MAKING THE NEWS:

Print journalism and the creative process

Janet Michelle Fulton
B.Comn (Hons 1st Class)

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

to

School of Design, Communication and Information Technology,
Faculty of Science and Information Technology,
University of Newcastle, Australia.

October 2011
This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other
degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my
knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another
person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this
copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for
loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Signed: .................................................. Date: .................................

Name: Janet Michelle Fulton
Abstract

This research applies the systems model of creativity, developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, to an investigation of the creative practices of print journalists in Australia. Rather than the traditional view of creativity, where the individual is seen as paramount, Csikszentmihalyi argues that creativity is generated through the interaction of a system of three elements at work: a domain of knowledge (the cultural structure), a field (the social structure) who understands the rules and traditions of the domain, and an individual. In applying these ideas to print journalism, it is possible to see that a journalist, as the individual in the system, acquires the knowledges and traditions existent in the domain of print journalism and uses this knowledge to produce a novel variation of this information. In the case of print journalism, this variation would be constituted by a news article. The print journalist presents their variation to the field of experts who understand the domain, seeking acknowledgement that the variation is a novel and appropriate contribution.

By using the systems model to examine the creative practices of print journalists, this thesis aims to demonstrate that the structures a journalist interacts with not only constrain but also enable production and it is through their agency, or ability to choose the possibilities within these structures, that journalists produce creative media texts. Rather than a view of creativity that focuses on the individual as the primary producer of a creative contribution, or conversely a largely deterministic view, where an individual is constrained or determined by the structures they work within, this thesis is arguing that print journalists and the structures they work within interact with each other.

The ethnographic research was conducted using a triangulated set of methods. Interviews were conducted with thirty-six journalists and editors who work in the Australian print media industry. Observation of three newsrooms was also undertaken. Document and artefact analysis was used as the third method and analysis of the data obtained from these methods, as well as an examination of creativity and journalism literature, shows that there is a link between the cultural structure, the social structure and the individual print journalist in the creation of a media text, illustrating the veracity of the systems model of creativity in action.
Declarations

Declaration 1:

I hereby declare that the work embodied in this thesis generated the following publications.

Book Chapters

Fulton, J.M. (forthcoming 2013) ‘Communication joy: print journalists and the experience of flow’ in Positive communication in health and wellness, (Eds) M. Pitts and T.J. Socha, Peter Lang, New York. (Permission to copy and communicate this work has been granted by Peter Lang Publishing. See electronic confirmation in Appendix 7.)

Journal Articles

Fulton, J.M. 2011, ‘Print journalism and the creative process: examining the interplay between journalists and the social organisation of journalism, Altitude, 9, http://www.thealtitudejournal.com/uploads/4/2/3/3/4233079/fulton_altitude_9_2011.pdf . (This article is licensed under the under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd) license.)


Conference Papers (Refereed)

Fulton, J.M. 2010, ‘Print journalism and the creative process: the social organisation of journalism and its influence on print journalists’ creative practices’, paper presented at the Australian and New Zealand Communication Association Conference 2010, Old Parliament House, Canberra, Australia, 7-9 July 2010. (This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Australian License.)

Fulton, J.M. 2009, ‘Print journalism and the creative process: journalists and the organisation’, paper presented at the Australian and New Zealand Communication Association Conference 2009, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia, 5-7 July, 2009. (This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Australian License.)


Conference Papers (Unrefereed)


Other


Declaration 2:

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis contains one published conference paper and one poster presentation of which I am the joint author. The co-authored paper was written with my principal supervisor, Dr Phillip McIntyre, and contains some of the information used in this thesis.

Signed: ………………………………………….. Date: ………………………………

Name: Janet Michelle Fulton

Signed: ………………………………………….. Date: ………………………………

Name: Dr Phillip McIntyre
Acknowledgements

They say it takes a village to raise a child and that is an apt description for the process in producing this baby.

Firstly, I must thank the journalists and editors who took part in my research. To the interviewees, I cannot thank you enough for your patience at my naivety and the incredible gift of your time. The three editors who let me into their newsrooms to sit and observe their staff, as well as the journos, sub-editors, photographers, design people and senior staff in these newsrooms, also have my gratitude. I was able to see the amazing work you do under sometimes trying circumstances and watching you work added rich depth to my data.

I would like to thank the University of Newcastle and the Faculty of Science and Information Technology who provided financial support via scholarships and grants. I could not have done this without these resources. The School of Design, Communication and Information Technology also supported my research with financial support as well as office space and for that I am grateful but even more, the School’s academic and general staff, including office staff and technical support, were unfailing in their assistance. The School also gave me the opportunity to teach into courses that were highly relevant to my research area and let me test out my ideas on groups of bright, passionate young people who love to argue.

I would particularly like to thank the women in Communication at the University of Newcastle, especially the wonderful women who shared their doctoral journey with me and provided strong examples of how best to go about this difficult process: Dr Judith Sandner, Dr Elizabeth Paton, Dr Clare Lloyd, Dr Melanie James and Dr Susan Kerrigan. I appreciate your support whenever I needed to moan and I value our friendship. To my fellow PhDers, Chloe Killen and Harry Criticos, we have certainly shared some highs and lows (as well as an office) but I could not have done this without your unwavering support. Good luck with your own fascinating projects.

To my supervisors, Michael Meany and Dr Phillip McIntyre, I am grateful for your unwavering encouragement and guidance. Michael provided support when I needed it with his wonderful outlook on life and gave me many a viewpoint that stopped me in
my tracks and made me rethink. His prodigious proofing skills also have to be acknowledged, particularly when he took time out of his own study time to do the final read-through for me.

But, it’s Phillip to whom I owe the most. I cannot put into words how incredibly grateful I am for the last five and a half years. Phillip was always available to answer questions, argue, and share his enormous knowledge on our research topic. His generosity in time and knowledge helped me through this journey. I also appreciate the opportunities Phillip gave me by inviting me to be his research assistant on a number of his projects. This gave me the example of an academic with integrity, a strong work ethic and an enormous love for his work, an example I hope to emulate.

Finally, to Steve, Jade and Pete, your love has been my constant support.

