation of creativity, and suggest that organisational creativity is more than the cumulative efforts of those people who work in offices, classrooms, factory floors or health services,
no matter how personally creative those individuals are. Organisational creativity looks somehow different, more organic than that. Haridimos Tsoukas and Robert Chia (2002, pp. 567-582) discuss organisational change in a similar manner. They are critical that change is often viewed synoptically, approached from the outside. This ‘does not do justice to the open-ended micro-processes that underlay the trajectories described; it does not quite capture the distinguishing features of change – its fluidity, pervasiveness, open-endedness, and indivisibility’ (2002, p. 570), they say.

Taking up this point, are creativity researchers examining their topic through a synoptic lens? If we go back to Allen and Brodzinski’s comment about a toolkit approach, the answer may very well be ‘yes’. Pressing for a broader and deeper definition of organisational creativity would certainly prepare a more thoughtful base for this research. It would open up rather than close down discussion about this complex task of conceptualising creativity in a system – health services – that focus attention on information, control, standardisation, and the development of sophisticated ways of avoiding surprise. There may be benefits in challenging privileged meanings about creativity in such a routinised and risk-averse system. Such ways may be constraining the development of fairer, more responsive and creative health services and this in turn may limit the ability to meet future health demands. One way to better appreciate the broader, and especially the social, nature of organisational creativity, it will be proposed in this dissertation, is to think about it as a practice.

Creativity and practice

The standard definition of creativity is, as we have seen, usually considered to be a ‘process’ involving both novelty and value, although, as we have also seen, there are other useful ways of defining it too. While there has been much attention paid in the literature to novelty and value, the notion of ‘process’ is generally not discussed. In fact, it is easy to make the assumption that the term ‘process’ is fixed, unquestioned, even unquestionable, and that everyday meanings associated with it are enough
to explain it in full. Usual meanings of the word ‘process’ conjure up notions of a series of tasks, actions or operations, and in the creativity literature one often sees terms like steps and phases (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 79) used to describe what amounts to be a dissection of the ‘process’. Even David Harrington’s (1990, p. 145) ecological approach adopted an operational definition of creativity as a process, although Csikszentmihalyi (1996, p. 28) used the term ‘components’ for his systems-based theory, while Seana Moran (2009, pp. 1-22), who compared the so-called boundary and organism metaphors for creativity, did manage to side-step the term ‘process’ almost altogether. Still, Moran’s account is a rare example and it is no wonder that creativity is often represented as something more or less mechanical, and as we have said, a string of phases or stages. This would of course suit the tradition of psychology, from whence much creativity research has arisen; however, an exploration of creativity from a different perspective could be very useful in opening up new discussions and, in turn, generating a renewed awareness of creativity in health services.

Over recent years there have been attempts to question the standard definition of creativity and to conceptualise it differently. Søren Klausen (2010, p. 347), for instance, claimed that the standard definition is problematic and that a ‘pure’ process view is ‘almost unintelligible’ (p. 351). Scholars such as Keith Sawyer (2012, pp. 59-75) are turning to sociocultural theory to help explain, in his case, group creativity. A social view provides a context for the notion of emergence as an element of creativity and also ‘connects creativity with every day social life and practices’ (Paloniemi & Collin, 2012, p. 23) so that creativity is not as rarefied – more accessible.

The purpose of creativity is also being called into question by progressive scholars ‘becoming aware of the dangers of locating “creativity” within a paradigm of economic (market) determinism’ [original emphasis] (Mrnarević, 2011, p. 21). Such modernist approaches to creativity are not uncommon, and these, Rob Pope (2005, p. 19) argues, are based on the
premise that creativity is needed to ‘meet the challenge of accelerating changes of an unprecedented magnitude; and the key areas of both change and challenge are those of scientific discovery, technical invention, commercial competition and military rivalry’. For those of us in the Western world who benefit from scientifically and technologically advanced health services, even if it is just to know that these clever things exist, ‘just in case’, it is hard to be disparaging of the massive change, driven by neo-liberal ideals, that have got us to this privileged position – or is it? Another way of looking at this is that modernism is not, in itself, a full and adequate basis for a discussion about creativity. Apart from there being, arguably, a postmodern influence in the earlier stages of creativity anyhow, that is, where ideas emerge ‘from outside the realm of rational thought processes’ (Nystrom, 2000, p. 110), ‘calling forth and realizing the unknown’ (p. 110), we could say, as Alfonso Montuori (2011, p. 221) did, that creativity is ‘not quite “normal” in Modernity’ [original emphasis]. Creativity opposes the status quo, we might say, by definition. Also, as we have seen, there have been moves towards organic (Moran, 2009, pp. 1-22), ecological (Harrington, 1990, pp. 143-169) and systemic (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, pp. 27-36) views of creativity, which is a challenge to creativity’s modernist stock. Of course, the lineage of creativity and its prevailing conceptualisation is likely to be a response to societal views more generally, but here too there has been a shift from materialist to postmaterialist values, and from modern to postmodern values in advanced industrial societies, according to some empirical research (Inglehart, 2000, p. 222). With this in mind, it is interesting to consider the work of Jill Green (1996, p. 269) who explored somatic practice and creativity through a post-humanistic lens. She came to question conventional views that the ‘self’ is static and removed from the social world (p. 273), and in working with her research participants (dancers), came to focus more on the ‘changing self in process in relationship to the sociopolitical world [resisting] technologies of normalization, dominant meaning systems, and social hierarchies’ (p. 273).
Becoming and changing, which in Green’s case was informed by the work of Lee Quinby (1991, pp. 1-192), are something that we will explore in more detail in the next chapter. It is, in fact, an important ontological position in Somerville’s postmodern emergence, for this research, in practice theory, as well as for creativity itself. For now, however, we note this early reaction against modernist conceptualisations of creativity, which is rare but not completely surprising, given changing societal views. In fact, one of Green’s (1996, p. 270) research participants commented:

In a way, being creative is, in this society, like being a renegade. Because in society …. We act so much like lemmings and like sheep – we follow without thinking. And creativity says, “I might be a lemming but I’m going to put polka dots on my back today …. I’m going to take another way.

Of course, polka dots are symbolic of wider concerns, such as ‘reaching out through a struggle to take social action’ (Green, 1996, p. 270), or here, like taking steps for more equitable access to health care. Still, the modernist view of creativity does remain the dominant position in creativity research. This is a blind spot that has the potential to divert our attention away from important considerations like actors’ becoming, or even organisational becoming, picking up on Green, let alone any consideration of how affect might be associated with creativity. It may also explain why authors such as Oliver (2009, p. 318) suggest that there is a tendency to frame creativity more as innovation, implying ‘a reproducible product’ rather than something that is ‘situational, embodied and temporal’. Of course, notions of situation, embodiment and temporality can be applied to practice without being restricted to the narrow gaze of economic determinism.

Changing the term ‘process’ to ‘practice’ in relation to creativity opens up new ways of seeing it, but here, again, we strike some definitional issues. Elena Antonacopoulou (2008, p. 114) points out that there is no consistent way of defining ‘practice’; it depends on the epistemological and ontological stance taken. Practice can be conceptualised as action, following the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1990, pp. 1-270), as structure (language, symbols,
tools), referencing Stephen Turner (1994, pp. 1-145), as activity system, after Yrjö Engeström, Reijo Miettinen and Raija-Leena Punamäki (1999, pp. 19-442), as social context (Lave & Wenger, 1991, pp. 1-138), or as knowing (Nicolini, Gherardi, & Yanow, 2003, pp. 3-261). Practice theories can favour inclusivity or exclusivity (Hager, 2012, pp. 17-27), with exclusivity being a means of making sense of the 'bewildering diversity of ways in which “practice” is employed' [original emphasis] (p. 17), whereas, as Paul Hager (2012, p. 19) noted, inclusive theories have a tendency to 'drain the term of any explanatory purchase'. Robin Usher and Richard Edwards' (2007, pp. 1-173) discussion of lifelong learning identified it, that is, lifelong learning, as a social 'practice', alongside other practices such as lifestyle practices, meaning-making practices, and so forth, so Hager's point about under-explaining the term practice is well made. Here, we will give particular attention to practice theories that tend to be more exclusive than inclusive, and represent current thought on practice theory.

We now consider the notion of teleaffective structures and other aspects of Theodore Schatzki's work on practice theory, continue with Antonacopoulou's complexity informed discussion of practice, together with Stephen Kemmis, Christine Edwards-Groves, Jane Wilkinson and Ian Hardy's notion of 'ecology of practices', and also Bill Green's guiding principles of practice. Schatzki (2002, p. 72) considers practices to be the site of the social, 'open, temporally unfolding nexuses of actions', involving 'doings' and 'sayings' (p. 72). Relevant to this discussion on creativity, practices encompass, amongst other things, 'new doings and sayings that constitute extant tasks, as well as existing and new doings and sayings that constituted novel tasks, where the newness involved resulted from innovations in and reorganisations of the practice's operations' (Schatzki, 2002, p. 74). So newness forms part of Schatzki's view of practice, within, or as part of, a practice. Here is Schatzki's (2002, p. 74) illustration of this:
Medicinal herbs, for instance, were not always sold in pressed block form. The introduction of this innovation required the performance of a great variety of new doings and sayings that constituted existing (e.g., packaging) as well as novel (e.g., pressing) tasks. Practices thus comprise regular, occasional, rare, and novel doings/sayings, tasks and projects.

Note that Schatzki is referring to innovation, but creativity is implied, if we take the usual line, for now at least, that creativity is a precursor to the innovation.

Rules are also an element of a Schatzkian (2002, p. 80) perspective. They serve 'the purpose of orienting and determining the course of activity' and 'shape how a practice unfolds' (Antonacopoulou, 2008, p. 116). However, rules are not fixed and standard (Antonacopoulou, 2008, p. 116). Actually, Antonacopoulou (2008, p. 116) suggests that rules and routines reproduce themselves in the process of improvisation. Take, for example, car repairers in the developing nation of Ghana. They use local materials in shacks or the open air to keep cars going and to eventually transform them so that the reworked vehicle can then be maintained with their makeshift tools (Edgerton, 2008, pp. 83-85). In a way, the car repairers operate in parallel to the original maintenance manuals. In this case: 'Creativity emerges ... when one produces something that paradoxically adheres to the rules of the game and at the same time establishes new rules' (Rehn & De Cock, 2009, p. 227). There is a tension here between ideas, rules and routines:

Focusing on tension is one possible approach for articulating and empirically engaging with the self-organising processes that shape practice as a mode of organising. Tensions not only underpin the interconnections within and between practices, they also define the emerging character of a practice and provide scope for dynamic ‘ways of seeing’ practice (Antonacopoulou, 2008, p. 117).

So we might even think of rules as facilitating improvisation in organisations: 'Institutionalization has no end; it is itself an unfolding process and the “institution” of practices, routines and rules in the realm of organising is itself an arena of negotiated order’ [original emphasis]
Important also is another characteristic of practice, according to Schatzki (2002, pp. 44-45), and that is that these practices are 'preconfigured'. Practices qualify the path of activity through constraint and enablement (Schatzki, 2002, p. 45), or constraint and possibility (Schatzki, 2002, p. 211), as a function of this prefiguration, so that '[a]gency makes the future within an extant mesh of practices and orders that prefigures what it does – and thereby what it makes' (Schatzki, 2002, p. 210). This is not a fatalistic view of the social but rather an acknowledgment of the complexity and intricacy of the social world. We use the physical and human elements of the social world, especially practices, already in place, to guide us through it. That said, practices are also fluid (Antonacopoulou, 2008, p. 116), overlap with other practices, in part, by virtue of their doings and sayings (Schatzki, 2002, p. 155), and they co-evolve with other practices (Antonacopoulou, 2008, p. 116). This way of looking at practices, preconfigured yet fluid, may also account for things like the impact of practices, in that they are surely not all equal in that regard. It may also account for their order, that is, that one practice can presuppose another, as well as their relationships with other practices.

The notion of an ecology of practices, that is, that practices are living and connected things (Kemmis, Edwards-Groves, Wilkinson, & Hardy, 2012, p. 36), harnessed together (Kemmis et al., 2012, p. 37) as complexes, with local variation (Kemmis et al., 2012, p. 36), is also useful to this discussion. Kemmis, Edwards-Groves, Wilkinson and Hardy (2012, pp. 36-37) use contemporary schooling as an example of this and associate it with practices of learning, teaching, teacher education, education policy, educational research and evaluation that form a 'complex of practices' (p. 37).

From another perspective, Green (2009, pp. 9-12) considers the guiding principles of professional practice to be phronesis, praxis and aporia. Phronesis is variously associated with practical wisdom, according to Bent Flyvberg (2004, p. 284), which implies values and ethics, and involves deliberation, reflection and an orientation towards action (Kinsella &
According to Donald Polkinghorne (2004, p. 69), *phronesis* is embodied, and Frederick Ellett (Jnr) (2012, p. 14) describes it as an embodied *social* practice ‘concerned to determine how one should act’ (2012, p. 15).

Interestingly, one of the few researchers to take a practice approach on creativity, Nayak (2008, p. 421), used the term ‘feel for the game’ as part of his definition of creativity (from a managerial perspective), although he did not use the term *phronesis* itself.

*Praxis* is ‘good’ action (B. Green, 2009, p. 10), which could be an action taken by a clinician or health leader for those clients or communities under their care. According to Green (2009, p. 10), Aristotle linked *praxis* with *phronesis*, so a practice involves ‘human activity oriented expressly towards that which is good’ (Green, 2009, p. 10), and this occurs with the aid of practical wisdom. *Apora* is the ‘confrontation in one’s own practice with unresolvable problematics, or paradoxes’ (Green, 2009, p. 11) – often part of the actuality of providing treatment and care. What Green (2009, p. 10) emphasises is that neither *phronesis*, *praxis* or *aporia* are superordinate or prior or linear, sequential or algorithmic (Green, 2009, p. 11); it is the interrelations of these three concepts that are important (Green, 2009, p. 10).

So what would be the entry point to creativity that is conceptualised as a practice? Is there a tipping point for when it might become enacted? At one level, an answer comes from aspects of Hans Joas’ (1996, p. 128) pragmatist-informed theory. Benjamin Dalton (2004, p. 606) interprets this as: ‘creativity is “called forth” when these habits are interrupted’ [original emphasis], that is, creativity is facilitated when current actions, or practices, are for some reason not as influential or effective. But how might this relate to the intersections of a particular know-how, an emergent requirement for a new ‘good action’ (some aspect of patient care or population health no doubt) along with *aporia*, which is what Alf Rehn and Christian De Cock (2009, p. 222) consider to be at the core of creativity?
Is it the spaces between these concepts and, to use Ernesto Lacau’s (1996, p. 54) phrase, in a ‘moment of madness’, where what we might call a practice of creativity, is enacted, and where, through aporia, and staying with Lacau (1996, p. 54) a little longer, there is a ‘jump from the experience of unpredictability to a creative act’. Would this be a one-off occurrence, how can we think about it temporally? Green (2009, p. 12) offers an answer to this question by suggesting that professional practitioners work creatively ‘time and time again, remaking themselves, their practice and the world, each time anew’ [original emphasis].

We have here a view of creativity, as practice, that focuses on complex adaptive systems, collective enactments (of creativity), and a view of creativity that emphasises embodiment, affect, fluidity and tacit rather than explicit responses. None of these ideas appears to have been applied to health services, where there is a sad lack of scholarship in the area of creativity. In fact, a search of the health-related journal database, MEDLINE, for the period 2004 to April 2014, using the search terms ‘creativity’ (in the title) and ‘health management’ (in the title) or ‘health administration’ (in the title) or ‘health services management’ (in the title) or ‘health care’ (in the title) yielded only one article, published in 2011. This was identified from the ‘creativity/health services’ combination; however, even in that article, ‘creativity’ was used in the title but not discussed in any sort of detail in the body of the publication. There were two publications identified from the creativity/health care combination (one in 2011 and the other in 2012). One of these was actually about innovation, and in the other, the word ‘creativity’ was also only used in the title and nowhere else. The creativity/health administration and creativity/health management combinations gleaned no results at all. There were 521 articles identified in the same databases and for the same time period using the term ‘creativity’ only (for the same period), so there is certainly an interest in the concept of creativity in a broad sense, just not at the level of the organisation or health service. A Scopus search for the same period using the single search term ‘creativity’ (not associated with ‘health’) in the title yielded 12,989 results and Scopus’ breakdown of the characteristics of
these papers highlights that the major disciplines and perspectives are Social Sciences (1,113), Psychology (858), Arts and Humanities (757), Business, Management and Accounting (557, and next is Medicine (294). Incidentally, most of these came from the United States, followed by the United Kingdom, and then Australia. Coupling ‘creativity’ and ‘practice’ (in the title) in a Scopus search for the same period yielded 111 results. Of these, there were two papers that referred to the term ‘practice’ in relation to practice theory; the others used the term in relation to, say, ‘clinical practice’ or ‘theory and practice’. One of the two papers was by Nayak (2008, pp. 420-439), referred to above and discussed in detail in Chapter 8, and the other was by Eleni Giannopoulou, Lidia Gryszkiewicz and Pierre-jean Barlatier (2014, pp. 23-44), which will also be discussed later in this dissertation.

Creativity and complex adaptive systems

We can say, then, that creativity has not been placed, convincingly at least, on the agendas of health services research and scholarship. One explanation of this, as we have already noted, is that the field is not comfortable with the topic (compared with ‘innovation’) (Munt & Hargreaves, 2009, p. 286), given the system’s natural predilection for stability, and an understandable avoidance of what is sometimes seen as the unpredictability associated with creativity. It may also be unclear what the field sees as the place of creativity in health services and indeed (compared with innovation) what it looks like in that environment driven by evidence-based practice, risk management and a striving for certainty. Would a more systemic take on health services creativity be useful? If so, how are health services framed, or how might they be framed, to achieve this? Reuben McDaniel and Dean Driebe (2001, pp. 11-36) offer a useful place to start thinking about this. They apply complex adaptive systems theory to health services, explaining that: ‘Rational approaches to understanding organisations have worked poorly’ (McDaniel & Driebe, 2001, p. 14). In healthcare, this is despite the best taming efforts of health leaders through standardisation, the use of protocols, risk management and many other
devices. ‘Laws, rules, and regulations – methods and procedures – are erected around our minds to prevent chaos’ (McDaniel, Jordan, & Fleeman, 2003, p. 268), but this pervasive approach to forestall surprise, and conquer the unpredictable and the unknown is failing. Think of medical error (incorrect medication administration, wrong surgery, for instance), which is something that can be put down to complexity and uncertainty (Scott, 2009, p. 22), as an unfortunate sign of this failure, and of a failure to avert surprise.

McDaniel and Driebe (2003, pp. 11-36) propose a more progressive approach for understanding health services, one which helps to locate a place for creativity, a place that does not so readily exist with more traditional approaches. They recommend that attention be paid to not only the ‘unknown’, but also what is ‘unknowable’. Take for instance community-based (primary) family medicine services. These are characterised by variation in patients, clinicians and practices, and forces inside and outside these practice such that ‘surprise is the norm’(Crabtree, 2003, p. 279). This would be the case for secondary- and tertiary-level health services, and no doubt for those public health services targeting entire populations also. From a complex adaptive systems standpoint, the health service is more like ‘a collection of individual agents with freedom to act in ways that are not always totally predictable, and whose actions are interconnected so that one agent’s actions changes the context for other agents’ (Plsek & Greenhalgh, 2001, p. 625). When viewed this way, surprise, the unpredictable, the unknown and unknowable can be expected, prompting health leaders to ‘pay attention in real time to the unfolding and coevolving worlds in which they must function’ (McDaniel & Driebe, 2001, p. 31). And, as Sarah Fraser and Trisha Greenhalgh (2001, p. 799) put it, ‘aim not merely for change, improvement, and response, but for changeability, improvability, and responsiveness’. However, as we have noted, much of the attention of health services is still directed at reducing surprise arising from the unknown, often through the collection and analysis of performance and projection data. This is done for very good
reasons, of course, but an unbalanced focus on it may draw attention away from creativity and important opportunities (or surprises) may be missed.

The purpose of this discussion is to awaken us to a more useful way of thinking about health services. As McDaniel (2003, p. 289) points out: ‘one of the critical barriers to doing things in a new way is our basic frame of reference or our fundamental view of the world’. The complex adaptive systems frame of reference will be employed here as we progress our discussion about the place and nature of, here, the creativity of health services. Complex adaptive systems and especially practice theory are not only interesting points, but also useful. They help us to ‘understand the dynamics of creativity’ (Nayak, 2008, p. 420), to enter the unknown, and to explore a new way of thinking about it.

Here, we will go about re-conceptualising creativity by making artworks, through metaphor, and also through conversations with people who we will consider to be entry-points for understanding the creativity of their health services. We will be careful to keep an honest record of how new ideas emerge. It is these ideas, as we will come to discuss, that contribute significantly to the character of what finally will emerge as a thesis on creativity as practice. Before that, however, we should make clear the basis of this research, starting with its theoretical and philosophical framework.
Michael Crotty (1998, p. 2) framed the development of research as answering a series of interrelated questions about epistemology, theoretical perspectives, methodology and methods. Here, ontology will be added to Crotty’s model, and epistemology and ontology are considered first to signify that these are foundational elements upon which the other elements of research are built.

Questions of epistemology and ontology, along with the project’s theoretical perspective, will be dealt with in this chapter, and methodology and methods will be discussed in Chapter 4. This is not to say that relationships do not exist across these domains – they do. For example, the discussion about the ontological basis of this research does not stand alone from the subsequent discussion about epistemology, and we will see in Chapter 4 that those scholars whose work are referred to add to the ontological and epistemological platform that is being built here. If we are to represent these links and relationships artistically, we might build a sculpture to highlight the complexity involved, and as a supplement to this textual representation of how the various elements are woven together. We should not only pass through the lines and paragraphs in this and the next chapter, but grab hold of the ideas contained within them and mentally weave them into this sculpture, perhaps where the beginning and end is almost indistinguishable. We will come across material in discussion about ontology that might be mentally tucked into the discussion about
epistemology, and there will be threads from the work of scholars John Dewey, Paul Carter and Margaret Somerville, in particular, as well as the Swiss artist Alberto Goacometti, that will shape the structure upon which we will knit the concepts of creativity, organisations, and health services. We will have then created a form upon which we will be able to affix a discussion about methodology and method, in Chapter 4.

**Ontology**

Staying with Crotty (1998, p. 185) for a while longer, his reference to ‘ambiguity, relativity, fragmentation, particularity and discontinuity’ sits well with what we have discussed as the heterogeneous and contextual nature of creativity, and also the complex nature of organisations like health services. Crotty is referring here to postmodernism, an established research tradition (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 191) which, according to Carol Grbich (2007, pp. 10-11), favours mini-narratives to provide explanations for small-scale situations located within particular contexts, where individual interpretation and illumination of a topic is time- and context-bound and influenced by the constructions and interpretations of both researcher and researched:

> The researcher and the researched are no longer identifiably separate; they interweave their constructed meanings in a delicate dance of recognition and interpretation as the same narratives are told and retold, presented and re-presented for the reader to hook into (Grbich, 2007, p. 11).

In postmodernism, reflexive subjectivity replaces objectivity. There is no quest for objective reality; realities are multiple. In fact, the terms that were used above, ‘weave’ and ‘knit’, are good metaphors for postmodernism because of their ‘emphasis on fragmentary images [which] invite readers to participate, to contribute from their own experiences and to take away challenging images for integration with their own life experiences’ (Grbich, 2007, p. 11).
Within a postmodern paradigm, the study of creativity does not work towards a unified understanding or set of techniques or models for making sense of or enhancing creativity. Perhaps this is why Alberto Giacometti, who painted the portrait of James Lord, (while Lord took notes) was: 

obliged to feel that it is necessary to start his entire career over again every day, as it were, from scratch. He refuses to rely on past achievements or even to look at the world in terms what he himself has made of it …. He often feels that the particular sculpture or painting on which he happens to be working at the moment is that one which will for the very first time express what he subjectively experiences in response to an objective reality (Lord, 1980, p. 27).

Although here we are not arguing for a single objective reality (in fact, the opposite), a very useful notion is raised about the subjective experience being unique; different every time Giacometti performs his practice. There is a link with Somerville's (2007, pp. 232-235) ontology of ‘becoming’ too. She proposed that this is a precondition for emergence, which, as we noted in Chapter 2, is a concept considered relevant to creativity. It ‘is the undoing of subjectivity’, ‘becoming other’ or ‘born of the space in-between’, and this, Somerville (2007, p. 234) writes, is ‘the condition for generating new knowledge’. So here we have an ontology of ‘becoming’ that aligns well with this research topic of creativity (emergence, liminality and novelty being implicated in both postmodern emergence and creativity), like the way Giacometti works ‘without any preconception whatever’ (Lord, 1980, p. 79) in the production of each artwork, and as I do in the production of this dissertation.

Schatzki (2002, p. xvi) refers to becoming also, but as a social becoming, a metamorphosis, in the nexuses of practices and other arrangements and their components. This perspective, informed by the work of Martin Heidegger and Ludwig Wittgenstein, considers becoming to be a ‘continuous churning enveloping horizon of organised human activity’ (Schatzki, 2002, p. xii).

This term, the ‘space in-between’, that Somerville uses, is in reference to the notion of liminality, described by Victor Turner (1982, p. 253) as:
a time outside time in which it is often permitted to play with the factors of sociocultural experience, to disengage what is mundanely connected, what, outside liminality, people may even believe to be naturally and intrinsically connected, and join the disarticulated part on a novel, even improbable, ways. [original emphasis]

Liminality is a feature of a postmodern world, writes Katherne Buttler Brown (2007, p. 5). It is the ‘blurring and crossing of thresholds and boundaries; the breakdown of historically fixed categories; the exposure of ambiguities; the fluidity and hybridity of identities; play and absurdity; and uncertainty’ (Buttler Brown, 2007, p. 5). Somerville (2007, p. 235) describes this as ‘the space of unknowing; the absences, silences and disjunctures of the liminal space with no narrative; the relational of any coming into being; and the messiness, unfolding, open-ended and irrational nature of becoming-other through research engagement’. In other writings, Somerville (2008c, p. 210) uses the term ‘chaotic place of unknowing’, which came originally from her doctoral student Tamah Nakamura. I take from reading these works side-by-side that ‘unknowing’, ‘undoing’, ‘becoming other’, and what Giacometti called ‘negative work’, share a resemblance and draw together, ontologically, notions of art-making, creativity and methodology.

Nakamura (as cited in Somerville, 2008c, p. 210) draws a similar link:

Waiting in the chaotic place of not knowing, and not knowing when and if I would know, and, further, not knowing what I would know, while honouring the informants’ knowledge as greater than my own, acknowledges method as a creative process.

Brodzinski and Munt (2009, p. 279), whose work we encountered in Chapter 2, also link liminality with creativity, describing liminality as a ‘metaphor for the creative process’. Also, Giacometti referred to ‘holes’ in nature in and in the making of artworks as opportunities from which his art might progress. An example is: ‘I have to make a little hole in nature …. And pass through it …. Yes. I’ve made a hole but its too small to pass through’ (Lord, 1980, p. 88). Creativity, and this research, also require a
large enough hole, which ‘cannot begin with logic but comes from a place of not knowing’ (Somerville, 2008c, p. 210).

In Chapter 2 we noted the importance of complex adaptive systems as a way of framing health services and also practice. According to Allen and Brodzinski (2009, p. 314), unpredictability ‘open[s] up a liminal space of not-knowing’; and the surprise emerging from this unpredictability and unknowing has been associated with creativity (McDaniel et al., 2003, p. 267). So, there does indeed seem to be useful relationships between postmodernism, creativity, liminality, complexity, and the methodology of postmodern emergence that we will discuss in Chapter 4.

**Epistemology**

If ‘knowledge is relative to the knower’ (Hatch, 1997, p. 48) and as researcher I am always becoming, I take a subjectivist rather than objectivist approach to knowledge. Beyond that, I would agree with Laurel Richardson and Elizabeth St. Pierre (2005, p. 961) and ‘doubt that any method or theory, any discourse or genre, or any tradition or novelty has a universal and general claim as the “right” or privileged form of authoritative knowledge’ [original emphasis]. To ‘know “something” without claiming to know everything’ (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 961), or even to seek meaning rather than knowledge (Carol Grbich, 2007, p. 9), is the stance, informed by postmodernism, that is taken here.

Somerville (2008c, p. 209) writes of ‘opening up of the possibility of generating new knowledge’ rather than closing it down. The notion of generating, not solving or completing, resonates with Giacometti’s art-making; he referred to *non finito*, which according to Lord (1980, p. 92) was evident right back to Michelangelo. Somerville’s (2007, p. 235) epistemology around generating is summarised below:
I choose generating rather than knowing because the definition of knowing is ‘to perceive or understand as fact or truth, or to apprehend with clearness and certainty’. I want to focus on the makings, the creation of products and assemblages, in an iterative process of representation and reflection through which we come to know in research.

In discussing generating as an epistemology, and gesturing towards the work of Elizabeth Grosz (1999, p. 5) (who in turn draws on Darwin, Nietzsche, Bergson and Deleuze), Somerville (2007, p. 237) writes: ‘It is through these “modes of repetition”, the iterative processes of representation and reflection then, that the new emerges’ [original emphasis]. Again, this is similar to how Lord (1980, p. 109) writes of Giacometti, as he observed him paint: ‘He was constructing it all over again from nothing, and for the hundredth time at least’. There is an entrée here to a concept that is central to the way that art is used in this study. Even if this entrée is not completely obvious, because it leads us to such an important idea, we will respond to it now. The point is that Somerville is writing of art not as decoration, illustration, or product, but as a generative process, as an epistemology; it is what Angie Titchen and Debbie Horsfall (2007, p. 216) refer to as ‘the use of creative arts media as data generating methods’. Art is an aesthetic experience, and this is exactly what John Dewey proposed in his book, Art as Experience (1934). An Australian scholar, Paul Carter, in his text Material Thinking (2004), also writes of art in a way that presupposes its generative qualities. It does seem like a worthwhile task, then, to be placing Dewey’s notion of art as experience alongside both Carter’s material thinking and Somerville’s postmodern emergence.

Dewey ‘sought to overcome rigid dichotomies [between] creative process and creative product’ (Leddy, 2012, p. 126). This is not unlike Carter’s (2004, p. 11) concern that: ‘The process of making the work becomes inseparable from what is produced’, or between ‘the artist and audience’ (Leddy, 2012, p. 126). Dewey (1934, p. 8) described this as ‘the gulf that exists generally between producer and consumer in modern society’. So the ‘experience’ of art involves not just viewing the artworks, but also the production and whatever else comprises a complex, larger and pleasurable
whole (Leddy, 2012, p. 130), involving ‘doing’ and also ‘undergoing’ (Leddy, 2012, p. 130), or ‘making’ and ‘experiencing’ (Leddy, 2012, p. 130). Taking this further:

Because the perception of relationship between what is done and what is undergone constitutes the work of intelligence, and because the artist is controlled in the process of his work by his [sic] grasp of the connection between what he has already done and what he is to do next, the idea that the artist does not think as intently and penetratingly as a scientific inquirer is absurd (Dewey, 1934, p. 47).

For someone like myself working in arts-based research, art ‘develops, accentuates, and idealizes what is valuable in life’ (Leddy, 2012, p. 127). This is the view taken here, quite different from the view, engendered by capitalism, as Dewey (1934, p. 7) notes, that art is properly homed in museums and the like. In fact, on the very first page of Art as Experience, Dewey (1934, p. 1) comments: ‘the very perfection of some of these products, the prestige they possess because of a long history of unquestioned admiration, creates conventions that get in the way of fresh insight’. As I read these few words in Dewey’s text, I highlighted them and wrote underneath that ‘art, in arts-based inquiry, does not have to be perfect’, although, in retrospect, the term ‘grand’ (rather than ‘perfect’) might have been more appropriate. This is somewhat of a defence of my own imperfect art-making perhaps, although Dewey’s point does seem to ring true for arts-based research more generally, where the emphasises are often the ‘everyday events, doings, and sufferings’ (Dewey, 1934, p. 2). Such everyday events, here, would include the-day-to-day activities of health professionals. We will get to these events, doings, and even the sufferings of creativity, later in this dissertation, but before we do that, another point that Dewey makes helps to crystallise this notion of ‘experience’ even further. Dewey (1934, p. 2) wrote, quite beautifully and illustratively, that ‘Mountain peaks do not float unsupported; they do not even rest upon the earth. They are the earth’ [original emphasis]. In other words, art does not simply rest on easels or hang on walls, devoid of, as we have noted, the events, doings and sufferings that contributed to its production and its appreciation. Art is no more displaced from experience than waves are
displaced from the sea, or to go to Dewey (1934, p. 12) directly: ‘life goes on in an environment; not merely in it but because of it, through interaction with it’ [original emphasis].

Artistic expression also occurs through a medium, not by ‘applying a preestablished idea to some material’, but in a way in which meaning becomes at the end of the process (Leddy, 2012, p. 131), or as Leddy (2012, p. 131) so nicely puts it: ‘when the meaning initially stirred up finally becomes conscious’. This suggests that a spark of an idea, what Dewey (1934, p. 60) calls ‘impulsion’, is developed, or brought to ‘completion’ (Leddy, 2012, p. 131) through art-making and leads to an ‘aesthetic understanding’ (Dewey, 1934, p. 11).

In most cases, I know when a painting is complete, or as some might say, when it ‘works’. There is an equilibrium, a ‘moment when we pass from disorder into harmony’, like: ‘when a paper you are working on takes on form and meaning’ (Leddy, 2012, p. 128). Importantly, there is an emotional satisfaction which arises from an internal integration and an aesthetic experience (Leddy, 2012, p. 130). This is not to say that the aesthetic experience is completely and uniformly pleasurable. Rather, it arises from a balance between the hard work and frustration associated with production and resolution and completion of the work. It is different from a ‘non-aesthetic’ experience which would ‘involve [a] loose or mechanical connection of parts’ (Leddy, 2012, p. 130), highlighting again, the importance to the aesthetic experience of both ‘doing and undergoing’, and how, for the artist, undergoing informs the doing, as the work is (re)created in its own terms (Leddy, 2012, p. 130).

There seems to be a useful relationship with emergence here too, perhaps even a hint at an explanation as to how emergence occurs. Dewey (1934, p. 10) uses the term ‘emergence’, albeit with a somewhat different, but probably related, connotation from its more contemporary meaning. The dynamic between doing and undergoing can be unpredictable; undergoing takes its own course. This undergoing, if we are to accept Dewey’s thesis,
informs doing and these iterations lead to the emergence of something such as a pattern, idea or artefact, or, to continue with Dewey (1934, p. 10): ‘the emergence of works of art out of ordinary experiences’. As already mentioned, this is different from ‘the refining of raw materials into valuable products’ (Dewey, 1934, p. 10). If conditions are suitable, the emergent leads to an aesthetic experience in the viewer, who, again, as we have just discussed, will recreate it in his or her own terms. The most generative phase of this research, as we will come to see, resides in this intersection between artefact, that is, paintings, itself an outcome of emergence, and viewer re-creation, as an iterative activity that has its own emergent outcome. As Somerville (2007, p. 239) might say, art-making and viewing, interviewing and writing are each (and each time) ‘a pause in an iterative process of representation, engagement and reflexivity’. To expand:

A tape-recorded interview, for example, can be regarded as such a pause, a relational artefact of the interaction between researcher and researched, a recorded oral performance. This recorded oral performance retains its own integrity in the pause but it can be transcribed and reinterpreted at any time by its inclusion in an assemblage of other representations … Art is more than a means for facilitating reflexivity; art facilitates the emergence of ideas (Somerville, 2007, p. 239).

Carter (2004, p. 7) picks up this discussion in asserting how creative practice is research: ‘while creative research ought to be a tautology, in the present cultural climate it is in fact an oxymoron’ [original emphasis]. He continues: ‘With rare exceptions, the new is commissioned on condition that it merely intensifies what already exists’ (p. 8), whereas material thinking is ‘an intellectual adventure peculiar to the making process’ (p. XI).

Here are some important relational questions about art and other forms of making. By thinking of, in this case, our topic of creativity, rather than about it, we move from the unknown to the known (Sullivan, 2009, p. 48), as we have said, instead of intensifying the already existing. Unlike some other forms of research, it is the other way around. This then yields local knowledge and new conversations, not specificity and generalisability.

Assisted by my own ‘material thinking’ in the production of a painting that I
call Of creativity (Figure 1), I attempted to explore Carter’s idea that to undergo an exercise in material thinking is to add to my understanding of, here, creativity. I wanted to untangle this notion of material thinking – to knot a few threads, and perhaps remove some altogether.

Figure 1. Of creativity

My initial mental image for Of creativity was a ‘folding in’ of art into research and I wanted to explore the relational aspects of this. I allowed the watercolour to make fine tracks across the paper. These seemed to break a corner of the paper into folds. I wrote the word ‘of’ (as I tried to think of creativity, rather than about it) in thick black paint in the centre of the paper. These marks, and the negative spaces they made, or the ‘pattern made of holes’, as Carter (2004, p. 1) might call it, told me what to do next, and how to respond to achieve a visual and intellectual satisfaction – a balance. I wondered what would emerge, and searched for clues. Familiar shapes began to appear, shapes from earlier paintings, to which I had attached meaning. So I gave them a nudge – moving the paint around, extending them – wondering about their associations. One shape that appeared was the letter ‘C’, for creativity, which was also a play on the title of a metaphor I had started to work with – the ‘Sea’ of creativity (which we will get to in Chapter 5). A participant of an earlier project came to life too – his black-rimmed glasses making him recognisable (see upper right section of the painting). Of creativity began as a social relation, if we follow Carter’s (2004, p. 10) argument (which goes back to Norman Bryson [1988]); it represents the relationship between collaborators and their ideas. Carter (2007, p. 21) might also say that I was working at an ‘unfulfilled relation’, although I sensed my painting to be more ‘a structure
for reinventing human relations’ (Carter, 2004, p. 10), where discourse ‘provided the testing ground of new ideas’ (Carter, 2007, p. 19). I say this because I had not planned to place the ‘C’ (of creativity) in juxtaposition, almost abruptly, against an image of (in fact, in the face of) another person, but as I thought of creativity, these marks emerged almost spontaneously. Referring to the work of Bryson (1988, p. xxiv), Carter (2004, p. 10) considers that art ‘begins as a social relation’ and is transformed by the artist before returning it to the social domain (p. 10). Put in a slightly different way, invention is a double movement of ‘decontextualisation in which the found elements are rendered strange, and of recontextualisation, in which new families of association and structures of meaning are established’ (Carter, 2007, pp. 15-16). Of creativity, as well as this text, might even be considered artefacts of this re-conceptualisation being returned.

A relationship also exists between artist and materials. Following Gaston Bachelard (1971, p. 167), Carter (2004, p. 186) points out that ‘a homology must exist between matter and mind, between the qualities of the material to be worked and the creative disposition of the artist who selects and works it’. However, ‘the malleable material is subservient to the dream of the artist; it is the artist’s fantasy that matter serves’ (Carter, 2004, p. 186). This is what takes us beyond simply thinking and writing about art and research, and more about thinking and writing of creative research.

In empiricist tradition, there is a style of ‘writing “about” creativity, rather than “of” it’ [original emphases] (Carter, 2004, p. 9), where ‘the disciplinary separation that undermines an understanding of creative processes also inhibits the emergence, even locally, of a discourse coeval with those processes rather than parasitic on it’ (Carter, 2004, p. 9). I interpret writing about creativity to be ‘parasitic’, and of as being ‘coeval’. It is the difference between locating oneself, as artist, writer or researcher, either external to, or within, the research. To continue to take on this about/of debate, referring now to Linda Roche (2009, p. 36): ‘The enquiry shapes itself within the making’ and in painting, control is passed over to it, in this
case, to the paint, in a ‘transactional and responsive, action/reaction: I do/it does’ (p. 36) fashion. For me, the character of marks on the paper informed the action of my loaded brush, and the location of the next mark, fuelled, I believe, by a process aptly described by Roche (2009, p. 42) where: ‘There is a sense of emergence or revealing that occurs outside of myself as the work develops’. This research is conducted through practice, or as Laurene Vaughan (2008, p. 1) says: ‘in this practice of material thinking’, where the practice itself is an epistemological act (p. 2). Here, the terms ‘through’ and ‘in’, two prepositions that would normally carry different meanings, should probably be considered cousins; both terms come from a family that values immersion, rather than detached observation.

Making is also inseparable, according to Carter (2004, p. 4), from a prerequisite of non-linear discourse of collaboration, like ‘a lover’s readiness to be plastically moulded by the other’s (intellectual) desire’ (Carter, 2004, p. XIII). As beautiful as this simile might be, it does require a little scrutiny. Surely there is some room for movement between Carter’s intimate depiction and the following more removed and implicit take on collaboration by Tonkinwise (2008, p. 7):

No expertise is solo. If acts are not explicitly collaborative, they will nonetheless tend to involve negotiations with suppliers, subcontractors, sellers. Even if conducted alone, the recipients of what is being expertly done will be in mind.