I dedicate this thesis to Asha and Will, our two beautiful grandbabies who came into our lives during the birth of this baby.
# Contents

Abstract .............................................................................................................................. i

Declarations ...................................................................................................................... ii

Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................... iv

Contents ........................................................................................................................... vi

List of figures ................................................................................................................. viii

1.0 Introduction ................................................................................................................. 1

2.0 Literature Review ...................................................................................................... 13

   2.1 A review of creativity ........................................................................................... 14

      2.1.1 What is creativity? ......................................................................................... 16

      2.1.2 Where can creativity be found?...................................................................... 18

      2.1.3 Creativity Research ........................................................................................ 24

   2.2 A review of journalism ......................................................................................... 63

      2.2.1 What is a journalist? ....................................................................................... 64

      2.2.2 Journalism research ........................................................................................ 66

      2.2.3 Confluence of factors in journalism ............................................................... 74

3.0 Methodology ............................................................................................................. 80

   3.1 Research approach ................................................................................................ 81

   3.2 Methodology ......................................................................................................... 84

   3.3 Methods ................................................................................................................. 87

      3.3.1 In-depth interviews ........................................................................................ 87

      3.3.2 Observation .................................................................................................... 88

      3.3.3 Document and artefact analysis ..................................................................... 89

   3.4 Data Collection ...................................................................................................... 90

      3.4.2 Participant Recruitment .................................................................................. 91

   3.5 Conclusion ............................................................................................................ 95

4.0 Analysis: the system of print journalism ................................................................... 96

   4.1 The domain of print journalism .......................................................................... 98

      4.1.1 Journalism’s rules, conventions and procedures ............................................. 104

      4.1.2 All the things that have gone before ............................................................. 138

      4.1.3 Conclusion .................................................................................................... 140

   4.2 Journalists as individuals within a dynamic system ............................................ 142

      4.2.1 Personal traits ............................................................................................... 146
List of figures

Figure 1 – The systems model of creativity.................................................................6
Figure 2 – The systems model of creativity.................................................................59
Figure 3 – Meunier’s proposed story schema in journalism.......................................68
Figure 4 – Preston’s five domains of influences: making the news............................76
Figure 5 – Shoemaker and Reese’s hierarchy of influences model .........................76
Figure 6 – Preston’s simplified typology of five explanatory views of news influences77
Figure 7 – Crotty’s model of the research process......................................................81
Figure 8 – Amended Crotty’s model of the research process......................................84
Figure 9 – Domain of journalism.............................................................................100
Figure 10 – Csikszentmihalyi’s autotelic experience...............................................169
Figure 11 – Sawyer’s nested audience......................................................................225
Figure 12 – Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model of creativity......................................326
1.0 Introduction

Creativity is a term that is typically associated with artistic activity. However, research into creativity carried out in academic disciplines such as biology, psychology, sociology, cultural studies, literary theory and communication studies has revealed that creativity can be found in such diverse areas as science, business and politics, as well as the arts and humanities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, pp. 390-391). This thesis contends that evidence of creative activity can be readily found in media production and, if this is the case, this must include journalism. Despite this contention, print journalism, in particular, is a form of writing that is seldom thought of as a creative form of writing. This situation may be primarily because it is conventional to associate the idea of creativity with artistic forms of cultural production. Print journalism is not an ‘artistic’ profession and some see it as constrained by rules and conventions, or structures, giving little licence for a journalist to exercise agency, that is, it is thought that the existence of these structures leaves little room for print journalists to make creative choice. Since unfettered agency is presumed to be a prerequisite of creative activity, it would be difficult, from this perspective, for journalists to be seen as creative producers of media texts.

It is argued here that this position is largely based on the popular Romantic (Boden, 2004, p. 14 emphasis in original) and inspirational (ibid., emphasis in original) views of creativity that Margaret Boden identifies. From these perspectives, a creative artist is often seen as a lone genius figure, who must be free of any constraints in order to be creative. However, it can be argued that all writing professions have limitations, or structures, that cultural producers work within. As Janet Wolff contends, it is “the existence of structures and institutions [that] actually enables people to act” (1981, p. 23). By putting in place a rational, research-based definition of creativity and examining the professional practices of print journalists within social and cultural structures, and exploring how a journalist, as an active agent, works within the “structures and institutions” (ibid.) of print journalism to produce texts, evidence of creative activity in print journalism is not only a possible outcome of this investigation but also a plausible one.

To elaborate on these ideas in more depth, it can be seen that the term creative journalism is one that may conjure up images of reporters fabricating stories. For
example, Mark Fishman (1980) pointed out in his book, *Manufacturing the News*, that, although his research was about the creation of news, he used the term *creation* warily because of the connotations associated with the word. Similarly, academic and journalist Margaret Simons said, “… I think the word ‘creative’ confuses people, people who are not journalists. When I’ve raised that in non-journalistic circles they think it means that you're going to make things up” (in The Media Report, 2004). ‘Making things up’, that is fabricating stories, contradicts one of the fundamental tenets of journalism with a responsibility to report the truth as one of its core principles (Conley & Lamble, 2006; Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon, 2001; Hirst & Patching, 2005; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001; Machin & Niblock, 2006; McQuail, 2010; Code of ethics, MEAA, 2008a; Morgan, 1998; Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ), 1999).

However, an examination of texts written about journalism shows that the terms *creative* and *creativity* have, in many cases, been used to describe how a print journalist should go about their work. For example, there are appeals to write creatively (Herbert, 2000, p. 11), it is listed as a positive trait for a journalist (Conley & Lamble, 2006, p. xiv; Sheridan Burns, 2001, p. 33; Tapsall & Varley, 2001, p. 4; Willis, 2003, p. 66), there are arguments that a lack of creative opportunities in journalism leads to disillusioned practitioners (Hirst & Patching, 2005, p. 68; Underwood, 1993, p. xx), and, conversely, the opportunity for creativity in journalism attracts “creative people to the media” (Lichter, Rothman & Lichter, 1986, p. 19). Yet even when these terms are used, the meaning attached to their usage is rarely clarified. The general application of the term *creativity* is typically based on a person-centred view without considering other necessary social or cultural factors. Research in other cultural spheres, such as contemporary Western song writing (McIntyre, 2006), documentary making (Kerrigan & McIntyre, 2010), Australian fiction writing (McIntyre & McIntyre, 2007; Paton, 2008) and Australian children’s literature (Killen, 2010b) has reached the same conclusion.

In addition to what will be argued is a misconception in the usage of the term *creativity*, if the term is used in a journalistic context, it is usually applied to specific genres of journalism such as feature writing and long form journalism. Applying the term *creativity* to these genres may arise because of the assumption that creativity can be seen in ‘artistic’ terms and highlights the idea that journalism forms such as feature
writing are perceived as more creative than hard, or daily, news (Daugherty, 1999; Maskell & Perry, 1999). While we can ignore for the moment the use of the term here as a form of artistic activity, genres such as feature writing and long form journalism are often perceived as having less structural constraint than hard, or daily, news (Randall, 1996; Ricketson, 2004; Schumacher et al., 1989) and, thus, allow more of the individual journalist’s imagination to be employed. Sara Niblock differentiates between hard news and feature writing by drawing distinctions between the two forms:

While in newspapers and other hard news media, words are used simply and concisely, magazine articles are often longer and more detailed and have to paint an intricate picture for the reader. This means magazines can be a rewarding career opportunity for the journalist who wants to use language and vocabulary more creatively (1996, p. 77).

Niblock’s contention implies that hard news journalists are so constrained by the structures they work within that they cannot be creative producers. Again, this presumes that one must have an absence of constraint in order to be creative. This is an argument that is unsustainable from a rationalist perspective. From this research’s perspective, if a journalist uses the structures of the form they are writing for, and produces a novel and acceptable text that is verified by a social field that understands what an acceptable text is, it can be said that creativity has occurred.

As argued earlier, the common understanding of the term *creativity* can be linked to the Western Romantic Movement of the eighteenth century. Romanticism was a reaction against the Enlightenment’s claim that reason was the paramount human faculty (Negus & Pickering, 2004) and argued that an individual’s imagination was a necessary and valuable part of the human psyche. Peter Watson asserts that the advent of Romanticism was the “third great turning-point” (2005, p. 607) in Western political thought and claims that it fundamentally changed how the world was viewed for adherents to these ideas. Rather than the accepted view that every question would eventually produce a rational answer, Romanticism argued that there were questions that would have no rational answer: “Whereas the scientists tried – or hoped – to explain the mystery, the romantics relished it” (Watson, 2005, p. 622). Part of that mystery was applicable to the creative act. A Romantic understanding of the creative act is a “narrowly artistic, deeply hierarchical view of creation” (Pope, 2005, p. 39). This view can be personified in the
idea of the lone genius who ideally should be free of any constraints to be able to create (Becker, 1992; Becker, 1982; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Isaksen, 1987; Pope, 2005; Sawyer, 2006; Wolff, 1993; Zolberg, 1990). In this sense, the Romantic view of creativity is the antithesis of the normal view of journalists who report facts, work in a collective environment, must write within the structure of the publication, must follow the conventions of journalistic writing, and must manage the expectations of the hierarchy of the publication they work for. However, despite these assumptions, it can be argued that it is the very existence of these structures, and a journalist’s knowledge of them, that enables the production of creative media texts. This research attempts to investigate how these structures can enable print journalists in their creative process.

To pursue these ideas further, Keith Negus and Michael Pickering note that, for the most part, creativity “entails putting together various words, sounds, shapes, colours and gestures in a recognisably familiar and only slightly different way” (2004, p.70, my emphasis). As this thesis will demonstrate, this is what journalists do: use recognised formats, refer to previous stories, and follow the rules and preferences of a domain (a pre-existing knowledge system) and a field (the social structure who understands the domain). Ian Ward states that, in journalism, “each news story told is not created afresh. Rather it is written against the backdrop of – and borrows from and adds to – similar, previously written stories” (1995, p. 113). Ward’s observation coincides with current investigations within the field of research into creativity as will become evident in the following literature review. Rather than creativity being viewed as the antithesis of tradition and convention, in line with Romanticism, it is understood by a number of researchers that it is these very traditions and conventions that allow for creativity (Negus & Pickering, 2004). Margaret Boden (2004), Keith Sawyer (2006) Sharon Bailin (1988) and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2003) all argue that without knowing and understanding what is in a domain, an individual cannot produce, and a social field cannot recognise, a creative product.

Accordingly, the term creative is not being used here in the Romantic sense but draws on a rationalist confluence approach (Sawyer, 2006; Sternberg & Lubart, 2003) that argues an individual is one part of a dynamic system of social, cultural and individual structures and the individual, as an active agent, interacts with these structures in the production, or creation, of their work. Phillip McIntyre, after an extensive examination
of the literature on creativity, proposed the following definition that takes account of this dynamic interplay:

… creativity is a productive activity whereby objects, processes and ideas are generated from antecedent conditions through the agency of someone, whose knowledge to do so comes from somewhere and the resultant novel variation is seen as a valued addition to the store of knowledge in at least one social setting (2008c, p. 1).

To deconstruct this definition, and apply it to a discussion of creativity in print journalism, it can be seen that the definition states that someone (in this case a print journalist) needs to produce something novel (in print journalism that would be an article) by using information that the print journalist has learnt (such as the rules and traditions of print journalism). The article is then passed on to members of a social setting (in this instance, subeditors, editors, news editors, chiefs of staff) to verify that the article is a novel and appropriate contribution, that is, the article is a “valued addition” (McIntyre, 2008c, p. 1) to journalism’s domain of knowledge. To paraphrase McIntyre’s definition, creativity in print journalism can be defined as both a product and process where a print journalist uses prior knowledges to write an article that is different to what has been published before and presents that article to a social structure for valuation and acceptance into the domain of print journalism.