Vaughan’s (2008, p. 1) perspective contributes to this discussion too: ‘I am concerned with the individual, their experiences, and their sense of placed self’ she wrote. This does not disregard the importance of collaboration but extends it to the notion of the individual in relation to place – to the ‘space or location of material thinking’ (Vughan, 2008, p. 2). She adds: ‘I argue that the practice of making, the materialising of ideas through materials and processes, is a process of place-making’ (2008, p. 2), and the power of place, according to Somerville (2008b, p. 331), is that it connects the local and the global:
Without an intimate knowledge of local places that we love there is no beginning point. Without a concept of the local, action is not possible. However, under conditions of global contemporaneity, it is no longer possible to consider local problems, such as a drought that affects every local area in Australia in different and specific ways, as independent of global issues.

This takes us back to Of creativity and to where it was produced, amidst the security of my studio, a place of intellectual desire fuelled by the references listed at the end of this dissertation, the art galleries that I have visited, my interaction with the internet, and much more. These global influences have imbued the place where Of creativity was made, and returning to Vaughan (2008, p. 2), Of creativity has, in turn, helped to make that place.

To continue now with our emphasis on prepositions, Vaughan (2008, p. 2) introduced the relatedness of making in and of a place, say a landscape, as a form of collaboration in material thinking, and there are other possibilities for collaborations and productive relationships in material thinking which include the intellectual space and the materials I have used. The way that wax softens in my hand as I think, or in the making of Of creativity, the movement of watered-down paint tracking freely across paper, are evocative events – events that I work with. In fact, these events, when they emerge or are manufactured, have an air of significance, sometimes equal, even if only momentarily, to that of a conversation. Barbara Bolt (2007, p. 1), taking her lead from Heidegger, makes the point that ‘in the artistic process, objects have agency and it is through the establishing conjunctions with other contributing elements in the art that humans are co-responsible for letting art emerge’ – a notion we will pick up later. This emergence occurs collaboratively, as a ‘co-emergence’ (Bolt, 2007, p. 3), where ‘the outcome cannot be known in advance’ (Bolt, 2007, p. 3).

These collaborations can be extended even further, conceptually, to include memory. Memory is drawn upon in creative practice. An artful scholar-researcher might have in mind a symbol, a recent article, or a piece of writing that is underway, or the transcription or perhaps the tone of an interview, and work in collaboration, or in productive relationship, with it.
That is: ‘To make something new is to recall something lost through a concomitant mode of production’ (Carter, 2004, pp. 183-184). To (re)member, as Carter (2004, p. 195) points out, where ‘member’ is a derivative of the word ‘limb’, is to use ‘memory as a material process of putting back together scattered pieces’ to produce, say, a ‘body’ of work. Carter (2004, p. 5) says this is remembering ‘beyond nostalgia’ where, recalling his emphasis on collaboration, the accumulated re-assemblage of memories leads to something new, to local invention. This would be an appropriate explanation of how images from earlier paintings re-emerged in Of creativity. Here Carter’s material thinking and Somerville’s emergence are usefully stitched together, as part of Somerville’s (2007, p. 228) notion of postmodern emergence and her ontological view that researchers ‘become’ in their research through ‘opening the mind, expansion, seeking to know the unknown, being uncertain; not proving, but wondering’ [original emphasis]. This is ‘a point of transformation’ (Somerville, 2007, p. 228) which arises out of an undoing of preconceptions (Somerville, 2007, p. 230), where complex patterns emerge. Somerville (2007, p. 231) describes this as: ‘a trickle in my brain and gathers other images as it goes’ and where ‘these images want to develop into forms’. The images that Somerville refers to might be memories, and in the case of Of creativity, these movements are of conversations, past paintings, the events that lead up to them, and all the other elements that formed the place of production of Of creativity. There is also the matter of technique to which we now turn.

For artful scholarship, ‘[t]echnique is necessary, but in the transformation, it falls away’ (Carter, 2007, p. 16) and can be considered, if we take Katy Macleod’s (2007, p. 1) point about the art of writing, to be replaced by what is ‘indissolubly connected to the research art’ (Macleod, 2007, p. 1). For Macleod (2007, p. 3) ‘[t]he written text is in the form of a highly reflexive address to [the artwork]’, which I hope, at least to some extent, is demonstrated here. Artistic technique, correctly located, is a means to an end, a connection between productive relationship and its outcomes.
Extending on from our discussion about prepositions even further, an examination of a work of art, say of a sculpture, noting say its graceful lines and beautiful patina, is an inquiry about art or creativity. An inquiry that pays full attention to the sculpting processes is an inquiry of art or creativity. Carter likens this notion to that of ‘becoming’, compared to ‘being’, and indeed this seems to fit perfectly with our ontological position and with the practice of research where becoming-other is a ‘condition for generating new knowledge’ (Somerville, 2007, p. 234). This, through the productive relationship of place, memories and also the materials of art, which according to Carter (2007, p. 19) are themselves in a state of becoming, is material thinking.

To now gather some of Carter’s comments and lace them together: material thinking is the ‘discourse of creative research’ (Carter, 2004, p. 9), ‘the supplement of matter that haunts communication’ (2007, p. 15), ‘what happens when matter stands in-between the collaborators supplying the discursive situation of their work’ (2007, p. 19), and where invention ‘is located neither after nor before the process but in the performance itself’ (2007, p. 19). Still on Carter (2004, p. 13), what we are left with from creative research is not ‘simplification and closure’ or ‘a ‘discovery’ that can be generalised or patented’. Rather, we have a localised practice (2004, p. 185), a conceptual advance mediated materially (2007, p. 16), where outcomes of creative research are:

offcuts of infinity. Bunching perceptions or grouping phenomena in new ways that are memorable, they provide the ‘prenotion’ that enables mediation between the immediately to hand (or local) and the otherwise ungraspable (the global) – the activity of material thinking (Carter, 2004, p. 184).

We will arrive at a good discussion about the outcomes of this creative research soon enough, but before that there is still more work to be done on establishing the groundwork, or the theoretical perspectives, for this research.
Theoretical perspectives

The theoretical perspectives, or the set of assumptions (Crotty, 1998, p. 7) brought to this research relate to creativity, organisations, health services and public health services.

Creativity

The popular view that creativity is about the arts and culture (consider here the romantic notion of the tortured artist) is unhelpful when one considers the different perspectives from which creativity might be observed. Creativity can be seen not only in cultural venues, inspired classrooms or pioneering companies, but also found in everyday life, as we saw in Chapter 2. There is a concern that popular conceptualisations of creativity portray it as being ‘increasingly removed from the commonplace and elevated into specialised, professional activity. In a consumer society arts have become a commodity’ (Govan & Munt, 2003, p. 3), which of course is what Dewey opposed. The outcome of this is that expectations and standards of creativity are set too high, so that to become ‘less than excellent is to fail’ (Govan & Munt, 2003, p. 3). Here Govan and Munt are focusing on art, yet the same argument would apply to all forms of creativity. Not only is this popular view of creativity unrealistic, then, it is also too narrow.

Creativity is generally considered to be a process leading to novelty, and there is value consigned to this novelty (Stein, 1953, pp. 321-322), as we have noted earlier on. This standard and definition of creativity is the starting point for most creativity research. Here, however, a broader perspective is taken and creativity is considered to be more heterogeneous than that. Further, while most creativity research has focused on the individual and traits (Kahl et al., 2009, p. 5), it can also be considered as a collective, team-based or organisational phenomenon, and that is the line taken in this dissertation. Even more importantly, the fact that creativity is almost always thought of as a process, and not, for example, a practice, is
not accepted here. In fact, our work to this point suggests that a practice (not process) of creativity would be a useful conceptualisation and one to be perused.

**Organisations**

Haridimos Tsoukas (2008, p. 196) proposed that ‘by treating [organisations] not so much as collections of routines, structures and rules but as complex arrangements with interactive accomplishments – leads us to appreciate the inherently creative role individuals play’. This is encouraging for our task here. It opens the way for thinking about the way in which the interaction of these routines, structures and rules contribute to creativity. For Anja Kern (2006, p. 65), and as we saw for Antonacopoulou (2008, p. 116), these seemingly disparate concepts (creativity alongside routines, structures and rules) are linked:

Artefacts such as rules are not only constraints for creativity but are also resources for it. Each time agents use rules, they interpret the rules, they adapt them to the situation, and they integrate them into their activity and thus change them. The use of rules creates new possibilities of meaning for activity (Kern, 2006, p. 65).

Kern uses the performing arts to illustrate this point: ‘it is widely recognized in performing arts that codes and rules, such as verse forms or rehearsal schedules, do not harm creativity but are a necessary part of it’ (2006, p. 66). She does, however, recommend that the relationship between creativity and rules be explored through research methodologies other than what she used, a cultural-historical psychology perspective (2006, p. 78), and also in other contexts. This research will hopefully be seen as making a contribution in this area as we use art to foreground what we will come to refer to the tension between fresh ideas and the current ways of operating (codes or rules).

Getting back to postmodernism, this time applied to organisations, we recall that Hatch (1997, p. 366) frames the use of knowledge as a means to emancipate, not control, and proposes that control and domination are
'opportunities for freedom and innovation rather than simply for further domination'. So the modernist response associated with contemporary organisational strategies such as risk management and process redesign (themselves modernist inventions), with their routines, structures and rules, would be to exert control, and this would involve some level of domination. For the postmodernist, however, the implementation of these processes in health services, if we are to apply Hatch’s logic, would be, in the end, to provide ‘freedom’, which might be represented as say improved access to treatment and care. The modernists would no doubt also claim to be working towards such goals too, and it may be that an observer would not notice too many differences either way. Still, the points of difference lie behind the actions. Despite the generally out-of-sight ontological priorities of organisations, overwhelmed by the noise of the more visible tasks of ‘organising’, the way in which organisations are understood have important implications for organisational leaders, and also for researchers. Tsoukas and his colleague Robert Chia (2002, p. 568) highlight these ontological differences between approaching organisations from the perspective of stability, which a modernist might aspire to, rather than ongoing change. Ongoing change introduces the notion of organisations as dynamic, more organism(istic) than mechanistic, where organisations are an emergent property of change. This is different from change being a property of organisations (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002, p. 570).

Tsoukas and Chia (2002, p. 573) also point out that knowledge representation in an organisation is inherently unstable and they go on to argue, through reference to Stafford Beer (1981, p. 58), that there must be a ‘closure of meaning’ (2002, p. 573), albeit temporarily, for organisational action to be possible. This presents, for this study, a point of departure from Tsoukas and Chia’s otherwise helpful work. The notion of ongoing knowledge generation, without closure, is a better epistemological fit here. It is one thing to look at an organisation in search of change, and because of the temporal qualities of change (somewhere along a timeline there has been a closure of meaning) one can say, yes, that was a change. It is more difficult, however, to look at an organisation and say, yes, it was creative.
Here, we are better off, getting back to Somerville (2007, p. 236), ‘keep[ing] things in process’ than to closing them down. Organising, as Stewart Clegg, Martin Kornberger and Carl Rhodes (2005, p. 153) consider it, is ‘a process of increasing complexity and reducing it; ordering and dis-ordering are interdependent, supplementary and parasitic’. Organising, then, becomes liminal as ‘as space between order and chaos’ [Emphasis added] (Clegg et al., 2005, p. 147).

**Health services**

Health services are organisations responsible for the provision of treatment and care. We have already noted the limitations of understanding health services from a rational perspective (McDaniel & Driebe, 2001, p. 14), where leaders try hard to dominate, control, and ‘tame’ the health service (McDaniel et al., 2003, p. 268) through regulation, quality management and performance management, and no doubt many other mechanisms. In some respects, it is hard to argue against this because the health care industry represents a special case in that the services it provides are vital, and the people reliant upon them are, of course, precious. Yet this approach is failing, recalling again the unacceptably high incidence of medical error in hospitals (Weingart, Wilson, Gibberd, & Harrison, 2000, p. 774) as a sign of this failure.

Complex adaptive systems is another perspective from which to consider health services – a way that we have already said is useful for locating a space for creativity – a space that does not readily exist with more traditional understandings. From this standpoint, the health care organisation is seen as ‘a collection of individual agents with freedom to act in ways that are not always totally predictable, and whose actions are interconnected so that one agent’s actions changes the context for other agents’ (Plsek & Greenhalgh, 2001, p. 625). In this way, surprise is expected. Figure 2, an adaptation of the work of McDaniel, Jordan and Fleeman (2003, pp. 266-267), focuses on this notion of surprise and shows how it may be conceptualised and responded to differently according to
two positions – surprise arising from the unknown, and surprise as something to be expected within complex adaptive systems (and the unknowable). As we have just noted, there can be little argument that health services pay much attention to reducing surprise, and this might be through the collection of endless amounts of data, standardisation of practices, and auditing; however the productive qualities of surprise should also be considered.

Figure 2. Matrix of surprise responses (adapted from McDaniel et al., 2003)

From the complex adaptive systems perspective, surprise can be linked with creativity and present as an opportunity. And whilst surprise is not the focus of this study, it does awaken us to different ways of thinking about health services.

Public health services

Complex adaptive systems and surprise set the tone for thinking differently about the creativity of health services. We now imagine what the impact of this might be:
Just for a moment imagine an Australia where there are no major differences between the health experienced by people in different groups, where prejudice is unheard of, where no children live in poverty, where the wisdom and rights of those of us who are indigenous are totally respected and where social and environmental considerations always balance economic decisions ….

Let your imagination wander a little further to a world with all those characteristics in which countries vary because of their culture and geography, rather than because of deep gulfs in wealth and poverty, and where cultural difference delights rather than frightens people (Baum, 2008, p. ix).

Alarmingly, this vision for public health is unachievable because of matters such as uneven food distribution, the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, and the lack of consideration of social and environmental factors as topmost factors in decision-making; otherwise, health would be more evenly distributed. Fran Baum notes that the so called ‘new public health’, or to use the increasingly popular synonym, ‘population health’ (Schmid, 2005, p. 11), ‘strives for a fairer, just, healthier, kinder world and recognises that it is human action rather than physical constraint that prevents us achieving it’ (Baum, 2008, p. ix). This is the focus of modern public health services, that is, those services concerned with the health status of populations and the social and environmental factors that impact upon health.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) (1986, p. 2) identifies the fundamental conditions and resources for health as peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable eco-system, sustainable resources, social justice, and equity. The WHO goes on to highlight the importance of advocacy and enablement in its landmark document The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion: ‘People cannot achieve their fullest health potential unless they are able to take control of those things which determine their health’ (WHO, 1986, p. 2). This often requires mediation: ‘Professional and social groups and health personnel have a major responsibility to mediate between differing interests in society for the pursuit of health’ (WHO, 1986, p. 2). This view, which fits with a postmodernist perspective, being sympathetic to differing interests and enablement, is the aspect of health services given priority in this research. In particular, we will apply Robert
Blank and Viola Burau’s (2007, p. 184) more inclusive interpretation of ‘public health’ that includes primary care, health promotion, health education and community health, rather than take a purely epidemiological perspective, which would limit the scope of the study. We will also acknowledge the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare’s (2012) priority population groups, such as Indigenous people, rural and remote people and socio-economically disadvantaged people, and refer to that during participant selection (discussed in Chapter 4). Notwithstanding that our main concern is for public health services, the term ‘health services’ will be used predominantly in this dissertation because it is a simpler formulation. However, this is not intended to take away from our emphasis on ‘the fullest health potential’ normally associated with public health.

In this chapter we have formed a platform for our research; a platform based on the concept of ‘becoming’, within a context of complexity, and based on ‘generating’ knowledge. In both of these cases, the term ‘non finito’ might be applied. The experience and materiality of art has been foregrounded as an important means for emergence, and along with that, thinking and researching. Seeing creativity as heterogeneous, as we have, and also as a practice, which we will explore in detail further into this dissertation, is intended to open up the discussion. This is also the reason for taking a broader view of organisations, as sites of ongoing change.

Seeing health services from a complex adaptive systems perspective helps to set the scene for a broader discussion, and adopting a public health perspective takes the discussion to some of the key issues affecting the health of populations in Australia, and beyond. This framework will encourage us to think differently and more productively about creativity.
CHAPTER 4

ARTFUL INQUIRY – METHODOLOGY, METHODS AND INTERVIEWS

We will advance in this research, as Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln (2005, p. 197) put it, by seeking opportunities for the ‘interweaving of viewpoints, for the incorporation of multiple perspectives, and for borrowing, or bricolage (poetic making do), where borrowing seems useful, richness enhancing, or theoretically heuristic’. Here we will discuss further the notion of postmodern emergence, borrowed from Somerville (2007, pp. 225-243), applying it to art-making, in particular, and within the context of what is referred to as arts-based research. This chapter will then deal with the details of the research, including the research methods that have been employed, the way in which research participants were recruited and interviewed, and the ethical considerations that underpinned participation in this research.

Postmodern emergence

Somerville (2007, p. 234) emphasised becoming, through liminality, as ‘the condition for generating new knowledge’ and her epistemology of generating (2007, p. 234), as we noted in Chapter 3. Becoming and generating form the basis of ‘postmodern emergence’ which Somerville (2007, p. 225) situates beyond postmodernism, ‘at the end of a spectrum of emergence’. In explaining this, Somerville (2008a, p. 7) refers to ‘a process of undoing the self to open that space for learning … undoing habits of logic and taken-for-granted knowings’. It is ‘a necessary condition for the
generation of any new knowledge, that is, we cannot know what it is that we will find prior to the research process', she says (Somerville, 2008a, p. 4). Here we have 'new knowledge emerging rather than old knowledge being re-told' (Somerville, 2008a, p. 6). As we have already noted, it is the 'makings, the creation of products and assemblages, in an iterative process of representation and reflection through which we come to know in research' (Somerville, 2007, p. 235). This knowing, then, comes about, not from a moment of genius, nor from dissecting what is already known, but as a recursive movement in which knowledge emerges.

The concept of postmodern emergence focuses on creative potential as part of a generative research process (Somerville, 2007, p. 225), although the extent of this relationship between methodology and creativity has not been fully explored in the literature. I argue that such a relationship not only exists but that creativity, in some cases and senses at least, is elemental. Referring to the creative act of painting a portrait – the Giacometti portrait, in fact – we will unpack the synergies between creativity and 'postmodern emergence' and note some important ontological and epistemological issues as we go. We will also look further at the notion of postmodern emergence within the broader context of emergence as concept, because this adds to a richer understanding of the methodology. All this will help to locate postmodern emergence alongside an expanding and diverse body of work on creativity. As Rehn and de Cock (2009, p. 223) said: 'we want to think creatively about creativity'.

The following quotation is James Lord’s (1980, p. 59) description of Alberto Giacometti’s studio in Paris, as Giacometti’s painted Lord’s portrait:
Through the large window I could see the sun in the treetops above the low roof line on the other side of the passageway. Inside the studio there was Giacometti directly in front of me, with the canvas just to the left of him, between me and the door. Behind him and below the window stood a large table covered with empty turpentine bottles, heaps of paper, dried paint tubes, discarded brushes, and plaster casts of small sculptures. To the right were several sculptural stands holding works in progress. In the corner stood a number of tall plaster figures, and on the wall behind them a large black head had long ago been painted.

Here we have an unusual but nevertheless useful backdrop to this conversation about creativity and the notion of postmodern emergence. Through art-making, Lord helps us to steal a look into creativity. It is only a glimpse of the experience of one creative person, over eighteen days, where creativity is contextualised as art-making practice, rather than any number of other possible creative actions. Nevertheless, it does set up a means for exploring ‘postmodern emergence’.

Somerville (2007, p. 225) suggests that postmodern emergence ‘focuses on the creative potential … to generate new knowledges’, and referring now to Carter, as Somerville herself does, creative research ‘explores the irreducible heterogeneity of cultural identity, the always unfinished process of making and remaking ourselves through our symbolic forms’ (Carter, 2004, p. 13). This puts the notion of postmodern emergence alongside, or at least in the neighbourhood of, other forms of creative research. To explore this a little further, we will revisit the concepts of becoming and generating, and the notion of ‘emergence’.

The history of emergence in the social sciences goes back to the mid 1800s where the term was coined by the English philosopher George Lewes (Hodgson, 2000, p. 65). Geoffrey Hodgson (2000, p. 69) noted the re-emergence of ‘emergence’ after the Second World War, together with a questioning of positivism, developments such as chaos and complexity theory, computerisation and simulations of nonlinear dynamic systems. Complexity theory, suggested Hodgson (2000, p. 71), brought a ‘respectability and prominence to the concept of emergence, even in disciplines where it had been neglected’. Drawing on the work of Kyriakos
Kontopoulos in 1993 (pp. 22-23). Hodgson (2000, p. 75) explains that ‘the marks of an emergent property include its novelty, its association with a new set of relations, the stability and boundedness of these relations, and the emergence of new laws or principles applicable to this entity’. To this, Jeffrey Goldstein (1999, p. 49) would add that this occurs at the macro level and during a process of self-organisation over time and not as a pre-given (1999, p. 52). For Peter Corning (2002, p. 56), however, a way of conceptualising emergence is through synergy, the combination of two or more elements to form something different. The water molecule, pack-hunting predators, human technologies and divisions of labour would be illustrations of this. Further enriching this description, Andrew Hargadon and Robert Sutton (2007, pp. 716-749) describe how organisations broker, transfer, and adapt existing knowledge from one industry to another or combine pre-existing ideas and products into new products. Emergence, through synergy, is conceivably a factor there too, that is, if one assumes that these synergies are not forced. Either way, the point that emergence can be considered a useful notion at the organisational level is well made. Somerville also alludes to the notion of synergy in her description of postmodern emergence, which occurs out of:

a particular assemblage of forms and meanings comes together as a moment of representation, a temporary stability within a dynamic flux of meaning-making in (re)search for new knowledge (Somerville, 2008c, p. 209).

Another illustration of emergence that Somerville (2007, p. 228) offers is: ‘a radical turning point in a student’s research process’, which is, in fact, where the next chapter in this dissertation derives its name. Such a turning point might be ‘the appearance of new images on [a student’s] painting and his reflections on that process, knowing that I was witnessing the emergence of a new methodology’, recounts Somerville (2007, p. 228). For her: ‘Emergence occurs in the space between data, representing grounded (but unknowable) material reality, and analysis, as the act of meaning-making’ (2007, p. 230). Somerville (2007, p. 229) uses grounded theory to illustrate the place of emergence in a research context, so we will go to the work of one of the founders of grounded theory, Barney Glaser (1992,
p. 4), who asserts the importance of emergence in that context: ‘The researcher must have patience and not force the data out of anxiety and impatience while waiting for the emergent. He must trust that emergence will occur and it does’.

Different from the notion of postmodern emergence, however, grounded theory has an ‘emphasis on verification, the residue of empiricist research that there is an attainable truth that exists outside representation’, says Somerville (2007, p. 230). This is, no doubt, what drove her to re-conceptualise emergence as ‘postmodern emergence’, where there is no such emphasis on ‘finding’ a single ‘truth’. Rather, as we have already said, here, notions of becoming and generating are emphasised.

Emergence is just as well rendered by Giacometti: ‘Everything must come of itself and in its own time. Otherwise it becomes superficial’, Lord (1980, p. 54) notes, adding: ‘what really disturbs me is the way the painting seems to come and go, as though Alberto himself had no control over it. And sometimes it disappears altogether’ (Lord, 1980, p. 45). In another illustration of what might be described as emergence, Lord (1980, p. 47) comments to Giacometti: ‘In some of your sculptures and paintings I find a great deal of feeling’. In response to this, Giacometti replies: ‘You may find it … but I didn’t put it there. It’s completely in spite of me’ (Lord, 1980, p. 47). This is what I would argue is emergence and is very similar to how contemporary artists such as John Olsen work: ‘It’s always instinctive. I move towards an idea, exploring … I never plan how a finished painting will look … A very intimate conversation occurs between me and the painting. It tells me: “Lick more paint here; stroke me there; now tickle me” I’m caressing it with my brushes’ (Hawley, 2010, p. 30). While not all artists will work in this way, Olsen’s sensuous and illuminating description is useful because it corresponds, in essence, with Somerville’s (2007, p. 210) description of postmodern emergence as being ‘informed by intuition and responsiveness’. Again, this shows the possible relationship between the practices of art-making and emergence.
Imagery is an aspect of emergence and this certainly comes across when reading about artists like Giacometti and Olsen. Somerville (2008c, p. 212) also refers to the image in relation to her concept of postmodern emergence:

the emergence of new knowledge is held in an image that has a direct relationship to my embodied experience of the place of the research. The image is pre-verbal in the sense that it involves multiple sensory responses in a particular moment.

Somerville is referring to emergence as occurring in a particular moment. However, a series of related moments might be just as conceivable. Somerville (2008c, pp. 209-220) writes of painting, stories and interviews, which are moments that might somehow be connected, and it would seem, contribute collectively to the image. The point being made here is that postmodern emergence might also be considered to have a temporal quality which, as we said earlier, comprises iterative or recursive movements.

This discussion now needs to further consider the ‘postmodern’ aspect of postmodern emergence, and there is a clear link between this and what the creative Giacometti thought (as interpreted by Lord) (1980, p. 72):

What meant something, what alone existed with a life of its own was his indefatigable, indeterminable struggle via the act of painting to express in visual terms a perception of reality that had happened to coincide momentarily with my head [which is what Giacometti was painting].

Reference to ‘a’ (not ‘the’) perception of reality would seem to imply that there is more than one reality, or perceptions of it, and the artist chooses to represent a particular one. Giacometti made the following comment also, which shows his sensitivity towards multiple realities: ‘the point is that you see things in a different way from others, because you see them exactly as they appear to you and not at all as others have seen them’ (Lord, 1980, p. 89). This is an important point related to our postmodern position – the encumbrance of searching for a single reality would
undermine the usefulness of emergence in this study, and indeed, limit the potential for thinking differently, which is what we identified in Chapter 1 as being important.

The notion of postmodern emergence provides a new and useful way of approaching research and deserves attention by scholars who may, as I have tried to do here, develop its growth and relational qualities. Of course, the relational concern here has been with creativity, the very topic of this research. This connection hopefully serves to support reflexive thought and locate myself, as researcher, and also the methodology, more within than outside the inquiry. As we have already noted, to place the notion of postmodern emergence alongside the considerable work being done on creativity will open up opportunities for other ‘postmodern emergence’ researchers to recognise and play with this synergy. In accordance with the postmodernist tradition, however, this is unlikely to come to a conclusion, and to this, Giacometti would no doubt agree: ‘it’s impossible ever really to finish anything’ (Lord, 1980, p. 9).

**Arts-based research**

Art (and, incidentally, philosophy for Bergson and James) extends our faculty of perceiving by focusing our attention on hitherto unnoticed aspects of our lives. But how does art achieve this? Interestingly, it achieves it by taking a distance from reality. Our attachment to everyday reality, that is our concern with living and acting, necessarily narrows our vision ... This happens because, in action, we are less interested in the things themselves than in the use we can make of them. We normally look at the categories things belong to, rather than things per se. Artists, however, do exactly the opposite (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002, pp. 571-572).

Tsoukas and Chia’s ideas are connected with work of Henri Bergson (1946, pp. 1-240), albeit through philosophy rather than art. A link also exists, although less obviously, with Dewey, in that Dewey (1907, p. 97) was also also influenced by James’ pragmatism (and James’ view about the pretence of finality in truth is not out of step with postmodernism either). So, we can say that in this study we have something of a lineage from as far back as James, to more contemporary forms of scholarship, including arts-
based research, and postmodern qualitative inquiry (Finley, 2005, p. 682). Arts-based research is not attached to any single ‘reality’, getting back to Tsoukas and Chia, and also Somerville and Giacomett and the ideas that emerge from this can be revealing and also durable – like the way our impression of the Australian bush changed after Frederick McCubbin and many other great Australian painters.

Graeme Sullivan (2009, pp. 41-62) places arts-based research within the broader context of ‘practice-led research’ and the following discussion is intended to explain the worth of this approach. It is an approach that resonates well with this research; as Sullivan (2009, p. 42) puts it: ‘artists themselves have the capacity to explore and explain complex theoretical issues that can have significance across a broad area of knowledge’. The Arts and Humanities Research Council’s (UK) description of practice-led research, to which Sullivan (as cited 2009, p. 47) refers, is a good place to start this discussion:

Practice-led research is a distinctive feature of the research activity in the creative and performing arts. As with other research conducted by arts and humanities researchers, it involves the identification of research questions and problems, but the research methods, contexts and outputs then involve a significant focus on creative practice. This type of research thus aims, through creativity and practice, to illuminate or bring about new knowledge and understanding, and it results in outputs that may not be text-based, but rather a performance (music, dance, drama), design, film, or exhibition.

Practice-led research may also be referred to as creative research or practice as research (Smith & Dean, 2009, p. 2), but regardless of the term, it seems to be accepted, at least by some, that this ‘can best be interpreted in terms of a broader view of creative practice which includes not only the artwork but also the surrounding theorisation and documentation’ (Smith & Dean, 2009, p. 5). This helps to explain the distinction between art for art sake and arts-based research. Sullivan’s framework for displaying the research practices pursued by artist-researchers is edifying also; it includes four domains of inquiry including theoretical practices where ‘research problems and issues are found and explored’ (Sullivan, 2009, p. 49).
conceptual practices (thinking in a medium) (p. 50), dialectical practices (thinking in a language) (p. 50) and contextual practices (thinking in a setting) (p. 50). This assists in thinking about this research more fully.

In this chapter, the usefulness (or otherwise) of using arts- or creative-based methodologies to study creativity needs to be questioned. Sullivan would seem to suggest that it is indeed appropriate. It might even be argued, as Sullivan (2009, p. 45) did, that creativity is highly relevant to all research:

creativity was clearly seen to be important within this tradition (basic and applied research) of research and development, irrespective of whether it was pursued by the inventive scientist or the imaginative artist

The crux of the distinction between practice-led research and other modes of inquiry relate, as Sullivan has suggested, is the way that some research moves from the known to the unknown, and practice-led research from the unknown to the known ‘as a means to critique existing knowledge’ (2009, p. 49). This demands a refocusing of attention from data collection to data creation (Sullivan, 2009, p. 50), and to knowledge generation, with regard to Somerville’s (2009, p. 48) epistemology. This is a useful conceptualisation, recapitulated below:

some approaches to research involve moving from the ‘known to the unknown’ as new knowledge is constructed within the spaces and places opened up by the gaps in existing information systems. These procedures draw on established methods that confirm the probability or plausibility of outcomes and make use of accepted conventions and practices. What is of interest to practice-led researchers, however, is the possibility of new knowledge that may be generated by moving from a stance more accurately seen to move from the ‘unknown to the known’ whereby imaginative leaps are made into what we don’t know as this can lead to critical insights that can change what we do know (Sullivan, 2009, p. 48).

It may be useful to now draw on a moment in this study that illustrates how arts-based research follows what is becoming an important concept in this research – this sequence of unknown to known. At an early stage in
the research I moulded a small piece of wax to help me think about the concept of creativity, and I came to wonder if creativity might go beyond, say, a professional discipline doing things differently as a result of creativity, and if there may be responses in other directions as well. This took me back to Csikszentmihalyi and his systems theory of creativity. Csikszentmihalyi (1996, p. 28) explains how a domain changes as a result of creativity, as we discussed earlier. What I came to wonder, reflecting on the emerging wax shape (and in doing this, having dived into the unknown), is that creativity may also emerge from the domain, that the domain might prompt creativity as much as receive it and be changed by it. It turned out that Csikszentmihalyi, himself, had made the same observation (1996, p. 28), but nonetheless, the point remains that it can be a very fruitful exercise to reverse the flow of research (as it is often practised) by proceeding from the unknown to the known, because this is an aid to thinking differently. Indeed, there are many more illustrations of this movement from the unknown to the known in Chapters 5 and 6.

Sullivan (2009, p. 48) also makes the point that ‘[s]erendipity and intuition that direct attention to unanticipated possibilities has long been a valued part of experimental inquiry’. What Sullivan (2009, p. 48) is getting at is that:

creative options and new associations occur in situations where there is intense concentration, but within an open landscape of free-range possibility rather than a closed geography of well-trodden pathways.

This is what Green (2009, p. 13) refers to as ‘combining discovery with speculation’ or simply, ‘emergence’.

New information can be generated through art and deep thinking as part of a genuine effort to, here, (re)present creativity, using tools that are boundless. Sullivan’s (2009, p. 49) point that practice-led research ‘is purposeful yet open-ended, clear-sighted yet exploratory’ is also useful, and perhaps the best place to end this brief discussion about practice-based
research, based largely on the work of Sullivan, is to include a final and inspiring quotation from him:

This is where artist-researchers take us – to where we’ve never been, to see what we’ve never seen. And then they bring us back and help us look again at what we thought we knew’ (2009, p. 62).

Our reference to movement from the unknown to the known in practice-led research parallels some helpful comments by Paul Reader (2008, p. 303), an artist and researcher, who refers to the notion of framing: ‘a framework must emerge but this is very different from imposing one at the outset. In painting the frame can come last’. An illustration of putting the frame first, and of the shortcomings of this, comes from one of the participants who will be introduced in more detail shortly. Rhona who does laboratory research involving Heparin, an anticoagulant, commented:

There has to be creativity at every level of that, because I think if you lose that ability to look at your information with fresh eyes, you start to have – only generate your preconceived ideas. You start any research with a hypothesis about – this is what I think’s going to happen, but if you’re so consumed by your hypothesis, then you’ll lose the ability to actually appreciate, well what if you find something different. And I think that for me, there was a classic example in that when I did my PhD, I expected – I gave children doses of Heparin and then measured the effect of that Heparin at 4 time points. And for the majority of the patients who received the Heparin, at the first 2 time points after they received their Heparin, the blood test results were un-recordable, which just meant that their clotting had been so slowed down by the dose of Heparin we’d given ... What the effect was, if you can’t get a number, you can’t generate your mean results; you can’t generate the amount of spread between the results that you see. And I was really disappointed in that, because I looked at that and thought, oh my goodness, all this data that I can’t use. It took me a while and a bit of guidance to appreciate, well isn’t that significant that at these two time points, post the dose being given, they’ve got un-recordable clotting. They’ve got no clotting happening in their body because of this dose of Heparin.

Rhona’s prior framing of her research limited, albeit only temporarily, her ability to see the meaning of her results; whereas, according to Reader (2008, p. 300): ‘a painter is capable of knowing and generating meaning without any detailed conceptual construction’ through ‘tacit knowledge’.
This, of course, is true for the concept of postmodern emergence.

Somerville (2008c, pp. 211-212) illustrates this by referring to the work of Chrissiejoy Marshall, an Aboriginal woman and artist with whom Somerville collaborated over a research project about Terewah, or the Narran Lake, as it is referred to on non-Indigenous maps. During the research, the Lake was empty, ‘barren red earth’, Somerville (2008c, p. 211) wrote. Marshall painted the Lake, remarking: ‘I have come to understand that the Lake is not dead, it is dormant’ (Somerville, 2008c, p. 211). Around that time, other researchers were examining core samples from the Lake, adding water and analysing for living matter. They also considered that the Lake was able to return to life, that is, it was dormant, not dead. Hence, two entirely different methodologies, ‘science’ and art, arrived at similar understandings.

More from within than outside

This methodology is located more within than outside the research. That is, the topic of research is creativity and the means for exploring it is creative practice. Concerned about the almost circular notion of creativity as object of research and method, I took advice from Angie Titchen and Debbie Horsfall (2007, p. 219), who suggested that creative arts have a place at most junctures in the research process, including at the beginning, where researchers access their driving forces through creative visualisation and expression. So this was what I did – a painting in acrylic on a full size sheet of artist’s paper using collage (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Driving forces.
What emerged was a vibrant painting with two concentric rings or spirals. I took the inner ring to represent creativity, since this was what I was contemplating at the time. Its features are replicated in the outer ring, which I thought should represent methodology, as that was also on my mind. As the painting evolved, I focused more on the actual materials that I was working with and the character of the marks on the paper. In doing this, I became open to new ideas; the notions of object of research and method morphed and became more like a spiral, integrated within the painting. Now only remnants of the spiral, and the distinction between creativity and methodology, remain. This took me closer to understanding Tsoukas and Chia’s (2002, p. 571) point: ‘Only by placing ourselves at the centre of an unfolding phenomenon can we hope to know it from within’.

But we should not leave the discussion here – Is the creativity of the artwork the same as the creativity of the methodology? This takes us back to Unsworth’s (2001, pp. 1-23) idea that creativity is not a unitary construct. So, for example, the surface considerations of an artwork, that is, composition, line, and so forth, might be considered as so called ‘everyday’ creativity, rather than ‘big C’ creativity. Also, clearly I did not invent the various techniques I use when I make paintings, and I certainly did not invent arts-based research, so everyday creativity would seem to be an apt description. To illustrate this point further, we go again to Kern (2006, p. 68) who refers in the following quotation to Alexander Pushkin’s popular Russian epic, Bylina:

Pushkin is, in fact, not the individual author of his poems, plays, and novels, as he did not invent methods of verse, or rhythms and rhymes, but has taken them from the immense heritage of literary tradition.

We might say, then, that the use of art in research is important but not all that remarkable. What is more important is to keep whatever level of creativity that may exist in research ‘in process’ (Somerville, 2007, p. 236). So we should not get too carried away with the external appearance of this project and the way art is used; even random-controlled trials will require some creativity in their design. In this study, arts-based research is a
particularly useful way of working with creativity, in the study of creativity, and this is what takes us closer to researching it more from within than outside.

**Methods**

There are three main ways in which art can be used in research, based on the origin of the artwork – the participant, the researcher, or a third person. Firstly, ‘the researcher may invite people to draw or paint or take photographs or make a short video or create an art installation that relates to the research questions or the phenomena being investigated’ (Knowles & Cole, 2008, p. 47). Secondly, ‘the researcher might be the one making new images’ (Knowles & Cole, 2008, p. 47). A third application of images in research involves their use to elicit or provoke other data (Knowles & Cole, 2008, p. 48) to ‘be the basis of further discussion, interviews, and/or analysis’ (Knowles & Cole, 2008, p. 47). This would be similar to the process of photo-elicitation (Rose, 2007, p. 242) or the way in which Julianne Moss, Joanne Deppeler, Lesley Astley and Kevin Pattison (2007, p. 49) used photographs taken by school children, as research participants, to further discussion and ‘open out’ (p. 46) research possibilities. The application used here, let’s say a fourth application, is a hybridisation of the second and third applications. This is where the researcher enters unknown spaces, with art, to generate knowledge. The same paintings are then used to provoke other data by showing them to participants. This is an approach I came to, following Mary Jo Hatch and Dvora Yanow’s (2008, p. 23) suggestion that art can find methodological ideas, which I did, as I sketched (Figure 4) with a paint-brush and thought deeply about this question of method.
Figure 4. Three stages.

Three Stages (Figure 4), as the name suggests, depicts the three stages of data generation. Although each stage is of a different hue, and each separated by a dark outline, they are all ‘warm’, accentuated by the ‘cooler’ background. They almost ‘huddle together’, suggesting their integration. The first stage represents the initial interview, which allowed the participant and me to get to know one another, and for me to ask about the work of their health service. I used some, albeit minimal, prompts in the initial interviews and audio-recorded it, and then had the recordings transcribed. I wanted to read through the transcripts and make notes and drawings as a starting point for the second stage, where I produced the artworks. In the second stage I was mindful of Susan Finley and Gary Knowles’ (1995, pp. 110-142) terms – ‘researcher as artist’ and ‘artist as researcher’, and how this gives free rein to deep thinking, further exploration, synthesising and the summarising of understandings, again, as part of what we have identified as postmodern emergence.

The third stage is where I showed the completed paintings to the respective research participants, recording and later transcribing these conversations also. The paintings and these subsequent interviews served to clarify, delving further into and expand on participants’ stories in much the same way as play-back theatre:

[Play-back theatre] empower[s] audience members by making them improvisational partners in the performance process, allowing them to articulate their own values and share their marginalized or triumphant experiences in their stories ... (Park-Fuller, 2003, p. 304).
In this way, the research became a partnership; participants shared their experience of creativity, contextualised, I took emergent understandings from my paintings and the participants were invited to communicate the meanings they attached to those images. There is another element common to all stages, however, and this is the act of writing. I kept a research journal, following Paul Leedy and Jeanne Ormond (2005, p. 145), throughout the three stages to document initial interpretations and unfolding ideas.

This staged approach was considered to be more appropriate than, say, asking participants to make their own artwork, because the whole concept of ‘researcher as artist’ would have otherwise been missed. Also, the willingness of participants to embrace such a form of research was uncertain. Even the three-stage model that I had in mind had potential risks. I therefore experimented with the methods in a pilot study exploring creativity in higher education (Rae, 2012), so that I could take any lessons from that project. After interviewing three academics, selected because they received national awards for their work in academia, I felt confident that the methods worked very well. Participants appreciated the artworks that I had made after interviewing them and had no difficulty describing and analysing them at the second interview. In fact, I learnt that I should not make any assumptions about participants’ abilities to analyse images, nor of course what their interpretation will be. Hatch (1997, p. 46) takes this back to postmodernism by suggesting that we ‘learn to take nothing for granted [and avoid] searching for one right answer, or believing that everyone thinks or should think as you do’. Of course, this requires reflexivity in the researcher and a reflexivity matrix developed for this study, and which will be discussed in detail shortly, helped.