To put these proposals another way, rather than considering creativity as primarily about the individual, it can be argued that creativity needs to be examined not only as an aspect of what individuals do, which is vitally important, but also as part of a cultural and social milieu. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2003) claims that creativity has traditionally been viewed and investigated with the individual as the central element of these investigations and this position does an injustice to the complexity of creativity. He argues that there must be an existing culture,¹ with traditions and conventions in

¹ When Csikszentmihalyi uses the term culture in reference to the domain component of the systems model, it is being used in a slightly different way to the usual understanding of culture in sociology. Raymond Williams provides a number of definitions for the term (1981, pp. 10-11) but it is argued here that the second description in the following definition explains Csikszentmihalyi’s use of the term, that is, in the systems model, the domain, as the cultural component of the model, is the “general signifying system” (ibid.):

There is some practical convergence between (i) the anthropological and sociological senses of culture as a distinct ‘whole way of life’, within which, now, a distinctive ‘world signifying system’ is seen not only as essential but as essentially involved in all forms of social activity, and (ii) the more specialised if also more common sense of culture as
place for an individual to refer to, before a difference can be produced and he also claims that creativity is inherently social. In other words, how do we know something is creative if we have nothing to compare it to, the antecedents in McIntyre’s definition, and how do we know it is creative if a judgement of some sort is not made or the creative object is not presented to a social group to be verified?

In order to account for this complexity, Csikszentmihalyi proposed what he called a systems model of creativity, a view of creativity that posits that to produce a creative text, an individual learns and draws from a body of knowledge called the domain, described by Csikszentmihalyi as a cultural structure that includes previous works as well as the rules and procedures necessary for production. The individual produces a variation and presents it to the field, that is, a social system that understands the domain, for verification that the variation is novel, or creative. If accepted by the field, the variation is then included in the domain for the cycle to continue. The domain, individual and field are all necessary component parts of the systems model and each is equally important for creative production.

![Figure 1 – The systems model of creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p. 315).](image)

‘artistic and intellectual activities’, though these, because of the emphasis on a general signifying system, are now much more broadly defined, to include not only the traditional arts and forms of intellectual production but also all the ‘signifying practices’ – from language through the arts and philosophy to journalism, fashion and advertising – which now constitute this complex and necessarily extended field (1981, p. 13).

2 Permission to copy and communicate this work has been granted by Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi. See electronic confirmation in Appendix 7.
This model is derived from a rationalist perspective (Sawyer, 2006) and is an example of a confluence approach to creativity, an approach that suggests a multiple of elements must be present and active for creativity to occur. It is argued here that using confluence based theories may offer the most appropriate way to research the wide-ranging aspects of creativity (Sternberg & Lubart, 2003) and allow for “an increasingly complex understanding of creativity” (McIntyre, 2008a, p. 41). Researchers who have investigated creativity using a confluence approach include Amabile (1982; 1993), Sternberg (2003b), Feldman (2003), Simonton (1999), Gardner (1993b) and Csikszentmihalyi (1988b; 1997; 2003). This thesis uses the systems model of creativity, developed by Csikszentmihalyi, to examine print journalism in Australia. The research uses an ethnographic approach, utilising interviews of print journalists, observation of newsrooms, and document and artefact analysis, to ascertain how print journalists use agency in interaction with cultural, individual and social structures to produce, or create, their work.

Although other research into journalism has examined newsroom production, there is surprisingly little emphasis given to journalists’ creativity and, most importantly, how this is affected by the social and cultural forces journalists work within to produce fresh articles every day. The classic ethnographic studies into news production from the 1970s and 1980s (for example Gans (1980), Tuchman (1978) and Fishman (1980)), while providing valuable insight into what news is selected, how journalists select the news and how work routines, work methods, newsroom influences and news values affect news production, do not deal directly with the creativity of print journalists. David Domingo (2008) further argues that these studies were primarily aimed at investigating how organisational influences shape news while this study argues something slightly different, that is, that organisational influences are one part of a confluence of necessary elements that affect the way news is produced or created. The systems model is a model that encompasses these elements. From this perspective, an argument can be made which suggests that examining how cultural and social structures affect how print journalists work could give fresh insight into their production processes. Furthermore, by applying outcomes to print journalism from the field of research into creativity, valuable insight about the production processes of journalists may be forthcoming. That insight will give a different perspective to the daily tasks a
journalist engages in and contribute to greater knowledge of professional practices for working journalists.

Paul Cobley has suggested that one of the fundamental questions to be asked in communication research is ‘how are messages created?’ (1996, p. 1) but Arthur Berger has claimed that within the communication discipline, artists, or producers, are often overlooked in mass communication research (1995, p. 145). Berger suggests that anyone “involved with the creation and production of texts that are distributed, spread, broadcast, narrowcast, cablecast, or beamed by satellite through the mass media” (1995, p. 146), could be thought of as an artist, or in the terms being presented here, a producer of cultural symbols. This definition would obviously include print journalists. While this definition may be an inclusive one, some researchers also maintain, in line with Berger, that recent research in communication studies has tended to focus on the audience (Bell, 1991; Fiske, 1990; Halloran, 1998; Hesmondhalgh, 2002; Klinenberg, 2005; Newcomb & Lotz, 2002; Ytreberg, 2000). John Henningham called attention to this situation when he asserted that,

… the pendulum may have swung too far: the impression one gets from some scholars is that what people read into mass communication messages is all that really matters, and that journalists, as producers of media content, are not in themselves particularly important. The reality, of course, is that journalists and their mass media organisations are of supreme importance as gatherers and presenters of the information, analysis and commentary seen and read each day by millions of people (1998b, p. 333).

However, the producer is an integral part of the communication process; a text must have a producer (Macheray, 1978; Ryan, 1991). As Reese has argued, “the field of communication should devote the same sustained research to the creation, control and shape of the mediated environment as it has to the effects on audiences of that environment” (2007, p. 30), a point agreed with emphatically by journalism academic Verica Rupar: “Comprehensive analysis of journalism, therefore, includes all elements of the journalistic field, including individual journalists” (2010, p. 7, emphasis in original). As such, an examination of journalism research indicates that researchers are paralleling creativity researchers’ contentions that a confluence of elements gives a
clearer understanding of how production occurs. For example, Martin Löffelholz, after summarising theoretical approaches to journalism, concluded that:

So far, none of these approaches seems to provide a complete and consistent theory for the description of journalism … We have just started on the long path toward an integration theory in which the links between macro-, meso-, and micro-levels of journalism are consistently explained. In the future, substantial integration potential might come also from other approaches emphasizing cultural rather than societal aspects (2008, p. 22).