**Participants**

Purposeful sampling was used in order to ‘yield the most information about the topic under investigation’ (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 147) and to allow for diversity in health contexts, understanding that creativity could be
expressed differently as a result of context. Encouraged by the success of the selection process in the pilot study, where I interviewed award winners, I reviewed reports on health awards across Australia, scanning State and Territory web sites for details. I considered that amongst health award winners and finalists, there would be stories of original thought and novel action, creativity in various forms, and a host of organisational influences that would be useful to understand. We can say that the award winners and finalists had been afforded a high level of value by the health profession, given that they were selected from within, that is, by panels of health professionals, sponsors or stakeholders. This is not dissimilar to Csikszentmihalyi’s (1996, p. 42) explanation of how the ‘field choose[s] from among the novelties those that deserve to be included in the canon’. Following Nayak’s (2008, p. 421) position that creativity crosses individual and organisational levels, in this research the individual level was considered to be the entry point for understanding the creativity of health services.

As far as would be possible, I wanted to locate myself neither within nor completely outside the participants’ worlds, in what might be considered a liminal space. I wanted to explore creativity in a system about which I had no familiarity in terms of structure and processes, and no assumptions about, yet have the language that allowed me to interact easily with participants, a point that came up in the reflexivity matrix. Because I had worked extensively in the New South Wales health system, knowing many of the health professionals and being familiar with its organisation, I chose to interview health professionals from the neighbouring state of Victoria. I accessed these people through the Victorian Public Healthcare Awards.

For public health in Australia, there are priority population groups, priority age groups and also priority disease processes, towards which the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare believe health promotion efforts should be directed (2012). These are identified in Table 1.
Table 1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare priority areas and groups

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Publicly available descriptions of each 2011 Victorian Public Healthcare Award were reviewed, and, of the sixty one awards, eight were selected. This selection was based on whether the work addressed one or more of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare priority areas and groups, if terms such as novel were used to describe the work that led to the award, and if there was some discussion about the value of the work. The pseudonyms used for each of the eight participants, the basis of their award, and the most relevant Australian Institute of Health and Welfare priority group (notwithstanding that the work of these participants crossed priority groups), are identified in Appendix A.

The selection process offered a mix that covered many of the priority areas and promised varied and interesting contexts for creativity. This was considered more important than any attempt at representation, which would be something more important to those wanting make generalisations, in a positivist sense, about health services creativity.
Participants were contacted indirectly through an e-mail to their Chief Executive Officer or the health service’s media representative. All agreed to participate and arrangements were made for the initial face to face interviews. An information sheet and consent form was forwarded to each participant prior to the interview.

**Interviews**

I used an informal and conversational interview style, sometimes referred to as an ethnographic interview, that is, open-ended and unstructured. According to Michael Patton (2002, p. 342), this ‘offers maximum flexibility to pursue information in whatever direction appears to be appropriate, depending on what emerges [and where] questions will flow from the immediate context’. Because this style places more emphasis on the participant than the researcher, the impact of any pre-constructed notion that the researcher may have regarding creativity, was thought to be reduced.

The interview structure proposed by Shawn Shea, developed for mental health interviews, but equally relevant here because of its emphasis on treating participants with respect, was used in a modified form, especially for first interviews. Shea (1988, p. 55) proposed five overlapping phases: the introduction, the opening, the body, the closing, and the termination. The introduction is a social period where the interviewer and interviewee get to know one another in order to help shape the relationship, and this, as Shea (1988, p. 56) notes, impacts on the remaining course of the interview. The introductory phase of first interviews ended with a description of the research, reading through the information sheet and signing of the consent form. The opening phase built on interviewer/interviewee relationships. At each interview ‘an open-ended question [was] used to … turn the interview over’ (Shea, 1988, p. 62) to the participant. The question used for this was: ‘Where did the first spark of an idea for your work come from’? Of course, this was not necessary for second interviews. Note that the word ‘idea’ was be used rather than
‘creativity’, so as to avoid leading. The communication technique of reflective (or active) listening was used to maintain a conversational and participant-focused style of interview. The next phase, the body, was where I not only listened to the unfolding story, but actively explored it through carefully chosen questions, prompts, listening techniques and, in some cases, silence. Participants’ responses to one question informed the next in an ‘expansion of regions’, to borrow Shea’s (1988, p. 105) term, as I endeavoured to blend questions into the natural flow of our conversation. In the closing phase of the initial interviews, I reminded participants that they would be asked to participate in a second one to discuss artworks made in response to the conversation that we had just had. The interviews were then concluded, again, as more of a social exchange.

Second interviews followed a similar structure, although the earlier phases only needed to be brief, since relationships had already been established and hence only needed to be rekindled. Opening phases drew the participants’ attention to the artworks and they were asked initially to simply describe what they saw, so as to provide material for subsequent questions, and also to relieve any pressure that the participant may have felt about offering an analysis. These second interviews were then dedicated to allowing participants to explore meaning in the artworks in as deep a way as they were able. To assist with this, I took heed of advice from Grbich (2012, p. 214) and also asked participants about possible alternative readings and marginalised voices; for example: ‘How might someone who is in a marginalised position interpret the painting?’

Whilst there were no predetermined questions for either the first or second interviews, I had devised a series of prompts in case they were needed to move the conversations forward. For the first interviews, I drew on lessons from the pilot study; for example, ‘Does change fit in?’ I also drew on the creativity literature, for example: ‘Were there any surprises?’, in reference to the work of Margaret Boden (2004, p. 2). For second interviews, I referred to comments that the participants had made in their
first interviews, sometimes explaining how I had embedded those ideas in the artwork.

**Analysis**

Data were gathered from the various sources and perspectives to ‘generate’ (getting back to Somerville’s [2007, p. 234] epistemology), knowledge about creativity. These data included those artworks made after the initial interviews, and later used to prompt further discussion during subsequent interviews. There were also artworks produced as ‘interstitial thinking’, that is, sketches and small wax sculptures used to facilitate thinking within the research, to assist ideas to emerge, or be galvanised. These are represented as Figures 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 11. In addition, there were transcripts of the first and second conversations with the eight research participants, and also notes from a research journal. The journal related mostly to thoughts around my conversations with each of the participants, and especially my thoughts while I was making their paintings. These thoughts were then used to inform the next step in art-making, which generated further reflection, and then further art-making, in a recursive fashion until the artwork was sufficiently developed. Analysis of these materials occurred in a way that was reminiscent of how Carter (2007, pp. 15-16) described invention, that is, as ‘a double movement of … decontextualisation in which the found elements are rendered strange, and of recontextualisation, in which new families of association and structures of meaning are established’. This is similar in intention to Somerville’s (2007, p. 239) method of dismantling and re-assembling her journal notes, transcripts, paintings and so forth, each time she ‘create[s] a new product from the research’ (2007, p. 239). Both these formulations render elements of research strange and facilitate the emergence of new associations (inventions). Carter (2007, p. 16) claims that, for practice-based research, this process is mediated materially, ‘allowing the unpredictable and differential situation to influence what is found’. Also, metaphor (notwithstanding that art is a form of metaphor [Brendal, 1999, pp. 189-190]) assisted here too; the ‘partial and ambiguous applicability to
the object of study stimulates theory builders to be creative in their interpretations and to generate new insights’ (Boxenbaum & Rouleau, 2011, p. 291). Indeed, this goes back to Aristotle who observed how metaphors can offer fresh understandings, in a way that ordinary words cannot (as cited in A. I. Miller, 1996, p. 113). In this study, art and metaphor were often used together. Both were useful generative devices, individually and collectively. They also helped to render elements – often transcript material or research notes – ‘strange’, getting back to Carter (2007, pp. 15-16). In this way, arguments challenged each other, contradictions and generalisations were identified, complexities of dichotomies were disentangled, alternative readings were sought, as were marginalised voices (Grbich, 2012, p. 214). New associations were allowed to emerge.

There is a selection of terms that Somerville (2007, pp. 228-231) used to describes ‘emergence’, which helped me to understand its quality: ‘becoming aware’, ‘the appearance of new images’, ‘a radically different piece of writing’, ‘open[ing] up their writing practice’, ‘chang[ing] her whole approach’. These signify turning points in research. They emerge within a framework of ‘dynamic inter(play) between data and theorizing’ [Emphasis added] (Somerville, 2007, p. 230), as fertile ground for, again, new associations. It is especially useful to note Somerville’s use of the word ‘between’ (data and theorising), which can be taken to indicate that meaning is not simply amassed, and that meaning emerges ‘from the relationship between parts’ (Somerville, 2007, p. 239), in this case, between artworks, transcripts, research notes, and other forms of text. In this study, transcript material, for instance, was not privileged over other forms of data, and not considered closer to ‘reality’ than other forms of data. Each of these data are, to repeat an earlier point, merely ‘a pause in an iterative process of representation, engagement and reflexivity’ (Somerville, 2007, p. 239), and, repeating again, and using transcripts as an example, ‘a relational artefact of the interaction between researcher and researched’ (Somerville, 2007, p. 239). Here, data are not, or do not represent, truth. In line with postmodern tradition, finite interpretations were avoided and
there were no attempts to verify findings. Of course, an approach such as this requires the relationship between myself, as researcher, and the research, to be considered and attended to. This will now be discussed.

**Reflexivity**

Linda Finlay considers that reflexivity is central in qualitative research. This is because ‘[m]eanings are seen to be negotiated between researcher and researched within a particular social context so that another researcher in a different relationship will unfold a different story’ (Finlay, 2002, p. 531). To ignore the researcher’s position in the research then is to discount a major component of the research process. What is required is ‘subjective self awareness’ (Finlay, 2002, p. 533) and an identification of the ‘lived experience that resides in the space between subject and object’ (Finlay, 2002a, p. 533). From a postmodern perspective, and so relevant here: ‘Reflexive subjectivity replaces objectivity’ (Grbich, 2007, p. 10). The researcher has a ‘heightened awareness of the self in the process of knowledge creation, a clarification of how one’s beliefs have been socially constructed and how these values are impacting on interaction, data collection and data analysis’ (Grbich, 2007, p. 10). This is important in much health services research, where qualitative research is commonplace (Mays & Pope, 2000, p. 50).

The importance of attending to reflexivity is also emphasised by Pierre Bourdieu (2004, p. 93), who writes of mastering ‘the subjective relation to the object – which, when it is not taken into account, and when it orientates choices of object, method, etc., is one of the most powerful factors of error [in research]’. Objectivating the subject of objectivation is carried out at three levels: ‘one first has to objectify the position of the subject of objectivation in the overall social space ... the position he or she occupies within the field of specialists [and] ... everything that is linked to membership of the scholastic universe’ (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 94).
According to Pyett (2003, p. 1170), qualitative research, and the process of analysis in particular, involves continuous reflexivity and self-scrutiny. This should occur not just in the pre-research phase but also ‘during the conduct of inquiry itself’ (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2008, p. 1). Taking up this point, Figure 5 sets out what Finlay (2002, pp. 536-541) identifies as the stages of research (pre-research, data collection and data analysis), along with Bourdieu’s different levels of objectivation, to form a matrix. The cells formed by the matrix raise questions about reflexivity and so are a means of prompting it. That said, authors such as John Cutcliffe (2003, pp. 136-147) and Maura Dowling (2006, pp. 7-18) offer caution, with Cutcliffe (2003, p. 146) warning that ‘the reflexive process has distinct limitations’ because it can never be complete. Hence, this matrix approach, which has been used throughout this study, should be seen as offering structure to advance reflexivity that is more complete than what it would otherwise be. We will come back to this shortly, after exploring another means of facilitating reflexivity, that is, self-portraiture, and we will then combine this with our reflexivity matrix.

A number of approaches to accessing reflexivity are available to qualitative researchers, including making efforts to suspend biases (bracketing),
**Figure 5. Reflexivity matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-research position of the subject of objectivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In the overall social space</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cell 1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- How does the researcher's broader motivations impact on the reason to conduct research in the first place, the choice of topic and research question, and the choice of methodology?

- What is the researcher's conceptualisation of 'health'?

| **Cell 4**                                           |

- What are the shared and divergent understandings between the researcher and each participant with regard to research generally and to the health related topic?

- Are there any differences of a social nature, eg. gender, education or experience?

- To what extent are meanings negotiated between the researcher and participants and how is this influenced by life experiences?

- Is the researcher prepared to undergo change as a result of his or her interaction with the research? What of the potential for change in the participant?

- As above for the position of the researcher during data analysis.
### Position of the subject of objectivation during data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Within the field of specialists</th>
<th>Within everything linked to membership of the scholastic universe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cell 2</td>
<td>Cell 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the relationship between the researcher and the health care field?</td>
<td>Where does the researcher's interests (and conflicts of interest) lie within the relevant literature and what are the interpretations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is the choice of topic relevant to health care?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Position of the subject of objectivation during analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cell 5</th>
<th>Cell 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do the researcher and participants share the same language, especially if they come from different health disciplines?</td>
<td>Are questions (or prompts) inadvertently shaped by popular (perhaps fleeting) scholarly opinion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any power differentials between the researcher and participant based on positions held (present or past), health discipline or education?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cell 7</th>
<th>Cell 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does the researcher’s experience with the field shape analysis?</td>
<td>How does the researcher moderate any drive for outcomes that might inadvertently lead to data omissions or fabrications?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are some data dismissed as being commonplace whereas they may warrant deeper interrogation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the researcher consider the balance of analytical authority to rest with the participant or with the researcher?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
reflecting on assumptions in the course of research (epistemological
reflexivity), examining political and social conditions linked to the research
(critical theory standpoint), and emphasising power differentials within the
research (feminist theory standpoint) (Dowling, 2006, pp. 10-18). Another
approach is identified by David Gauntlett (2007, p. 29) who, informed by
Dewey, concludes that ‘making or looking at a work of art encourages
reflection upon ourselves and our place in the world’. Building on this idea,
I decided to use self-portraiture, a direct and potentially revealing genre, as a
way of accessing reflexivity in relation this study.

Portraiture is:

a communication process in which the portraitist seeks constantly
to understand the construction of reality that reflects the subject’s
past experience, gives meaning to her present experience, and
directs her future experience. She uses her own voice to elicit the
voice of the actor and to comprehend and frame the meaning of the
actor’s story (Bloom & Erlandson, 2003, p. 875).

As Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005, p. 11) put it: ‘the voice of the portraitist
often helps us identify her or his place in the inquiry’. This seeing and
thinking about oneself in relation to research is complex, and we will call
on Gregory Ulmer (and his account of Jacques Derrida) for guidance.
Ulmer (1985, p. 229) refers to the images and performances of artist
Joseph Beuys, noting that ‘his objects are specifically models’. In this way,
we will now consider my self-portrait (Figure 6), that is, as a model.

Figure 6. Self portrait 1.
This self portrait was painted early in this research, between developing the proposal and initiating the pilot. In the background (to the research, not of the portrait) was a personal desire to work with paint in a representational way, which is different from my usual preference for abstract painting. This confluence of research and artistic desire was, as we have noted, a response to questions of reflexivity, fuelled largely by the literature that I had been reading on the topic, and a need to explain and respond to some of the emotional issues around this research. Self-portraiture was an obvious way forward.

The portrait (Figure 6) that emerged suggests a contradiction, and this became apparent even in the early stages of painting. The subject (myself) appears to thrust himself forward with a degree of confidence, yet his left arm and hand seem to be offering a level of resistance. Thinking of this image in Derrida’s terms, that is, as a model, helps us make sense of these features of the picture. Incongruity, such as seen in my posture, can be observed elsewhere, including the neck-tie, which is knotted, but not completely, and about to ‘fly away’. The picture also shows a great deal of contrast – a light background to the left, and a dark background to the right. This counterpoint might be interpreted as a transitioning, moving between spaces, a becoming, or liminality. Of significance here is a comment by Christina Garsten (1999, p. 604) (in reference to temporary employees): ‘as a consequence of being betwixt and between more regular positions, reflexivity is enhanced, turning control and monitoring onto the self’.

Another artwork (Figure 7), a small sculpture made in wax, was made in order to allow further contemplation. It seemed to be needed to help shore up the ideas, possibly because they were novel, and I thought that the painting lacked conviction; it did not seem to declare itself to be finished.
Immersed in the new space between the materiality of the wax and the meanings that had already been taken from the painting, allowed for deeper thinking. In many ways this helped to confirm the original ideas, while adding another dimension. The left arm in the sculpture, compared with the one in the painting, does not so boldly proclaim resistance, being more outstretched and slightly lower than in the painting. In fact, the left arm looks to be more aligned with the posture of a body that exhibits confidence (as is the case with the right arm). There is more balance about it than in the painting. Raised here, then, are questions about temporality and reflexivity, since the two portraits were produced at different times. The combination of the two portraits serves as a reminder that the orientation of the researcher, as the project progresses, will likely vary, which supports Finlay’s attention to the stages of research.

What appears to be the, albeit changing, binary posturing of the researcher (confidence yet resistance, betwixt and between) could be considered a metaphor for where I am positioned in academia and in my former role in the health services. This would be a reasonable assumption since, when the painting and the sculpture were made, I had only recently moved from the later to the former. My place in this regard is relevant to the object of research. Such a move from practitioner to researcher and to academia has been noted by others as leading to ambivalence in adjusting to the new role (LaRocco & Bruns, 2006, pp. 626-638). Diane Bandow, Barbara Minsky and Richard Voss (2007, p. 32) put this down to ‘the development of a particular values hierarchy ... and often results in some level of tension in
the receiving institution in the form of values incongruency’. In a similar manner, Ann Dalzell, Christine Bonsmann and Deborah Erskine (2010, p. 128) showed through their work on teaching counselling research methodologies that to shift from learning to do research to becoming a researcher, students traversed a liminal space between these two positions, and that this involved researcher reflexivity. This seems to correspond with the theme expressed in the portraits; hence we will explore it further, and do so with the assistance of our reflexivity matrix (Figure 5).

Putting the portraits alongside the matrix served as a useful prompt for reflexivity, especially at the beginning of the work. Cell 1 of the matrix required me to think about the broader motivations for this research. That Cell asks if I am making an original contribution for the sake of furthering knowledge in the area of public health, or as Kathryn Ahern (1999, p. 408) suggested could be the case, to obtain a degree, or to find a place, and credibility, within the academy. Efforts to gain a degree or acceptance within a research community would hardly be unusual, but nevertheless, the question did serve as a prompt for me to think about my motivations (although I believed they were about making an original contribution to the sector I had spend most of my life working in). What was more pressing was that I needed to be mindful of the more popular understandings of creativity, in all their colour, and especially the use of art to explore this. The dualistic image of the portraits (Figures 6 and 7) might suggest my reluctance to fully accept some academic traditions, perhaps the positivist research approaches used by so many researchers, including the majority of creativity researchers. Choosing a method for that reason alone would of course be questionable, and I had decided, that this was not the case. The reflexivity matrix prompted me to think about this in the early stages of the study, especially as I painted Driving Forces (Figure 3) to explore the relationship between creativity as topic and as method. I also reflected on how I would interact with the research participants, how I would explain my arts-based approach to them, and how I would need to keep focused on the aim of the research during the long months I spent in the studio.
making paintings, and indeed throughout the research. I was also reminded to seek out reviews from academic peers regarding the research, and to be open to scrutiny about its value.

My understanding of ‘health’ was also challenged as I responded to Cell 1. In this research, it is public health that is being focused on, in particular, rather than say the more acute care issues – length of stay, waiting lists, and so forth, all of which relate back to a more traditional definition of health. It was important to be clear about this and the ambiguous gesturing in the portraits served as a reminder throughout the project of the need to check and re-check my orientation in this regard.

Going back to Bourdieu’s objectivation of the subject of objectivation and Finlay’s space between the subject and object, I became mindful of my assumptions about public health and the possibility of valorising the notion of creativity within that context (Cell 2). Is there a pre-supposition that health services are not creative enough, and is the conduct of this research, inadvertently, an attempt to make that point? Being mindful of the potential for this encouraged me to be more transparent than I would have otherwise been in conducting this research and in writing this dissertation. My proximity to the ‘field’ (Cell 2) could be considered to be counterbalanced by my understanding of the relevance of the research context and topic. That is, earlier participation in public health, and knowing the practices involved, meant that I could have some ‘blind spots’ but also a good sense of those practices and capacity to discern their vagaries. Still, I kept my relationship with the field in mind, especially when it came to participant selection. As we have discussed, I chose to interview health practitioners from outside my own State of New South Wales, so that I was less familiar with their context, yet able to draw on the language of ‘health’ to assist in developing a relationship with each of the research participants.

What also needed to be considered were my interests (and conflicts of interest) that lie within the literature that was drawn upon during the pre-
research period (Cell 3). There is little, if any, literature related directly to creativity in public health, or even health. Given this, I was quite naturally forced to examine the literature in related areas, picking and choosing not so much at random, but certainly based on my own perceptions of importance. Indeed, I was immersed in a broad range of literature as I was painting and sculpting the portraits, and all the artworks that came after that. How does this relate to the sense of incongruity that emerged from the portraits? Does my apparent confidence, yet hesitation, affect the choice of literature chosen, and my interpretation of the readings? One might think that I would be more confident with the literature related to my former practice in public health, and perhaps creativity too, and less confident with the literature on professional practice, per se, and certainly less confident with the more theoretical areas. Yet this was not the case. As I was formulating the initial ideas for the research, I participated in scholarly discussions and communities which served to challenge some of my preconceptions. This resulted in a more thoughtful selection of literature from unanticipated and useful areas.

Attending now to the data collection stage of the research, firstly with reference to Bourdieu’s notion of social space, the portraits (Figures 6 and 7) proved useful. They asked about any shared or divergent understandings between myself and the participants with regard to research generally, and especially regarding creativity (Cell 4). The trigger questions required me to think about any unwanted and unwarrented potential for leading the research participant. For example, informing the participant that the study is about creativity may have influenced participant expectations of the interview and possibly flavour their responses. This is not to suggest that the true purpose of the research was concealed, but rather, that the degree to which emphasis was placed on such words was considered more carefully, and as has been noted, this is why the opening question: ‘Where did the first spark of an idea for you work come from?’ was used.

Power differentials of a social nature, possibly even those associated with the title ‘researcher’, also needed to be taken into account. Differences in
education and life experiences between the researcher and participants
require reflexive thought. This is likely to be especially so here, where art
is a prominent part of the research methodology. Taking this point back to
Bourdieu, and his notion that art perception is a factor of social
stratification, Nick Prior (2005, p. 126) writes:

Because artworks are coded, meaning is dependent on socially-
acquired mechanisms of comprehension possessed by perceivers at
varying levels. Successful reception only occurs if there is a fit
between the work’s codes and those possessed by the beholder.

As we have said, meanings are negotiated between researcher and
participant, or at the very least, my behaviour will have had at least some
effect on the research participants and how they respond to my
questioning and artworks (Cell 4). My life experiences also come under this
reflexive gaze, and an awareness of this was of some consequence. I had to
be mindful to avoid positioning myself (through life experiences,
questioning and prompting) so as to avoid a dominant position, which
would have affected participant responses and negotiated meanings. This
sort of balancing act might even be considered evocative of the twin
postures in the portraits, and served to remind me of the potential
differences in the experiences of creativity between each of the participants
and myself. Such differences should not necessarily be framed as a barrier
to finding any objective ‘truth’, as we discussed, but as a prompt to do, as
Elaine Power (2004, pp. 858-864) and Guy Enosh and Adital Ben-Ari (2009,
p. 126) advocated, that is, to reflexively explore such divergent reports
and understandings ‘at a higher level of conceptual analysis’. Such thoughts
did not occur to me as I painted and sculpted, but did so afterwards, as I
referred to the literature, reflected at length on the artworks, spoke about
those artworks with colleagues, and now as I write this dissertation.

Cell 4 in the reflexivity matrix prompted me to question my preparedness
to undergo change as a result of this research – to continue on the
trajectory of becoming a researcher. Not quite ready to leave the shadows
of professional life, how would I be affected by my interaction with the
participants, and the way they speak of creativity? Interacting with the
participants gave me a sense of empathy for them, and given my understanding of what they are trying to achieve, I could hardly not have been affected in some way. It is not out of the question, either, that these interactions will continue to transform me in some way.

Of even greater importance is the potential for change in the research participants. This did not come up in the development of the artworks, but it needs to be written into this discussion. It is very reasonable to assume that participation in an interview has at least the potential to create change in them. The interview style that I was to eventually adopt, and my ability to work with it, therefore becomes important. I agree with Jeanette Hewitt (2007, p. 1149) that there is a potential for risk to participants in qualitative research, and to this end, the interview structure proposed by Shawn Shea (1988, pp. 55-133) was very useful. Again, this is because of the emphasis that Shea puts on a conversational style of interview which treats participants with respect, hopefully so that they also gain something from the interview process. In view of this, efforts were made to acknowledge the value of the participant’s work. In one case, a research participant even reflected on how his health services might be managed into the future, as he looked at the painting that I had made for him, suggesting that he was indeed gaining something from our conversation.

As already mentioned, I felt well placed when it came to having language in common with my research participants (Cell 5). Being neither within nor outside the participants’ worlds assisted me to ask questions that I may not have otherwise asked because of assumed (common) understandings, and I was able to understand issues such as power differentials present in the field (also Cell 5) without being ‘caught up’ in them.

The influence of prevailing scholarly opinion on myself and on the conduct of the interviews, also needed to be questioned (Cell 6). For example, the dominant definition of creativity as a process involving both novelty and value or usefulness has been adopted by most creativity researchers, as we have said. I came to understand that to conduct interviews with fixed
notions such as this could inadvertently set boundaries around those interviews. This could have been particularly problematic, especially when the aim of the research was to (re)conceptualise creativity.

My location between the field and the academy (Cell 7) positions me quite well to see and to work around conceptual boundaries. Still, I had to take care not to dismiss data as being commonplace by virtue of my, albeit lessening, familiarity with the context. Deep interrogation, frank discussions with collaborators, and, to repeat, a tendency to follow Grbich’s (2012, p. 214) recommendations about allowing arguments to challenge each other, identifying contradictions and generalisations, disentangling complexities, seeking alternative readings and marginalised voices, and avoiding finite interpretations, helped to avoid such pitfalls. I certainly kept this in mind, especially during analysis.

Cell 8 of the reflexive matrix asks about how the researcher might moderate any premature or ill-conceived drive for outcomes and how this may inadvertently lead to data omissions or fabrications. This, in some ways, takes us back to questions about how broader motivations impact on the reason to conduct research in the first place (Cell 1). I was reminded that there might be a greater tendency for this, as someone who is betwixt and between institutions and roles, and arguably wanting to gain the favour of one. As a response to this, I referred to the matrix periodically, especially prior to meeting the research participants for the first time, and then at various other stages of the research.

A systematic approach to reflexivity, such as the reflexivity matrix, is a good place to start any research project, especially for newcomer qualitative health researchers. The matrix might also be used by collaborators as a springboard for discussion about reflexivity throughout a project, and even beyond. Note too that a special use of the reflexivity matrix would be to facilitate discussion between, say, doctoral supervisors and their students. Of course, the questions contained within each of the cells in the matrix might be altered to account for the peculiarities of each
research context, and indeed, the characteristics of the researchers. It could even be argued that it is the creation, not simply the use, of the reflexivity matrix that helps to highlight the question of reflexivity. Following on from this, other qualitative researchers might benefit from developing their own tool, perhaps using this one as a guide. Still, the questions contained in the reflexivity matrix did serve me well in their present form.

Portraiture can raise questions and generate data for reflexivity. It might even be considered unusual, especially for arts-based research, that portraiture is not used more often for this. Portraiture can help resolve issues around reflexivity because, as it has done here, it serves as an appropriate and sympathetic way into an arts-based project. Of course, not all arts-based researchers have the ability or the desire to paint or sculpt themselves. However, this is something that can be easily overcome through the use of other forms of representation, such as photography, something which, as a means of producing and recording images, might well be within the reach of most.

The ethical considerations of this research should also be considered and Uwe Flick (2007, p. 69) provides some useful principles for this. Firstly, this research proceeded with the informed consent of participants who had the option of refusing to take part in the study, and also of withdrawing from the study, although none did either. Participant information sheets were given to all participants and consent forms were signed by them. There was no deception of research participants at any stage, or in any way, and participants’ names, or where they work, will never be made public. However, because all participants had been recipients of health awards, and this dissertation and publications arising from this research will declare that, participant anonymity was not guaranteed. This was made clear on the information sheet and consent form.

Data gathering and analysis steps have been carefully documented so as to open this research to external scrutiny. Participants were respected in all
interactions with them and every attempt was made to represent them here as accurately and fairly as possible. Their wellbeing was always considered uppermost and no vulnerable people, such as children or older patients, were interviewed. No participants became distressed or disturbed during the interviews. In fact, most, if not all, participants appeared to enjoy their participation. Finally, ‘the relation of benefits and burdens for the research participants’ (Flick, 2007, p. 69) had been considered in an earlier peer-reviewed process, with the benefits thought to outweigh the burdens.

The research was approved by the Charles Sturt University Human Research Ethics Committee, protocol number 2010/099.

We have set out in Section 1 of this dissertation to address the question: *How can creativity be reconceptualised in a way that is applicable to public health services, and beyond, and what is the impact of this?* This question arose from an understanding that creativity is needed in public health, if not all health services and a variety of other organisations, but current conceptualisations work against some of the characteristics of health services, such as their emphasis on standardisation and certainty. While creativity might be called for, action towards it is limited – even resisted.

The creativity research literature provides us with a good starting point; it has opened up our discussion and prompted us to question some of the taken-for-granted binaries and divisions, for example, between creativity and innovation. We can take from the literature that creativity can very well be considered a heterogeneous concept, expressed differently in different contexts.

The task of re-conceptualising creativity requires it to be looked at differently and the work of Carter and Dewey as well as Somerville provide the theoretical platform for this, as does the work of practice scholars, Schatzki and Green, in particular. We have taken the view that it should be examined from within, through creative practice itself, founded on an ontology of becoming and an epistemology of generating. These are the basis of Somerville’s notion of postmodern emergence, which provides
the theoretical and methodological approach for the study. The possibilities of emergence, as they have come to light in the course of this study, have been referred to as 'turning points', which is the theme of Chapter 5.
SECTION 2
CHAPTER 5

TURNING POINTS – EMERGENCE AND TRANSFORMATION IN THE WORK OF THIS RESEARCH

There is a moment when new knowledge starts to take shape, a moment in a broader generative process when researchers take note and respond, a radical turning point (Somerville, 2007, p. 228). This chapter will show the turning points in this research, the moments akin to when ‘soil is transformed from the ground of the savannah to a coded sample in a test tube’ (Somerville, 2007, p. 229), or more particularly, when artworks and metaphor, text and conversation, open up new ways of thinking about creativity. I will discuss what others might be inclined to gloss over (Somerville, 2007, p. 230) and explain how new insights emerged and become transformational in this research.

I take these turning points to be generative and also contributory, where one idea or turn leads to another. For this reason I veer away from Somerville’s term ‘radical’, having sensed in this research a series of turning points that were cumulative. Either way, and as I had noted in my research journal: ‘I feel sure that understanding comes with writing “of” painting’. That is, understanding comes as I locate my writing within painting, as it is taking shape. I am more than an external observer, what Carter (2004, p. 9) would term a ‘parasite’. Painting is a time when my thoughts are with the research participants, their actions and their health services. Of course, turning to new knowledge in this way is no simple matter. It requires a reflexive approach, as we have discussed, and also a balanced approach:
I feel that there is always a risk in doing these artworks when I slip into a mode that has me focused on not so much exploring ideas through 'letting myself go' and immersing myself in the art, and perhaps emergence, but rather wanting to please the person to whom I will show the finished piece. That is on one hand – on the other, and this seems to be worth noting, I wonder if in fact I cannot not lose and emerse myself – that would seem hard to do since my natural inclination is to shut out much of what is going around me and focus almost exclusively on the art-making process (Research journal).

Wanting to ‘allow the unpredictable to influence what is found’, to get back to Carter (2007, p. 16) again, I knew I needed to trust the process, to ‘become’ as researcher and be open to emergence. My research journal provides some useful signposts and aide-mémoires to this process, so we will refer to these notes to get as close as we can to the turning points, and the path they created. The journal was kept from when I first met each of the eight research participants to the completion of the artworks that were made in response to my conversations with them, a period of several months. We will of course refer to these paintings, made primarily to generate understanding and then more data when they were shown to the research participants. However, they also (re)present the turning points and we might even consider them to be, like Picasso, as ‘another way of keeping a diary’ (as cited in Leavy, 2009, p. 215), although here we should be mindful of what Patricia Leavy (2009, p. 215) says, that visual imagery is not ‘a window into the world, but rather a created perspective’. This is not so much a limitation of the use of art here; it is a strength. After all, the ‘created perspective’ is what helped to produce the turning points in the first place, so there is a dynamic relationship between creating and representation. What is certain is that the paintings are not illustrations.

A new conceptualisation of creativity, contextualised to public health services, matured as a string of these turning points. In the background was an altogether different type of ‘turn’, an ontological turn, the practice turn: ‘Thinkers once spoke of ‘structures,’ ‘systems,’ ‘meaning,’ ‘life world,’ ‘events,’ and ‘actions’ when naming the primary generic social thing. Today, ‘many theorists would accord “practices” a comparable honor’ (Schatzki, Knorr Cetina, & Von Savigny, 2001, p. 10), and through this lens, these
theorists are ‘making decisive contributions to contemporary understandings of diverse issues’ (Schatzki et al., 2001, p. 10). The same lens can be applied, I argue a little later on in this dissertation, to creativity. For now, however, we will restrict our discussion to the turning points themselves.

**Sea of Creativity metaphor**

Taking the advice of Titchen and Horsfell (2007, p. 219) again about art having a place in accessing researchers’ driving forces, I started painting. I thought of this not only as a generative exercise, but similar to what Bettina Brendal (1999, pp. 189-190) spoke about, as metaphor making. As we have noted, metaphor can generate new insights (Boxenbaum & Rouleau, 2011, p. 291), and there is indeed a long tradition in this, going back to Aristotle (as cited in A. I. Miller, 1996, p. 113). Using art alongside (or as) metaphor proved to be a useful way of thinking differently about the creativity of health services.

I made a preliminary drawing (Figure 8) and from this emerged a metaphor about the nervous system – separation of neuron and muscle, yet connection and innervation through neurotransmitters.

**Figure 8. Neurotransmission**

Working from this, but wanting to go further and thus undo what Somerville (2007, p. 230) would call my ‘habits of logic and order, and to
respond differently to the landscape of the research’, I started painting. A more evocative image of the sea emerged, and this also spoke of separation and connection (the ocean is separated but connected to the shore through waves) (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Sea of Creativity

Of course, this would not be the first time that the sea or its various components have been used metaphorically: ‘drawing towards and contemplating the vast sea of beauty, he will create many fair and noble thoughts and notions in boundless love of wisdom’ is one example from Plato (424-348BC). Still, the Sea of Creativity metaphor seemed new to this context and indeed something that I now look back on as an important moment, or turning point, in this research.

The water colour and pencil painting (Figure 9) helped me to (re)view the creativity of health services. Of course others might expect a picture of the sea to be of different hues, say blue and aqua, perhaps over a golden wash that represents the sand. I thought that the cadmium red highlighted a tension, and the layering of lines, somewhat random, reminded me of complexity. When I stood back from the painting I wondered if it might be that it is from this tension and complexity that creativity emerges. A bank of waves forms in the top-left hand corner of the painting and rolls on towards the shore, located at the bottom right-hand corner. The luminous form in the space between the waves and the shore still catches my eye as a central feature of the painting.
I played with ideas embedded in the *Sea of Creativity* as the metaphor came more into perspective. I pondered its use as a domain-specific conceptualisation of creativity. Here, waves build, amidst an ebb and flow, swash and backwash, breaking, each differently, randomly, though in an overall pattern, always shoreward. Driven by the wind, particles of water move in a circular motion. They do not travel; only their collective energy travels. So waves are the Sea of Creativity, rather than something passing over it. These particles move and interact with sand and debris; they shape waves and connect with the shore. The waves form and reform, the boundary between the sea and the shore shifts (Mack, 2011, p. 165), and the shore itself changes. Tensions in the collision of particles and in the breaking of waves on the shore make the shore what it is, and because the shore itself produces a reactive tension against the waves, which seldom ceases, a new version of the shore emerges. Waves do not form without the wind or break without the shore. The shore influences how waves form and break; it is a complex system of interacting components. The Sea of Creativity is a space that is betwixt and between – between the ocean and the land. Those who play in the sea, if we are to take a sociocultural perspective, are from time to time, and in different ways, liminal characters. They have ‘become disconnected from the set of rules which sustained them in the world they have left behind; yet they are not of the world on whose fringes they have been washed up’ (Mack, 2011, p. 165). Here is a space for change and the emergence of the novel, like the iconic images of surfing’s counterculture in the 1970’s (Bonner, McKay, & McKee, 2010, pp. 269-274; Henderson, 2010, pp. 319-332). These now not-so-new images form part of our understanding of the beach, along with all those images that followed. The Sea of Creativity is transformational.

I could see a connection here with Lena, one of our research participants. Lena walked into a large city hospital over a decade ago, said they should give her a part-time job, which they did, and she has since grown a whole music therapy department there, in many respects, transforming the health service. ‘I knew I was doing something different because I plopped myself down in a hospital that never had music therapy before’, Lena said. Lena writes songs
with cancer sufferers, mostly just before they die. When we first met up, Lena had written nearly seven hundred such songs and by the time of our second interview, a well-known Australian singer-songwriter had recorded two of them. As I prepared to make a painting for Lena, I wrote in my research journal that for her to work in this way, so extensively and also publically, she was probably very much part of the culture of the hospital. She was, but never completely, she said, perhaps enjoying her liminal space. That is, Lena described herself as being a little different, but she liked that.

We have considered that the creative energy of water particles is the very substance of the Sea of Creativity, and to wade just a little deeper into this metaphor, creativity can be considered the fabric of health services, again, rather than something passing over them. Creativity framed this way is omnipresent. In the business of case conferences, community education sessions or planning meetings, in the rhythm of all the day-to-day practices of providing treatment and care, ideas build, like waves; each is different. They link with previous ideas, rolling on, forming and reforming, eventually banding together and swelling, improvised. As much as they appear random, each wave contributes, in one way or another, to the overall design, like the layering of lines in the painting (Figure 9). You can speculate on their path, perhaps improved access to care, the quality of life of older people, or possibly the provision of hope. Whatever their route, they almost always move forward in the same trajectory, shoreward, to what we might now call the ‘procedures’, or those practices that reinforce current operations. These procedural elements of health services take the appearance of culture, mission and responsibility, which are made up of older ideas and which yesterday were considered to be creative. Here is the tension, conspicuous in ‘cadmium red’. Practitioners throw up ideas, accepting, rejecting, listening, deflecting, wondering, asking for evidence, and reacting in one way or other with the procedures. The tension never completely resolves because a new wave is about to break, and there are always surprises. Health services eventually reinvent themselves, and in their liminality they are always becoming. Practices, are formed and (re)formed, domains are (trans)formed
(Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 28), ‘rules emerge retrospectively’ (Green, 2011, p. 7), and so health services are creative.

**An emergent perspective on creativity**

This emerging conceptualisation of creativity has been facilitated through painting and metaphor, and now by connecting that thinking to the literature about creativity. Although the literature related to such a novel approach is indeed lean, there are some authors who have offered a similarly organic account and the literature on social systems can also be usefully applied. David Harrington’s (1990, pp. 143-169) ecological perspective on creativity is an early and helpful anchor for the view of creativity that is developing here; it might even be considered a cousin to the Sea of Creativity. Moving beyond the notion that creativity is a solo and a coordinated process, Harrington (1990, p. 144) used the development of the personal computer to illustrate how creativity can arise from ‘the products of several people working in intended and unintended collaboration’. He explains that some creative actions are planned and purposeful, and arise out of surprise, having ‘impact beyond the original creative agent(s)’. To paraphrase part of Harrington’s (1990, p. 148) intentionally oversimplified description of the development of the personal computer: a tinkerer made a gadget that performed an amusing task, someone heard about this, modified it and connected it to their own gizmo, and as a result of personal contacts, someone else saw some practical applications and that person had the skills to bring these to fruition, although others needed to be convinced of the need to commit economic and material resources to enable that. What Harrington is getting at here, not unlike Csikszentmihalyi’s (1996, pp. 27-36) systems view of creativity, is that: ‘it was the ecosystem as a whole that elaborated and developed each person’s original insights (Harrington, 1990, p. 148). It follows, then, that there is a temporal and ‘a developmental dimension’ (Harrington, 1990, p. 145) to creativity framed this way, since the connection of insights no doubt occurs over a period of time.
Harrington’s (1990, pp. 143-169) model focuses on the relationships between creative processes, people and the environment. Creative processes place psychosocial demands, in the form of knowledge, imagination and skills, on both creatively active people and their ecosystems. These demands need to be met in equal strength if creative processes are to flourish (Harrington, 1990, p. 154). Also, individuals and ecosystems can each make their own demands on the other two parts of the model. It is interesting to note that for those involved, this process can evoke conflicting and successive feelings of confusion, frustration, excitement, pleasure, fear, hope, discouragement and surprise (Harrington, 1990, p. 156), which is not all that dissimilar from the tension in our Sea of Creativity metaphor. Another point that Harrington (1990, p. 157) makes about this is:

if creativity is to occur, creatively active individuals and their ecosystems must initiate and sustain creative processes in the face of powerful process-avoiding and process-terminating forces brought into play by uncertainty, fear of failure, intolerance of ambiguity, and pressures for quick and certain results.