Löffelholz’s conclusion was comparable to that reached by Hennessey and Amabile who, after summarising research into creativity from a psychological perspective, maintained that taking a systems theory approach is the best way of understanding creativity:

Only by using multiple lenses simultaneously, looking across levels, and thinking about creativity systematically, will we be able to unlock and use its secrets. What we need now are all encompassing systems theories of creativity designed to tie together and make sense of the diversity of perspectives found in the literature - from the innermost neurological level to the outermost cultural level (2010, p. 590).

Sawyer also states that creativity should be examined as an “interdisciplinary endeavor, bringing together scientists who are experts in multiple levels of analysis” (2010, pp. 377-378) and notes that Csikszentmihalyi’s systemic approach to creativity encompasses individual, social and cultural elements that will provide “a more complete scientific explanation of how new things emerge from human activity” (ibid.).

In summary, it will be argued that the systems model of creativity provides a simple but thorough framework to examine the “macro-, meso-, and micro-levels of journalism” (Löffelholz, 2008, p. 22) including examining individual journalists and how these journalists interact with cultural, social and individual structures to create messages.

**Operational definitions**

The operational definition for *creativity* employed in this research is McIntyre’s definition as discussed above:
… creativity is a productive activity whereby objects, processes and ideas are generated from antecedent conditions through the agency of someone, whose knowledge to do so comes from somewhere and the resultant novel variation is seen as a valued addition to the store of knowledge in at least one social setting (2008c, p. 1).

While a definition for print journalism is explored more fully in the following literature review, to distinguish which print journalists could be interviewed for this research, the following criteria was used:

A print journalist produces news-oriented non-fiction work, primarily via writing, using identified professional practices and presents that work to an audience via a print or online medium.

**The Research Question**

Creswell (2003) notes that within qualitative investigations, the research questions employed by a researcher evolve and change as the study continues and, as Ezzy claims: “Most qualitative researchers do not presume to know all their research questions before they start data collection” (2002, p. 77). However, at the onset of this particular process, the central question being followed, based on Cobley’s (1996) communication question, was: how do print journalists produce, or create, an article? This has since evolved.

A number of other questions developed from this initial question. Firstly, it was recognised that rules, conventions, techniques, guides and procedures, or the structures, of the domain of print journalism shape a journalist’s production and are often seen as constraints. Two sub-questions arose from this recognition: how do these cultural norms affect how journalists produce creative texts, and, could these structures enable journalists to produce their work? The second question that developed was founded on the individual characteristics journalists may have and whether these characteristics influence their creative process: how does a journalist’s individual characteristics and background affect a journalist’s production process? Thirdly, it was perceived that journalism has a highly visible social structure that is involved in a journalist’s work throughout the production process. The question that evolved from this perception was: How can a journalist produce work when their creativity, a term typically understood to refer to artistic activity, is influenced by others? With these questions in mind, the
primary research question evolved into the following: how do print journalists in Australia interact with cultural, individual and social structures in their creative process?

This central research question corresponded to the ideas presented by the systems model, which outlines the view that an individual interacts with a domain (a cultural structure), their own personal qualities and background, and a field (a social structure who understands the domain) to produce a creative outcome.

**Thesis outline**

Given the questions this research pursued, Chapter Two includes a review of the literature and initially examines different approaches to research about creativity. It illustrates how various disciplines that have examined creativity (including biology, psychology, sociology and cultural studies) have each come to a similar conclusion about this phenomena, that is, a majority of researchers now see that it is necessary to examine a multiple set of elements to explain creative outcomes. Research into journalism has arrived at a remarkably similar conclusion. This contention is also discussed in the literature review along with an examination of research literature in journalism identifying why a confluence approach is needed to explain journalists’ production processes.

Chapter Three describes and defends the ethnographic methodology employed in the research and provides the theoretical underpinnings supporting this research methodology. Chapter Four analyses the collected data under the sub-headings of *Domain, Individual* and *Field*, as per the components of the systems model. A theme developed throughout the analysis in Chapter Four shows the constant and iterative interaction between each of these three components. Further, it describes the systemic nature of the sphere of print journalism. This chapter also provides an explanation for why and how journalists, with their idiosyncratic talents, personal attributes, family backgrounds and education, and varying subjectivities, can work successfully within the system of print journalism.

The final chapter, Chapter Five, provides concluding remarks and suggests possible future applications of the research findings. The data revealed how crucial both agency and structure are in how a print journalist produces, or creates, their work. Journalists learn the knowledges, traditions, techniques, rules, codes and conventions of the domain
of print journalism as well as the expectations of the field and use this knowledge to make choices. This conditional agency, where a journalist interacts with this known set of structures, is how a print journalist produces creative texts.
2.0 Literature Review

A review of literature in both creativity and journalism conducted for this research showed similarities in how each approach has researched the production process as well as revealing similar problems in providing a useful definition of each area. In journalism, for example, there is currently an argument about defining what a journalist is, particularly with the growth of forms such as citizen journalism and the advent of newer delivery platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. Similarly, creativity researchers have found it increasingly important to view creativity as a complex phenomenon that needs a multi-faceted approach to define it fully rather than a definition based on a simple, person-centred approach.