This sounds like what we had earlier referred to as the procedures of health services, those practices that reinforce current operations, although for Harrington they have an individual rather than an organisational focus, and his tension is portrayed more as a consequence of creativity, rather than a stimulus for it.

As suitable as the alignment between Harrington’s ecological perspective on creativity and the Sea of Creativity metaphor might at first seem, the productive tension that is so central to the Sea of Creativity metaphor is not given sufficient prominence. So, if we are to pursue the ideas embedded in the Sea of Creativity metaphor with confidence, we should deepen and broaden our perspective on this tension, and to do this our discussion needs to be informed from outside the creativity research literature. We need to explore the place of productive tension in human systems more generally because the prevailing understanding of creativity in organisations is that ‘managerial realities are seen as the problem and
inhibitor of creativity’ (Nayak, 2008, p. 423). The Sea of Creativity metaphor is asking us to think differently, that is, there can be a productive tension between those practices reinforcing current operations (managerial realties for Nayak (2008, p. 423)) and fresh ideas. Joseph Schumpeter provides a starting point for this line of thought. Coming from an economic development perspective, he proposed that: ‘it is not possible to explain economic change by previous economic change conditions alone. For the economic state of a people does not emerge simply from the preceding economic conditions, but only from the preceding total situation’ [original emphases] (1934, p. 58). We will return to Schumpeter shortly but for now what we can take from him is that organisation-wide creativity is more than a linear chain of (creative) events; it is more holistic, or organic, than that.

This notion of a more organic conceptualisation of creativity gets to the heart of the Sea of Creativity metaphor. Seana Moran (2009, pp. 1-22) identified and distinguished between two other metaphors for creativity, the boundary metaphor and the organism metaphor. The boundary metaphor, arguably the most dominant in creativity research, conceptualises creativity as ‘crossing, breaking, or pushing out a boundary’ (Moran, 2009, p. 2), thus reaching something that is typically described as novel and valuable, as we have discussed. This creativity is ‘an outside thing, which can be harnessed by the ‘innovator’ or the ‘entrepreneur’ (Rehn & De Cock, 2009, p. 227) [original emphases]. The organism metaphor of creativity points in a different direction. It provokes an understanding that is not so much about creativity being a ‘eureka’ moment, but as something more systemic, again, similar to Csikszentmihalyi’s (1996, pp. 27-36) argument, where the system itself becomes creative, where the dynamics of creativity are not overlooked (Moran, 2009, p. 8). To introduce one more metaphor, who can resist this portrayal of an organic notion of creativity: ‘a perennial flower blossoming and producing seeds’ (2009, p. 17), which Moran borrowed from David Perkins (1988, p. 369). This approach seems to have the potential to set creativity researchers’ sights beyond ‘ah ha’ moments and to expose new areas for research. Still, at the
moment at least, it falls short in the health services context, and so this is where we now turn our attention.

The organism metaphor is meta-theoretical. That is, it charts an overall course for research and ‘guide[s] the search for domain-based theories’ (Baer, 2012, p. 16). If the Harrington model is a cousin to the Sea of Creativity, as we said, then the organism metaphor would be its parent and while the organism metaphor serves that purpose well, there still is a ‘generation gap’ between it and the creativity of public health, its risk-aversive practices and, in general, its fixed mission, which is the area that we are most interested in. Regardless of whether or not one is enamoured of this fixed mission (and it certainly is tempting to cavalierly brush it aside in the name of more creativity, in a more popular sense), it is intrinsic to a system that has the specific purpose of improving health, and a societal expectation and legislative responsibility to protect the wellbeing of its consumers, who in many cases, are in vulnerable positions. Still, we should not end the discussion here; this claim that the organism metaphor, as it stands, has limited utility in health services deserves more discussion, starting with its origin.

The organism metaphor comes from a Darwinian basis, which has been a somewhat contested area in the creativity literature. Donald Campbell’s 1960 (p. 380) paper is key in this argument. He proposed a ‘blind-variation-and-selective-retention’ process, not unlike natural selection in evolution, but where there is a selection (and then retention) of ‘blind ideas’ – akin to trial and error. Trial and error might work for some organisations, but would likely raise the hackles of anyone aware of the high rates of avoidable error in health services, especially since the release of data by Ross Wilson and his colleagues in 1995 (p. 465). Critical of Campbell’s model, Subrata Dasgupta (2004, pp. 403-413) used historical studies to argue that creativity is less like natural selection and more about being goal-driven, knowledge-driven and directional, without being deterministic. Simonton (2005, pp. 299-308) then entered the fray, arguing that blindness and goal directedness are not necessarily in opposition. This ‘decoupling’,
to use Simonton’s (2005, p. 302) term, of the notions of blindness and goal directedness, creates a space that might be more acceptable for a (re)conceptualisation of creativity relevant to health services. That is, it becomes possible, or logical, that creativity in health services, unlike for some other industries, can, or even should, be thought of as both organic or evolutionary as well as goal directed. It is not assumed here that these two concepts form a neat and agreeable package – indeed, it would be likely that there will be some conflict between them.

All this became clearer after I met Suzy, a research participant whose health service responded to calls from adolescents affected by cancer who wanted a more age-appropriate service (for Suzy’s full story, see Chapter 6). Suzy and her team gave voice to these young people by creating an advisory board, comprising adolescents, to the Minister of Health. When I first met Suzy, she said: ‘the award was for the development of that board and it being really inclusive of young people and promoting, empowering engagement rather than being something that was tokenistic ... I think it's unique in this area of adolescent and young adult oncology’. I wondered how Suzy facilitated this empowering engagement. Did she form a partnership with the adolescents and work with them to evolve the service in a way that makes it more responsive to their needs, or did she refer to the health service’s strategic plan or key performance indicator data regarding, perhaps, client satisfaction for guidance, or did she search for evidence around the particular medical and psychosocial needs of adolescents with cancer? I also wondered if there was a place for creativity somewhere in between the need for new ideas, such as those of her adolescent clients, and all the routine practices, those maintaining and reinforcing current operations. That would seem feasible: ‘Creativity emerges from the nature of routine activity itself’, as Dalton (2004, p. 620) theorised.

Campbell, Dasgupta, Simonton, Dalton and our participant, Suzy, all pointed to evolution and change as being relevant to, even an aspect of, creativity. More recently, Chris Bilton (2014, p. 1) wrote about the
'importance of continuity over change, the contribution of intermediaries and administrators to creativity process and the possibility of reconfiguring and refining existing ideas rather than new ones’. So, wanting to think more about this, I went once again to Somerville (2010, p. 10); this time to her book, *Singing the Coast*, which she authored with Tony Perkins, to look for prompts. Perkins is quoted:

> When I look back I saw the bark huts down there, then the tin huts, and I saw people come up to brick homes. I saw people change from living out of the Lake to going down to the shop. Before that they were down there at the Lake getting fish and crab, eels and turtles, and they’d be down on the beach looking for pippies and shellfish. They’d go down to the red gums and get the grubs out of the trees and to the river to get cobra out of the logs. You’d never see mince meat and sausages. It was kangaroo on smoking rails.

Here I thought back to Lena, the music therapist, and made a note in my research journal: ‘Can Lena's creativity be describes as evolutionary or as change? Are her practices a result of a changing context? Perkins (2010, p. 10) is quoted as saying, a little further into his text, that the lake, to which he refers above, is dying, and that it should be restored (which is reminiscent of Somerville’s [2008c, p. 211] report on Terewah). Is Lena's creativity a restoration or perhaps a reinstatement of the more human aspects of living with illness? This would seem possible from my conversations with her, but how could that emerge? Clearly Lena links her talents with a world of illness, but was that intentional? Also, are emotions involved? How would you explain the tension between old and new ways or practices, the traditional ways of caring for people with cancer and the hospital's gradual adoption of Lena’s ways, or between institutionalisation and living, actually living, with serious illness? We could frame this, so far, as a dyad involving firstly, evolution (blind ideas), and secondly, directedness (goal-driven and knowledge-driven), which along with all other organisational responsibilities of a cultural, legal and professional nature represent
the ‘procedures’, that is, those practices reinforcing current operations.

To get back to the organism metaphor, a limiting factor is that much discussion comes from the perspective of the individual, as we saw for Harrington (1990, pp. 143-169), rather than from a whole-of-organisation perspective. This has a tendency to close off discussion about complexity theory and emergence, which we identified as being useful in social contexts like health services. We also run the risk of missing valuable lessons that might come out of exploring the unpredictability of health services, the tension between the ‘procedures’ and the unknowability of health services (McDaniel et al., 2003, p. 269) and the gift of surprise (McDaniel et al., 2003, p. 275). So now the dyadic tension can be expanded to a triadic one – evolution, directedness, and complexity. Our metaphorical organism metaphor has been stretched. So whilst the organism metaphor has created a new space for creativity research, and is an excellent springboard for this discussion, its use is limited because of the uniqueness of health services (their lack of tolerance for trial and error, fixed missions and complex nature). Metaphors influence how we think (Morgan, 2006, p. 4) and, according to the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, are ‘never innocent’ (as cited in Ulmer, 1985, p. 11). Viewed this way, a metaphor that is contextualised to health services, like the Sea of Creativity, becomes important if we are to retain an organic, ecological or systemic approach and build a platform for more applicable research in the area.

We now return to Schumpeter (1942, p. 83) and his term ‘creative destruction’. This was in relation to capitalism, although its basic tenet can be quite usefully borrowed here, even if only momentarily. Schumpeter (1942, p. 83) described creative destruction as a process of incessant revolutionising from within and through: ‘incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating the new one’. This relates to our notion of an evolutionary creativity, even as a possible explanation of it, and also how creativity can emerge from routine, recalling Dalton (2004, p. 620), but can
tension in health services creativity be usefully considered as a destruction-creation sequence? Another economic theory, disruptive innovation, holds that where new products are simpler, more convenient or affordable, even if lower in functionality, new markets will open. Once a market foothold is secured, the new product takes a gradual improvement trajectory (Hwang & Christensen, 2008, p. 1330). Translating this to the Sea of Creativity metaphor, tension might arise out of the risk of fresh ideas (akin to products); their quality is considered, probably with great suspicion, until their improvement trajectory takes hold. Another concept, shadow systems, that is, the 'informal shadows of formal systems' (Smith & Stacey, 1997, p. 80), is also helpful:

Tensions between the shadow organization and the formal organization generated new forms of behavior. This state of bounded instability – tension and conflict – is essential to break down old patterns of thought and behavior, and to allow the new to emerge. This is typically how complex adaptive systems evolve. (Smith & Stacey, 1997, p. 79).

According to this, with its roots in the notion of complex adaptive systems, the tension of the Sea of Creativity would arise from the friction between these two parallel systems that together form the health service. One other evolutionary theory, Red Queen, was crafted by Van Valen in 1973 (p. 21):

To a good approximation, each species is part of a zero-sum game against other species. Which adversary is most important for a species may vary from time to time and for some or even most species no one adversary may ever be paramount. Furthermore, no species can ever win, and new adversaries grinningly replace the losers … From this overlook we see dynamic equilibria on an immense scale, determining much of the course of evolution by their self-perpetuating fluctuations’

This Lewis Carroll (1913) inspired theory is often placed within an organisational context to explain competition. An organisation facing competition makes a response, which in turn triggers a response by the first (competitor) organisation, and then there is a counter-response by the second organisation, etcetera.
Processes of incessant destruction and creation, suspicion about a lack of quality, friction between parallel organisational systems, and the tension that precedes dynamic equilibria, all speak to the omnipresence of tension in human systems, including, of course, health services, even though they may not be directly applicable. With this and the Sea of Creativity metaphor in mind, we will now revisit Harrington’s model, looking for a new formulation, contextualised to health services (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Sea of Creativity model of health services re-creation

![Figure 10](image)

Figure 10 borrows from Harrington’s proposition that creativity arises out of the meeting of psychosocial demands. However, where Harrington regards this dynamic to be between creative processes, personal resources and ecosystem resources, as we said earlier, here it is considered to occur between those practices that reinforce current operations (what we have also referred to as the procedures) and fresh ideas, and any actions associated with those fresh ideas. This dynamic can be thought of as being at the heart of creativity. Here we have a simple conceptualisation of creativity which foregrounds the actions or practices involved; it is an organic approach to health services creativity. As in Harrington’s model, demands are initiated from both sources, and where demands are not met in equal strength, tension arises. This mismatch between demands and the ensuing tension is almost inevitable in health services amidst their hustle and bustle. A demand might arise out of, say, a new evidence-based
strategy. Where that demand is eventually met, after the strategy has been explored and debated, after interdisciplinary or interdepartmental conflicts have arisen and subsided, and after lessons have been taken and fresh thinking emerges, causing extant practices to respond and expand, there might be creative implementation, similar to what Rehn and De Cock (2009, p. 226) called '(re)productive work’, where ‘originality lies in the relational dynamics, not the things itself’ (Rehn & De Cock, 2009, p. 226). This situation is not dissimilar, either, to the Hegelian informed dialectical theory of change interpreted by Andrew Van de Ven and Marshall Poole (1995, p. 517) – as novel ideas emerging from ‘colliding events, forces, or contradictory values that compete with each other’, or to put this more impassively: ‘an entity subscribing to a thesis (A) may be challenged by an opposing entity with an antithesis (Not-A) and the resolution of the conflict produces a synthesis (which is Non Not-A). Over time, this synthesis becomes a new thesis’ (1995, p. 517). In our case, the ‘new thesis’ would become new, or rather evolved, ‘procedures’ and all those practices associated with them.

Another route through the framework depicted in Figure 10, which might be thought of as creative activism, rather than creative implementation, originates from fresh thinking, blind ideas, actions or practices. Take our earlier example of a groundswell of opinion about better ways to support adolescents with cancer. Those demands, expressed as activism, might eventually be met by a creative change to those practices that reinforced current operations (the procedures), and they might expand, as happened when the adolescent advisory board was convened. Kerrie Unsworth (2001, pp. 289-297) described different types of creativity and there is some alignment with what we are proposing. In particular, Unsworth (2001, p. 292) used the term ‘proactive creativity’, which occurs where individuals ‘actively search for problems to solve’ (2001, p. 292) and volunteer suggestions. However, the similarity between Unsworth’s formulation and our Sea of Creativity inspired perspective ends there, not least because Unsworth looked at creativity at a psychological rather than an organisational level.
The meeting of demands, or not, is unlikely to be an all or nothing type affair. New organisational strategies might be implemented, although there will likely be pockets where staff may refuse to engage, and it may be not too difficult for most of us to recall how fresh thinking within just about any organisation led to a change, although that change was not quite to the extent that was hoped for. In these cases, a level of tension remains, along with the potential for further creativity. If demands from both directions are met, if fresh ideas are responded to by the health service, and the health service can rely on fresh ideas to support its demands, which might even be to maintain the status quo amidst, say, a crisis, then the organisation might be considered to be in a state similar to organisational flow. This would be like Keith Sawyer’s (2007, p. 43) notion of group flow: ‘a peak experience, a group performing at its top level of ability’, which is an idea that builds on Csikszentmihalyi’s (1996, p. 110) original conception of flow. The difference between what Sawyer proposed and the ideas presented here is not so much the character of flow, but that, again, we are coming from an organisational, not an individual or group, perspective. It is the organisational tension and the working towards its resolution that is important because this is what brings to the fore possibilities of ‘co-evolution and flexibility in adapting to an ever-changing environment’ (McDaniel et al., 2003, p. 269), a point that is important to complexity theory. Of course, this tension is not necessarily static and it would be possible that, due to changes in context, that creative implementation is more or less prominent at different times, and the same would apply to creative activism. In the same way, creative implementation might, over time, and according to a changing direction of tension, yield to creative activism, or vice versa.

Some organisations can be remarkably effective and successful, but to what extent do researchers, leaders, members, sponsors or service partners consider this to be because they are intrinsically creative? Creativity might be considered to be not so much supplementary to existing ways of operating, but rather, as an essential force that is, in reference to the Sea of Creativity metaphor, a matter of re-creation, something vital to an
organisation’s operations and growth, where organisations are ‘construed as temporarily stabilized event clusters abstracted from a sea of flux and change’ (Nayak & Chia, 2011, p. 281), and where, drawing a parallel with Tsoukas and Chia’s (2002, p. 570) thesis about organisational change, they not only stem and facilitate creativity, they are the outcome of creativity.

The Sea of Creativity metaphor prompts us to consider organisations, including health services, and to take another lesson from Tsoukas and Chia (2002, p. 577), as having an ever-mutating character, like Sawyer’s (1999, p. 466) ‘accumulation of hundreds or thousands of tiny emergent steps’ in a process of re-creation.

The notion of re-creation and the Sea of Creativity metaphor are turning points in this study, therefore, and together they offer a useful lens through which creativity can be understood. Of course, this is only a single lens, and in most cases a single lens provides partial sight only. So we need to remember these restrictions and recall Grbich’s (2012, p. 214) advice to allow arguments to challenge each other, identify contradictions and generalisations, and disentangle the complexities of any dichotomies. We need to, as Grbich (2012, p. 214) also said, seek alternative readings, so we should be inclined to take from the Sea of Creativity, as well as add to it, as the metaphor matures, as we reflect on the images and other artefacts ‘in a dynamic interplay between data and theorizing’ (Somerville, 2007, p. 230), and as we listen to the participants’ voices and those of scholars in the area.

A practice of creativity

Prompted by my discussion with Lena, the music therapist, I thought about how health services are unique and complex; there are a great number of discipline groups, environments and practices. Lena referred to health services as dualistic: ‘like the great, great, great, great grandson of a burlesque dancer and a high class doctor’, she said. Tension no doubt arises from such dualism and in my research journal I noted that it should be possible to balance such tensions, turn them into something productive,
and further that it might be a person who does this, or perhaps a *practice*. My thinking had, albeit inadvertently, drifted from thinking about a ‘process’ of creativity to thinking about a ‘practice’ of creativity. I remained unaware of this shift, despite putting it down in black and white in my journal, until I had a conversation with the practice theory scholar, Bill Green, who was supervising this research. This was another turning point.

Both terms ‘process’ and ‘practice’ imply acting or doing something. The former has a more mechanistic tone than the later, and supporting this are the numerous models describing the process of creativity, which is frequently represented as stages, and the componential model of creativity (Amabile, 1983, pp. 357-376) is a commonly cited example of this. The term ‘practice’, however, when one looks even just a little under the surface, has quite a different connotation. A richer meaning becomes apparent from the work of Jeannette Lancaster (2012, p. 119), and her phrase: ‘practices interact with each other to form a field’, which is a notion she borrowed from Theodore Schatzki, Karin Knorr Cetina and Eike Von Savigny (2001, p. 11):

> practice accounts are joined in the belief that such phenomena as knowledge, meaning, human activity, science, power, language, social institutions, and historical transformation occur within and are aspects of components of the *field of practices*. The field of practices is the total nexus of interconnected human practices.

Whether one considers this ‘field’ to represent the social, as Schatzki (2002, p. 119) did, or a country scene, which I would argue is also a useful metaphor (considering the multiple elements that merge to create the expanse of a field of either sort), it is possible to draw the conclusion that this notion of a practice is richer, more complex, with refreshingly indistinct boundaries, than the term ‘process’. Indeed, this may be a space for re-conceptualising creativity. I had known this but at the time had not really known it well enough, which may not be all that surprising since there is very little attention paid to the term ‘practice’ in the creativity literature, although the work of Nayak (2008, pp. 420-439) and also Giannopoulou, Gryszkiewicz and Barlatier (2014, pp. 23-44) are
exceptions, and we will get to their work shortly. So, I fingered my way through my research journal again to look for some other references to the word ‘practice’ and came across an idea that I had painted earlier on.

Figure 11. Creativity bumps up against other things

Against this painting, I wrote:

Creativity floats in the Sea of Creativity, often in turmoil, coexisting with other forms, shapes and colours, and bumps against other things with vibrancy and tension.

There is a yellow mark in the painting that resembles a ‘C’, perhaps the ‘C’ in creativity. This was unplanned. The letter ‘C’ (little c, big C and so forth) comes up from time to time in the creativity literature, for example in Banaji, Burn and Buckingham’s (2010, pp. 1-82) literature review. Here, however, the letter ‘c’ emerged materially, which is not insignificant if we take Ulmer’s (1985, p. 229) view that writing, which we might extend to painting, or writing in paint, ‘becomes a research into creativity’. Even now I am taken by the association of ‘things’ bumping against each other, in the name of creativity, and what Stephen Kemmis, Christine Edwards-Groves, Jane Wilkinson and Ian Hardy (2012, p. 36) call ecology of practices, where ‘practices coexist and are connected with one another in complexes of practices ... with local variation ... like different species in an ecosystem’ [original emphasis]. As an illustration of what might constitute a complex of practices, as we have noted, Kemmis, Edwards-Groves, Wilkinson and Hardy (2012, pp. 36-37) use the practice of leadership in schools and associate that with practices concerned with learning, teaching, teacher education, education policy, educational research and evaluation. It is possible, then, that a practice of creativity might be associated with other
practices such as communication, teaching and evaluation, which coexist in public health.

A further turning point occurred when I was asked to make a presentation on this, then far from complete, research. As usual, I anticipated questions and discussion points and came to wonder if the audience might be inclined to see creativity as just a component of good practice (note that this was another fortuitous reference to the term practice, not process, even at that early stage). That is, is creativity a component of other practices and therefore something that draws on, accentuates, triggers or enhances them, practices capped with creativity perhaps; or alternatively, does a practice of creativity stand alone in an ecology of practices, bumping against other more routine practices, as I had started to think. This would be the difference between a ‘creative practice’ or ‘practising creatively’, versus ‘a practice of creativity’ or ‘practising creativity’. Creativity must be involved within a practice, surely, to enliven or even to maintain it, and this might occur as a response to the practice context, or the ritual associated with practices, as Andrew Metcalfe and Ann Game (2010, p. 166) would say. However, a distinctive practice of creativity would also seem possible, and this will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Of course, all these formulations of a practice approach to creativity might be equally useful under different circumstances, or they might be implicated together within the same context, at different times or possibly as part of a continuum. The idea of this, along with those ideas emerging from the Sea of Creativity metaphor – the notion of productive tension, the concept of re-creation and an evolutionary form of creativity, and the possibilities offered by a practice approach to creativity, even a practice of creativity – represent the origins of what will eventually become a new conceptualisation of creativity. At the moment, however, that thesis is embryonic, and its development depends on fuller discussion, or what we might call theorising, and of course, reference to those people considered to have particular knowledge of the creativity of health services, because
they participate in it. It is these people, our research participants, to whom we now turn our attention.
CHAPTER 6

TURNING TO EIGHT AWARD-WINNING HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Our new conceptualisation of creativity, contextualised to health services, is considered a practice, rather than a process. This formulation considers creativity to be part of the fabric of health services, not something passing over them. There is a reactive tension from the so called procedures – the ideas, actions and practices that are older, although once considered creative, that serve to reinforce current operations. Fresh and older ideas, actions and practices are in dynamic interplay and this can lead to either creative implementation or creative activism in a changing context framed as a complex adaptive system.

In this chapter, we will work with and develop this conceptualisation of creativity by referring to my conversations with the eight research participants. Reflecting on these conversations, and continuing to work in a space of unknowing, ideas will emerge and be discussed, and we will be required to work with some ideas more than others. Some ideas will be used to reinforce those that emerged earlier, and others will challenge them. Consequently, some participants will be referred to more than others, and in different ways, even though I valued my interactions with each participant equally.
Chad

Chad told me that his health service received its award for the 'implementation of the strength model … into a public mental health service'. This model turns the table for mental health clients – the team now focuses more on clients’ strengths, not their problems. Chad and his team’s new and useful mental health service serves as an illustration of creative implementation. They wanted to make creative changes, said Chad at our second meeting, and implement a model, what they call the 'strength' model of care, which is based on social recovery principles. This was not creating a new way, rather it involved implementing an existing way in a new context. Implementation often requires adaptation, as we said in Chapter 1, and this was novel. Here, creativity originated not from fresh ideas, but from a strategic direction – wanting to do things well, more effectively, akin to Fisher and Amabile’s (2009, p. 13) notion of creative services, and Nayak’s (2008, p. 421) ‘getting the job done’.

Perhaps the best way to get a sense of Chad and his organisation’s work is to recount a story that he told me about a client:

a young guy who had eight admissions, never took drugs or alcohol, so there was none of that complicating factors in this young man’s life, just a really serious and a nasty psychotic illness that interrupted his phase of life …. he was 22 …. just finished his apprenticeship then become psychotic and had eight admissions in, I don’t know 6 years or something like that and his life had basically stopped. We were treating him very well, giving him the best cutting edge psychiatric treatment from this area of mental health service, and he wasn’t getting anywhere. In fact in a lot of ways he was going backwards, he was still living at home with mum and dad and he wasn’t achieving what, as a young Greek man he should have been achieving. He didn’t have a girlfriend, didn’t have a car, the things that they’re supposed to do, it’s very much a cultural thing that they’re supposed to, the first boy in the family’s supposed to lead the way. He wasn’t achieving and in fact was, when he had admissions they were nasty, they were, staff were getting injured … so long story short, he got his licence, he bought a motorbike … buying a car, he started saving the money, he got a job in cabinet making, he did all the things that if we’d been asked a couple of years earlier, people would have thought he’ll never work again, he’ll never have a relationship …. He’d only really engaged with the model for around eight months …. now he’s no longer even case managed.
A practice approach to creativity might be imagined as a ‘growing within’ what often appear to be, but seldom are, fixed structures, such as health services. In this way, creativity is organic and evolving, taking us back to Moran’s (2009, pp. 1-22) organism metaphor. Chad and his organisation’s creativity was nudged along by support, leadership, staff changes, taking in different perspectives, risks, and of course, hard work, but it was mostly a matter of building on, or growing within, what already exists, rather than seeking to replace it. This occurred, according to Chad, through managing, choosing, and empowering service users to assist in the model’s development, reflecting, planning, defining complex concepts, reconfiguring service structures, forming and working within groups, making contacts, and indeed many more of what Schatzki (2002, p. 73) would call ‘doings’.

I made two paintings in acrylic and collage for Chad (these paintings and those made for the other research participants can be viewed at http://seaofcreativity.weebly.com/). One was called Don’t give up (Plate 1), and the other was No limit (Plate 2); both were made in response to our first conversation, and we discussed them in detail the second time we met. I had graffiti in mind when I painted Don’t give up. It seemed that graffiti somehow embodied the notion of humanity and also improvisation, as well as the context of Chad’s practice, an inner-city environment. Not surprisingly, I also wanted to represent strength; a person pulling themselves up out of a hole, not giving up, was what I initially had in mind. Although the figure looked less energetic than I had wanted, I persevered in case something came of it, or in case something might emerge:

I experimented with some cut-outs that came from last night’s work, positioning and repositioning these, along with colourful backgrounds until it felt like it was well composed and balanced and meant something. I also wondered how often that feeling like something is well composed and well balanced coincides with meaning (Research journal).

As I was doing this, I noted in my research journal that I felt sure (strong words in retrospect) that understanding came with my writing, a nod to
Richardson and St. Pierre (2005, pp. 923-948), and here I felt the same about the experience of painting:

I feel that there is always a risk in doing these artworks when I slip into a mode that has me focused on not so much exploring ideas through ‘letting myself go’ and emerging myself in the art, and perhaps emergence, but rather wanting to please the person to whom I will show the finished piece. That is on one hand – on the other, and this seems to be worth noting, I wonder if in fact I cannot not lose and emerge myself – that would seem hard to do since my natural inclination is to shut out much of what is going around me and focus almost exclusively on the art-making process (Research journal).

Don’t give up represents a client-mental health worker collaboration. The leaf (top, left-hand corner) speaks of how my work was leaning towards something organic and that a model of care focusing on a person’s strength seemed ‘natural’. That is, if the various structures such as pathology and treatment are peeled back, what is left is a more human depiction of a person’s life and aspirations.

The first thing that came to Chad when he looked at Don’t give up was what he called ‘the personal’: ‘It looks to be sort of a hardworking, it's like a hard working posture ... hard but not adverse to hard work, it's a longitudinal hard journey. But not overwhelming and not without support’. If this is creativity, then it would seem to be more than a sequence of steps or phases that the organisation took; a longitudinal hard journey would likely be more demanding and complex than that. Clearly, my concerns over the figure not appearing energetic were unfounded. The ‘hard’, Chad said, relates to ‘moving towards something that’s lighter. And the second image to me is much brighter and it’s a similar structure so the work continues’. This movement from right to left, Chad said, impressed and excited him. It was a movement from the:
Plate I: Don’t give up (2012)

14 x 30 cm acrylic and collage
Plate 2: No limit (2012)

76 x 56 cm acrylic and collage
... black in terms of, that's their past ... don't forget everything because in order to be creative, everything can't be brand new, I mean is built on the past and maybe that's the really good parts that you want to keep around the culture ... changing the creative ideas that you're building on, previous creative ideas ... reinvent stuff ... knowledge and build on and that will build strength rather than try and sort of develop strength by nothing ... Well I didn’t see that prior to just then but I can see how it's a solidness that's holding things up ... for us a solid base was the strength that we already had ... we looked at the strengths of the organisation and the individual teams that made up that organisation. And we looked at the strengths and the weaknesses but we emphasised the strengths and then said “Okay if we want to create ... how can we build on what we've got ... This had the feel of a gradual reshaping of Chad’s health service, like the way the shore slowly re-forms in response to waves, facilitated by ‘good action’ around patient care – to empower people who have mental health problems to buy a car, save, get a job, or whatever they chose to do. So creativity was, and is, located and grows within Chad’s health service, as its fabric, alongside all the other activities – it is not simply something passing over it.

Aporia comes into play here as an enabler of Chad’s creativity and is illustrated when he reflected on No limit (a title intended to reflect Chad’s philosophy of care): ‘where does the ladder lead ... we don’t know yet and we won’t know until we get there’. The practice response to this, as Green (2009, pp. 9-12) might propose, is the pulling in of actions that would seem second nature to an experienced manager – what we might consider to represent phronesis. Chad mentioned the need to make choices, empower service users, reflect, plan, define complex concepts, reconfigure service structures, form and work within groups, search the literature and make contacts. If this creativity is lead by praxis as action towards the best possible and ethical care, it would also be enabled by the interrelations between aporia and phronesis, as the following comment might suggest:
... again that, there's that sort of brightness and allure of what might be, what could be rather than a darkness ... I like the break in the ladder which would, to me just brings an imagery that there's some risk in this journey. It's onward and upward but there's risk, yeah but we can see the risks so it's about managing the risk, thinking about it and maybe that's what the images are doing ... In terms of ideas, don't be limited even though the ladder has a break in it; don't let that limit your idea generation. Be aware of the risks and wherever possible, contingencies for how you might manage that when you get there but don't stop the journey because you going to see that into the future. ... They're thinking "Okay can see what we've got to do, we can see the risk, we've got the resources, are we right, are we able to do this?"

Chad remarked on the layering effect in Don't give up: ‘there's almost like there's a parallel, a double going on’. He offered a few interpretations of this but spoke most about it representing other people, and this can be taken to highlight the importance of ‘relatings’ in practice, a notion that Kemmis (2009, p. 19) introduced to practice theory. Chad also referred to losses along the journey: ‘as in partnerships of management and then one of those partners will move on to another hospital or something like that and that would be a loss. And there's a loss of that doubling and other people have had to step into the role’. He went on to say:

It's not just a lone figure when you're talking about a group or people on the same wavelength, there's a togetherness, there's a, it might be, there might be, you know the stand out is a single figure of, there's again doubling happening. There's people there but it's supporting [a form of relating] that person or those people in what they're considering and contemplating and sort of working towards ... I'm getting that imagery, you know the what have been the really key drivers for change? And the biggest drivers for change are people.

In Chad’s mind there were two similarities between his two paintings, No limit and Don't give up. Firstly, Chad noticed in No limit what he called a ‘very solid base’, and secondly, the doubling which we have just mentioned. Also: ‘there's that double that you've got some people that are going to have to lead and others are going to have to make sure everyone comes’, he said. Chad put forward another explanation too:
What I’m seeing I guess is multiple figures … with slightly different perspectives, one looking more up, one looking more middle and one looking sort of a bit more straight ahead. But they’re together but again that, to me is just sort of talking about the need for that slightly different perspective, we all see a ladder but maybe we all see it slightly differently, how do we work together so that we all collectively move in the right direction … if you’re climbing the ladder how do you make sure that everyone’s coming with you? You can’t sort of; maybe send people up first but you can’t send the people up first because somebody has to lead. And maybe that’s why there’s parallel process going on … the lowest common denominator over time has dominated so there’s a natural pulling down. People have come back down the ladder because the weight of the momentum has been down the bottom … some people are still standing, looking at the ladder and some of the people are out of sight and therefore they’ve, there is a disconnect. For others they can still see the path but they just are still standing, contemplating.

As Chad reflected on No limit, he unearthed some other insights about the introduction of the strength model. While I had considered the brown and black circular marks on the painting to represent rocks or boulders, signifying the weight and ‘strength’ associated with rocks, Chad immediately saw them as ‘two links in the chain’. He thought the figure and the ladder referenced climbing out of, in this case, an unsatisfactory situation. Where I had been thinking more about Chad’s clients, he was focused more on his team and its uncertain context:

The ladder gets smaller the higher it gets and so the steps are getting, possibly a little bit, there might be some steps later on that are even a little less certain at this point in time … it’s where we haven’t gone before so we know, as much as we know about it, we don’t know everything, can’t predict it. So, and so there has to be a sense of that’s okay and trust.

What we have here is no procedural or pre-fabricated change management plan or a risk management plan. These would be important understandings, in the sense Schatzki (2002, p. 58) used the term ‘understandings’ in relation to practice; however, the following comment suggests that Chad’s practice was deeper, more expansive and almost endless:
I'm seeing this cycle, that's what I'm seeing, what I'm thinking about when we started in 2004, went ... in 2006, we reviewed in 2008, we reviewed again in 2010 and now we've actually got to smaller cycles, we’re doing 12 month cycles now. So, which is kind of what I'm seeing, this bigger cycle and it's a smaller cycle and then it's smaller cycle again. So it's a tightening up of the structures around this journey ... like that. Because I think it both represents what we've done but also represents what we need to do ... And I'm just sitting here having a realisation about it now, and this has helped me with that realisation. Because we expect, I think I expect some of my colleagues who haven't been along the journey to fully understand the journey.

What was happening was that Chad was being prompted to think prospectively – how might he facilitate further implementation of the model? He also raised what seems to be a useful point about another of Schatzki’s (2002, p. 73) elements of practice, ‘sayings’:

[T]alk about the dream, the unlimited path, you know where does the ladder lead or where is the next ladder coming, we don’t know yet and we won’t know until we get there so see without limits and dream without limits. Because by the time we get there there'll be other people that have joined you anyway, to welcome them along the journey ... for me it's kind of this ... there's no limit to this, this chain keeps going. There shouldn’t be an end upon a chain ... every link just keeps going, there's no weak link. There's no break even though this here is, it's not broken, it's a different sort of thickness/density etcetera but it’s still there.

When Chad explained this to me, I could see how the painting No limit was providing him with a new way of looking at his work and its evolving nature: ‘Every time you come back to it, it speaks more; your mind can open up to more parts of it ... these creative works really represent that well’, he said.

**Lena**

For Lena to participate in her creative endeavours, and indeed to be considered to be a pioneer in the area of music therapy, she had to become part of the culture of her hospital. Resonating from the interviews, transcripts and my research journal were two words, ‘duality’ and ‘balance’, that Lena said I should peg, and which she said was a reflection of the culture she worked in. She illustrated this by pointing out that some days
are better than others, that there are differences between what clinicians and researchers do, as between qualitative and quantitative.

I struggled with this concept of duality and balance when it came time to translating it to an artwork. That was until I decided on a large diptych in acrylic and collage that I called, after a phrase Lena said she inherited from her father, *How hard can it be* (Plate 3 – see also http://seaofcreativity.weebly.com/). The left-hand panel was an abstract representation of Lena’s hospital, and the right-hand panel was a comment on what I thought to be Lena’s way of operating. This right hand panel was about culture, broadly speaking, represented by a figure, Lena, as a choir conductor. Lena did in fact conduct the hospital choir, but here I had in mind a broader notion of conducting – conducting the hospital’s culture, or rather, an aspect of it. Interestingly, the image of the conductor (that is, Lena) had inadvertently developed a reasonable likeness to her.

Showing the painting to Lena was quite an event. She really liked it, especially the use of the colour red. The large size, seventy six by one hundred and twelve centimetres, seemed to have impact too, and also that it was a diptych. Lena recounted what a colleague has said to her as I wheeled the painting through the hospital corridors to her office: ‘Lesley said “Oh no wonder you’ve got the biggest picture”. Yeah what did she mean? Just sort of a big personality I think she means’, and: ‘it’s big because I think big I think’, and also: ‘I think it’s interesting that you had to do two things, I know … [one was] not enough’. These were all comments that Lena made with great hilarity.
Lena’s more serious reaction to *How hard can it be* was as follows:

I’m really pleased that there are people in it ... this looks like the hospital. There’s like a building and there’s – which I like and I like the way that the colours kind of smashing through it in a way or infiltrating it. Which is sort of how I feel about the music, it’s not so much smashing, but it’s kind of getting in lots of different areas and some areas that I don’t even realise it’s got into ... obviously this is a – for me that was like a conductor ... And what I love is though that the conductor is embedded in the people ... It’s not conducting to them, I mean they’re looking and there are people looking at it sideways and onwards but it’s actually within them ... And I like to think that’s how I try and work ... that reflects on working with the patients and working with the staff and working within the – an established group ... You’re doing things with them and I think that’s the – but you still have to be an expert. And I think that’s what that shows up – there’s a conductor who’s an expert in what they do but they’re not waving their stick at them.

Lena also spoke to the left-hand panel, the hospital: ‘we are all in structures whether we like it or not’. This was something akin to our discussion about one of Chad’s paintings, where I had been thinking about growth within a structure, such as a health service. However, Lena did not necessarily see her hospital as a unified structure, adding: ‘our presence is greater in some and less than others and you know sometimes that depends on what people think hospitals are for’. Lena explained that hospitals are either ‘places for healing and expression and healing in the kind of global sense’ or the more traditional biomedical model of ‘putting your hands on and healing someone’. Could it be that if creativity grows from within, evolving, as we said in Chad’s case, then the way in which the hospital itself is conceptualised matters? Of course, and following Lena’s lead, it might be conceptualised in cultural terms. If a more holistic conceptualisation is adopted by its actors, if it is made of a certain fabric, perhaps the fruits of creativity follow suit. Also, the conditions for entering and enacting a practice of creativity might be different from the point of view of *praxis*; ‘good’ action will have a particular connotation according to how the hospital is framed. The practical wisdom (*phronesis*) associated with healing and expression, more globally, will also be different from what is required for a more modernist view of treatment, and it is likely that any unresolvable problematics or paradoxes (*aporia*) are likely to present and
Plate 3: How hard can it be (2012)

76 x 112 cm acrylic and collage
be managed differently too. A holistic view would tend towards allowing for, even embracing, deviations from the usual, whereas the modernist view would want to curtail deviation in the name of standardisation and safety. Also, as Lena mentioned, ‘it’ is ‘getting in lots of different areas’, but probably not all, so this raises the question, is a practice of creativity entered and enacted differently across a health service? Perhaps it is. The important thing here is that context, including culture, and the way that health services are conceptualised, are shaping up to be useful notions for a practice approach to creativity.

Lena saw quite a lot of what she called ‘action’ in the left-hand panel of *How hard can it be*: ‘I think this is interesting – you’ve got action moving but there’s still a little bit of a barrier but it still gets through ... there’s a sort of movement and I think that’s very much – like some parts it flows’. Alongside this flow ‘there’s still definition between the spaces. And I think that’s probably very much what it’s like here you know’. The flow in some parts of *How hard can it be* seems more apparent than in other parts of the painting and it would be surprising if the same were not the case for the hospital. Here perhaps is a limitation of the Sea of Creativity metaphor. Waves move shoreward and in most cases reach their destination. However, Lena challenges this suggesting that only some parts of it flow. Possibly only some waves reach the shore, and perhaps only in some cases is a practice of creativity fully achieved; in other cases it might be arrested. This fits with Dalton’s (2004, p. 620) critique of Joas’s text *The Creativity of Action*, that posits that action can have both habitual and creative elements, which for us serves to remove, or at least reduce what might be considered to be the dualism between creative implementation and creative activism.

When I first approached the task of making Lena’s painting, I knew that a representation of a guitar would be far too obvious for a music therapist, and this might even block any deep analysis of the painting. Nevertheless, that is what I did, despite my best efforts to resist such a naive response to our first interview. However, this guitar was embedded in the
representation of the hospital and it was barely recognisable (see bottom left of left-hand panel). Would Lena even notice it? When I raised this whole matter with her, she retorted:

‘No thank god you didn’t’ (Laughing).
Reluctantly, I said: ‘I did’.
Lena: ‘Oh you did’.