A further similarity between journalism and creativity research is how research in both areas has followed a similar trajectory when investigating the production process. It can be claimed that early research in each area often failed to recognise the multiple complexities involved. In the case of creativity, different disciplines that have researched this phenomenon, such as biology, psychology, sociology and the approaches of cultural studies, have each initially focused on one variable of the production process, for example, how the individual, or the audience, or the structures an individual works within affects how a creative contribution is produced. However, each discipline has reached the conclusion that explaining creativity is difficult to achieve without including a confluence of these variables. In a similar fashion, journalism research into production has also tended to focus on single elements, either the individual journalist or the structures a journalist works within, before also recognising that a holistic approach to journalism research is a more constructive way to investigate journalists’ production. This similarity in both the creativity and journalism research spheres is an example of the tension between agency and structure, agency being an individual’s option for choice and action within individual, social and cultural structures, with this research demonstrating how agency and structure are intimately connected rather than separate. The deep connection between agency and structure is a crucial aspect of this research and is discussed in greater depth further into this review. With this in mind, this literature review examines how different approaches in creativity and journalism research have examined creativity, or production, and places this thesis within current thinking in both creativity and journalism research.
2.1 A review of creativity

Creativity has been a challenging concept to research for several reasons. Firstly, it has been difficult to define (Amabile, 1996; Feist, 2003; Isaksen, 1987; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2006; Mumford & Gustafson, 1988; Runco, 2007; Sternberg & Lubart, 2003). Even in an academic context, the definition of creativity has been problematic with research claiming that many studies that are examining creativity do not define the term (Plucker, Beghetto & Dow, 2004; Plucker & Makel, 2010). The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) provides a definition that embodies Western culture’s conventional understanding of creativity: “To bring into being, cause to exist; esp. to produce where nothing was before, ‘to form out of nothing’” (Oxford University Press, 2007b). This perception of something forming out of nothing is embedded in the Judaeo-Christian stories of creation and, as will be argued, lives on in the eighteenth century Romantic ideal of a creator who must be free of any constraints to be able to create beautiful work that ostensibly comes from nowhere but their imagination (Becker, 1992; Becker, 1982; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Isaksen, 1987; Pope, 2005; Sawyer, 2006; Wolff, 1993; Zolberg, 1990). These ideas of creativity are specific to Western culture (Alexander, 2003; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2006; Lubart, 2003; Pope, 2005) and there are a number of problematics with them that will be raised shortly.

Secondly, a further challenge for research exists in arguments about the source of creativity. Where can creativity be found? (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; 1997). Ideas about the source of creativity have shifted along a continuum from Plato’s divinely inspired poets who supposedly composed poems after inspiration from the gods, to the Romantic artist as individual source of creative inspiration, and through to the post-structuralist view of the audience as the creator of meaning. Each of these ideas about creativity discounts any external intervention (Bailin, 1988) and are person-centred, a thesis that recent research has found to be unsustainable (Amabile, 1982; Amabile & Tighe, 1993; Csikszentmihalyi, 1988b; 1997; 2003; Feldman, 2003; Gardner, 1993b; Simonton, 1999; Sternberg, 2003b). Thus, current research is exploring confluence theories where more than one element must be present for a creative outcome to occur. The argument is that creativity can be found within a confluence of components, that is, an individual interacting with social and cultural elements (Sawyer, 2006).
Thirdly, creativity research itself has been problematic from a number of angles. For example, it is a commonly held contention within the discipline of psychology that creativity research only became legitimate after J.P Guilford’s American Psychological Association (APA) Presidential Address in 1950 (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988b; Feldman, Csikszentmihalyi & Gardner, 1994; Gruber & Wallace, 2003; Isaksen, 1987; Kaufman, 2009; Mayer, 2003; Mumford, 2003; Plucker & Makel, 2010; Pope, 2005; Rothenberg & Hausman, 1996; Runco, 2004; Sawyer, 2006; Smith & Smith, 2010; Ward, Smith & Finke, 2003; Weisberg, 2006). In his speech, Guilford stated that valid empirical research of creativity in psychology up to the 1950s was rare. However, researchers have identified issues in creativity research from both before and after Guilford’s statement. For example, it has been claimed that research methodology has been problematic from a positivist standpoint (Rothenberg & Hausman, 1996; Sternberg & Lubart, 2003) with flawed research design, inappropriate test methods and research conducted that was argued to be based on contentious assumptions. Additionally, research has typically been unidisciplinary (Sternberg & Lubart, 2003), with each field of research unable to explain the full complexity of creativity (Isaksen, 1987; Magyari-Beck, 1994). Wehner, Csikszentmihalyi and Magyari-Beck’s (1991) study of doctoral dissertations on creativity found that, although different disciplines study creativity, there is very little in common between the disciplines both in terms used and methodological and theoretical approaches. Furthermore, much research into creativity has been conducted under the assumption that the term creativity only refers to artistic activity, an assumption that has limited research to “those expressions of creativity that are highly valued in Western cultures” (Sawyer, 2006, p. 6).

Regardless of these problems, different disciplines have investigated creativity. Psychology has conducted a great deal of research, although in the early period of this research it tended to reinforce the common belief that creativity occurs mainly within the person because of its primary disciplinary focus. However, other disciplines that have added to knowledge about creativity include biology, sociology and cultural studies with other disciplines, including business (Amabile, 1998), science (Simonton, 2004) and education (Craft, 2005; Piirto, 2004; Smith & Smith, 2010), applying research models in their own spheres. Recent research in communication studies has also applied creativity models to investigate production (Coffee, 2011; Kerrigan, 2006; 2008; 2009; Kerrigan & McIntyre, 2010; Killen, 2010b; 2011; McIntyre, 2003; 2006;
The following sections examine the literature of creativity and present information about definitions of creativity (what is creativity?) and the source of creativity (where can creativity be found?) as well as presenting a history of creativity research from different disciplines including biology, psychology, sociology and cultural studies.