What might have been an artistic faux pas turned out to be a useful comment on Lena’s practice, to which she responded: ‘I mean it's all built around this [guitar] ... it's nice now that I can see that the colourful buildings are built on the guitar because that’s how the service has been built’. Lena elaborated: ‘But the guitar isn’t me – that's the practice ... That’s the service ... So you take that away, it doesn’t exist. If you take me away ... things will go on ... You know that the service will keep going and it'll evolve you know.’ In other words, and despite the fact that Lena used two words, ‘practice’ and ‘service’, to describe the same thing, the point here is that Lena’s creative work goes beyond herself, or even her team – it comes from the practices of the health service. This could be classified as collective creativity: ‘when people’s perspectives and experiences are brought together to bear on problematic situations in ways that create distinctly new solutions’ (Hargadon & Bechky, 2006, p. 487). However, here we might prefer to say that within a sea of practices, an emergent requirement for good action (praxis) and an alteration in the intersections between this, prevailing know-how (phronesis) and aporia, create new practices that are transformative. A practice of creativity would fit with this description.

As I read through Lena’s transcript again, I started to wonder if there was another interpretation of the guitar in the painting, apart from it representing a practice (or service). I saw another possibility. The guitar, upon which the hospital is built, might also be considered to represent what we have termed procedures (practices that reinforce current operations). As Lena said: ‘[T]here are policies you have to – I'm a big
believer in policies anyway, they're important'; or with regard to evidence-based practice: 'I'm a big believer in evidence-based practice. So I believe in being creative but also that you need to have a good foundation under what you do’. Lena is showing her ability to play in the space between current ways of operating and emergent drivers for something anew and good, as with praxis, where good is, again, that ‘they care about other people’. I wondered if this play is a type of phronesis: 'I know how to play the game John, don’t you worry. Yeah I know and I realise it's a game – it is a game. So I know that there are boxes you need to tick but maybe you can tick a little bit of a groovy tick’, said Lena, reminding me of one of Jill Green’s (1996, p. 270) research participants who spoke about wearing polka dots on her back.

Health services are not predictable or even knowable, as complexity theory tells us, and that is something that I picked up on in my painting of the hospital, which was something that Lena noticed too:

[S]ometimes the most loved bookshops are a cacophony. Yeah because people can explore and discover and I think … this has got an improvisational feel to it to. And I think that’s what I mean when you make a decision, you’re not locked into that decision if you’re an improviser.

There is a useful link here with the work of Antonacopoulou (2008, p. 115) who notes how many definitions of ‘practice’ have difficulty articulating its dynamic nature, which is where complexity theory and possibilities of emergence fit in, and helps to explain 'how practices emerge and evolve over time' (Antonacopoulou, 2008, p. 115). The practitioner response to this is illustrated by what Lena said she learnt from her dying patients: ‘be present at that moment … you don’t know what's going to happen but that doesn’t mean you can't be present at that moment’. This aligns with advice from Reuben McDaniel, Michelle Jordan and Brigitte Fleeman (2003, p. 274), who wrote about complex adaptive systems in health services and the need to: ‘respond to the emergent phenomenon’ as it arises, an important consideration for a practice of creativity too, no doubt.
Suzy

Suzy’s parting comment from our first interview was that the painting I was to do for her might pick up on the notion of a solid foundation, not dissimilar to what I did for both Chad and Lena, and she suggested something flowing or maybe even ‘exploding’ from that foundation. After completing *Stepping into something new and bigger* (Plate 4), which I was initially quite happy with, I came to feel unsure how well it would resonate with Suzy, aware that it hadn’t really responded adequately to her recommendation. That painting referenced a group of adolescent cancer sufferers, lobbying for more age-appropriate services, so it certainly had its merits. Nevertheless, I made another painting for Suzy that was called *Growth* (Plate 5). Looking back at my research journal, this second painting seemed to be going in the right direction, that is, it was about creativity being built up and supported from within, which was what I thought Suzy was getting at. I also wanted to explore another point of Suzy’s – that of integration – not just the coexistence of policy and creativity, but their integration ‘so that the result is something artful, and something life-giving’, I noted in my research journal on thinking about this. As this second painting neared completion, I wrote again in my research journal that it seemed to be working, or emerging, well:

Felt like I was experiencing flow late last night as I produced this painting – one thing led to another as I worked on the painting, with Suzy in mind. Most attention was directed at the aesthetics though – felt very much drawn to that. I had a lot of confidence that I was on the right track, that the plan I had for the painting was working – just needed careful execution, and a constant re-evaluation to see that there were no problems with composition or the application of technique, or that there were no new opportunities opening up as the work progressed. The idea around integration is good (Research journal)

As I read back over that transcript of my first interview with Suzy I realised that, in this case, client autonomy could be considered a practice ‘end’, which to Schatzki (2002, p. 80) is what ‘participants should or may pursue’. In Suzy’s own words: ‘I think in practice with young people in a clinical
Plate 4: Stepping into something new and bigger (2012)

76 x 56 cm acrylic and collage
Plate 5: Growth (2012)

45 x 36 cm acrylic and collage
sense you want to support them to become autonomous’. To achieve that, says Suzy: ‘be invested in what you’re doing. I think want to do it justice ... if you don’t have the passion behind it to do it the best way you can then it’s not going to succeed I think’. Here is the affective element of the Schatzki’s teleoafffective structure. While Suzy’s emotions might be a little different to Chad’s, they are aligned with his notion of touching something dear to those who participate in creativity, and also with Lena’s prerequisite of caring about people, a common thing in health services, of course. Also, as for Chad and Lena, the notion of relating was important to Suzy also: ‘Collaborate, don’t assume that you can do it all yourself ’, she said, and just as Lena had explained how she knew how to play the game, Suzy also commented: ‘Look for ways that you can play the game and get around that a bit and be innovative I guess. Don’t be afraid to question and to look for and identify those gaps’. However, what Suzy suggests, which is different from Lena’s comments, is that it might first be necessary to look for ways’ and ‘look for the gaps’, and importantly: ‘Don’t get stuck within that kind of box or the system that you think exists’. I initially took this as a challenge to Chad and Lena’s comments about the system or structure (such as a health service) which they seemed content to work within to foster growth, but a second thought was that in some cases, creativity will be more or less assertive in its questioning of the system or structure, and the quality of the tensions between waves and the shore, the new and old practices, or the interrelations between praxis, phronesis and aporia, might be what informs this.

Just as Lena had spoken of balance, Suzy also said ‘it’s always a balancing act between what you’re mandated to do and what you’re not’. Again, there is a subtle difference between this and Lena’s comment, which related more to balancing dualities. Suzy seems to be suggesting that practitioners need to know what actions are legitimate for their role, or organisation, and what are not: ‘recognise what the current limitations are and I think you need to identify, as well as where the gaps are and what the parameters within which you currently work in’, she said. Again, these limitations, gaps
and parameters might be perused with various levels of rigour, depending on the practice context and no doubt a range of other factors.

Suzy used the term ‘growth’ as she reflected on the painting that was subsequently given that name, and this adds to our understanding of creativity:

That for me is about growth. That for me is about development and positive change. I’m not sure what the ground there is about. I think that’s, I guess for me, about it’s a darker place and something that’s evolving from that darker place. But there’s also beauty in that. There’s also some, with the pinks and the colours, there’s also beauty.

This notion of growth, here from a darker but still beautiful place, seems to have some durability and there is also a surprising resemblance between this and our organising metaphor, the Sea of Creativity, despite the fact that I made no mention of the metaphor to Suzy:

I also see the waves that are crossing that growth, so I think for me they represent challenges or they represent change and growth through change ... I think it’s about rolling with the waves in some regards. I think you know there’s occasionally going to be a big wave that knocks you over or knocks someone else over that’s an unexpected challenge or an unexpected change. So I think it’s about, as much as you can expect the unexpected, trying to work with recognition of that movement and recognition of the development that they’re undergoing ... So I think it’s about that growth generally through those challenges. And I guess I mean those waves, in some way they form part of the direction of the tree ... I use challenges as a broad term but I think you’re right. I think those can be personal and definitely systematic in terms of funding and policy and legislation and what is known, what is done and what is currently accepted. And it’s about as well, weaving through those and trying to negotiate them (Second interview).

The idea of a foundation, as depicted in the painting Growth, seemed to resonate with Suzy. As for me, I remain very pleased with these dark but also glowing and tactile looking rocks that I cut out of embossed wallpaper. There is a delicacy and complexity in these, heralding something new and of value perhaps. They are not at all routine, if we look carefully at them.
Pedro

When I met with Pedro, a manager of a rural primary health service that is considered to be innovative (Department of Health, 2011, p. 14), and asked him why he thought his organisation received its award, he referred to ‘high level practice across a range of health service delivery criteria’. He also spoke about the context of his organisation’s innovation:

[I]t’s also partly because it’s a small rural community and people identify with their local community more strongly … I think people are really interested – they see what’s going on out there and they’re really interested in collaborating to try and find solutions to engage people to be healthier, to be – have access to higher level services when they need it.

The initial image that I held after meeting Pedro was about creativity being embedded in his organisation, through its practices, and as with Chad and Suzy, that there was a growth within. I thought of Pedro’s health service as bedrock, similar to Suzy’s, but this bedrock was trust. During our first interview, Pedro spoke about trust being an important ingredient in the health service’s relationship with the community. Further, and not surprisingly for a rural community: ‘there’s a real culture of connecting up with other organisations and other services to get the resources you need’. So, here Pedro’s bedrock must be extended beyond the way Suzy and I had originally conceived of it; it might also include trust and importantly, not just the health service, but all that it is connected to.

Pedro mentioned that he preferred improvised over formal and planned health promotional interventions, which were his main responsibilities at work, and as we mentioned in Chapter 3, an important aspect of public health. I was mindful of this as I painted Immersion (Plate 6), made up of eight small panels. I knew my painting needed to be loose and organic, and Pedro seemed to pick up on that when he saw it:

[T]here’s a different kind of energy, a different kind of activity or vibe within each panel and yet that’s how I feel, I feel it’s integrated. I can see there’s some calmer panels actually now that I look a bit closer one with
the human figure in it that seems to be a little more passive and contemplative and there are people ... it feels like there's leaves and it's sort of autumny in a way but then I feel there are people getting their heads together – that bottom left hand panel really seems like the people are sort of getting together and thinking about where they're going

As Pedro responded to *Immersion* (named as such because of the way Pedro’s health service seemed to be immersed in community life), he referred to people and integration, forms of relating, no doubt, but not in a way that suggested that relating is linear. This reminded me of Suzy’s comment about unexpected challenge or change, but it was Pedro who drew together these notions of bedrock, trust, and now complexity:

> [M] y eyes are drawn to that second from the left and I'm thinking it's complex, it isn't easy, doesn't come easily and in order to move into that complexity and almost immerse yourself in it ... I want to be embedded in the community

This recurring theme of complexity was taken a step further as Pedro continued to survey the panels of *Immersion*: ‘it’s quite vibrant but there's also calmness in it and I think that's a good analogy or good description of how we are with the community, it is dynamic but it's also there's an ongoing foundation of trust and that we all manage complexity in a calm and rational and supportive way’. Although Pedro’s words ‘complexity’ and ‘rational’ seem to clash, loudly even, his suggestion about a calm response, is useful:

> I'd see them immersing in the complexity there and feeling a bit lost and valuing moving across that left which is more contemplative and having space to actually get into that space and understand where they're at but it's up to us to venture out into the complexity and to engage with them to be engaged but to be engaged in a culturally appropriate [way] and in a context where they feel that they're being understood that what they believe is valid.

For Pedro, to embed oneself in the community with all these complexities is ‘about people feeling that they are being listened to ... people thinking
Plate 6: Immersion (2012)

94 x 62 cm acrylic and collage
you are thinking of their best interests and they're prepared to engage in
discussion around that'.

Pedro explained how he enjoyed working at his health service because 'you
have to ... base what you're doing on evidence and it's good to share that
with the community, but it's good for them to know that we're not rigid
about the processes we use, you know they can be flexible'. Here we are
reminded of how Lena placed importance on evidence-based practice,
calling it a 'good foundation', the same term that Suzy used, with arguably a
similar meaning. We are reminded too of Lena’s guitar, and how Chad
referred to building strength rather than trying to develop strength from
nothing. All this makes a point about the role and importance of the
foundations of creativity, conceptualised, here, as practice. The foundation
might include evidences and current practices which might seem ‘dark’ in
the sense that Suzy used that term, but, as we saw in Growth, there can also
be a hint of pink with embossing. That is, what are now old were once
creative and what is creative today will one day reinforce current
operations. It is the dynamic interplay between fresh ideas and the older
ideas, actions and practices, and the tension that this causes, which leads to
either creative implementation or creative activism.

Pedro was a very perceptive and helpful collaborator, and for him, art was
a useful method: ‘I like art, I enjoy art, but I’m pretty impressed how it’s
been able to elicit just feelings and thoughts about the organisation, yeah’.

Ross
The backdrop to Ross’ building a new inter-sectorial service for homeless
people, was that:

the homeless sector [was] the most fractured sector I’ve ever
worked with ... [yet] we’ve worked together ... I think ten
organisations are going to put staff in there. None of us had funded
for it. We’ll fund it in our system program so we’re going to be
take a little bit out of each of them and then create a service system
which is new.
I wanted to make an artwork that, like Ross’ activism, went beyond boundaries, which materially was the paper I painted on, but in Ross’s practice, were the organisational and service boundaries that he seemed to so masterfully traverse.

The hands in the painting Balance (Plate 7) were originally meant to represent giving and taking (in balance). However, as I worked with the hands and described them in my research journal, they came to represent ‘supporting, through giving and taking’. Ross had a similar interpretation, and in reference to the hands, he said: ‘I really like this … I often describe myself as a sergeant major … so I’m partly doing that by grabbing them and leading them on this hand, and this one I’m patting and supporting’. Ross then explained that ‘it does need some steady hands … because of a whole lot of tensions in every organisation, it’s all about funding, it’s all about a range of things’. Still looking at Balancing, Ross thought that ‘it will come together and it’ll come together by itself’, suggesting, I believe, as we said earlier, something organic, less mechanical, about his organisation’s creativity.

What drew Ross’s attention most about Balancing was what he described as a disjoint, that is, the break in the oval shape that dominates the painting. Ross’s interpretation, without any hesitation at all, was of ‘connecting, but I also notice this bit about gently balancing and I notice this bit about … and I must admit I immediately – when I saw that I thought that’s a bit like grabbing an opportunity’ [reference to the left hand]. Ross continued:

[T]hat’s what I’m sort of saying, I mean I think this is, this is a … system … I see this as a bit like sun spots [crude marks or smudges on the painting], and that’s a bit about how you deal with them, you could almost have a perfect, and then something bloody well happens … it’s a natural thing that happens and it’s got lots of power.

It is a complex environment in which Ross practised, but he was experienced in dealing with its so called ‘sun-spots’. Ross had what might be thought of as practical wisdom (phronesis): ‘And I figure that’s how I
Plate 7: Balancing (2012)

56 x 76 cm acrylic, water colour and collage
know how to do this, I know where to put the energy in, I know how to let some people go, but I know how to bring them back on track too’, while staying ‘focused on the important, you learn to let go of what you need to let go’, he said. This evoked an image for me – a surfer, choosing to go here, not there, automatically reacting, moving, embodied, good action and practical wisdom for any surfer playing in (the Sea of) creativity. From here I was awakened to another ‘See’ of creativity – ‘seeing’ the idea, ‘seeing’ how to operationalise it, and ‘seeing’ how to make it sustainable, which is what Ross referred to. I was reminded too of Suzy’s ideas, this time about finding (seeing) gaps and also the recurrence of the notion of support, so clearly evident in Chad, Suzy and Pedro’s practices too.

Lucinda

Lucinda’s award was a surprise: '[W]e didn’t think that it would ever take off like that’, she said of what was being referred to as her health service’s unique work in the area of Aboriginal dental health promotion (Department of Health, 2011, p. 47). Not unexpectedly, then, Lucinda told me that the painting I was to do for her must not be linear – ‘no boxes’, she said – and that it must represent something about complexity, perhaps with linkages that are not predictable or rational. She also thought that the painting needed to be colourful. My own idea was that the image should relate to the landscape or place, that I should try to think through place (Somerville, 2010, p. 335), because it seemed that that may have fuelled, even was the material of, Lucinda’s creative collaborations. I made a note in my research journal to be mindful that collaborators, even from similar landscapes, can, in some ways, be different, but in other ways may have a lot on common – a ‘productive tension’, as Somerville (2010, p. 335) might call it.

Lucinda seemed to appreciate some of the painterly qualities of the picture, a diptych influenced by Lucinda’s comment about stepping out of one’s comfort zone. Of Stepping out (Plate 8) Lucinda said: ‘I notice that there’s, first that there’s one sort of a lighter side and one darker side, but then they’re not one piece of artwork they’re two separate, so that’s sort of
quite significant’. This aligned with my own ideas about the painting.

Lucinda referred to a hill in the background and even though, for me, that represented a shape taken from a topographical view of the landscape in which Lucinda lived and practised, it was clear that we both talked of the same place: ‘Well because land is such a big part of the indigenous culture, and their spirituality, and that’s probably what, just having the silhouettes of people there, I wondered whether that was sort of depicting spirituality’, Lucinda said. ‘The spirit in the land’, she reiterated, was something she always tried to ‘keep it in my mind out of respect, their close connections to their land and how important it all is to them’. Indeed, land has always been a central issue to the local Gunditjmara people, and possibly even more so since the so-called ‘Convincing Ground massacre’, which occurred shortly after European settlement. Just as Somerville (2010, pp. xiii-xiv) felt at Moonee Beach in 2008, when she embarked on the project with Perkins, I also felt a need to know the place of the Gunditjmara people, and I did this through painting.

Lucinda had no trouble interpreting Stepping out, and she related this ‘new form’ to her practice context:

I like the way you’ve sort of, well this is how I see it, is that you’ve got, is like a hill or something at the back, so it’s coming from both pictures and peaking ... so it’s sort of rocky and dark, and that may signify the, you know, the worse oral health statistics, I suppose, maybe I don’t know – you know, because it is darker on that side and statistics tell me that indigenous oral health is worse than health in a lot of – oral health, other people’s oral health – so, you know, and I didn’t know whether the top of the mountain it kind of does look a bit like a decayed tooth – nobody else would know.

What emerged from the painting was a depiction of poor Aboriginal dental health, and a requirement for good action or praxis. As we continued to discuss Lucinda’s practice, sitting side by side to look at the painting front on, there seemed to be two main ways in which Lucinda addressed this public health issue, that is, if we look deeper than the more procedural matters associated with putting in place a health promotion and education strategy. One way evolved, and the other, serving to facilitate this
Plate 8: Stepping out (2012)

112 x 76 cm acrylic and collage
evolution, was partnership. To deal, firstly, with evolution: ‘it all started with the children and the artwork’, Lucinda said. This artwork was not what I, as researcher, had produced but a set of paintings developed twelve months into the project and which aimed to promote better dental health care amongst Aboriginal people. Lucinda thought that these paintings were instrumental in the work gaining wider recognition. Then: ‘it’s become bigger than that. So, now, as I said, I’ll go to the National Indigenous Oral Health Forum and, hopefully we’ll push for the nation oral health training to be part of the indigenous health workers’ training’, explained Lucinda. So, what was a local initiative reverberated more globally, because, to take Stacey’s view on this, organisations are ‘not one monolithic identity, one social object, but many linked ones’ (Stacey, 2005b, p. 39); linked through networks, where creativity gets taken up ‘through wider conversations’ (Tosey, 2006, p. 35). If we take a practice perspective, and imagine a sea of practices, doings, sayings and relatings impact on the shore, which affect sea currents, and world climate, getting back to the Sea of Creativity metaphor. Of course, this evolution needed some facilitation: ‘if it took my voice to push it a bit further, then why not’, said Lucinda, and besides that, or alongside it, there is, as we said earlier, partnership:

[It’s sort of the nature of living in a rural community where a lot of people move on and, you know, staff are transient but everybody that’s come have really got behind the whole initiative ... it ebbs and flows with the indigenous staff too, they come and go a lot]

Lucinda’s work also required leadership but, as she was quick to point out: ‘Well it’s not just one person that’s done it, it’s owned by many. Cross cultural, owned by many, driven by a few but owned by many’.

Rhona
Rhona was introduced briefly in Chapter 4. We saw how the frame that she had applied to her research on anticoagulation therapy in children limited her ability to see meaning in her results. What prompted Rhona, a nurse, to do this work was that she hated to see children who had recovered from heart surgery go to hospital so often for blood tests. She worked in a laboratory, as part of a PhD, until she had created a way of
doing the same tests at home. However, shifting the site of care from the hospital to the community came at a cost: ‘we had to look at ways of, how can we actually deliver this opportunity to improve the outcomes for our patient group in a way that we can cover the costs’.

Rhona obviously liked her painting, *Becoming together*. The colour seemed to have drawn her in, saying: ‘It’s very effective, very cool, yeah … I think I see the vibrancy of it, which is kind of nice … I like the multi-layeredness of it … It feels a little bit more three-dimensional.’ She admitted she could not necessarily see a link between the painting and our earlier conversation and put that down to her not being an abstract thinker; she was more logical, as she said. What the painting meant for me, or rather, what emerged from it, was, firstly, something about partnership (reflected in the title of the painting), and we will soon move on to see that Rhona agreed with this. Secondly, and we will deal with this now, related to how Rhona’s organisation was being challenged by the very context it created. That is, new ways (treatments for congenital heart disease) led to patient survival but also inconveniences (very frequent blood tests in hospital), which required even newer ways (home based-blood tests) to resolve the inconveniences, and it was the creation of these even newer ways that were the reason Rhona’s work had been described as pioneering, for which she received her award. This might be considered a process similar to the Red Queen effect, discussed in the previous chapter, where there is an initial response, which triggers a subsequent response, and then there is a counter-response. Another explanation, getting back to Rhona’s case, and drawing on practice theory and our earlier reasoning, is that new practices replace former practices, which, as we have noted, were once creative.
Plate 9: Becoming together (2012)

56 x 76 cm acrylic and collage
To come back to the partnership theme, Rhona said:

I like that there’s more than one person in there. It wouldn’t have worked if there was no people in there … roles like mine I don’t think work in isolation, it’s all about making those connections with people and that kind of thing. So I think that that’s important that that does come out there as well … I think a lot of people act in isolation and there’s a lot of things all going on at the same time, with not good collaboration and that at the end of the day doesn’t tend to have any good positive outcomes.

As Rhona and I looked deeper into Becoming together (Plate 9), Rhona said that she liked that she did not see any single person, as she put it, ‘in authority’. Rather, she saw an ‘interconnectedness of people’ and ‘a lot more [of] a teamwork kind of approach, which is really nice’. I also take from Rhona that relatings can spawn other relatings and, again, that relating connects the local to the global, as we saw in Lucinda:

[F]or me I guess, who is used to working in networks, I see the connectiveness of the three [linked people in the foreground]. What I see … [is] the light and reflection beyond them as potentially just being a casting of your reflection more broadly than just those three as well.

The dualities and tensions that other participants mentioned also came up for Rhona, although she framed these as managing tradition, a particular type of tension, no doubt: ‘[in] any industry area there’s a lot of tradition that goes with things and I would say that tradition is probably the greatest barrier to change into thinking differently’. Further:

[I]t’s always been done this way, this is the way we do it, we don’t want to change, this is the budget, this is what we’ve got to work with, we can’t change. That they’re the key drivers of keeping things on a status quo if you like, rather than challenging people to think about different ways of doing it … but I think that that also just means that then you have to be prepared to not only come up with fresh ideas about how to deliver care but fresh ideas about how you can implement that or fund it, all that kind of thing … they come up with a great idea and they think the great idea should sell itself … And unfortunately in the current climate, it’s not enough.
'You think that the benevolence of an idea should be enough’, said Rhona, but, of course, it seldom is. Rhona’s health service had to work with the tension, and as we have already noted, that is where the fresh ideas came from. This tension can be that people come at a particular problem or challenge differently, which can be productive, but, what Rhona adds is that tension can also come about from looking at different depths too:

[There will multiple different ways you can approach a same problem ... so people working in the same area might identify the common problem, but come up with different approaches to how they can address that problem ... quite often people know the problem but they haven’t actually looked into it deeply enough to say “The root is X”, maybe the root’s Y and they just haven’t dug deeply enough to know exactly what the cause is. And they’re seeing a secondary cause, but you have to look back a bit deeper to see where the problem really starts and I think I see that not infrequently and so if you’ve got people who are seeing the same problem outcome, but they’re going, they’re digging at different depths, to understand the origin of that problem, they’re going to come up with different ideas.

Some empirical studies (Hoever, van Knippenberg, van Ginkel, & Barkema, 2012, pp. 982-996) suggest that team diversity is more likely to foster creativity and this may be because diverse teams have a greater ability to take on a range of team-member perspectives. In Rhona’s case, this may have been the case but there was also diversity in depth of analysis, which, if worked with, say through constructive debate, can be a productive tension too.

**Owen**

As I waited in the waiting room to meet Owen, and not feeling particularly well at that time, I was prompted to reflect in my research journal:

What would it feel like to be taken off to a residential care facility, needing medications and be denied them because of the poor system I find myself part of? Sounds like Owen has smoothed out the system with residents in mind – even though the pointy end of this problem lies with these facilities more so than his department.
Owen’s new service ‘was in response to a lot of problems that as pharmacists we face on a daily basis’, as he put it, and the reason he and his team received their award. Indeed, residential care facilities are particularly useful places to research creativity because the issues are often complex.

The concept I had for Owen’s painting *Dealing with the gap* (Plate 10) was relatively simple. I started to paint a gap, simply because Owen and his team had identified what they called a ‘gap’ in the continuity between acute and residential aged care. On the art paper, the gap looked a little like a tree trunk and the painting progressed from there. When Owen saw this, he likened it to what he described as ‘the chasm; basically it’s just what jumps out at me’, and he also noticed the leaves: ‘which also makes me wonder whether these are actually roots, and this is underground, and this is something sprouting’, as he mentally negotiated the location of the horizon in the painting.

As we looked at the painting together, I asked Owen about tension, thinking back to the Sea of Creativity metaphor:

There’s lots of tensions in that system, because you’ve got – and we haven’t got rid of them all, but I mean there’s tensions between the hospital and the GP, there’s tensions between the hospital pharmacy and the community pharmacy, there’s tension between the ward and the residential care facility, there’s a lot of issues around – I think one of the good things that came out of that process was that, by getting people, all those people in the one room talking to each other, they started to understand why the hospital can’t do certain things and the hospital understood why the facility needed certain things and why the pharmacy needs certain things, and why … the community pharmacy can’t do particular things. So we could all work in very different environments and we, other than a few conversations on the phone, we don’t really understand what each other’s issues are, that’s why a lot of those tensions exist, because the GP can’t understand why the hospital can’t sort this out. And the hospital can’t understand why the GP can’t write a drug chart, and there’s these tensions and getting people around the table and talking about it, certainly you can see light bulbs going off, when people understood, ah that’s why that happens all the time, or I didn’t know that that’s what you actually do in the hospital or those sorts of things.

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Owen’s way of dealing with the tension was also through collaboration. However, we ought to be a little cautious here because the way Owen understands tension is that it is something to overcome. While at one level we might agree with this, for Owen there was no sense that tension would, or perhaps could, facilitate or be productive and, indeed, be an element of creativity. This is different from Ross who referred to tension more positively, as we said, knowing that it will ‘come together by itself’. Going back to Chad for a moment, too, he offered a more positive take on tension:

I would like this organisation to go head long into the change, yeah and not have to be concerned about the other bits and pieces. But there’s still a strong risk of adverse culture in clinical mental health services, driven by coronal inquests …. we’d also get out of kilter with the people that fund us ... And to a degree the society in which we live. I don’t fully believe that the society is 100% behind us being fully risk taking and giving over the responsibility of choice to the consumers. And there are times when society wants a risk adverse approach and demands that. It doesn’t just want it, it demands it. And the risk for us is that we don’t temper our hope inducing behaviours. So yeah in a funny sort of way, that tension may be good ... there’s a little uncertainty creeps into the process and you need to reconsolidate again.

Owen dealt with tension through evidence, saying: ‘I think to get the attention of Government and the policy makers and all that sort of thing, the data was absolutely the thing’. For Owen, there was a pattern: ‘I’ve had the same issue with other projects, until you’re got some data, people just aren’t interested, they don’t believe that it’s an issue’, he said. Actually, Owen questioned how his work was creative: ‘something that’s pretty much evidence-based and developed around that process, is that really creative’, he responded. I could see that Owen had a very traditional understanding of what creativity is: ‘creativity I also would associate with art and music and that sort of thing’, was his take on it. He said he preferred the term ‘innovation’, and so it would be seem useful for us to briefly take up this point. Creativity is popularly known to be the precursor to innovation (Amabile et al., 1996, p. 1155), as we have said, and we know that the notion of creativity is something the health sector is not completely comfortable with (Munt & Hargreaves, 2009, p. 286). We could
Plate 10: Dealing with the gap (2012)

76 x 56 cm acrylic and collage
argue, however, that since Owen and his collaborators were not aware of a solution as they went into the project, which he said was the case, and even though Owen knew there would be a solution, this suggests creativity over innovation, according to common usages of these terms. That is, for innovation, the ‘what’ is being implemented, is usually known in advance.

If we take the line that Owen’s work represents creativity, now considered a practice, what are the ends of this practice? He spoke to me about there being:

a lot of people who as you would know, just accept the status quo, and they go, this is a real pain in the arse, but nothing I can do about it, and just live with it. Whereas I’m, people around here will know that I’m not – I just get frustrated by stupid things, and I try and do something about them. So I don’t know, it’s probably something in my nature, see something that could be fixed and I think why hasn’t someone fixed this

I wonder if here is a form of creativity where its ends are a more functional system in which treatment and care can operate. That would serve as Owen’s poiesis, his creative ‘making’, which certainly seems to be the main driver of his work.

**Concluding observations**

Conversations with the eight research participants, and the artworks made for each, provides us with access to the creativity of these participants’ health services, allowing us to engage with and reflect on their creativity. The eight health services were different, of course, not only in structure, size and complexity, but also in the nature of their creativity. Chad’s, for example, serves as an illustration of creative implementation, and Lena’s of creative activism, although this is not to imply that any health service fits neatly or uniformly under either of these headings. Chad’s mental health service built on what was already in place; they did not just replace what was there, it was a reshaping of the health service, from within – an evolution. Rhona provided a fine example of this too – new ways led to patient inconveniences, which led to even newer ways. This evolutionary
character emerged from the discussions I had with most participants, although less so for Owen, perhaps because, unlike the other participants, he tended to see his health service in a linear, cause and effect, way.

The language that Chad used could be related to notions of complexity, and aporia, as well as the practical wisdom (phronesis) that comes from experience and knowing how to ‘play the game’, as he (and also Lena and Suzy) said. Ross’s comments also pointed to phronesis. He said he knew where to put his energy, how to let some people go, and how to bring them back on track, for instance. The creativity of Chad’s organisation arose from action towards better care, as praxis. In fact, the case for a dynamic between aporia, phronesis and praxis could be made for each of the eight participants and their health services, including Owen’s, to varying degrees.

Lena’s organisation showed us creative activism, as we have noted. They made a music therapy department, and key to this was how that service was embedded in the culture of the organisation, ‘infiltrating’ it, as Lena said, and as was the case for Chad’s organisation, this was not achieved neatly or uniformly. Lena, Chad and the other participants showed how their health services responded to their unique context, and part of that, as Lena pointed out, is how the role of the health service is perceived by its participants. Both Chad and Lena referred to the need for a solid base, as did most of the research participants. Not surprisingly, however, the nature of that base differed, although the use of evidence was often mentioned.

All of the research participants seemed to value collaboration and their working relationships. Most went to great lengths to highlight this, even acting relieved (as both Lena and Rhona did) when groups of people or notions of partnership emerged in their paintings. Rhona put the concept of ‘tension’ and its nuances front and centre, and other participants spoke about this in different ways – working with dichotomy and duality, said Lena. For Owen, tension was dealt with
through collaboration, and for Suzy, balancing between what you are mandated to do and what you are not, was the tension and also her response to it. Ross spoke about 'grabbing and leading' on one hand, 'patting and supporting' on the other, as well as 'gently balancing'.

Spending time with these award-winning health professionals and making and discussing my paintings with them allowed me to observe some deeper responses to creativity, and especially how the concept of affect was a factor in their work. For instance, Suzy spoke about passion and wanting to do her work justice and working towards the autonomy of young people affected by cancer, but Suzy is not alone there; all participants showed a similar level of passion.

Affect, tension, relationship, building on a solid base, evolution, culture, complexity, and the dynamics between aporia, phronesis and praxis are some of the points that have been discerned from my conversations with the research participants. These points deserve attention, to be worked with, to be shaped and re-shaped as a new conceptualisation of creativity, that is, a practice approach to creativity, contextualised to health services. Some of this shaping will occur in Chapter 7.
CHAPTER 7

A THEORETICAL TURN: CREATIVITY AS PRACTICE

Juxtaposing the turning points in this research with the experiences of the eight research participants helped us to develop and enrich those turning points. In this chapter we move forward with what we have already noted as being important, what Somerville (2007, p. 230) describes as ‘dynamic inter(play) between data and theorizing, the idea of ‘play between’. Somerville (2007, p. 230) proposed this as a way of understanding emergence, and I would add, facilitating it. We will do this in a way that remains true to our postmodern position, our epistemology of generating and our ontology of becoming.

Heidegger (2008, p. 203) refers to being concernfully absorbed in the world and that ‘this absorption helps us to discover our own being-in-the-world’ (2001, p. 684). This is something to which Richard Coyne (1997, p. 141) adds: ‘for this indeterminate whole, we can construct theories of cognition for particular purposes [which] is a valid pursuit, provided we do not take it for granted that in doing so we are any closer to understanding who we are and what the world is like’. Although our concern here is for becoming, rather than being, and not at all for cognition, we still benefit from being reminded of this, and that we too are not about to claim any single truth.

For creativity to be conceptualised as practice, following Nayak (2008, pp. 420-439), in particular, greater attention needs to be given to theorising the claim. Nayak is something of a lone voice in describing creativity as
practice, although Deborah Dougherty and Neill Tolboom (2008, p. 247) touched on the connection, but that is all, when they suggested that ‘the innovative organization ideally defines work in terms of a certain kind of practice: the practice of creation’. Also, Giannopoulou, Gryszkiewicz and Barlatier (2014, pp. 23-44) refer to practices that facilitated capability for creativity and, in turn, innovation. Some of their ‘practices’, however, such as a team’s multidisciplinarity and staff turnover (p. 30), external relationships (p. 34), organisational structure (p. 35) and web platform (p. 36), would be more appropriately described as qualities, characteristics, or just objects, rather than practices. Despite these limitations, these authors have recognised a new and useful way of thinking about creativity, however, we need to understand it from a current, although always changing, practice-theory perspective. We will do this by concentrating on some key issues raised in Chapter 6, building on them to present an argument that shows that a practice approach to creativity is intelligible and recognisable. We will also come to appreciate and then discuss the role of affect in all this.

**Tension**

Nayak (2008, p. 427) concluded that creative action for managers arises out of four tensions: that is, between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (external rewards versus love of the job); pleasure and control (committing to organisational change and seeing it as liberating versus being sceptical of change); politics (trading off affinities to different groups within the organisation); and morality (personal morality versus organisational ethics). This, says Nayak (2008, p. 433), ‘provides a new way of defining and researching creativity’. Nayak’s discussion is limited to these four tensions that arose from his empirical research, but I argue that it is the notion of tension itself, regardless of its origin, that is associated with creativity. The origin and nature of such tension is varied and likely to depend on context, surely, like Suzy’s tension around role, Ross’ concern with funding, Rhona’s need to manage tradition and what comes from looking at a problem from different perspectives or depths, and related to this, the tensions between
services and organisations, which was Owen’s issue. There is an association here with *praxis* and *poiesis*, that is, two forms of action taken in response to tension, and which feed into creative implementation and creative activism differently.

**Creative implementation and activism**

Taking a *praxis* stance or ‘orientation’ (Edwards-Groves, Gray, Kemmis, & Smith, 2008, p. 87) requires ‘thinking outside and beyond the rules’ (Kemmis & Smith, 2008, p. 5) for good action. This engagement ‘with’ the rules, as they are considered and met head-on, is different from working ‘within’ the rules; working ‘with’ the rules leads to a creative tension rather than simple acceptance. *Praxis* is especially relevant to creative implementation (Figure 12) when what is required is good action to reinforce or bolster current operations. It is interesting to note that Nayak (2008, p. 422) also referred to ‘managerial action held together by moral judgements and sentiments’ as being important in a practice approach to creativity, and Rehn and De Cock (2009, p. 228) also suggested that creativity is ‘necessarily tied to a moral and ideological context’. Both moral judgements and sentiments and moral and ideological context, assuming there is some sort of associated action, are related to *praxis*.

**Figure 12. Creative implementation**

![Diagram showing the relationship between tension, praxis, and creativity.]

Creative activism also works ‘with’ the rules, and indeed in the complexity of health services and all of their tension, *praxis* and its rule-challenging characteristic would likely be a factor as well. In creative activism, the rules might be nudged even further but now a different concept, *poiesis*, also comes into play (Figure 13) as fresh ideas demand the production of new ways, or operations.
Here we might ask if creativity re-conceptualised as a practice can be ruleless, or if, in creativity, rules are variably enacted or enforced, and hence creativity operates in a less inhibited environment, one suitable for the materialisation of novelty. There is some appeal in these suggestions, although this may only be due to their simplicity. Then again, is it possible to function within the social without any rules whatsoever, or even be influenced minimally by rules? That would seem unlikely. Another explanation would be that, for creativity, rules lie outside or perhaps alongside it, so that they provide a contextualised influence as productive tension. This seems to be a more reasonable explanation because alignment with context is likely to be a stimulus for a practice of creativity being inhabited and enacted if, for example, that context is imbued with unmet need, and as we have just noted, tension, which in turn opens up a space for *praxis*, *poiesis*, or both. It is possible, even likely, that rules, as well as other aspects of creativity, are located within organisational memory. This would fit with how Schatzki (2002, p. 105) thinks about rules, as something humans are schooled in and hold each other to; they are simply ‘the human way of life’ (2002, p. 105) (a point that Schatzki attributes to Wittgenstein). Rules are always there, accumulated from other, perhaps creative, but not necessarily so, actions, and also memory. It will be useful now to look a little closer at memory, and especially what Schatzki (2006, p. 1868) called practice memory, that is:
those elements of the structures of an organization’s practices that do not govern the performances of this or that organization action [and] continue to exist during and between these performances ... This persistence of structure from the past into the present is what I call practice memory. The memory of the organization is the sum of the memories of its practices. An organization can also have a cultural and a collective memory in Assmann’s sense, that is, accumulated knowledge that stabilizes a collective identity for members. Organizations vary, however, in how much cultural and collective memory they possess. All organizations, by contrast, have practice memories, that is, persisting practice structures.

For Lena, the rules were not at all about music therapy but, as we noted in the previous chapter and to use Lena’s own words: ‘what people think hospitals are for’. As we have seen, Lena’s take on this is that hospitals can be treatment-focused or take a more holistic approach, and no doubt many other things, including a place from which to draw a wage, and this can be different in different wards or departments too. The important thing for Lena was to be mindful of whatever rules are in play and know how to work with them. To repeat: ‘I know how to play the game John, don’t you worry. Yeah I know and I realise it’s a game – it is a game’, is what Lena said. She seemed to have what Benjamin Bradley (2009, p. 65) wrote – accumulated past experience at her disposal to be able to work with rules. It is possible that Lena learnt this as she developed in her practice and also from other aspects of her life. In the same way, all those associated with Lena’s work would have drawn on their experiences, including their experience of rules, and worked with them too. So although the rules of creativity might not be dedicated and fore-grounded, they are nonetheless there and influence the practice.

*Praxis* and *poiesis* can be usefully incorporated into a practice approach to creativity, building on Green’s (2009, p. 9) work, and putting aside their interrelationships with *aporia* for the moment. *Praxis* and *poiesis* are interrelated, a point Derek Whitehead (2003, p. 2) made. They ‘bring about a transforming encounter’ between an artist and their work, he wrote, although here we might say between health practitioners and health care. According to Whitehead (2003, p. 4), *poiesis* ‘liberates the wilfulness of a praxis that wants only itself’. At this point we should note that what is
achieved in *praxis* is often considered to be internal to the activity, but if ‘an activity has as its end external to itself, in the sense of enduring after it as a separate product or state of affairs – as a well-designed building or a person restored to health endure after the activities of the architect or the medic – then an Aristotelian view would count it as *poiesis*’ (Dunne, 2005, p. 368). So, to quote Whitehead (2003, p. 8) more fully:

Rather than seeing *praxis* as the exercise of an intentional will alone, we may see its relation to *poiesis* as bringing about a transforming encounter between the artist and his or her work in the unfolding conditions of art-making, which itself communicates a *poietic* world view to art’s recipients.

Whitehead’s argument regarding art can be applied, at least in some cases, to a practitioner, group of practitioners, or an organisation. Good action (*praxis*) might not just be taken as part of creative implementation, it may be taken in relation to *poiesis* so that there is an unfolding, or as we have said earlier, an evolution, of creative actions. While *praxis* has its purpose within, *poiesis* has its purpose external to the activity which is why it is considered as creative production or making – what is produced or made has its own purpose.

Again, this relationship between *praxis* and *poiesis*, and their combined transformational quality, is significant for a practice approach to creativity in the way we are formulating it here – see Figure 14. At this stage, however, we will refer to this as an arrested practice of creativity. Later in this chapter will discuss that a precondition of a practice of creativity being fully achieved is the notion of ‘affect’, or rather, the relationship between *praxis* and affect, and *poiesis* and affect.
As we have noted, *poiesis* means production (Ackrill, 1978, p. 595) or making. However, when Heidegger’s notion of *unconcealment* is applied to the term, we end up with a slightly different and especially useful way of looking at it. In fact, it is arguably more helpful here than, say, Kemmis and Smith’s (2008, p. 15) more static notion of *poiesis* as ‘the production of a known product that can be produced by known means using known material’. Heidegger frames *poiesis* in his text *The Question Concerning Technology* through what he called ‘Enframing’, which according to the book’s translator, William Loveitt, refers to a ‘demanding summons’ (Heidegger, 1977, p. 19), where *poiesis* becomes more about ‘let[ting] what presences come forth into unconcealment’ (Heidegger, 1977, p. 21). *Poiesis* ‘pro-duces or leads (a thing) into being’ (Whitehead, 2003, p. 1), as ‘an “undercurrent” striving towards the light of day’ [original emphasis] (Whitehead, 2003, p. 1), which is the difference between ‘mastery over’ and ‘openness before what-is’ (Bolt, 2011, p. 80), or indeed the difference between a health services manager telling a team to be more creative versus exploring the barriers that stand in the way of, say, more creative treatment and care.

A further way of thinking about *poiesis* also comes from Whitehead (2003, p. 3). He picks up Heidegger’s discussion about the difference between an
artist and an artisan and elaborates: ‘The artist founds the world in which producing takes its rightful place, whereas the artisan makes useful things that do not of themselves have the capacity to found a world’. The artist, according to Whitehead (2003, p. 3), in a nod to Michael Zimmerman’s (1990, p. 231) account of Heidegger’s views on ‘technology’, ‘participates in world-founding poiesis’, whereas the artisan does not. There is quite an obvious parallel here with art and handicraft (Whitehead, 2003, p. 3) and what we discussed in Chapter 2, the difference between big-C and little-c creativity.

Our discussion about the relationship between praxis and poiesis can be expanded by employing Lenore Langsdorf’s (1995, p. 206) term ‘communicative poiesis’, that which ‘generates imaginative, aesthetic vision that in turn inspires moments of praxis’ (Crick, 2004, p. 314), which is not unlike Whitehead’s (2003, p. 4) interpretation. Crick (2004, p. 303), who would seem to be picking up on Dewey’s take on art, interprets communicative poiesis as communication at its best, as a form of art: ‘in which poiesis and praxis are united within a single, consumatory experience’. Once again, the constructive relationship between praxis and poiesis is highlighted, and this concept of communicative poiesis is something that could have considerable utility within the context of practice. In Watercourses: From Poetic to Poietic, Donna Trueit (2005, p. 86) refers not to poietic communication, but to poietic ‘conversation’ which she says ‘orientates thought’, and aligning herself with John Shotter, she considers ‘interactions as a nexus of circumstances and events necessary for creativity, [and] recognizes conversation as necessary for creative thinking’ (Trueit, 2005, p. 78). Further, and this time drawing on the pragmatist Charles Peirce (who also influenced Dewey), Trueit (2005, p. 79) notes that ‘poietic logic’ (not poetic logic) leads to the creating of new ideas. It has to be said that communication and conversation are not the same thing, in that conversation is just one means of communication, or even a metaphor for communication, and Trueit (2005, p. 77) concerns herself most with conversation as ‘a flow of words and meanings, a stream of consciousness’. Still, these notions of communication and conversation, as used here in
terms of poiesis, must be somehow related to each other and also to creativity.

How is praxis and poiesis represented across the social? According to Kemmis and Smith (2008, p. 5):

praxis does not refer to an ideal. A proper understanding of praxis recognises that the person who is acting is doing so in response to the practicalities and particularities of a given situation – they do the best they could do on the day, the best they could do under the circumstances.

In other words, a number of factors, many of them likely to be contextual, impinge on how praxis comes forth. This is why praxis ought to be considered as a continuum, rather than simply present or not, although it is likely to be the impact, not the quantity, or some other measure of praxis that is continuous. In a similar way, poiesis might be thought of other than in binary terms (Figure 14) if we accept Whitehead’s (2003, p. 7) view:

[Poiesis is something ‘in process’ contemporaneously, that it remains a subjacent influence striving towards realization. As such it is likely to surface in forms wherein the artist’s intuitive facility appears paramount [original emphasis].]

If poiesis is not static, but in process and ready to ‘come forth into unconcealment’, getting back to Heidegger [1977, p. 21], it also should not be considered running from low to high, or in small or large amounts. It may be more useful to consider it according to its impact also, that is, by virtue of its realisation or surfacing.

A practice view of creativity, as it has been presented here, places the notion of tension in the foreground, and as we have said, this tension might be understood in terms of Nayak’s (2008, p. 427) four tensions, a range of other tensions, or the tension found between those practices that reinforce current operations, and fresh ideas and actions that call for new operations. We have already seen that there are a number of theoretical arguments, mostly from an economic or organisational perspective, that
support the productive role of tension. This includes the notion of incessant destruction and creation (Schumpeter, 1942, p. 83), suspicion about a lack of quality (Hwang & Christensen, 2008, p. 1330), friction between parallel organisational systems (Smith & Stacey, 1997, p. 80), and the tension that precedes dynamic equilibria (Van Valen, 1973, p. 21). Some authors also use the term ‘creative tension’ and this includes Peter Senge (1990, p. 142) who saw it as the gap between vision and current positioning and as the ‘key to more effective creativity’ (1990, p. 226). This, according to Senge (1990, p. 226), occurs at both personal and organisational levels and, of course, we have our own formulations of creative implementation and creative activism, which help to explain the productive quality of tension.

In health services, as we have noted, tension can often be traced back to demand – unmet demand regarding some aspect of patient treatment and care or community health, perhaps – and it will be useful to now consider what we have just discussed, especially in terms of creative implementation, in relation to this notion of demand. Health services work within an ever-changing environment where the demand for services fluctuates, often increasing. Sometimes a change in demand occurs in small doses, say as community expectation gradually increases, and sometimes a change in demand is abrupt and large, as with an epidemic or health service restructure. As extant practices start to lose their grip on health demand, tension arises from a growing difference between those practices that reinforce current operations and fresh ideas, each working towards a solution to the unmet demand. This is where, recalling Joas, (1996, p. 128), habitual action becomes inadequate, or as Myeong-Gu Seo and Douglas Creed (2002, p. 229) see it, there are organisational contradictions. Here, praxis may be renegotiated and this mediating mechanism of praxis creates organisational change (Seo & Creed, 2002, p. 229) through the creative implementation of actions that reinforce current operations. Alternatively, poiesis may be invoked because the new demand and the tension created between fresh ideas and current operations calls for the making of new ways, as creative activism. So, extant practices might expand because of
praxis, as with creative implementation, that is, taking action to maintain or improve services to communities or patients, or, and possibly in addition, poiesis might be evoked because of a demand for new ways, and this leads to creative activism. In either case, new actions aimed at the same, or possibly modified, ends are produced, or unveiled, to get back to Heidegger (1977, p. 21) again, and re-enter the changing social world that caused the demand in the first place.

Dunne’s (2005, p. 368) reference to ‘external goods’ of practice (a concept he borrows from Alasdair Mclntyre [1984, p. 176]) asks us to consider if the products of, in this case, creativity, can be achieved in other ways. This is worth pondering, but on the surface at least, it may very well be the case. Lena’s music therapy department could have arisen out of a governing body’s mandate and the provision of all the necessary resources and tools for its implementation. Of course, that was not the case, but perhaps some time in the future, music therapy departments will routinely be placed in health services. This would then represent creative implementation, similar to what occurred in Chad’s case, but not necessarily creative activism. This is not to say that creative activism is less valuable than creative implementation (or vice versa). In fact, the impact of creative implementation might be even greater than creative activism, if, for example, a broader population is reached and benefited. The difference is more about how praxis and poiesis come into effect in order to extend practices. Of course, any margins between creative activism and creative implementation must be considered soft, at best, because the complexity of organisations means that tensions change and because multiple practices will be operating in a single location at any given time. So, extant practices respond to tensions and may extend as creative implementation or creative activism, or some other action done creatively, through praxis or poiesis. However, for an even greater unmet demand, something different is needed, something that will find its way through the aporias and where phronesis becomes more important. Novel and useful ways of doing things do not simply materialises on cue, of course. Rather, they emerge, and it is proposed here that this occurs because of the mediating effect of a practice
– what we are calling a ‘practice of creativity’. However, this mediation creates its own tension, a secondary tension if you like, as it rubs up against other (extant) practices. This secondary tension propels the creativity forward as the tension is resolved. This is the difference between creative implementation and creative activism, and a practice of creativity. Of course, this difference cannot be isolated and observed, but a reasonable explanation would be that a practice enacted creatively, towards implementation and activism, is, as we have noted, an arrested practice of creativity. This is different from a practice of creativity fully achieved, where an interceding factor is likely to be affect, and we will move on to that discussion shortly.

**Phronesis and aporia**

We have discussed the interrelationship between praxis and poiesis but only touched on the relation of these to phronesis and aporia. According to Green (2009, p. 10), praxis, phronesis and aporia do not act alone; it is the interrelations of these three concepts that matter. Thinking firstly about the interrelations between praxis and phronesis, for Rhona to move forward with her work, and what was undoubtedly her good action, she: ‘stepped into that lab world’, as she described it. This was one way of working with the rules. It was, to use Rhona’s words again, ‘incredibly challenging for me, I didn’t even do chemistry in Year 12’. It needs to be said that although Rhona is referring here to knowledge, what she highlighted most during our conversations was that she needed support. Rhona said that she needed to do her work confidently, and to work collaboratively. Practical knowledge about working collaboratively is not necessary a small thing, but it is what Rhona had experience with and could do very well. This was her practical wisdom, her phronesis that supported her praxis, which fits with the Aristotelian view that the knowledge associated with praxis is phronesis (Kavanagh, 2012, p. 110).

What of aporia in Rhona’s case, and its interrelationship with praxis and phronesis? One of the things Rhona highlighted to me was that questions
are often generated in the laboratory, and also from the bedside. This separation of the disciplines can be problematic and something Donald Schön (1983, p. 69) put down to the threat of uncertainty associated with entering someone else’s discipline. Here, high levels of specialisation, repetition, routine, and what Schön (1983, p. 61) calls ‘knowing in practice’, are associated with increasingly tacit and spontaneous responses that can leave the practitioner more likely to ‘miss important opportunities to think about what he is doing’ (p. 61). This was a central issue in Rhona’s work and no doubt the reason why she found herself as a nurse working in a laboratory. Fortunately, this is exactly where the skills of Rhona’s mentor lay. Rhona developed an ability to be able to see the opportunities of crossing disciplines, and to be able to carry these opportunities forward, working, probably daily, within the uncertainty that accompanies this. Here is aporia, and I would suggest, it is an aporia that covers much of what happens in health services. Aporia in Rhona’s case is in relation to making a difference or doing good (praxis) for patients or communities, by wisely accessing support, confidently, and working collaboratively across divides. We might call this Rhona’s phronesis also. Such interrelationships are obviously unique and contextualised and we could consider them to be calling for something other than existing practices – we could consider them to be calling for a practice of creativity.

Recognisability of a practice of creativity

How would a practice of creativity be recognisable? What does it look like, exactly? We might start to answer this question by looking for what we have considered to be a stimulus for creativity – tensions, and in particular, those tensions related to meeting health demands which call for praxis, as a lever for creative implementation, or poiesis, as a lever for creative activism. We might also look for praxis and poiesis together and the tension that arises from not just unmet demand but also that which is caused between extant and emergent practices as a practice of creativity is inhabited. We want to see the actions taken by and within the health service that tells us that we are, in fact, witnessing creativity of some sort.
As Rhona said, creativity ‘developed out of ... our identified need that current ways of monitoring this medication in children put quite a lot of conditions upon families that meant it effected the quality of life’. This was a health demand for a large number of children and their families affected by congenital heart disease. Their need was not only for ongoing anticoagulation because of heart surgery, but also for ongoing monitoring of the effects of that. That situation quite naturally causes distress for children and their parents because of the need to travel, often daily, for a blood test. The tension was also felt by those providing the treatment and care and the health service had a desire to step outside its current way of doing things to overcome this tension: ‘we had to look at ways of, how can we actually deliver this opportunity [home-based monitoring] to improve the outcomes for our patient group in a way that we can cover the costs’, said Rhona. Here we have praxis as a lever for creative implementation, in the name of these children and their families. Current practices were not good enough. Rhona told me how finger-prick testing for blood coagulation was available in what she called ‘adult land’, and also that she had visited a haematology department overseas because other countries had recently started home-based testing in children. This has a sense of creative implementation about it, although, according to Rhona, there were still many years of ‘trying to work out’ how to offer the test, said Rhona. So creativity was not just a single ‘ah ha’ moment, and if praxis is implicated here, it should be considered longitudinally. For example, Rhona explained: ‘the first thing we had to do was to prove that clinically the outcomes of monitoring Warfarin [the anticoagulant] therapy, which is using a test called INR, is not inferior’. Again, this suggests a renegotiated good action. As Rhona said: ‘this can make a significant difference’. Even after that, even now, the health service provides ongoing assistance to these children and not only do they do this, they make a financial sacrifice: ‘we don’t make money, and so, that’s a loss that our department incurs because of our commitment to providing quality care to patients’, according to Rhona.

What of the difference between the artist and artisan in Rhona’s story, to take up Whitehead’s (2003, p. 3) point about poiesis? Did this same tension
also facilitate poiesis and serve as a lever? Was there a demand to produce something new? This is where the painting that I made for Rhona, Becoming together, illuminated what might have been otherwise harder to see. Reflecting on the painting, Rhona commented: ‘for me the people in it stand out a lot and I think there’s connection between the people’ and ‘the thing I like and that I don’t see [is] that there’s any one person in authority’. Continuing this line of discussion, Rhona said: ‘I think that network and people connecting was probably the most important thing, whether you put it in a set box of mentorship or it’s something bigger than that’. Could that ‘bigger’ have something to do with poiesis, perhaps? Is this interaction between practitioners founding the world or just making useful things? I would argue that Rhona and her collaborators’ communication, and all that is associated with that, their connecting and relating, created a transforming encounter. This is poiesis represented as communication, or getting back to the concept that was introduced earlier on, ‘communicative poiesis’ (Crick, 2004, p. 314). So we might say that Rhona and her team were also working artfully, poietically, as part of a transforming encounter and, again, thinking longitudinally, through ongoing dosing and management for the good of quality care, as praxis, where poiesis and praxis are closely related, again, as a single consumatory experience (Crick, 2004, p. 303).

Rhona’s case shows creativity somewhere along the poiesis continuum, perhaps associated more with what we referred to earlier as big-C, rather than little-c, creativity, and there would be an intersection with praxis and creative implementation. While these judgements are a matter of debate, of course, it does make us think that for work, or creativity, of this magnitude, actions go well beyond extant practices. For instance, no one else had done what Rhona had done, that is, in her context. Practices changed significantly and this led to outstanding outcomes. All this seems more likely to be the result of a practice that mediates novelty and value, that is, a practice of creativity. Here is an organisational view of practice that is organic, especially if we consider, again, that Rhona and her team’s actions were aimed at offsetting earlier creative actions around the
treatment of congenital heart disease. We can speculate too that these new creative actions will prompt a future tension and creative action.

It is unlikely that there is a single tipping point or set of criteria that take a practice from expanding and changing to creative implementation, creative activism, or a practice of creativity, although it is possible that a range of such tipping points do exist. Seo and Creed (2002, p. 230) suggest that as organisational contradictions, or what we are calling tensions, permeate actors’ social experience, so too does the mediating affect of praxis. This is the case if we accept that what Schatzki’s (2002, p. 155) said, that sets of doings and sayings have multiple practice memberships. Such fluidity and ‘bumping against each other’, as we noted in Chapter 5, can cause extant practices to be stretched or expanded, in response to their context. However, our thesis here is that no practice can be stretched infinitum. What needs to emerge to meet a changed context, perhaps a new demand, and the tension that comes from that, is a different sort of action. This is a practice that is not just going to resolve the current tension, as if to plug a hole, but a practice that has as its ends something novel and valuable, whatever that may be within its context. That is a practice of creativity. A practice of creativity, once inhabited, interacts with extant practices and, in doing so, as we have already said, generates its own (secondary) tension and opens a space for the new ways, new actions, and newer practices that will meet the demand. With this in mind, we turn once again to Lucinda’s case.

Lucinda and her health promotion initiative, in Aboriginal dental health, was what Lucinda called ‘just one very small opportunistic part of a bigger program that we’re hoping to get up and running’. As part of this work, Lucinda conducted feasibility studies and community need assessments, did a literature review, piloted the project, consulted, engaged an indigenous artist, and evaluated all that. We should note too that this was a project that Lucinda was completing as part of a post-graduate qualification in health promotion. So there was something of a formulaic approach to Lucinda and her organisation’s work, even more so than in Rhona’s case.
Still, to use Lucinda’s words, they had to keep ‘looking outside the box’ in terms of forging partnerships and so forth and, again in Lucinda’s own words: ‘there hasn’t been anything [else] like it’. So despite the formula, there is no denying Lucinda and her organisation’s creativity. However, their work is not yet finalised: ‘it’s just the first stepping stone to something that’s bigger’, Lucinda said.

The most striking aspect of Lucinda’s work became apparent as she looked over her painting Stepping out. Lucinda had a desire, a strong desire in fact, to take good action (praxis): ‘what drove me was the fact that there was no indigenous specific oral health resources’. This is despite the fact that, as Lucinda’s said, ‘indigenous oral health is worse than health in a lot of – oral health, other people’s oral health’, so current action was not good enough. Stepping out prompted Lucinda to think deeply about what we will call her praxis: ‘You know, you sort of you look at prejudice as well; some services can be prejudiced and non – you know, they’re quite threatening to minority groups, whether they be disability, or indigenous’. Lucinda reflected not only on what good action needed to be taken, and why, but also on an underlying principle of taking good action in this context: ‘Always try to keep it in my mind out of respect, their close connections to their land and how important it all is to them, so, yeah absolutely’, she said.

Stepping out also helped to locate Lucinda’s work, and her creativity, temporally:

[Y]ou’ve still got them [images of people in Stepping out] on two separate pieces of paper, so even though they’re together, they’re still not, which is the crux of it all, isn’t it, really? And it’s not going to be – it’ll take a long time in regards to partnerships with indigenous communities and acceptance on both sides, it’ll take a long time before that will, actually ever become one.

What Lucinda is getting at here is that her work is incomplete and that is because it is difficult, although the motivation is strong: ‘still a long way to go’, she said, and: ‘I think that will come eventually.’
There is a sense here that Lucinda’s work is creative implementation, although there is activism against injustice and prejudice, and the health demand that arises out of that. For Lucinda and her organisation this was the tension. However, where Rhona’s case tended more towards big-C creativity, Lucinda’s seems to be further back along that poietic continuum. Clearly, what is being produced is novel, but as she said, it is not yet complete. For example, the actual impact on indigenous oral health in that community is still undetermined. Also, what is missing from Lucinda’s case, which is more prominent in Rhona’s, is artistry. Perhaps at the moment Lucinda and her team are artisans, maintaining, and even extending, extant practices, making useful things but not yet ‘founding a world’ though poiesis, and so, the term ‘creative implementation’ might be more fittingly applied. We still have a view, here, of creativity that is organic, growing out of earlier practices of health promotion. With Rhona, we saw a stepping outside the current rules and with Lucinda we saw a similar thing. Lucinda carefully managed her creative work and as part of this fought for, and is still fighting for, resources. Similar to Rhona, Lucinda’s ends are clear and her creativity is also about connecting with others. Both Rhona and Lucinda’s creativity have shown forms of creative implementation, through praxis, but because of differences of poiesis, we might say that Rhona’s work is more likely than Lucinda’s to have arisen out of a practice of creativity.

We should bring Lena back into the conversation now because her creativity can be usefully considered and contrasted to Rhona and Lucinda’s, especially when we consider Lena’s comments as she examined her painting *How hard can it be*. When Lena identified the left-hand panel of the painting as her hospital, she said: ‘I like the way that the colours kind of smashing through it in a way or infiltrating it. Which is sort of how I feel about the music, it’s not so much smashing’. The language here needs to be considered, which is obviously something Lena thought was important too, having retracted the word ‘smashing’, leaving the word ‘infiltrating’ resonating over the painting, and perhaps also Lena and her organisation’s creativity. The impression that we get from this is that, despite Lena’s energetic, hands-on and upbeat approach to her
work, her style is actually more akin to ‘openness before what-is’ than ‘mastery over’. The following comments of Lena’s support this and show how a facilitated sequence of events were unveiled. By way of introduction, I point out that two of Lena’s clients, young women dying from cancer, wrote songs with Lena that were recorded posthumously by a well-known Australian singer/songwriter, who we will call William:

\[
\text{[W]e got quite a lot of feedback from that [the recordings] from the general community. So that again that was taking it even further past the bedside, people emailing about their experiences with cancer, what it meant for them to hear those songs. So the girls legacy and that sort of public health message went out broader …’}
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This level of impact was not planned at all. Only the original song writing was planned, but not the recordings or the involvement of the well-known artist. It was a matter of opportunities arising and being responded to. Of course, the public response could not be anticipated either. It all unfolded to be a novel, and very valuable, public health activity. In fact, it is questionable if such a powerful public health message could ever be planned, given the sensitivities involved. It required, according to Lena, her to ‘sneak it in’, ‘put up with the knock backs’ and be ‘brave and take that first little step’. She seemed to have worked within that context artfully, poetically. Lena did have a plan: ‘My plan was always to grow – I wasn’t sure how I’d grow’, which probably helped her deal with the messiness that would inevitably arise along the way.

Lena continued describing how the ‘William story’, as she referred to it, evolved, in more of an organic than mechanistic fashion:

\[
\text{And then just recently [we] had a young patient in and he’s a William fan and I said “Oh blah blah blah I know William”, “Oh really”. I told him about the songs and he downloaded them straight away and he said “They’re beautiful, they’re beautiful”. And I thought wasn’t that full circle you know…. So it’s so important, he during this time gets that same help that those girls.}
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This is the work of an artist. Of course, we are not talking about me as the painter, or the artist in a musical sense, but artistry in the sense that
Whitehead (2003, p. 3) used the term, that is, Lena acting in concert with her organisation, with *poiesis*. Lena’s is big-C creativity and her team’s work is creative activism. It involves *praxis* based on action towards creating hopefulness and underpinned by a holistic view of health and, as we have said, *poiesis* is involved too. This is a better fit with a practice of creativity than an expansion of extant practices.

A practice of creativity fully achieved through affect

What causes a practice of creativity, such as Rhona’s and Lena’s, to be fully achieved? What impacts a desire to respond to unmet demand and the tension around that to take good action and to respond with *artistry*? Whilst there is no doubt a range of possible responses to these questions, a particularly helpful answer lies within the affective domain. Certainly, that came across in the conversations I had with the research participants and this might not be surprising since organisational creativity scholars such as Zhou and Shalley (2008a, p. 356) believe that affect ‘holds considerable promise in advancing our understanding of creativity in the workplace’. Carsten De Dreu, Matthijs Baas and Bernard Nijstad (2012, pp. 217-240) reviewed empirical literature on affect and creativity, albeit mostly at the individual level, and concluded that there is an important relationship, but that more research in the area is required, especially regarding negative emotional states. So how might affect be associated with creativity? Dewey has been very useful to us so far, and here is no exception.

Two theorists, Charles Darwin and William James, in particular, influenced Dewey’s theory of emotion (Garrison, 2003, pp. 405-443). Not surprisingly, Darwin’s is a more biological approach to emotion and can be criticised for its dualism which separates physical stimulus and embodied reaction (Garrison, 2003, p. 406), and this is residual in the work of James also (Garrison, 2003, p. 411). Dewey’s view is that emotion is held within the world, and then impressed upon us (Morse, 2010, p. 224). This notion is a little challenging perhaps, and some even call it absurd (Morse, 2010, p. 224); however, it does awaken us to the view that emotion is not just
related to and felt purely at any individual level. According to Dewey (1958, p. 42): ‘fear, whether an instinct or an acquisition, is a function of the environment. Man fears because he exists in a fearful, an awful world. The world is precarious and perilous’. The seat of emotion, if we accept this, is located in the world, the social, and no doubt the health service too.

Dewey (1895, p. 15) claims that his theory is ‘purposive’, and ‘teleological’ (1895, p. 13), and according to Donald Morse (2010, p. 224), aims to make us morally responsible. Here, we might say that emotion keeps the company of praxis, especially when we consider what is termed critical emotional praxis, albeit applied to teaching, where ‘critical praxis [is] informed by emotional resistance to unjust pedagogical systems and practice (Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2008, p. 274).

We might also note the relationship between emotion and poiesis, in a way that retains a link with Heidegger’s view of poiesis: ‘the bringing forth or revealing of aesthetic and poetic human realities through subjective emotional expression and reflection [is] what the ancient Greeks called poiesis’ (Atkinson, 2009, p. 178).

We should note, subsequent to Dewey’s theory of emotion, the emerging debate on the concept of affect and how some theorists, drawing on the work of Deleuze (see Deleuze & Guattari, [1988]), and, before that, Spinoza (see Spinoza [2000]), are coming to see that it is different from emotion². Take for example Cate Poynton and Alison Lee’s (2011, p. 637) work; they discuss different conceptualisations of affect, including it being pre-personal, following Massumi in 1987. That is, they say it is ‘what comes before action and by implication forms, rather than carries out, the dictates of desire’.

² The ‘affective turn’ is not acknowledged or referred to by many, if any, creativity (and creativity related) researchers, including, for example, authors such as Nayak, who uses the word ‘motivation’ in a traditional sense. In such instances, it is useful to appreciate words such as ‘motivation’ and ‘emotion’ in terms of how they might represent something beyond the ‘boundary of the self’ (Poynton & Lee, 2011, p. 634), aligned with ‘social space’ (Poynton & Lee, 2011, p. 634), even though this may not have been the authors’ original intention.
These authors also refer to Lawrence Grossberg (1992) and his emphasis on affect as energy, which they interpret as being ‘from the subject outward to the world’ (2011, p. 637). This suggestion that affect goes beyond the individual and his or her feelings suits our purposes well in terms of its association with praxis and poiesis, and in moderating creativity. The suggestion is even more appealing when considering that affect can be considered, itself, a practice (Poynton & Lee, 2011, p. 642). If practices share doings and sayings (Schatzki, 2002, p. 155), it is not all that surprising that affect and a practice of creativity connect.

This discussion quite naturally takes us back to Schatzki’s (2002, p. 80) notion of ‘teleo-affective’ structures, and this is a useful link because the tasks, projects and ends that make up teleaffective structures, according to Schatzki at least, are allied with emotions, or what we might now call affect. The role of affect in creativity is also apparent in Nayak’s (2008, p. 433) reference to motivation, affinity to groups of people and morality, in relation to his four tensions associated with a practice approach to creativity. The affective domain is raised by Senge (1990, p. 142) also, who noted the presence of emotions, principally negative ones, alongside creative tension. The affective domain is considered by some leading creativity researchers to be crucial to creativity (Amabile & Kramer, 2011, p. 31). Of course, affect might also be a product of creativity, as in ‘emotional creativity’ (Averill, 2005a, p. 173), and as part of positive psychology, but before we get to that, we will consider it as a mediator of creativity. At the individual level, ‘associations between concepts are mediated by emotional profiles or feeling tones [which] spread as a global “wave” throughout the memory system’ [original emphasis], thus facilitating creativity, says Averill (2005b, p. 226). Suzy Gilson and Christina Shalley (2004, p. 454), picking up on the work of William Kahn (1990), offer a more social perspective on this: ‘Engagement in creative processes involves team members behaviourally, cognitively, and emotionally attempting new things or ways of going about their work’. Munt and Hargreaves’ research in the area of health and social care also showed that emotion was central to creativity, but where Gilson and Shalley refer to the emotion of action,
Munt and Hargreaves (2009, p. 290) highlighted emotional engagement with the subject: ‘whether that be putting themselves in the shoes of another human being or immersing themselves deeply in a topic or context’. This, they say, is then responded to with imagination (2009, p. 290). For some creative acts, emotion may even be imbued in the creative product. For example, recalling Giacometti’s painting of James Lord’s portrait from Chapter 4, Lord (1980, p. 29) commented to Giacometti: ‘In some of your sculptures and paintings I find a great deal of feeling’. In response to this, Giacometti replied: ‘You may find it … but I didn’t put it there. It’s completely in spite of me’ (Lord, 1980, p. 29), which we put down to emergence. In this case we certainly might refer to affect and not emotion, but either way, we can say that it is associated with creativity, variably in terms of product, activity and moderation.

What of our research participants and the affective domain as expressed in the transcripts? Going back to Lena, our music therapist, as an illustration:

So you’ve got to have an end goal – an understanding of your end point or points. But if you – and it’s hard because we are bought up with logical sequencing, if I do this, I do this and if I do this. But what that doesn’t say to you is, if I do this then I’ll feel like this and then I might do this. So we don’t accept that little circle that happens in the middle and I think that helps you get fresh ideas because you acknowledge your feelings related to that process.

Having said earlier that Lena’s work involved a practice of creativity, we can now add that this creativity, with regard to the ‘ends’ of providing hopefulness to cancer sufferers, may very well have been mediated by affect, and even more than that, by Lena and her team’s reflexive response to affect. There is a lesson here, if we listen to Lena, and this is that no amount of raw emotion will, alone, moderate creativity. What is most important is that there is a response to the affective in a way that drives good action (praxis) and production (poiesis). What also needs to be considered is that although these might be Lena’s thoughts, thought is both a collective and individual process (Kinsella, 2012, p. 44). Here, Anne Kinsella (2012, p. 44) is referring to the work of David Bohm (1996, p. 11), and we will benefit from doing that also:
We could consider two kinds of thoughts – individual and collective. Individually I can think of various things, but a great deal of thought is what we do together.

So collective thought, as might occur in a health service, or part of it, ‘implicitly informs the backdrop in the process of an individual’s world making in practice’ (Kinsella, 2012, p. 45). In Lena’s case, and her health service’s case, there was a certain reflexive response, but for other situations or other health services, it might be a different one. The important thing is that the affective domain is responded to somehow and this ‘affects’ a practice of creativity being inhabited and, given the centrality of affect to creativity, full achieved (Figure 15). If affect less usefully drives praxis, poiesis, or both, a practice of creativity may be considered as arrested. Affect and the dynamics associated with it are a ‘mediating precondition of practice’, to pick up on the concept described by Kemmis (2009, p. 33). Here, that would be a practice of creativity fully achieved (Figure 15).

Certain key concepts have emerged in our discussion about creativity, framed as practice, and these include creative implementation, creative activism, a practice of creativity arrested, and, what we have just come to, a practice of creativity fully achieved. We noted earlier how this is not an
all-or-nothing affair and that any margins between these concepts must be considered soft. This is important if we go back to Schatzki’s (2002, p. 240) conceptualisation of practices, and in particular, note that: ‘Practice organizations are not static. The understandings, rules, and teleoaffective structures that organize integrative practices frequently change. So too, do the doings and sayings that constitute these practices’. Here, we would attribute this change to changing tensions, which may arise from changing demands, and that these influence praxis and poiesis. The terms that Schatzki (2002, p. 240) uses to describe practice change is ‘reorganization’ and ‘recomposition’. Picking up on this, we might now think how a practice approach to creativity represents an elastic view of creative implementation, creative activism, a practice of creativity arrested, and a practice of creativity fully achieved, where each might be considered a reorganisation or recomposition of the other. Our reference to affect as a mediating factor of a practice of creativity fully achieved also fits with a Schatzkian perspective. Schatzki (2002, p. 44) insists that practices are prefigured and that the ‘site of the social prefigures the flow of activity by qualifying the possible paths it can take’. Here, it is proposed that affect is what qualifies that path; affect ‘prefigures forthcoming activity by constraining and enabling’ (Schatzki, 2002, p. 45) it.

I wonder now if the affective domain has been crucial for my own practice, including my practice of painting. If it is important, is it a product of my creativity, or is it a mediator? Is my action filled with affect or is affect generated more from how I feel about the research participants’ work? Is this part of the product – the painting? Also, what is to be said about praxis and poiesis and are such things constant or is there some temporal quality to all this? Exactly where does the affective domain fit in? I certainly do think affect is crucial to my creative practice, for example, when, as I recounted in the previous chapter, I experienced what might best be described as ‘flow’ while I painted Growth for Suzy. This affective response, I believe, then fed back into my production, that is, the way I enacted my practice. I noticed a similar response by Pedro in his unwavering commitment to his community, and in Ross’s ability to push hard for a
better deal for those with little capacity to do so for themselves, that is, the homeless. In terms of my own production, all the participants indicated how much they liked their paintings, all participated wholeheartedly in their experience of art (another nod to Dewey), and most responded with comments similar to Chad’s:

Yeah it's resonating with me because it's something that I perhaps in the past … appreciated it when I walked past it. And in this experience I've immersed myself in the imagery and perhaps the meaning and the personal meaning for me. But I'm also kind of aware of the, I know some of the journey which is inspired here and the conversation which is inspired the works, and that in itself has a particular, you know it heightens the enjoyment.

Using my own practice as an illustration, to say that affect is merely ‘associated’ with creativity, as emotion might be, seems to lessen its significance. To me, affect surrounds my practice, as I painted, interacted with participants, wrote, and, indeed, in my own practice of creativity.

My actions as a painter are purposive, aligned to the objectives of this research, and those personal objectives that are not normally articulated in dissertations, which at the end of the day relate to what I consider to be my moral responsibilities. So there is praxis, and I would suggest, also poiesis. There is more artist than artisan, I hope, although it has to be said that this waxes and wanes. For instance, as I stood back from my paintings so many times in this study, asking them to tell me what stroke to make next, as many other artists do, I also attended to the more domestic responsibilities of art; I prepared my brushes, applied glazes, and so forth. So, this raises, again, the temporal aspects of a poiesis, and also praxis, and I contend that it is emotion that drives me towards praxis and poiesis. Without that, I doubt if I would get too far past domesticity. One simply cannot apply evenly one’s being to poiesis and praxis for the duration of any single creative act, perhaps even the briefest. It seems much more realistic to think about such things temporally, present one moment and then receding, to reappear again as a response to affect. This has important implications for organisations. Within an organisation, such as a health service, there will be innumerable cases in which tension is, perhaps
appropriately, ignored. At that time a potential practice of creativity will be arrested, and somewhere else affect will emerge, a response, and a practice of creativity will be inhabited and fully achieved.

As has been foreshadowed, affect is not just a facilitator of a practice of creativity but also an outcome, which in turn facilitates more creativity. This argument comes out of a point we have made a number of times so far, that the purpose of praxis is internal to itself. If, as Mark Rowlands (2013, p. 184) reports: ‘it is a necessary condition of something truly important in life that it have no purpose outside itself’, then praxis is important from that angle also. Rowlands is a scholar from the discipline of philosophy and in his book Running with the Pack (2013, pp. 1-218) he refers to a range of scholarly works, including Heidegger’s Being and Time (1962, pp. 1-589), to remind us that as humans we tend to think in utilitarian terms – the world as a network of instruments that have purpose (Rowlands, 2013, p. 183). This is something that rings true in the traditional conceptualisation of creativity too. Rowlands is actually writing about running here and makes the point that running, as a form of play, would count as something that has value for its own sake. That is, running is not merely of utilitarian purpose (putting aside the health benefits associated with it). For many runners, running is, of itself, a source of joy – there are no ulterior motives. What of a practice of creativity? Considering that praxis has a purpose internal to itself, and here is associated with creativity, it would be reasonable to expect that joy or some similar feeling be associated with creativity. This would not be in a utilitarian sense, where joy facilitates creativity, but as a result of creativity – one experiences joy, or something like it, simply because one is being creative. There are some useful links here with the work that Munt and Hargreaves (2009, p. 292) did on creativity and emotion. They came to the conclusion that ‘[c]reativity can be fuelled by emotion, can channel and harness emotion and can be the producer of emotion. Emotion and creativity are intertwined’. In explaining this, Munt and Hargreaves (1996, p. 113) referred to Csikszentmihalyi’s concept of flow and the following quotation,
an illustration, goes a long way to reinforcing our idea that sensations like flow or joy are intrinsic to creativity:

I may be scared of using a computer and learn to do it only because my job depends on it. But as my skills increase, I recognize what the computer allows me to do, I may begin to enjoy using the computer for its own sake as well. At this point the activity becomes autotelic, which is Greek for something that has an end in itself. Some activities such as art, music, and sports are usually autotelic: There is no reason for doing them except to feel the experience they provide. Most things in life are exotelic: We do them not because we enjoy them but in order to get to some later goal. And some activities are both. The violinist gets payed for playing, and the surgeon gets status and good money for operating, as well as getting enjoyment from doing what they do. In many ways the secret to a happy life is to learn to get flow from as many of the things we have to do as possible (Munt & Hargreaves, 1996, p. 113).

Csikszentmihalyi’s suggestion for a happy life might also be applied to professional life, including those whose professions are located in health services. So the argument for placing emphasis on praxis and its autotelic character is becoming hard to ignore if we want more creative health services. The argument for an ‘evolving’ health services creativity is also becoming stronger – if affect is considered to be a facilitator of creativity, and also a result of creativity, one feeds the other in a recursive and evolutionary fashion. This is balanced with poiesis and its exotelic character, aimed at meeting external goals which might be around, say, community engagement, health status, more functional treatment and care processes, and so forth.

Another useful comment that Munt and Hargreaves (2009, p. 294) make is that creativity ‘may well play a useful role in creating a sense of joy and belonging in the process of change and in bringing about creative and innovative outcomes’. Note the use of the word ‘joy’. It is not all that surprising, then, that Gauntlett (2011, p. 76), who we referred to earlier on regarding his views on ‘creativity as making and connecting’, highlights joy as part of his definition of creativity:
Everyday creativity refers to a process which brings together at least one active human mind, and the material or digital world, in the activity of making something. The activity has not been done in this way by this person (or these people) before. The process may arouse various emotions, such as excitement and frustration, but most especially a feeling of joy. When witnessing and appreciating the output, people may sense the presence of the maker, and recognize these feelings.

The way in which Gauntlett refers to joy, associated with making, points to praxis, and possibly creative implementation, because joy would be autotelic to creativity. The difficulty with this is that creative production (poiesis), which aligns nicely to Gauntlett’s ‘making’, is considered to have an exotelic character, that is, the purpose lies in what is made. Gauntlett is referring to making craft, rather than art, and although many craftspeople would disagree, there would seem to be a significant element of implementation, such as the use of stencils, associated with craft making, but less so with art. This does raise a point made earlier on, which is worth repeating here, that praxis and poiesis should each be thought of as a continuum and that in either creative implementation or creative activism creativity, both praxis and poiesis may be present, just to various degrees.

We will leave the notion of affect here for a moment, although not to forget it, and move forward in this discussion to take up another way of thinking about creativity. This other way is complementary to notions of praxis and poiesis, and also the affective domain, as well as phronesis and aporia.

**Doings, sayings, relatings**

We will now think about creativity from a material, economic and discursive perspective, that is, as doings, sayings and relatings. We have said that a practice, according to Schatzki (2002, p. 71), is ‘an organized constellation of actions’ involving a ‘set of doings and sayings’ (2002, p. 73). Practices are social phenomena (Schatzki, 2002, p. 87), a point that Kemmis (2009, p. 25) makes when he adds ‘relatings’ to Schatzki’s doings and sayings. The notion of relatings aligns, although not necessarily
automatically, to *poiesis* or creative making, that is, if we look differently at this term ‘making’, which we will get to shortly. Getting back to Gauntlett (2011, p. 25), he explains that, picking up on the work of Peter Dormer (1997, p. 18), to truly understand something, you have to make a version of it: ‘knowledge comes not before or after but *within* the practice of making’ [original emphasis]. This is a comment relevant to the methodology used here too, of course. To be *within* making, that is, having not yet reached what is to be made, to still be in there, carries a level of uncertainty, *aporia* perhaps, and to bring in our earlier discussion about complex adaptive systems, a level of unknowability. We can also go back to the Heideggarian view of *poiesis* because to be ‘within making’ requires, to some extent, openness to, rather than mastery over, making. That is, one can less easily summons a production if one is engaged with, is part of, and is responding to, the process of making as it unfolds.