2.1.1 What is creativity?

A common understanding of creativity in Western culture is that creativity comes from nowhere but the imagination of an individual. Creative contributions spring from nothing. This understanding is not only rooted in the Judaeo-Christian mythology typical of the West and its approach to the divine but has also found an intellectual home in Romanticism where it is thought that an individual genius produces new and original work from nowhere but their imagination. However, research has shown that this understanding is unsustainable and a rationalist view of creativity is one that can explain the complex nature of creativity (Sawyer, 2006). A rationalist view of creativity draws in part on Aristotle’s definition of ‘being’ in *Metaphysics* (1960). Aristotle wrote that, “whatever comes to be is generated by the agency of something, out of something, and comes to be something” (1960, p. 142) from which it can be argued that all novel contributions are based on traditions and prior knowledges. According to Rothenberg and Hausman (1996), Aristotle offered the idea that the processes of creativity could be explained within previously known conditions and resources used by artists were “both necessary and sufficient” (Rothenberg & Hausman, 1996, p. 28 emphasis in original) to create. Following this line of reasoning, a simple definition is provided by Barron who described creativity as the “ability to bring something new into existence” (1969, p. 10). In line with Aristotle, Barron also noted that creativity can only occur by utilising existing physical or mental resources, either by reconstituting an existing form or by generating something from an existing form. However, this definition of creativity does not quite provide a full explanation: it conflates creativity with novelty and offers no conception of value or use. An examination of research into creativity shows that a rationalist definition states that for something to be considered as creative, it should be novel, or, in Barron’s terms, new, but it must also be appropriate (Boden, 2004; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Kaufman, 2009; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2010; Moran, 2010;
Sawyer, 2006; Sternberg, 2003b; Sternberg & Lubart, 2003, p. 3), that is, a novel, or creative, contribution is subject to a value judgment. As stated in the introduction, how do we know something is creative if a judgement of some sort is not made? Therefore, recent definitions of creativity have been based on the idea of novelty, or newness, and, in line with the Aristotelian tradition, the novel contribution also builds on existing conditions, but also add the caveat that there is a need for social validation (Amabile & Tighe, 1993; Feldman, Csikszentmihalyi & Gardner, 1994; Gardner, 1993b; Kaufman & Sternberg, 2010; Plucker & Makel, 2010; Rothenberg & Hausman, 1996; Sawyer, 2006; Vernon, 1989; Ward, Smith & Finke, 2003). The operational definition being employed for this research project is an example of one based on extensive research of academic texts written about creativity. To reiterate this definition:

…creativity is a productive activity whereby objects, processes and ideas are generated from antecedent conditions through the agency of someone, whose knowledge to do so comes from somewhere and the resultant novel variation is seen as a valued addition to the store of knowledge in at least one social setting (McIntyre, 2008c, p. 1).

Nevertheless, and keeping the above definitions in mind, there have been arguments for recognition of different degrees of creativity (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007; Feldman, 2003; Greenfield, 2008; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009; Necka, Grohman & Slabosz, 2006; Sternberg, 2003b) with a common claim being that creativity has two levels: little-c and Big-C (Gardner, 1993b; Nickerson, 2003; Piirto, 2004; Sawyer, 2006). These different degrees attempt to judge the value of a creative contribution (Sternberg, 2003b, p. 125) with Boden stating that there is a concern with “how novel a novelty has to be, to be counted as creative” (2004, p. 13). Sawyer (2006) describes little-c creativity as creativity everybody experiences that is not necessarily valuable to the broader culture. For example, an individual may produce something novel but others may have thought of it before. In this case, the contribution is novel, but only “in the population of thoughts he can claim as his own, not something new for mankind as a whole” (Barron, 1969, p. 19). On the other hand, if a novel contribution is Big-C creative it is considered novel to the culture. Csikszentmihalyi describes Big-C creativity as, “the kind that changes some aspect of the culture” (1997, p. 27). These two categories have also been called private and social (Harrington, 1990; Milgram, 1990), garden-variety and groundbreaking (Amabile & Tighe, 1993), everyday and
However, it can be argued that these two terms imply that a created contribution can only be one or the other. Boden (2004) counteracts this argument by labelling the phenomenon \( p \) (psychological) and \( H \) (historical) creativity. P-creativity is defined by Boden as “ideas (whether in science, needle-work, music, painting, literature …) that are surprising, or perhaps even fundamentally novel, with respect to the individual mind which had the idea” (2004, p. 43, emphasis in original) whereas H-creativity “applies to ideas that are novel with respect to the whole of human history” (ibid., emphasis in original). Although these definitions appear similar to other descriptions of the levels of creativity, Boden contends, “there can be no psychological explanation of this historical category. But all H-creative ideas, by definition, are P-creative too” (1994, p. 77), thus providing an argument for a continuum of creativity rather than separate levels.

Furthermore, Boden argues that for an idea to be considered H-creative, and to continue to be H-creative, depends on many factors:

> Shared knowledge and shifting intellectual fashions are especially important … But other factors are relevant, too: loyalties and jealousies, finances and health, religion and politics, communications and information storage, trade and technology (2004, p. 45).

In other words, it is cultural and social factors external to the individual that contribute to a decision as to whether a novel contribution is H-creative, or culturally valuable. McIntyre and McIntyre maintain that Boden’s definitions demonstrate how creativity is culturally specific arguing that the attribution of creativity does not hold true across cultures or across time (2007, p. 19).

### 2.1.2 Where can creativity be found?

In order to narrow down what the object of study may be, rather than asking ‘what is creativity’ Csikszentmihalyi asked ‘where can creativity be found?’ (1990, p. 200; 1997, p. 23). Notions regarding the source of creativity have ranged from the divine

---

3 Kaufman and Beghetto attempt to break these categories down further when they suggest that rather than two categories, there is an argument for four: mini-\( c \), little-\( c \), Pro-\( c \) and Big-\( C \) creativity (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009).
view, where a creator is inspired to produce by external sources such as God or a Muse, to the Romantic view, where inspiration comes from the creator themselves, to the post-structuralist view of Barthes (1977), who argued that it is the audience that creates the meaning of a text. Stillinger (1991) claims that philosophers and literary theorists have long debated the source of creativity: can creativity be found within the author, the text or the reader? Noting the use of the classic communication triad associated with the transmission model of communication, that is, sender, message and receiver, Stillinger’s comments connect creativity research to communication studies. These three elements form the basis of communication and, in a manner similar to creativity research, different schools of thought within communication studies emphasise different elements within the triad. Early research examined the transmission model of communication. This model maintained that messages are sent from the sender to the receiver via a one-way, linear model of sender - message - receiver; the model “sees communication as a process by which one person affects the behaviour or state of mind of another” (Fiske, 1990, p. 2). This focus on the sender as the main source of meaning-making is in line with the divine and Romantic views of creativity that place the source of creativity with the producer or author of cultural artefacts. In reaction to the transmission model, the semiotics model, or cultural context model (Schirato & Yell, 2000) argued that the receiver, or audience, interacts with the message, or text, to produce meaning. This position is similar to the post-structuralist arguments that claim that the audience, and its interpretation of messages based on cultural understandings, is more important than the producer when it comes to meaning-making.