Here we have two ways of discussing a practice approach to creativity, the Aristotelian, rooted around *praxis* and *poiesis*, and now the material, economic and discursive perspectives of Schatzki, which has been added to by Kemmis. The Aristotelian approach is principle-based, getting back to Green, whereas Schatzki’s and Kemmis’ approach takes us to a more visible or operational understanding of practice. These arrangements can be brought into closer alignment by replacing the term ‘relatings’ with what has emerged from this discussion, ‘making’, because, according to Gauntlett (2011, p. 2), making is connecting:

Making is connecting because you have to connect things together (materials, ideas, or both) to make something new; [m]aking is connecting because acts of creativity usually involve, at some point, a social dimension and connect us with other people; [a]nd making is connecting because through making things and sharing them in the world, we increase our engagement and connection with our social and physical environments.

Replacing the term ‘relatings’ with ‘makings’ is not all that reckless, either, especially within the context of a creativity because, again, referring to Gauntlett (2011, p. 2), in making you connect things together, and as Gauntlett points out: ‘acts of creativity usually involve, at some point, a
social dimension and connect us with people’, and also because in ‘making things and sharing them in the world, we increase our engagement and connection with our social and physical environments’ (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 2).

Another argument that connects making and relating, this time via ‘conversation’, is offered by Rebecca Steiner (2013, p. 8): ‘making an object instigates two conversations – one between the material and the maker, and one between the maker and the viewer. These conversations are both needed to bring the object into being’, which is another reference to Heidegger’s being in and of the world (1962, p. 245), and also Dewey’s (1934, p. 22) notion of art as experience, which ‘when it is carried to the full, is a transformation of interaction into participation and communication [Emphasis added]. This resonates with what we noted earlier to be’ Rhona’s poiesis and the place of communicative poiesis in their work.

Practical-based and conventional approaches to creativity

It would seem worthwhile at this point to stop and take this notion of a practice approach to creativity and compare it with conceptualisations more commonly referred to in the creativity literature. The point has been made earlier that the vast majority of the frequently cited definitions of creativity have it as a process, not as a practice. Take for example the componential theory of creativity (Amabile, 1983, pp. 357-376), which is purportedly ‘comprehensively useful for both psychological and organisational creativity research’ (Amabile & Mueller, 2008, p. 35), and holds that there are three individual and ‘necessary’ (Amabile & Mueller, 2008, p. 37) components of creativity. These components are domain relevant skills such as intelligence, technical skills and talent; creativity-relevant processes which are personal characteristics that ‘are conducive to independence, risk-taking, and taking new perspectives on problems, as well as a disciplined work style and skills in generating ideas’; and intrinsic task motivation which is, as the term implies, motivation to undertake a task because it is interesting, challenging or satisfying. Along with these is an
external component, the work or social environment, which is the site of extrinsic motivators, framed by Teresa Amabile and Jennifer Mueller (2008, pp. 35-37) as factors that can either facilitate or inhibit creativity. Amabile and Muller (2008, pp. 35-37) generously provided an illustration of the application of the componential model, which is reproduced here:

For example, an employee might start by considering a particular customer need (problem identification) and immediately come up with an idea (response generation) followed by reading and talking with colleagues about existing work in the area (preparation). She might then present the idea to top management (communication). If top management accepts the new idea as something potentially novel and useful, the employee might then be asked to test the idea (validation). The testing process could involve a series of tests, followed each time by refinement of the original idea and, perhaps, additional preparation through information gathering or even reformulation of the original problem identification. Once a final validated idea is accepted as novel and appropriate, then a creative outcome has been generated. However, if the idea is ejected, the employee must continue the process of refining the problem definition, preparing, generating, testing, and communicating ideas – or terminate the process. Ultimately, higher levels of each of the four components should lead to more effective cognitive processing, which, in turn, should lead to more creative outcomes.

In this illustration, we can assume that the employee possessed sufficient domain relevant skills to recognise the problem and generate an initial response to it, as well as an understanding of how to actually work on the problem (creativity-relevant processes), including liaising with more senior staff, and entering an iterative process of testing and refining. Of course, the employee must be motivated to take such actions, and the external work environment needs to be conducive – poor communication by senior staff would probably serve to sour the employees continued involvement with the problem. This rather mechanistic conceptualisation of creativity is typical of what Moran (2009, p. 2) would describe as ‘crossing, breaking, or pushing out a boundary’ in order to reach, as we have said, what most creativity scholars would describe as something novel and valuable. Moran labels this as the boundary metaphor of creativity, different from the organism metaphor of creativity, which, as we will now discuss, has a different orientation.
The way that creativity is framed in this dissertation, as a practice, fits much better with Moran’s organism metaphor than does the componential or other similar ‘process’ theories. Looking at the example that Amabile and Muller provided, but this time through a practice lens, broadens and deepens our understanding of creativity. It could be argued that what the employee did was a task (or project) of an extant practice, possibly something to do with monitoring consumer need, or a task around customer service. However, the worker wanted to go beyond the usual call of duty, which in itself is a tension, although it is hard to imagine that they engaged in praxis to the extent that has been shown by our research participants. There was certainly good action beyond standard operating procedures, but perhaps not all that much more. Thinking about poiesis, was the worker an artist or artisan – probably an artisan. This is painting a picture of creative implementation or an arrested practice of creativity, which would fit with the worker’s immediate resolution to the problem, covered by the usual doings and sayings. Do other workers similarly extend their practices? Have other extant practices in that organisation been arrested in this way? What would result if top management ‘allowed’ or facilitated more artistry, or initiated communication to prompt even greater ends? How is affect implicated, and how might affect be responded to in order to build on this creativity? Can this particular creative act have a more global effect? These are examples of questions that very usefully open up when considering creativity as practice.

Amabile and Muller required the employee’s idea to be validated. In most cases, ideas are evaluated in terms of their implementation, their uptake and the results within a certain context, although it is likely that validation of all creative acts may not be feasible. In fact, it would probably be completely unworkable. However, an iterative refinement of an original idea, which is what was described in the scenario, seems more practicable. Our practice-based approach would account for ongoing refinement, in more of an organic way, where all the relationships associated with, in this case, customer service, arise and influence the idea and its implementation. Practices are 'are open, temporarily unfolding nexuses of actions' (Schatzki,
2002, p. 72), and actions, as well as sayings, ‘almost always constitute further actions in the contexts in which they are performed’ (Schatzki, 2002, p. 72). We saw the unfolding of actions in Rhona’s case. A string of actions led to improved mortality for children with congenital heart defects, but this was not the finish of it because this prompted further action, and there is always space for more action, especially with ends that include the provision of hope, as was the case for Lena.

It was useful that Amabile and Muller included in their scenario that ideas might be rejected. This is a tension often present in creativity, in a productive way. Amabile and Muller seemed to think along these lines too because that tension led to improvement of the idea (although it could have also terminated it). Still, are there not tensions present, even if top management accept the idea as it was first presented? Was there not some tension that alerted the worker to the issue in the first place; did all colleagues with whom the worker spoke have a clear and agreed understanding of what the new idea entailed, and were they in possession of the necessary practical wisdom, not just the knowledge and skills? How would the new idea impact on current practices? It is hard to imagine that the idea, once implemented, would not have even a slight impact on other practices – perhaps practices associated with ordering, recording, customer flow, and so forth. These are all likely tensions.

Amabile and Muller’s conceptualisation of creativity is quite different from our practice-based approach, with its roots in the Sea of Creativity metaphor. The Sea of Creativity metaphor had the shore, or to use the language of practice, what were once newly emerged practices, but are now well accepted and enacted practices, and the shore created a tension with the waves, which could be emerging practices. Within a practice:
a number of competing priorities and ongoing negotiation of values, assumptions, behaviours and actions constantly reinterpret the rules of engagement in a practice and have a significant bearing on the unfolding character of a practice. The diversity and heterogeneity of multiple and competing practices constantly redefine each practice and by implication the field to which a practice is embedded (Antonacopoulou, 2008, p. 122).

For creativity, tension between the now old practices and those emerging practices, as part of an overall ecology of practices, to go back to Kemmis, Edwards-Groves, Wilkinson and Hardy (2012, p. 45), is a useful concept that is not given sufficient attention in the componental theory, and consequently, not fully explored by creativity researchers. Of course, extra-individual conditions play a role here too. Recalling Rhona, apart from the technological advances in the treatment of congenital heart defects, the availability of a suitable mentor, collaborations across a team that included both laboratory staff and clinicians, were all important extra-individual conditions. There was also, as Rhona said:

> our identified need that current ways of monitoring this medication in children put quite a lot of conditions upon families that meant it effected the quality of life of not only the child but the whole family unit that that child was situated in, but our way of, I guess trying to get this service up and running has very much been dependent upon our ability to source competitive research or philanthropic funding that we haven’t had the infrastructure and finances to be able to do that as a direct clinical initiative.

What is particularly difficult to elicit from Amabile and Mueller’s scenario is the role of affect, let alone the intrinsic purpose of joy. Although it might be argued that emotion, say emotional intelligence, would be included as one of Amabile and Mueller’s skills or personal characteristics, or is possibly related to task motivation or the social environment, it is a concept that is very much in the background in the way that the componental theory of creativity has been depicted. Surely, affect was present as the worker navigated the workplace and its levels of authority. A practice approach to creativity, in the way it is presented here, offers more scope for understanding the role of affect, which, as we have noted, is clearly important.
Local and global action

Practices, such as creativity, can have global impact, and Kemmis, Edwards-Groves, Wilkinson and Hardy (2012, p. 36) used school education to illustrate this point:

"[P]ractices coexist and are connected with one another in complexes of practices in which each adapts and evolves in relation to the others, with local and regional variations, both of the large scale of historical time (e.g. in the evolution of contemporary schooling) and of the smaller scale of the day-to-day and moment-to-moment interactions of life in schools and communities.

Thinking now of Lucinda; she worked not only in Aboriginal oral health promotion, which was what she was focusing at the time we met, but in other health promotion areas as well. Lucinda came from a background of sexual health promotion, and had authored a children’s book on hospitalisation for Indigenous children, for example. She did all this through a range of practices, including facilitating workshops, developing partnerships, and evaluating, and this supported her work in Aboriginal oral health – part of a complex of practices, we might say. Lucinda’s work evolved within her practice context. The paintings made by the local artist, in many ways, spearheaded her work, but that would not have achieved its ends unless Lucinda also drew on practices like negotiation and organisation (for example, the organisation of copyright for the artist).

What was especially clear from meeting with Lucinda was that she wanted her current work to get to a broader audience and she is working at this by liaising with the relevant governmental departments that span larger geographical areas than she currently has influence over. Lucinda’s practices were expanding and connecting to other complexes, more generally.

If Lucinda is successful in globalising her work, if we are to take the advice of Kemmis, Edwards-Groves, Wilkinson and Hardy (2012, p. 37) again, her practices will 'retain family resemblances but it may not remain exactly the
same. Because the context of the globalised practice is going to be different, and so too will the external enablers and constraints, and also the “different kinds of intensities and relationships” [original emphasis]. The next context may require more or less praxis or poiesis as it responds to the tensions. Extant practices might expand as creative implementation or creative activism, depending whether that organisation had already decided to work on Aboriginal dental health, or it might enable a practice of creativity, like Rhona’s and her organisation did. What we have here are practices considered as organisms, as an ecology. Kemmis Edwards-Groves, Wilkinson and Hardy (2012, pp. 33-49 ) proposed this, arguing that practices meet the criteria of having ecological principles, networks, nested systems, interdependence, diversity, cycles, flows, development, and dynamic balance (pp. 39-47).

What of the nature of these links from the local to global? What form might they take or how might they be interpreted? Bradley (2009, p. 65), in reference to the work of Dunne (2005, pp. 367-389), offers some insight:

If practice is to hold educative value, that value cannot solely hang in the here-and-now of the case-at-hand but instead must lend practitioners the quality of being 'experienced', such that their accumulated past experience, so far from being dead capital, is always at their disposal, informing in an intimate way how they deal with the unforeseen in cases to come.

For this to happen, for Lucinda’s experiences and actions to be translated from the local to the global, there must be elements of a practice, for example, rules, that carry over from one practice to another, or be in some way shared. This would be similar to the way that doings and sayings constitute different actions and tasks (Schatzki, 2002, p. 73). Lucinda and her team would have been exposed to rules that form practices in, perhaps, the next jurisdiction, or another health discipline in the same jurisdiction, by virtue of the practices of sexual health promotion and storybook writing. This is because there are ‘persisting inscriptions of rules (e.g. in documents) in conjunction with a complex of linguistic and non-linguistic actions, thoughts, and readinesses that are distributed among practice participants’ (Schatzki, 2006, p. 1869). In this way, Lucinda and her
health service’s creativity is based on past experiences, former creativity, and indeed, this explains how her creativity can have global impact.

Creativity can be usefully theorised as practice, enriching our understanding of it. A practice approach to creativity provides an argument for creativity being social and contextual, as part of an ecology of practices. In this way, a practice of creativity facilitates collective creativity, in our case, the creativity of public health services, in much the same way that 'learning in learning communities … manifests itself as a living practice that orchestrates (amongst other things) the people who practice it' (Kemmis et al., 2012, p. 40). This conceptualisation of creativity gathers up some relevant concepts such as productive and creative tension, complexity, aporia, praxis and poiesis, that are seldom made use of in the creativity literature, and this broadens the discussion and the potential for future research. Also, it makes space for different forms of creativity, such as creative implementation and creative activism. The way that creativity is theorised here also accounts for (and highlights) its developmental character. This is in reference to the difference between a practice of creativity that is arrested and one fully achieved, or put another way, a practice of creativity that has not been reorganised or recomposed to be fully achieved through the prefiguring qualities of affect.
CHAPTER 8

CONNECTING TO PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEMS – ELABORATIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND APPLICATIONS

The ideas discussed thus far in this dissertation, supported by the work of scholars in the area, and my conversations with the research participants, have the potential to make a significant contribution to health services. These ideas should not be considered relevant to health services alone, either; creativity as practice is a notion that should be considered for many types of organisations. Of course, there are limitations to this research, and also opportunities for further research, and these will also be discussed in this chapter also.

Elaborations and applications of key concepts

Health services are often under pressure; this is a familiar state of affairs and it is hard to be surprised by it. For instance, there is a rise in health care expenditure, as a share of gross domestic product, across many countries (Heijink, Koolman, & Westert, 2013, p. 527), and more relevant to public health, there is still a gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous health status (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2008, p. 62), which was noted at the beginning of this dissertation. Of course, there are tensions associated with this and these tensions will likely be played out in different ways. Here, we are less concerned with the sort of tension that the individual might experience (although that should never be ignored) and most interested in tension in an organisational sense, as we have already discussed. In organisations, tension is to be worked with, to be balanced and turned into something productive. Recall, again, the dark yet
glowing and tactile looking rocks cut out of embossed wallpaper in the painting, *Growth*, that I made for Suzy, suggesting that beauty can very well be located within what at first seems to be darkness. We have said that tension prompts creativity and noted that this is often a tension between fresh ideas and the 'procedures' – those practices serving to reinforce current operations. Some health services, for example, Chad’s, welcome tension. Authors such as Bilton (2007, p. 39) consider creative tension in organisations, often exhibited as diversity and contradiction, as the raw material for creativity. Conversely, there is some suggestion in the literature that constraints and pressures at work are actually detrimental to creativity (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010, p. 585), but this is mainly in the area of time pressure (2010, pp. 569-598) and the results are far from clear because responses to time pressure are variable and so too are the types of time pressures. What is clear, however, is that this notion of tension deserves more attention by creativity researchers.

Health leaders should try to understand tension in their organisation. They should also try to understand the thinking of as many of their colleagues as they can manage to talk to. Some of their ideas will be fresh, like Lena’s, and others, although once fresh, are now part of current operations. Much depends on how a health service is defined, which was another of Lena’s points. For example, is there a view that health care is about repairing damaged or worn-out ‘patients’, or is there a focus on their health and well-being, that is, their actual health, and also that of the community? There are implications here for how health services are planned and where planning documents make reference to, say, a new model of care, as was the case in Chad’s organisation, health leaders should pay particular attention to those practices that align with the new direction, and also those practices that reinforce current operations; there will likely be a tension between these practices. This would fit in with the usual efforts to manage change, of course, but what is being proposed here is that it is this tension that should be exploited because of its creative potential.
Consider the following example. A community might be ageing, which would be the case for much of the developed world (Blank & Burau, 2007, p. 21), and along with this would come a change in disease profile and pattern of admissions, which would impact on extant practices. Some health services might be required to function beyond capacity as older people occupy beds in hospital while they await their place in a nursing home. New (and unkind) terms like ‘bed blockers’ get used to describe these older patients and new strategies get implemented to divert them from the usual care pathways. The greater risk that older people have of developing illnesses such as cancer, stroke and heart disease means that fresh ideas will emerge and public health practices will expand. These fresh ideas come from different perspectives, no doubt; some will align with current operations and some will not.

From what was discussed in the previous chapter, and above, it would not be at all surprising to see tension between fresh ideas and what sometimes can be an unwavering commitment to current practices. After all, those practices are likely to be embedded in policy, guidelines or accreditation standards. If we go back to the notion of practice complexes, new treatment and care practices will be developed, and this may require changed leadership practices, and perhaps professional development practices. So, the tension associated with population ageing has been generative, from which new ideas, actions and practices have emerged. Amidst this may be a poria, not knowing where the ladder leads, thinking again about the painting No limit. Aporia, says Rob Macklin (2009, p. 96), ‘reinforces the idea that codes, principles and guides should never be applied inflexibly but must always be adapted to circumstances’, and this is where the notion of practical wisdom (phronesis) becomes useful. As current practices get challenged by the demands of population ageing, and through the tension between fresh ideas, expanded practices and new practices, the organisation eventually changes (because practices are the site of the organisation). What is required, beyond leadership and professional development, for example, is experience with the aporias, which should be considered to be a normal, or, as we said earlier, a ‘core’
(Rehn & De Cock, 2009, p. 222) part of health services creativity. The extent that health leaders, educators and participants already do this remains unclear and would certainly be a topic for further research.

Uncertainty and unpredictability, notions related to aporia and also complex adaptive systems, help in the achievement of a creative act (Laclau, 1996, p. 54), although here we might prefer to say ‘in the achievement of a creative health service’. Again, if health services are considered complex adaptive systems, and a ‘sea’ of practices, the idea that practices ‘emerge’ (Stacey, 2005a, p. 80) to become inhabited, is useful. In the tension of a health service, actors interact to resolve the tension. It is the interaction, notably conversation, between actors that makes something of the tensions. Paul Tosey (2006, p. 35), also coming from a complexity perspective, considers creativity to be where ‘locally developed new ideas and practices become engaged in, and are taken up through, wider conversations’. Conrad Kasperon (1978, p. 691) explored the association between creativity and conversations amongst scientists which, he claims, is related to ‘the utility of people at conventions, meetings, and the like’. He observes, further, that ‘creative scientists are distinguished from other scientists in their use of people as sources of information and that they receive information from a wider field of disciplinary areas’ (Kasperon 1978, p. 691). This link between creativity and conversation can be understood in a variety of other ways. For example, Vlad-Petre Glaveanu (2011, pp. 473-492) used a sociocultural frame, as illustrated in the following passage:

[T]he person is guided in his/her creative process by a broad cultural frame which is the personal representational space ... By exploring/communicating these unique representational spaces members come to “realize” other ways of understanding or doing things. It is by communicating or sharing such resources (in the form of ideas, experiences, procedures, etc.) that unique representational spaces open themselves (although never completely) to the common representational space. This “fusion” facilitates the emergence of a new representational space, the space of the creative solution (action or material outcome) (Glaveanu, 2011, p. 483).
This view resonates with the concept of the ‘third space’ that French philosopher Michel Serres (1982, pp. 15-16) wrote about in *The Parasite*. Here, two people have a conversation, differences or disagreements emerge, and a new space is required where the relationship is intercepted and mediation occurs. Hargadon and Beth Bechky (2006, pp. 484-500) also underscore the importance of social interactions, but this time to organisational creativity. Drawing on the work of Amabile (1988, pp. 123-167), Van de Ven (1986, pp. 590-607), Weick (1979, pp. ix-294), and Hagadon and Sutton (1997, pp. 716-749), Hargadon and Bechky (2006, p. 484) take the view that ‘creative solutions are built from the recombination of existing ideas’. On the other hand, and as noted earlier, communication structures, such as networks and learning communities of practice, can be considered as shadow systems that serve the purpose of subversion of the formal systems (Stacey, 1997, p. 85). What happens is: ‘informal forms of organization [will be] made formal, shadow systems accomplish further change, in a never ending cycle’ (Smith & Stacey, 1997, p. 85). In this way, shadow systems can be a source of creativity (Behrens, 2009, p. 124).

What we can take from this is that wherever organisations are framed as complex adaptive systems, and we were alerted to this when Chad referred to unpredictability and uncertainty, and Lena to improvisation through exploration and discovery, communication and relationships are key factors. Creative health services, then, are communicative, and here lies an important responsibility for health leaders and, indeed, for health service participants.

In a practical sense, communication relies on relationship, or as Chad said, ‘trust’. It is hard to imagine communication being truly productive without actors knowing each other and having a certain level of comfort with each other. Chakrabarty and Woodman (2009, p. 192) identified four types of creative relationships – no creative relationship, inspiring relationships, integrating relationships (actors mutually divide their roles for creative action), and synergising relationships, which are characterised by ‘intense collaborative action’ that ‘encourages each other’s progress, affirms confidence in each other’s capability and arouse mutual interest’ (2009, p. 192).
Synergising relationships must surely include an element of trust too, or some similar emotion, and we have seen how emotion is a characteristic of creativity (Munt & Hargreaves, 2009, p. 8). This might, at first glance, seem to be at odds with the work of Jill Perry-Smith (2006, p. 96) who found that ‘weak ties facilitate creativity and that strong ties do not’, on the basis that weak ties are characterised by ‘low levels of closeness and interaction’ (p. 86) and are considered to be associated with nonredundant information, more diverse perspectives, and less conformity (Perry-Smith, 2006, p. 87). It is unlikely, however, that one would find purely weak or strong ties or relationships in any organisation. There must, surely, be gradations of relationship strength, even a waxing and waning, and so it still seems fair to say that here too is another area for further research. If relationship is important in creativity, we still have the question of how it might be achieved. It is also likely that trust, getting back to Chad, and as Lombardo and Roddy (2011, p. 3) explain, exists in synergistic creative relationships. Anna Brattrtröms, Hans Löfsen and Anders Richtnér (2012, p. 743), through their empirical research, show that ‘goodwill trust’, that is, trust in the moral integrity of a collaborator or colleague, is a mediating factor in creativity, even in rule-guided, systematised work environments. So there is another message for health leaders.

Health leaders might also consider attending to affect, or the emotion of the world as it impresses upon us, recalling Morse’s (2010, p. 224) account of Dewey’s theory. In this regard, the balance of research findings, according to Hennessey and Amabile’s (2010, p. 575) review of creativity research, suggests that positive affect is associated with creativity, possibly because positive affect is associated with feelings of safety (Madjar, Oldham, & Pratt, 2002, p. 764) and this allows for a different and more expansive thinking, as opposed to negative affect, where risk tends to be avoided, although it should be acknowledged that a small number of studies, including those by George and Zhou (2002, pp. 687-697), have found that within organisations, negative affect can also prompt creativity. Also highlighted in Hennessey and Amabile’s literature review was the more recent work of George and Zhou (2007, pp. 605-622) who assert that
creativity is benefited by experiencing both positive and negative affect because this balances playfulness, arising out of positive affect, and a need to try hard. Even more recently, and subsequent to the review by Hennessey and Amabile, Ronald Bledow, Kahrin Rosing and Michael Frese (2013, pp. 432-450) argued that it is a dynamic shift between positive and negative affect that facilitates creativity. This might even be considered a productive (micro-)tension in line with our earlier discussion, which would not be at odds with what we noted to be Lena’s observation that it is not necessarily affect per se that is associated with creativity, but rather how affect is responded to that counts. This also supports the value of the dynamic of affect.

We have said that affect is instrumental in leading a practice of creativity to being fully achieved, rather than arrested, and that it is the dynamic of affect that is important. If we accept Dewey’s notion that emotion is ‘held within the world’, how might that dynamic be employed to facilitate creativity? A supportive workplace is important for creativity (Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta, & Kramer, 2004, pp. 5-32), something highlighted in Hennessey and Amabile’s review (2010, p. 580), and in midwifery, for example, emotion is ‘strongly influenced by the context of practice’ (Hunter, 2005, p. 253). So, it is possible that there is something of a circular relationship here, where contextual factors, including affect, facilitate creativity, which, recalling Gauntlett (2011, p. 76) again, leads to a further affective response, which then feeds back into the workplace context and its creativity. Removing affect from this equation would likely constrain creativity.

What is also important about affect is how it might be associated with praxis, poiesis, or both. Affect is implicit in praxis if one takes Colin Holmes and Philip Warelow’s (2000, p. 177) lead and apply Paulo Freire’s view of praxis as a combination of body and mind: ‘you have to do it to know it’, as Lena said. To quote Holmes and Warelow (2000, p. 180) directly, praxis is all about (let’s call them) creatives: ‘actualising the full wealth of their best potential capacities, encompassing their distinctive talents and skills
and engaging an emancipatory position in which they challenge received ways of thinking, feeling and practising’. Holmes and Warelow are referring to nurses, although the idea would certainly seem to be relevant across health services more generally and, no doubt, beyond. We have already implicated praxis in creativity but there may be some leverage in understanding, through further research, the notion of praxis, in the context of creativity, better. For example, how well do health professionals believe that their talents and skills are used? Do they think that they are supported in challenging current ways, through their thoughts, feelings and practices, and if so, how does that occur? If praxis involves collective consciousness, as Seo and Creed (2002, p. 240) suggest, another topic for future research might be how these talents, thoughts, feelings and practices are used (or not used) across entire organisations.

Amidst a health service’s affectivity, there may be a desire, for instance, to seek and apply evidence in a wise and practical way, like Owen did, or there may be any number of other actions inspired by phronesis. There might be a growing reliance on clinical judgement in determining, say, a patient’s health need, rather than adhering to set protocols or clinical pathways. More emphasis might be placed on interacting with groups of older people in the community, that is, promoting healthy lifestyle changes to them directly, personally, instead of what seems to have become the more fashionable approach of tweaking the ‘policy machine’ a little here and there to direct health behaviour. One might reasonably expect to see a secondary tension here also – between ways of knowing, where technology and policy are privileged over what comes from experience and ‘common sense’ (Crowden, 2003, p. 147). Exactly how phronesis is important, and in particular, how important it is across a range of situations might be explored in future research, to echo the comments of Andrew Crowden’s (2003, p. 148). Researchers might follow the lead of Kathryn Montgomery (2005, p. 28), who, in writing about clinical judgement and practice in medicine, notes how ‘Medicine is not a science; physicians must act. They must do the best they can, even when it is inadequate, even when they don’t know all there is to know, even when there is nothing to do’.
Creativity probably plays a role here and researching it at an organisational
level, with complexity theory in mind, following Antonacopoulou (2008, p. 117), would be very useful.

Earlier on we noted the interrelationship between praxis and poiesis, how
poiesis ‘liberates the wilfulness of a praxis’ (Whitehead, 2003, p. 4), and how
this can be transformational in art (Whitehead, 2003, p. 2), and it might be
argued, also in ‘making’ a health service, as Chad showed us. If creativity is
important to health services, one should not only act in the pursuit of this
relationship between praxis and poiesis, one should take it further and
consider such a transformational prompt as fertile ground for research
also.

As we have noted, tension in health services often arises from unmet
demand, and, related to this, there may be some clashing between ‘the way
we do things around here’ and fresh ideas. We have noted, also, that such
an environment is made up of interconnected doings and unpredictability,
and that within this environment there are aporias and affective responses
and people working collectively, drawing on their practical wisdom
(phronesis). One could say, then, that such a health service is primed for
creativity. This, I would argue, is far more important than having a handful
of gifted individuals, or a single smart team, turning their minds to a health
service’s current demands.

The relationship between praxis and phronesis, getting back to Edwards-
Groves, Gray, Kemmis and Smith (2008, p. 87), requires thinking beyond
the rules and working with them. Creativity emerges where the rules of the
game brush up against fresh ideas, where new rules are established (Rehn &
De Cock, 2009, p. 227). We saw how this works when a car is repaired in
Ghana. Using evidence-based practice as an example again, how do those
rules co-inhabit the same space as fresh ideas? Stephen Webb (2001, p. 75)
raised similar questions in the discipline and practice of social work. While
evidence might often be looked upon as a ‘truth’, it is always provisional
and developing, and further, staying with Webb (2001, p. 72), social work is
highly situated, varied, requires complex decision-making, is political, and in
constant flux and change. You would expect to find this dilemma in other health disciplines, of course, and possibly all health services. That is, there is a misguided belief that evidence is fixed, amidst the fluid nature of practices and change. As Lena said: ‘Because sometimes maybe the rules are good but maybe they’re old rules … and its difficult because you live in a culture that wants you to be innovative, kind of’. These words, ‘kind of’, almost sum up the dilemma – creativity and innovation might be required, but as has been noted on numerous occasions, there is a tension with those practices, such as those concerned with evidence-based practice, that reinforce current operations. Going back to Antonacopoulou (2008, p. 116), we are reminded that rules and routines reproduce themselves, somewhat changed through improvisation, because practices, including practices associated with evidence-based practice, themselves are co-evolving. So, Antonacopoulou’s complexity approach to practice, along with our practice approach to creativity, helps us to understand this dilemma. Certainly the more traditional process view of creativity provides far less insight. Here, rules serve an important role, as the raw material for new rules, and in the end, new organisations. What this means for health services is the heightened need to work intuitively and reflexively, just like Lena, who used ‘instinct’, which she said should always be listened to and reflected on, although not always followed.

In this chapter we have, so far, attended most to what makes up and facilitates creativity – tensions, affect, action towards good (praxis) and practical wisdom (phronesis). In some ways, these have been thought of as resources. It is equally important, surely, to be concerned with those participating in health services and their experiences with tension, affect, and taking action. Health professionals are driven to help people, said Chad, so it is important to also consider how the changes that unfold as a result of creativity fit with these beliefs, and clinical identity, which was another point that Chad made. That is, it can be useful to consider the internal purpose of praxis, especially concerning the implementation of new models, such as models aimed at supporting older people in hospital or Chad’s strength model. It is also worth reflecting here on how health
services not only implement new models creatively, but how new ways of doing business are produced creatively, through *poiesis*, where fresh ideas challenge current operations as creative activism, and, again, the impact of this on an organisation’s actors. Here are potentially useful topics of future research also, along with some relational aspects worthy of investigation, especially concerning artful communication or communicative *poiesis*, as well as the notion of ‘relating’ itself, and for reasons explained earlier on, the connecting qualities of ‘making’ – making plans, for instance.

Understanding how these concepts might facilitate health services in moving forward, creatively, to better meet demand, would be most useful. These demands might relate to Aboriginal people, for instance, and their infant mortality, or to rural and remote people and, say, farm safety, or to issues around the socio-economically disadvantaged, veterans, prisoners and their health, overseas-born people, issues related to the lifespan, such as arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions, asthma, cancer, cardiovascular health, diabetes, injury prevention and control, mental health or obesity. These, of course, are the Australian Institute Health and Welfare priority areas that were referred to when selecting our participants. Other countries may have different health demands to be addressed creatively. Worldwide there are major differences in access, safety and care efficiency (Schoen, Osborn, How, Doty, & Peugh, 2009, p. 3), there is a need for a public health response to climate change (Frumkin, Hess, Luber, Malilay, & McGeehin, 2008, p. 435), and some rural areas of developing countries remain unreached by medical experts (Kai & Ahmed, 2013, p. 1016). There is still human suffering because some communities cannot access the right pharmaceuticals (Fisher & Syed, 2008, p. 1). There is, indeed, no end to the list of complex health issues that might be thought about differently, through a practice approach to creativity.

A practice of creativity does not stand in isolation. As we have noted, it bumps up against other practices as part of an ecology of practices. A practice of creativity might be associated with what Tizianna Rosso-Spena and Christina Mele (2012, pp. 532-533) refer to as a ‘practice of
innovation’. The doings, sayings and relatings of practices of creativity and innovation may very well have some commonality; to an observer, differences in the way people act, communicate and relate as they either create or innovate may be hardly discernable. The aporias associated with creativity and innovation might be similar too – people may become ‘frozen’, as Lena said, when it comes to making decisions about creativity and innovation equally and in the same way. The same argument can be applied to praxis and phronesis, where morally guided action and practical wisdom might look similar for both creativity and innovation. One difference, however, thinking of practice’s teleoaffective structures, is that the ends of creativity and innovation will differ, which is what the usual comparisons between creativity and innovation usually focus on (ideation versus implementation). Still, the separation of creativity from innovation is starting to seem somewhat artificial from a practice perspective, especially when considering Nayak’s (2008, p. 421) comment that in organisations, creativity is less about novelty and appropriateness than accomplishing something in a novel and appropriate way, which could pass as a descriptor of innovation. Our expression of creativity as either implementation or activism reduces, although not altogether, the notional barrier between creativity and innovation. If multidimensional creativity research is considered important, and we will soon get to that, an argument in favour of research that incorporates both creativity and innovation, and even change, as Woodman (2008, pp. 283-300) suggests, may be beneficial. It may better to focus attention on the totality of organisational experiences and practices, rather than separating them. A multidimensional approach would provide a means for better appreciating the interrelationships between creativity, innovation and change and this, in turn, may assist in the application of research findings to practice.
Contributions to the scholarship of creativity and limitations of this research

Our approach to creativity offers a new way of seeing and utilising the creativity research literature – to integrate theories and research findings into what Michael Mumford (2003, p. 118) refers to as a ‘coherent system’. Mumford summarised the state of creativity research in 2003 by referring to the chapters of two (then) new creativity handbooks. One was edited by Mark Runco (1997) and the other by Robert Sternberg (1999). Mumford’s approach would seem to be a useful way of capturing current perspectives; however, the focus of both these handbooks was on the individual rather than the organisation. So, here we will consider two more recent handbooks, both on organisational creativity, to discuss how a practice approach to creativity might add to knowledge of the field. Handbooks by Zhou and Shalley (2008b) and (again) Mumford (2012) are useful, but the one of greatest relevance, because it provides a synoptic view of organisational creativity research, was that edited by Zhou and Shalley. The last chapter in their handbook is dedicated to expanding the scope and impact of creativity research. The authors of this section, Zhou and Shalley (2008a, p. 348), lead with their concern for more multilevel research on creativity, a point made in the conclusion of Mumford’s (2012, p. 711) handbook also. Zhou and Shalley suggest that it would be useful to understand how the antecedents of creativity operate at the individual, team and organisational levels, not separately, but across these three levels jointly. From the traditional research standpoint, as Zhou and Shalley (2008a, p. 348) point out, this is problematic in terms of data collection and sample size, and also because ‘the creativity research field has not developed a unified typology that would provide theoretical guidance’. Here we would not accept such claims on ontological and epistemological grounds, given our postmodern stance, but apart from that, we should note the advantages of taking a practice approach in overcoming this dilemma for creativity research. Zhou and Shalley (2008a, p. 350) claim that a suitable multilevel theory for creativity has not yet been formulated, but a practice approach to creativity does offer a multilevel approach.
perspective. As Nayak (2008, pp. 433-434) points out, a practice approach to creativity means that creative acts occur within a relational space. This relational space does not necessarily belong exclusively to either individuals, teams or organisations; it exists through ‘social connections among individuals, collectives, organisations, institutions and situated contexts in which these connections take form’ (Russo-Spена & Mele, 2012, p. 533). Schatzki and the work he has done on order, that is, social order, is particularly useful here too. For Schatzki (2002, p. 59), ‘social orders are not self-standing or self-propagating configurations, but ... they exist and evolve only in some context encompassing them’. This context is a nexus of social practices, says Schatzki (2002, p. 59), to which Sue Saltmash (2009, p. 153) adds: ‘no clinic, classroom or workplace can ever operate independently of the communities and contexts in which their work takes place’, and, as Lena commented: ‘we’ve affected the culture and the culture’s affected us’. If one accepts this line, there is a relationship between different levels or orders of practice, so that creativity might be practiced by an individual, team or organisation in a way that is part of a nexus of practices. There is an opportunity here for creativity researchers to identify ways of using a practice approach to firstly see across these levels and then to understand their interdependence and the impact of working across them.

Zhou and Shalley’s final chapter of their handbook also makes reference to the work of Andrew Hargadon (2008, pp. 323-343) and Jill Perry-Smith (2008, pp. 189-210); they put forward an argument that creativity is a social process. At the same time, Zhou and Shalley (2008a, pp. 359-361) call for a bridging of creativity research with other fields of research. This is interesting also in that this study does in fact offer a bridge between practice, as the site of the social, to borrow Schatzki’s (2002) phrase, and the creativity field of research.

Another helpful comment that Zhou and Shalley (2008a, p. 359) make is that ‘much can be learned by considering and investigating creating and organizing simultaneously’. A practice approach to creativity offers some
prospect here because there is an association between organising, as a managerial function (Wood, Zeffane, Fromholtz, Wiesner, & Creed, 2010, p. 12) and Nayak’s (2008, p. 421) comment about ‘getting the job done’, which he made in relation to creativity and which can be taken to come from a management perspective. Once the traditional process approach to creativity is relinquished and a practice approach employed, it becomes much easier to see interrelationships such as these and there is, therefore, greater potential, with practice theory as part of a theoretical framework, to research such relationships.

Nayak’s application of practice theory to creativity, and to a lesser extent, the work of Giannopoulou, Gryszkiewicz and Barlatier (2014, pp. 23-44) and Dougherty and Tolboom (2008, pp. 263-282), have been very helpful and are most encouraging, especially considering that Nayak’s research and this study arrived at similar points in very different ways. Unfortunately, Nayak’s work has not gained traction amongst creativity scholars and it is hoped that this research will be seen as support, and that it will be of assistance to others wanting to step outside the traditional view of creativity, that is, creativity conceptualised as a process. This research also provides a different context from Nayak’s, and the more hierarchical, governmental, multidisciplinary and risk adverse nature of health services, with their specific mission, offers a useful contrast to Nayak’s supermarkets. Most importantly, the material covered in Section 2 of this dissertation extends Nayak’s theoretical platform.

Similar to Nayak, here, organisational tensions are considered to be important prompts for organisational creativity. However, where Nayak, through his data analysis, identified four tensions (intrinsic-extrinsic motivation, pleasure-control, organisational politics ad personal-corporate morality), we broadened the scope of tension considerably, which is not out of step with the literature on creative tension more generally, as discussed in Chapter 7. In fact, tensions may very well be context-specific and it is not too difficult to identify tensions present in health services that will not be present in supermarkets, or anywhere else. Demand for new
and better services because of population ageing (at the expense of other services) would be one health-specific tension, but others would include tensions associated with different disciplines’ approach to treatment and care, each having some sort of evidence with which to argue their case, or between the requirement to provide acute care at the expense of say health promotion, or inpatient care at the expense of community care. Of course, other tensions will be common across many industries and tensions between financial constraint and quality would be one. One area of difference between Nayak’s tensions and our conceptualisation of creativity is that, here, tension arises between what has been referred to as ‘procedures’ and fresh ideas. This may, in part, be a reflection of the size and complexity of most health services, and the concomitant requirement for standardisation, compared with supermarkets and some other industries.

Nayak’s (2008, p. 420) reference to personal morality and its ‘important role in enabling creativity’ seems to align with what is proposed here also. However, we have referred to morally guided action, or praxis. By bringing praxis into the discussion, not just the notion of morality, a whole new body of literature becomes available to creativity (and practice) researchers. For example, we have been able to consider the fact that the purpose of praxis lies within it and the recognition of this allowed us to a better understanding the internal purposes of a practice of creativity, making another useful link with Gauntlett’s (2011, p. 76) suggestion that joy is implicated, intimately, in creativity. This is something that Nayak (2008, p. 432) would likely agree with: ‘Creativity is often associated with fun and pleasure’.

Nayak (2008, p. 421) also refers to ‘a feel for the game’ as an example of operating logic, a term he relates to Bordieu’s ‘habitus’ (1990, p. 55), and as useful as this may be, our reference to phronesis, to which a feel for the game might also apply, can be put to even better use in understanding creativity. Take for example Anne Kinsella and Allan Pitman’s (2012b, p. 1) co-edited volume Phronesis as professional knowledge: Practical wisdom of the
professions; these editors challenge the instrumentalist values that, as they say, permeate professional practices and policies. They see phronesis as a means for 'correcting' (2012b, p. 1) this. Phronesis may be one of the levers required to open up creativity research so that there is more of an alignment with the organism (rather than boundary or process) metaphor of creativity (Moran, 2009, pp. 1-22), which does not take, as Nayak (2008, p. 423) very nicely writes, a 'divine spectator' view. This is the difference between object and experience (Nayak, 2008, p. 424).

Nayak (2008, p. 420) emphasizes 'managerial creativity'. Our practice approach, referring again to Schatzki, Knorr Cetina and Von Savigny (2001, p. 11), positions creativity within a field of practices, as a social phenomenon, where aspects of these practices (such as rules) are shared between organisational participants. So, a practice of creativity can be shared across an organisation and in response to this the organisation evolves, much the same as the way Tsoukas (2002, pp. 567-582) describes organisational change. Creativity researchers might even consider organisational creativity to be not just a matter of responding to directions, encouragements or facilitating moves from managers, but at least in part, as a collective 'becoming'. This would then be reflected in research questions and objectives, broadening the scope of research beyond the dominant psychological, social-psychological or managerial framework.

We made the case in Chapter 2 that creativity is a heterogeneous concept. What is proposed in this dissertation, that is, a practice approach to creativity, should be considered in much the same way. Our emphasis has been on health services and this has been useful because they are under pressure and they are expected to be creative in resolving this pressure. How might lessons from this research, then, be applied to other organisation or to other types of organisations? The answer to this question may be to, again, go back to the concepts of productive tension, working with notions of complexity, aporia, phronesis, affect, praxis, rules, poiesis, relatings and makings, and the evolutionary nature of creativity, because each of these will be flavoured by its context and shape the
character of creativity. For example, *phronesis* associated with health care may be different from the practical wisdom associated with say banking, construction, education or horticulture. The nature of relating may have more commonality across these areas, perhaps, but the rules will most likely be different. Nevertheless, these concepts represent a useful place to start in applying a practice approach to creativity in any organisation and to researching it. It would also be useful to research differences in creativity, according to context, possibly setting the scene for more sharing of ideas and experiences across industries, which would be similar to how health services have taken valuable lessons about safety from, for example, the aviation industry (Pronovost et al., 2009, pp. 479-489). Also, how does a practice of creativity cross organisations or organisation types? At a time when the provision of public health care often involves partnerships with, say, the fitness industry, in the case of falls injury prevention in older people, the justice system in the case of hepatitis C treatment, or local government in creating healthy towns and cities, much might be gained by exploring such cross-industry application of a practice approach to creativity.

A possible criticism of this research might be that the notion of creativity has been valorised, and that there is an assumption that all organisations or health services (or other organisations) ought to be striving for creativity all of the time. Of course, some organisations, perhaps new ones, may more usefully attend to other practices, such as those that relate most to their core business (what will eventually become those extant practices that reinforce current operations). Other organisations might prefer to focus more on performance, or perhaps efficiency, although one needs to be mindful that reform, performance and creativity are not mutually exclusive and it is likely that as organisations travel the path to performance and efficiency, there will be times when creativity will be required. This is where it may be better to consider a practice of creativity, as we have said, as omnipresent, but at times, arrested.
There is always the possibility that creativity fully achieved can unintentionally, or even intentionally, have serious or even horrifically negative effects. The so-called ‘dark side of creativity’, highlighted by Robert McLaren (1993, pp. 137-144), refers to such things as ‘technological frolics destructive to our environment’ (p. 137) or our communities. What does our conceptualisation of creativity offer by way of understanding or even helping to resolve this dilemma? Green’s (2009, p. 10) guiding principles of professional practice and the interrelationship between praxis and phronesis, especially, may hold the beginnings of an answer. Praxis is a good place to start in thinking about this because praxis is commonly thought of as investing practice with an explicit moral dimension, including justness (Wilson, 1994, p. 189). So there is at least a theoretical response to the dark side of creativity. This argument can be taken further in that the link between praxis and phronesis also involves this moral domain, according to Macklin (2009, p. 83): ‘moral judgements require … practical reasoning when applying ethical norms’. Practical reasoning, or phronesis, is ‘not about developing and applying universal rules or repeatable techniques, but about adapting our experiences, knowledge and normative criteria’ (Macklin, 2009, p. 93). If this is the case, our practice of creativity approach, fitted with praxis, and also reliant upon phronesis, might offer creativity researchers an avenue for exploring how immoral applications of creativity might be avoided or curtailed, especially in areas such as health services where decisions are often made on behalf of other people or communities.

We have referred to creativity in a way that foregrounds its many benefits and also acknowledged its dark side, and also discussed tensions between current and potential new ways of operating. One has to be careful, then, not to create a binary in the way that Rehn and De Cock (2009, p. 4) described – old/bad versus new/good. This takes us back to the concept of novelty, often considered a main feature of creativity, and how novelty has a tendency to be valorised. Of course, not all that is old is bad, especially in our more organic and evolutionary view of creativity, where ‘virtually all [creative] acts contain at least some traces of old ideas, and this “old” content might in fact be quite substantial’ [original emphasis] (Rehn & De
Cock, 2009, p. 224). In the same way, not all that is novel or new is good, as we have said. Also, Rehn and De Cock (2009, p. 224) make the point, so often missed in the creativity literature, that ‘originality lies in the relational dynamics, not in the thing itself’. We have an illustration of that, recalling Rhona’s home INR testing, which had already been in place for adults and for children overseas. Creativity researchers might give more attention to such relationships between old and new, and all the gradations between.

The so called ‘turn’ to practice has it that ‘life transpires through human activities’ (Whittington, 2003, p. 122) called practices. However, putting the work of Nayak aside for a moment, insufficient attention has thus far been given to what is offered here as a practice approach to creativity. A practice approach more usefully depicts creativity as integral to the constitution of society, as a means of expression and improvement (Schatzki, 2002, p. 123).

**Methodological contributions and limitations**

Robert Drazin, Mary Ann Glynn and Robert Kazanjian (1993, pp. 137-144) caution creativity researchers about defining creativity as an outcome, suggesting that attention needs to be focused more on process (or, in our case, practice). In this research, participants were chosen because their organisations achieved outcomes considered to be novel and valuable. However, outcomes were merely a means of accessing research participants, rather than being the topic of investigation. Given that we have taken the view that creativity is a heterogeneous construct, so the quality of outcome becomes less important. Some scholars are also critical of the way in which creativity researchers consider that ‘individuals’ creativity aggregates to become work group creativity, and work group creativity aggregates to become organizational creativity’ (Drazin, Glynn, & Kazanjian, 1999, p. 302), and this is a criticism that may be levelled at this research, at least during its initial stages. Still, the call for multilevel theorising about creativity, as we have just discussed, has not been ignored and, as has also been mentioned, individuals have been considered the
entry point for understanding the creativity of their health services, and a practice approach has helped us to see organisations more as organisms than aggregated parts. Also, and following a number of other researchers including Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell (1999, p. 302), individual actors can be considered to be institutionally constructed anyhow. Other creativity researchers might consider, as Richard Whittington (1999, p. 303) points out, that the notion of practice has a ‘stronger focus on people than organisations, the routines as opposed to change, and situated activity rather than abstract process’, although this would not be how Schatzki (2002, p. xi), for example, would likely see it, given the emphasis he places on practice as ‘the site of the social’.

Many creativity researchers have examined creativity from a distance and this arises out of disciplinary biases (for example, psychology often takes an experimental approach) and also methodological biases. To explore creativity from within, as I have attempted to do here, required me to work with creativity. The phrase ‘to fight fire with fire’, referring to the firefighting strategy of back-burning, suggests that in certain circumstances, such as when the results being sought are important, it can be helpful to use methods that go beyond the usual – to work with the fire. Here is one such case. Although the term ‘fight’ has little place in this discussion, the idea of using creativity to explore creativity seems most apt and other creativity researchers might consider a similar approach.

Elliot Eisner (2006, pp. 9-18) identified features required of arts-based research to, as he said, have a future. This list of features can be distilled down to two main points: the degree to which it ‘reach[es] for the heavens by crafting research that reveals to us what we have learned not to see’ (Eisner, 2006, p. 17), and also ‘the public’s willingness to accept what we have made visible as one useful way to understand’ (Eisner, 2006, p. 17), which in Eisner’s case, are schools, but for us, health services and their creativity. These same points can be used to consider the contribution that this research might be considered to have made, from a methodological point of view. Reaching for the heavens is a tall order indeed and, for most,
unachievable. Still, we have worked towards a whole new way of thinking about creativity and this has not been done this by adding or confirming what is presupposed. That approach would have taken us in a very different direction, albeit one more common in creativity scholarship, but possibly even further from the heavens. We have taken risks and relied heavily on concepts like emergence, encouraged by the work of Somerville (2007, pp. 225-243) and Carter (2004, pp. 1-16). There was risk here, indeed, because our approach demanded letting go in order ‘become’ as a researcher. This has been most useful in enabling me to ‘see’, as we have done, what others had not been able to see. The discussion about turning points (Chapter 5) was an attempt to represent this, honestly and transparently, and it is hoped that there is a good sense now of how useful it has been to enter the unknown, and the rewards of this.

This research advanced in a way that adapted, if not added to, current understandings of qualitative research. It follows Reader’s (2008, pp. 297-311) illustration of emergence, which extended Somerville’s notion of postmodern emergence. Reader explained how, in painting, ‘new elements would appear on the canvas from what seemed to be out of nowhere’ (p. 300). Somerville (2007, p. 228) observed this, referring to ‘the appearance of new images on the painting’, which is thought-provokingly similar to Lord’s description of Giacometti’s process of painting, discussed in some detail in Chapter 3, and what was experienced in this study.

Reader (2008, p. 298) reacts to the way in which writing is a privileged form of scholarship and he refers to efforts to ‘tame the visual and incorporate it into existing genres’, through exegeses, for example. Nevertheless, he did make commentaries while painting and took notes (p. 300) after painting sessions, similar to the way I kept a research journal, in fact. So Reader’s research practice was not devoid of text altogether, although the use of text, or not, is probably not the main point to be made here. The more interesting point is around the character of text employed in research practice. Here we are reminded, again, of Ulmer’s ‘applied grammatology’, and also Richardson and St. Pierre’s (2005, pp. 923-948).
article Writing: A method of Inquiry, to show that writing is much more than recording and reporting; writing is thinking and analysis. This seems to be the case for metaphor, especially.

Metaphor has been used in this research as a generative device. Just as Reader put commentary and note taking in close association with painting, I connected metaphor with painting. That is, the Sea of Creativity painting begot the Sea of Creativity metaphor, an important turning point in this research. The painting was not forgotten with the emergence of the metaphor either, no more than a parent ceases to exist after the child is born; in most cases, the parent remains as an independent yet persistent influence – so did the painting in relation to the metaphor.

Reader (2008, p. 304) refers to ‘visual thinking’ and ‘painterly methodology’, which gets to the heart of his methodology. The word ‘video’, which Reader also used, would also serve as a useful description, as in ‘video-analysis’, perhaps. There could even be an argument for terms like ‘annotation’ and ‘painting’ to be placed in juxtaposition, to acknowledge the actual contribution of text to Reader’s work. This is not to say that painting, or more broadly, art, does not make its own epistemic contribution. The point here is that, as illustrated in this study, even where art-making is the predominant method, it can be very usefully associated with other modes of thinking and researching, including text. W.J.T Mitchell goes even further than this in coining the term ‘imagetext’. In an interview by Brad Bucknell and Christine Wiesenthal (2000, p. 2), Mitchell talks about how imagetext is a way of explaining that ‘representation is heterogeneous’. So, we can say that art can be appropriately and usefully associated with metaphor as it is re- or co-presented and extended in text, perhaps as a form of imagetext, or in what, here, might even be called ‘imagemetaphor’, or possibly, ‘visuo-metaphorical thinking’.

Arthur Miller (1996, p. 225) used Niels Bohr’s early reasoning about atomic theory to illustrate the productive conjunction of the visual and the metaphor: ‘The atom behaves as if it were a miniscule solar system’
The term ‘miniscule solar system’ is a metaphorical strategy to aid in understanding the primary subject, the atom. The distinctive image associated with the solar system then adds weight to the metaphor. This shows just how potent this combination of the visual and metaphor can be. But what of art, as a form of the visual, and metaphor? Art may be read literally, as in the case of representational art (Morey, 2011, p. 19), or metaphor may be used to provide a means for ‘both artist and the viewer [to] engage in a complex epistemological process’ (Morey, 2011, p. 18). This is the basis of this research, one might say. Hypermedia might also be considered as a way of facilitating emergence, not only through the making of pictures, but also as a process with epistemological ends outside art-making. The World Wide Web (and especially what some refer to as Web 2.0), and its features characteristic of complex adaptive systems (Rupert, Rattrout, & Hassas, 2008, p. 133), offers more than an ability to search and read, where ‘everybody “out there” [is] basically an audience’ [original emphasis] (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 6), or a provider of data. The magnitude and ‘power of the network’ (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 6) means that researchers, such as myself, enter that space and play (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 7). The unfathomable number of destinations created by a vast array of connections creates an environment, I found, to be generative, in a process not all that dissimilar to painting. Just as one mark on the paper leads to another, so does one set of search results, or one article, lead to another. Here is a sign of what Henk Eijkman (2011, p. 343) refers to a ‘shift towards a radically altered, “postmodernist” epistemic architecture of participation’ [original emphasis]. A carefully thought out search term might, sometimes out of failure or frustration, be altered, and altered again, and so lead to another source that, although not what was originally called for, or imagined, offers a new perspective on a topic. This might cause one to reframe their question, perhaps a few times, or the bibliography of an article might take you somewhere surprising, to an unfamiliar discipline perhaps, and then that material collides with some earlier memories, images or readings, and the synergistic nature of this, getting back to Corning’s (2002, p. 56) explanation of emergence (Chapter 4) ends up offering you a completely new understanding. This form of emergence
might be further explored; the likely relevance of this to a range of researchers could make such research particularly worthwhile.

Not to be overlooked in this discussion about research methodology is that our *modus operandi* has been to use creativity (or research methods that draws on creativity) to study that very thing, creativity – creativity has been used to study itself. This notion of working within, that is, not being external to the research, as if a spectator, has been useful and it is a theme we will pick up on as we conclude this dissertation in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION: RESTING PLACE

This discussion about a practice approach to creativity, contextualised to health services, might be closing, but the work itself, its future turns and permutations, should continue. So, following the example set by Brendan McCormack and Angie Titchen (2009, p. 226), the term ‘Resting Place’ would seem to be an appropriate addition to the usual ‘Conclusion’.

The opening discussion in this dissertation was about the importance of creativity to health services, and there is no shortage of reports advocating creativity (or innovation) as a means for success in this area. The choice of health services as the context for this research has proven to be valuable because that puts up challenges to the notion of creativity that would not be as obvious for, say, the creative industries, or some of the other areas in which creativity research is often conducted. Health services are complex in terms of their structure (multi- and inter-disciplinary), processes, as evidenced by terms such as ‘continuum of care’, and risk-aversive nature (given the vulnerability of many of their clients), the propensity for error and the sensitivity of many treatments, which feed a code of standardisation. This is especially so for public health, where the issues are immense and multifactorial (as for Aboriginal health) and where a single intervention often targets not just a single person or family, but an entire population. So, it is understandable, indeed, for health services to be wary of efforts to be more creative, despite what might be considered to be a need to do things differently, especially when one takes an
international perspective on health care. This is the case, at least, for creativity as it is currently understood.

The starting point for this research was my own practices. That is, my practice as a health professional, researcher and artist. Writing (another of my practices) about my ‘horizon’, a term taken from Patton (2009, p. 184), helped me to scope-out this research, rejecting, for example, a focus on health management, having become aware of the benefits in taking a more systemic approach. Even at this early stage, I played with the word ‘process’ – ‘the conversations are about process’, as I wrote into my horizon – which ended up being a pivotal concept in the argument that was to eventually be made. I used art and metaphor to penetrate the ‘layers of dust, and varnish’ that I imagined preserved established conceptualisations of creativity. I drew heavily on Bourdieu (2004, pp. 93-94) and Finlay (2002, pp. 531-541) in thinking about my relationship with this research. The reflexivity matrix that was created, its application, and the painting and sculpting of self-portraits, offered a useful means for working in the project. I found myself doing what Laura Ellingson (Forthcoming) urged researchers to do: ‘reflect upon the ways in which our body/selves shape our understandings and representations’.

These practices were generative and fundamental to the direction and ultimate outcome of this research. Key amongst all this was making eleven paintings for the eight research participants (and all the associated practices of framing, budgeting, scheduling, travelling, transporting, interviewing, recording, reviewing, reading, and so forth), which did what Somerville (2007, p. 235) said it would do, that is, to help me to ‘come to know’, in this case, about the creativity of health services. We will come back to this shortly.

The so-called ‘standard’ definition of creativity, considered to be a process involving novelty and value, provided the backdrop to this research. It is not a backdrop that ought to be dismissed easily either, just because it has been questioned here, as we challenged the status quo in creativity
research. These ‘current ways of operating’, to use a phrase introduced in
Chapter 3, and the fresh ideas that emerged in this research, provided the
basis for a creative tension. We have considered tension to be important in
creativity, so it is not at all surprising that a similar dynamic was evident
here also. That is, if this research can be thought of as being itself creative,
at least to some extent, one would expect to see some of the elements of
a practice of creativity, such as tension, emerging in this dissertation. It
might even be imagined that a similar tension arose for Boden (2004, p. 2)
when she proposed that creativity is not an all-or-nothing affair, for
Beghetto and Kaufman (2007, p. 73) when they proposed so called ‘mini-
creativity’, or for Banaji, Burn and Buckingham (2010, p. 28) when they
questioned the binary of Big-C creativity and little-c creativity, or indeed
for many of the authors who were referred to in Chapter 2. One certainly
gets a sense of this from reading Brodzinski and Munt (2009, p. 279), who
referred to ‘the crisis of creativity’ as they set out to problematise the
notion of creativity by comparing it to innovation, before eventually coming
up with the concept of ‘empathic imagination’ and, in doing so, offering a
fresh look at aesthetics and emotion and their importance to creativity.
Nayak (2008, pp. 420-439) must have also worked within a similar tension,
surely, when he formulated his practice-based approach to creativity,
although, like most researchers’ reports (creativity or otherwise), there is
little evidence, indeed, of how this tension played out.

The aim of Chapter 5 was to describe the turning points in this research.
At each turn, there were these creative tensions. The events that led to
the realisation that creativity might be conceptualised as a practice, rather
than a process, occurred with some difficulty, despite, for example, an
earlier reference to practice theory in my research journal; such is the
degree to which the term ‘process’ is embedded in the creativity literature,
and for a period, in my own psyche. On the other hand, coming to know
that organisational creativity has evolutionary qualities was less difficult,
perhaps because the tensions arose and were responded to at a distance
from the context, that is, through art and metaphor, located, as they were,
within the Sea of Creativity. Again, we are reminded of the relationship
between the topic of research and the means for exploring it, that creativity is being researched through creative practice, a matter of ‘knowing from within’ (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002, p. 571), or thinking of, rather than about, creativity, recalling Sullivan (2009, p. 48) and also Chapter 4, where the painting Driving forces explored this association.

Creativity, as practice, does not recoil from those tensions that are abundant in today’s health services, or indeed, most other organisations. Tension provides health leaders, sponsors and practitioners who want their health service to be more creative, with a useful and often-obvious place to start. At the very least, a point to come from this research is that tensions between accepted ways (what has been referred to as those practices that reinforce current operations) and fresh ideas ought to be exploited. Accepted ways are often time-limited, due to changing contexts, so fresh ideas, in many cases, announce what eventually become the new ways. It is the working with this tension, that is, discussing it openly, that serves as a stimulus for change, and again drawing a parallel with Tsoukas and Chia’s (2002, p. 570) thesis about organisational change, this determines how the organisation will be tomorrow. One might even ask, why struggle with this tension when it, or some similar tension, will take the organisation to a place where it would eventually go anyhow? That place may be part of the vision of the organisation, embodied through and its current practices, or it may be an emerging vision, accumulated through the fresh ideas of organisational participants. There is a sense here, then, that the creativity of health services is not entirely at the mercy of its leaders, strategists, or strategies, in some top-down movement, nor is it the result of the random, albeit cumulative, actions of the organisation’s participants. The notions of creative implementation and creative activism make this point. Depending on the origin and resolution of tension, which will no doubt vary according to a changing context, the creativity of health services is a co-production. Viewed this way, leaders might feel reassured that it is not they, alone, who shape the organisation’s future. In fact, they would do well to facilitate fresh ideas, and wait for and welcome those that have not yet emerged from organisational participants. In turn,
organisational participants might also feel some responsibility, even empowerment, in this regard. The notion of creative activism gives credence to the role that organisational participants have in generating and, of course, discussing, fresh ideas, knowing that this helps to form the future organisation, evolved to better meet demand.

If we have gone about knowing creativity from within, it would seem likely that in the production of this dissertation, we would have worked not only with tension, but also with other concepts relevant to our conceptualisation of creativity, like aporia. There certainly were times when I felt like Chad did, as he reflected on the painting No limit. Chad did not know where the ladder would lead, in a metaphorical sense, and of course, neither did I. I worked within my social context where relationships between actors, what they did, said, and wrote, and how they related, were, in large measure, unpredictable. Thinking again about some of the concepts associated with our conceptualisation of creativity, I drew upon what could be called phronesis. Similar to what was observed in Ross, I developed, with experience, a sense of where to put energy, which ideas to let go and which to work with, while, as for Ross, I stayed focused on the important.

Here, what was important was ‘a fairer, just, healthier, kinder world’ (Baum, 2008, p. ix), that is, our earlier re-visioning of public health services. The actions that have been taken in this research have worked towards that. This was my praxis, perhaps; it is what fired and sustained my engagement in the project as I worked, to some extent, outside the rules. Being in such a space has its own rewards, at times joy, and hopefully the reader will get a sense of how affect also played a role in this space. One might also think, as Owen did, that what was required was to ‘make’ a system in which better health is possible, or rather, to produce a better understanding of what is required, so there is a suggestion that poiesis is implicated also. Here are more of the concepts that emerged as being important to our conceptualisation of creativity. They emerged as the project unfolded, as I practised creativity, and looked at creativity from
within. Note too that our conceptualisation of creativity can be applied at multiple levels (individual, team and organisation), which is what was noted in Chapter 8 as being called for by creativity scholars. The conceptualisation of creativity proposed here is far from Moran’s (2009, pp. 1-22) boundary metaphor and more akin to her organism metaphor. It has temporal and evolutionary qualities and it is this evolutionary quality, according to Bilton (2014, p. 12), that relieves ‘the pressure to come up with new initiatives and new projects’. This may be a useful consequence, perhaps more so than what might be first imagined. A de-emphasis of novelty could enhance the acceptability of creativity in health services, and in other organisations that share that field’s characteristics. This may then have the effect of placing more emphasis on the system itself, in its entirety and its complexity, so that any new initiatives and projects are more sustainable. In fact, the emphasis on initiatives and projects may even decrease; creativity, innovation and change may come to be considered as, not only what has formed the organisation, but what continually re-forms the organisation in a recursive way.

This research has benefited from conversations with eight award-winning health professionals and the way in which they provided us ‘entry’ to their health services’ creativity. The creativity of each of these health services was different. This became clear after reading the transcripts, especially during the making of the paintings for the research participants. If one ‘stands back’ and experiences Chad’s painting, No limit, as a whole, in terms of its gestalt, there is a feeling of vision and contemplation, while ‘Don’t give up’, also made for Chad, shows a sense of support. This is not a muted form of support, but rather support that is the central to the health service’s creativity. There is also a sense of contemplation in both these paintings, as the health service evolved, slowly and purposefully, from being focused mostly on clients’ pathologies to their strengths. This is different from what one takes from Ross’ painting, Balancing. The creativity of Ross’ health service had to be more assertive in order to engage and manage a range of service partners, and indeed, for them to provide funding for the
There is more of a ‘hands-on’ and energetic mood to *Balancing*, which could be considered a point of difference from *No limit*. It is similar to Pedro’s painting, *Immersion*, certainly in hue, although *Immersion* is far more complex, yet not in a burdensome way. This ties in with how Pedro’s health service become integrated, productively, with the community that it serves, and how *Immersion* was informed by the place in which I spent time, at a certain time of year, experiencing its rurality, and its relationship with other, much larger, places. There is a similarity here with how Lena embedded her music therapy service into the workings and the culture of a large metropolitan health service. It was difficult to incorporate a narrative capable of representing Lena’s organisation, so *How hard can it be* ended up being a diptych, as did Lucinda’s painting, *Stepping out*. The creativity of Lucinda’s organisation, with respect to Aboriginal health, highlighted sensitivity, an acknowledgement of difference, but also commonality, and again, the place, and the history of that place, at which groups of people shared and collaborated. This experience (in a Deweyian sense) of *Stepping out* is different from that of *Growth*, painted for Suzy. Although the methods for making both *Stepping out* and *Growth* were similar, using collage, glazes and ‘cut outs’ to make their statements, *Growth* has a much more constructed feel to it, more aligned with the type of creativity that would be required to develop an advisory board, as Suzy’s organisation did. All this is supporting what was discussed in Chapter 2, that creativity is best considered to be a heterogeneous concept, and the point to be made is that the conceptualisation of creativity proposed here should also be seen as such. Creativity, here, will be represented differently in different health services, or in other organisations. Sometimes it will be characteristic of creative implementation and sometimes creative activism. Sometimes it will be fully achieved and sometimes not, depending on a range of factors such as the ends to be achieved, the complexity of tasks and projects, and place.

The concepts of creative implementation and creative activism, and their relationships with *praxis* and *poiesis*, and also the ways in which *praxis* and *poiesis* work *with* (that is, outside or beyond, not within) rules, is useful in understanding how health services, or other organisations, or other
researchers, might engage with a practice approach to creativity. It was noted earlier that there are benefits in de-emphasising (although not removing) novelty, as a signpost of creativity, and creative implementation does this. This is especially useful considering that health services often implement ideas that have been found to be useful elsewhere. This follows the current emphasis on evidence-based practice, of course, but the term 'creative implementation', associated with praxis and its rule-challenging character, does give credence to the difficulty of importing strategies, technologies or practices from one context to another. Creative implementation draws in, or comes in closer alignment with, the notion of innovation, and so serves as a potential device for conducting more multidimensional (creativity plus innovation) research.

Creative activism, where poiesis is implicated, is also a useful formulation because it signifies a response to demands for new ways of operating. One may not automatically associate this concept of poiesis with creativity (beyond its definition as ‘creative production’), but it does hold potential for a deeper understanding of creativity, especially if we turn our attention to the type of knowledge associated with poiesis, that is, techne. Consider, for example, Pawel Kro and Mireille Lavoie’s (2014, p. 114) discussion of the neoliberal qualities of modern health services; they call on Heidegger’s explanation of poiesis in Essais et Conferences:

Heidegger explained that in a society, individuals, their culture and knowledge are perpetuated by the interaction between three kinds of poiesis: sexual (pro)creation, social creativity, and virtue. Heidegger (1954) argued that in modernity, social poiesis and the poiesis of virtue have been absorbed into what he defines as the modern techne, a phenomenon in which technology becomes an end in itself (Kro & Lavoie, 2014, p. 114).

Here, we have two ways of looking at poiesis — the poiesis of modernity, with an emphasis on techn(e)ocracy, and this pre-modern poiesis, where social and virtuous poiesis retain their independence. Creative implementation would seem to align better with ‘modern techne’, where there is intent to achieve certain ends. In a neoliberal sense, creative implementation would likely relate to greater effectiveness or efficiency.
Poiesis that retains its original social emphasis, however, aligns better with creative activism because the social must include communication, and this holds true to the way we have conceptualised the 'social' here, that is, as comprising practices, and as we have noted, within practices, are 'sayings'. There is also a useful link here with communicative poiesis and the way that it is associated with aesthetic vision and imagination (Crick, 2004, p. 314), not the technical. This even harks back to Lena’s comment in Chapter 6 about how health services are framed, as either ‘places for healing and expression and healing in the kind of global sense’ or the more traditional biomedical model of 'putting your hands on and healing someone'. So, these terms, of Ancient Greek origin, and placed within a practice approach to creativity, have some potential to carry our thinking about creativity forward. Of course, this may not be an abrupt movement forward, but rather, as has been proposed in this research, an evolutionary movement. The concepts that have been applied to creativity, such as poiesis, are not only useful for the purpose of this research; they are likely to be useful in ways not even imaginable until they are worked with further, in a range of contexts and by different researchers, and over time. In addition to our earlier discussion about further research (Chapter 8), here is another example of how a practice approach to creativity offers a very good foundation for much more creative research, about creativity.

The anchor for our conceptualisation of creativity has been the metaphor, Sea of Creativity. As a model, it is flexible, and so easily accommodates heterogeneity. We can picture in many, if not all, of our research participants’ health services, that waves have built, and broke, differently and randomly – ideas have linked with previous ideas, actions and conversations, rolling on, forming and reforming, swelling, improvised. Our research participants can be imagined as moving ‘shoreward’ in the Sea of Creativity, to what we would now think of as a practice ends, which in Lena’s case, for example, was hopefulness. In these health services, the waves did not travel, but their collective energy did. That is, it was the waves, the ideas and the practices that formed these health services, which constituted, recalling the discussion in Chapter 5, their ‘fabric’. From them,
new versions of the shore emerged, new practices reinforced current operations, and, in turn, these influenced how the next new waves formed and broke, and how these health services evolved, creatively.

A practice approach to creativity offers, as was demonstrated in Chapter 7, more than does the frequently cited componential theory of creativity (Amabile, 1983, pp. 357-376), where creativity is conceptualised as comprising three necessary components (domain-relevant skills, technical skills and creativity-relevant skills such as risk taking and motivation). This view, while having served as a convenient framework for much creativity research (and indeed, it has been referred to in over two thousand published articles up to the present year), fails to achieve, on some counts at least, what a practice approach can achieve. Nine years after Amabile and Mueller’s publication of the componential theory, Deborah Dougherty (1992, pp. 77-92) proposed a ‘practice-centered’ model of product innovation. Despite the author’s focus on innovation, and not creativity, there were lessons there that might have been, but, by and large, were not applied to creativity research. Dougherty (1992, p. 77) was critical of what she calls an ‘ABC’ approach to innovation, which she suggests is an ‘abstraction which distorts the complex realities’. This is a point that we might take up, now, two decades after Dougherty’s publication, in relation to creativity. We can do this by reflecting on the work of our research participants. Pedro, for example, said: ‘it’s complex, it isn’t easy, doesn’t come easily ... in order to move into that complexity’, as he looked at the painting Immersion, and Lucinda asked that her painting represent complexity – not be linear – have no boxes. Creativity, as practice, more properly accounts for this complexity and the possibility of emergence. Aside from the very useful work of Antonacopoulou, who, as we have seen, referred to social complexity within the context of practice, others, such as Whittington (2003, p. 119), consider that a practice perspective is more interested in ‘situated’ activity. This points to the usefulness of practice approaches in accounting for and responding to complexity, because one situation will, surely, be different from the next. That is, variability, and so, unpredictability, will almost always be a feature. A
formulaic, ABC-type, approach, such as the componential theory, is less agile in responding to variability and unpredictability. Agility is required, of course, if, again, we recall the opening sentence of this dissertation regarding the changing health care context, with all its political, technological and consumer influences.

We now go back to Baum’s (2008, p. ix) comment about public health, where ‘there are no major differences between the health experienced by people in different groups’, where social determinants of health such as prejudice, poverty, equitable access to resources are removed, where ‘the wisdom and rights of those of us who are indigenous are totally respected’ (Baum, 2008, p. ix) and where cultural difference delights rather than frightens people (Baum, 2008, p. ix). This vision, we can now say, represents the practice ends of our research participants. Recall the way Suzy’s health service put adolescents affected by cancer on an equal footing with other cancer sufferers, and how Owen took action, advocating for frail older people, so that they might receive the medications they need, that is, that they receive the treatment younger people receive as a matter of course. Also, recall how Chad’s organisation saw and took what Chad called a ‘longitudinally hard journey’ to treat people with mental illness in a way that everyone would want to be treated, without prejudice – simply, as people. Remember how Lucinda and her team worked in a way that kept in mind the spirit in the land, as she said, out of respect for the Gunditjmara people, and how Ross worked within an affluent society, where almost everyone had access to basic health care, and how he did what no one else had done – form a network that made available those health services to people who had been stripped of their capacity to seek such services themselves.

It is an important outcome of a practice approach to creativity that greater attention is paid to those who participate in health services, or indeed, any other type of organisations. Rather than focusing on domain-relevant skills, technical skills and creativity-relevant skills (Amabile, 1983, pp. 357-376), which would likely exclude some, if not, many participants, here, all
organisational participants are considered. Moreover, here, we are not
thinking solely about what organisational participants can offer
organisational creativity, although that would still be important; we are just
as keen to note what creativity, as practice, can offer to organisational
participants. Creative making, or poiesis, or what we have associated with
creative activism, is considered to have an exotelic character
(Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 113), and if we relate that to the work of
Gauntlett (2011, p. 76), and Munt and Hargreaves (2009, p. 294), this
character might be joy, that is, the joy in what was made. For creative
implementation, and its association with praxis, this joy, or some similar
emotion, comes from the actual doing – the practice-ing. Either way, here
is a way of thinking about health services’ creativity that not only
acknowledges health professionals’ contributions, it can be used to enrich
these health professionals’ lives. This, alone, could have far-reaching effects
and, it is not too hard to imagine, spark a self-perpetuating system that
might be represented as ‘action-joy-action’, towards creativity, or, as has
been said on numerous occasions, an evolving creativity.

The notion of ‘embodiment’ through practice referred to above, deserves
more attention now because the place of the body in this dissertation has
not been prominent. Andreas Reckwitz (2002, p. 249) does, in fact, discuss
the relationship between practice and the body. Put simply, practices are
‘bodily activities’ (p. 249), but this does not imply that practices merely
‘use’ (p. 251) bodies; it is more a matter of: ‘if practices are the site of the
social, then routinized bodily performances are the site of the social’ (p.
251), a nod to Schatzki, no doubt. The significance of this, explains
Reckwitz (p. 257), is threefold. Firstly, a practice approach is a heuristic
device, and it has already been noted that conceptualising creativity as
practice opens up directions in research that would not otherwise be as
accessible. Practising creativity, bodily, which is seldom, if ever, discussed, is
an example of the strength of this heuristic device. Secondly, social theory,
here, as practice theory, ‘provides us with a certain way of defining our
position as human beings in a social world’ (p. 257), and so, health
professionals, that is, all health professional, are considered to have a place
in this creativity, not just in a vague intellectual sense, but through their actions. Thirdly, as Reckwitz (p. 257) reports, social theories ‘are ways of breaking with cultural traditions of human self-perception, changing them and opening up “new” possibilities of self-understanding’ [original emphasis], adding a new dimension to the notion of being a health professional, and also the notion of ‘doing’ what a health professional does. That is, staying with Reckwitz (2002, p. 259) just a little longer, a practice approach to creativity ‘decentres’ mind, texts and conversation. Simultaneously, it shifts bodily movements, things, practical knowledge and routine to the centre of its vocabulary’ [original emphasis], which is a concept that health professionals, in particular, are likely to engage with.

New and valuable ways of operating emerged in Suzy, Roan, Chad, Lucinda and Ross’ organisations, as well as Lena’s, Rhona’s and Pedro’s, but this did not occur out of a formulaic response to context, nor any requirement to be creative. A better way to consider these illustrations of creativity comes from the concepts that have been discussed throughout this dissertation. Of course, one must be aware of any temptation to treat these concepts as a formula, to be applied generally. That is not the intention. In fact, to do so would be to disregard the postmodern tradition, upon which this work is built, and it should be noted that postmodernism is what allowed, facilitated and supported the generation of ideas that form the basis of this dissertation. Many other philosophical frameworks would have inhibited emergence, or at least taken any fresh ideas in some other, perhaps predetermined direction. So, if there is a parallel between the doing of this research and the doing of creativity generally, as we have said is the case, the claims made here should not be packaged or thought of as a model. They should be seen, rather, as key concepts that if considered and worked with, in full or in part, and in ways relevant to different contexts, may help health services, or other organisations, to think productively about creativity, to be attuned to it, to see, and allow for, and not stifle, its emergence.
This research has involved different ways of knowing, including art as a way of knowing. This might be considered by some to ‘go against the grain’, but why? Mark Johnson (2007, p. 210) puts it into perspective; he writes about how for many people, art has ‘a derivative and dependent status as a source of images and second-rate understanding’ (p. 210), but this has only been the case since the Enlightenment. It was Dewey, says Johnson (p. 212), who rediscovered ‘art as a condition of life and meaning’, and as Johnson (p. 212) implies, there is more work to be done: ‘We need a Dewey for the twenty-first century. That is, we need a philosophy that sees aesthetics as not just about art, beauty, and taste, but rather as about how human beings experience and make meaning’ [original emphasis]. Who is, or who might be, the new Dewey, and how might she or he emerge? There certainly are scholars, some referred to in this dissertation, who might be thought of as a Dewey-like character, and Carter is one who comes to mind. However, a Dewey-like movement, or as Johnson says, a philosophy, might be more practicable, and the current interest in arts-based research would seem to provide the right environment for that. It is hoped that this research, then, might be considered to make even a minor contribution to that end. One thing that future researchers might consider, if this study is to serve as a guide, is that the path to such a philosophy will come from within – aesthetics understood, that is, through aesthetics.

This dissertation now closes by suggesting that no longer should we rest solely on the standard definition of creativity, or one of its derivations, hinging on the words ‘novelty’ and ‘value’, and of course, ‘process’, as they do. Such neat conceptual packages do have their appeal, and no doubt, utility, as do those models of creativity that reduce creativity to a set of stages. However, what we now have is a much more rounded and organic understanding of creativity that, admittedly, may never be as concise as what came before it, but which does have considerable application, especially for health services, if not all organisations. One might even state this new understanding of creativity as:
Creativity is a shared practice, in a sea of practices, enacted through organisations and their self-organising and emergent qualities. This practice of creativity might emerge from extant practices, including those that reinforce the current operations. Here, tension builds as these extant practices are challenged by fresh ideas. The aporia of this might be met with practical wisdom (phronesis) and it is possible that amidst this there will be an affective response. Action that is morally guided (praxis) might be called on as a mediator, itself associated with an affective response that feeds back into the practice and spurs it on even further. The practice has a set of ‘ends’ that actors may want to, or can be encouraged to, pursue. What can be considered as ‘rules’ of the situation are worked with (not ignored or broken). This situation facilitates the creative implementation of new aspects of the organisation’s operations, and all this might then be noticed and followed by other organisations. In other cases, the practice of creativity emerges, not from extant practices, from the collection of fresh ideas. Still, a tension with the extant practices is formed. From this, something new is produced or unveiled (poiesis) and this is transforming – a form of activism. The ends here will be new aspects of the operations or even novel operations.

Creativity, as practice, signifies the action, and the intricacy of that action, in ‘doing’ creativity. This is different from more passively undergoing a process. A practice is ‘more than a process’, suggests Tiziana Rosso-Spena and Christina Mele (2012, p. 532); a practice foregrounds what Whittington (2003, p. 239) calls situated concrete activity and labour, and we have seen that in the stories of the research participants. Concrete activity and labour (or action) are not unfamiliar concepts to those who work in health services; they are part of the ‘background noise’ of just about any health service. This conceptualisation of creativity, then, may be more palatable to health professionals and so may be more likely placed on their agendas. At the very least, this research should offer a sense of new possibilities for creativity research and serve to broaden the discussion in that field, as well as furthering the effective and meaningful practice of the health professions, and beyond.


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APPENDIX A. PARTICIPANTS BY AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND WELFARE PRIORITY GROUP

Lena (AIHW Group – Cancer)
Lena’s music therapy program won the Premier’s award for enabling person and family-centred care. The Department of Health referred to Lena as ‘... an internationally renowned innovator for her patient centred model of creating original songs with cancer patients at the bedside’ (2011, p. 28).

Chad (AIHW Group – Mental health)
Chad and his community mental health team were highly commended for implementing the mental health strength model and for ‘a new way of thinking about how best to support recovery for consumers’ (Department of Health, 2011, p. 44).

Pedro (AIHW Group – Rural and remote people)
Pedro was the Director of Community Services of the ‘rural health service of the year’ which was described as being ‘innovative, adaptive and energetic’ (Department of Health, 2011, p. 14).

Suzy (AIHW Group – Young people and cancer)
Suzy worked across three organisations to establish Australia’s first youth cancer advisory board (Department of Health, 2011, p. 34). Her team gave voice to young people with cancer.

Lucinda (AIHW Group – Indigenous people)
Lucinda, a health promotion officer, and her team received a highly commended in the category of Secretaries Award for improving the oral health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people. They worked with children and elders of a playgroup and what eventuated was ‘a unique set of paintings depicting the eat well, drink well, brush well message’ (Department of Health, 2011, p. 47)’
Ross (AIHW Group – Socio-economically disadvantaged people)

Ross manages the Primary health service of the year which was recognised for its processes ‘to engage the community, enabling the people to take control of their health’ (Department of Health, 2011, p. 10), including in the area of homelessness.

Rhona (AIHW Group – Children)

Rhona and her team were Gold winners for Excellence in healthcare outcomes through person-centred care. They provide anticoagulant treatment to over 130 children with major illnesses and pioneered a home blood testing program for ‘significantly reducing the burden of hospital visits’ (Department of Health, 2011, p. 76).

Owen (AIHW Group – Older people)

Owen and his pharmacy team created a new medication administration system for older people who are transferred from hospital to a residential care facility (RCF). The result was ‘improved patient safety and eased workload issues for RCF staff and GPs’ (Department of Health, 2011, p. 84).