In response to both of these positions, communication studies and creativity research have arrived at similar conclusions: focusing on an individual producer or, conversely, an audience as maker of meaning does not provide a full explanation of the process of creating a ‘message’. To find the source of creativity, a confluence of elements is necessary. However, before confluence theories are discussed in this review, it is important to examine the divine, Romantic and post-structuralist views of creativity to outline Western culture’s evolving ideas about where creativity can be found.

2.1.2.1 Divine inspiration

Many are the noble words in which poets speak concerning the actions of men; but like yourself when speaking about Homer, they do not speak of them by any rules of art: they are simply inspired to utter that to which the Muse impels them, and that only.

*Plato in 'Ion'*
Plato’s reference to the Muse in his reflections on poets provided a precursor to the
*divine*, or *supernatural* (Rothenberg & Hausman, 1996) or *inspirational* (Boden, 2004),
view of creativity. Plato stated that “for all good poets … compose their beautiful
poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed” (1971, p. 220). The
individual is the vessel that produces art from divine ideas sent by the gods or the
Muses (Sternberg & Lubart, 2003; Weisberg, 1993). In Plato’s view, the gods inspire
poets under *enthousiasmos*, or divine madness (Becker, 2000, p. 46; Sawyer, 2006, p.
16), thus, in this view, the gods must be the source of inspired creativity.

The inspirational tradition is the oldest approach to thinking about authorship (Burke,
1995). It can be traced in one tradition to South American shamans but early Christians
also believed that their Christian God provided divine inspiration (Burke, 1995; Clark,
1997) in the production of the Bible by revealing the Scriptural truth “to the Evangelists
through to the Church Fathers who assembled the Biblical canon” (Burke, 1995, p. 7).
The foundations of Western, Judaeo-Christian culture is based on the idea of Creation
(Albert & Runco, 2003; Buttmer, 1983; Negus & Pickering, 2004; Piirto, 2004; Pope,
2005) – “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). *Creatio
ex nihilo* or creation out of nothing sits at the heart of this thinking.

Despite growing empirical evidence disputing the notion of ideas coming from
nowhere, the inspirational tradition continues to have a strong hold in Western culture
(Piirto, 2004; Tomasevskij, 1995; Ward, Smith & Finke, 2003) because of anecdotal
evidence from, for example, writers, who cannot explain where their ideas come from
(Burke, 1995) with some artists claiming their Muse as a means of inspiration.
Csikszentmihalyi (1997) suggests it is the inherent difficulty in analysing unconscious
thought processes that occur while creating that has strengthened the thesis of a Muse as
inspiration.

### 2.1.2.2 Romantic artist

It was during the Renaissance that the emphasis changed from God as Creator to the
artist as genius with Albert and Runco stating that “the divine attribute of great artists
and artisans was recognized and often emphasized as manifestly their own and not of
divine origin” (Albert & Runco, 2003, p. 18). Although the Romantic view of creativity
is less extreme than the divine view, it still emphasises that only certain people born
with innate gifts and talents can ever be creative (Boden, 2004). Buttmer (1983)
maintained that transferring the source of creativity from God to the individual fulfilled the human dream of wanting to match God as Creator. The Romantics believed that imagination was a necessary and valuable part of the human psyche with the rationalist position of science seen as a stance of “intellectual disengagement, neutrality and calculation” (Negus & Pickering, 2004, p. 7) that would not provide the “moral or spiritual dimension necessary for personal fulfilment and cultural nourishment” (ibid). In other words, rationalism was a cold, calculating way of looking at the world and Romanticism countered this by emphasising passion, freedom and imagination.

This freedom, or absence from constraint, is one of the core beliefs in Romanticism. The Romantic Movement originally developed in Germany with poets such as Goethe, Chateaubriand and Rousseau defying the strict German culture of the time with English poets such as Shelley, Keats and Byron taking up these ideas to rebel against the English industrial revolution (Watson, 2005, p. 612). These poets idealised the individual hero who rebelled against society with Watson describing the Romantic artist as, “the martyred hero, the tragic hero, the outcast genius, the suffering wild man, rebelling against a tame and philistine society” (2005, p. 612). Berger wrote that artists have been perceived as “geniuses who must be allowed to live their lives as they desired and who could not be expected to conform to social norms” (1995, p. 153), that is, to be truly creative, an artist must be free of any constraints or structures. Kant, an early writer on genius, wrote that an artist is not bound by rules: “We see thus that genius is a talent for producing that for which no definite rule can be given” (in Rothenberg & Hausman, 1996, p. 37, emphasis in original). Despite research that has shown all action is conducted within structures (Wolff, 1981; 1993) and that structures may not only constrain but can also enable the creative process (Alexander, 2003; Giddens, 1984; Wolff, 1993), this image of freedom, seen simply as the absence of constraint, as essential to creativity persists (Boden, 2004; Negus & Pickering, 2002).

Berger’s comment also highlights another core ideal of Romanticism: the notion of genius. The OED provides a conventional Western understanding of genius, defining it as “native intellectual power of an exalted type … instinctive and extraordinary capacity for imaginative creation, original thought, invention, or discovery. Often contrasted with talent” (Oxford University Press, 2007a, emphasis in original). This definition of genius only emerged in the eighteenth century (Albert & Runco, 2003; Becker, 1992;
Howe, 2001; Negus & Pickering, 2004; Pope, 2005; Preminger & Brogan, 1993; Watson, 2005) and it did so concurrent with the rise of the idea of the Romantic artist. In line with the OED definition, Howe (2001) contends that genius is seen as opposite to expertise. Genius is “spontaneous and fluent: it sparkles” (Howe, 2001, p. 157) whereas expertise involves practising a craft. The Romantic ideal proclaims that a genius seemingly does not need to work; inspiration flows effortlessly. However, in direct contrast to the Romantic’s claim, research has shown that expertise in a domain requires continuous effort and preparation (Feldman, 2003; Gardner, 1993b; Gruber & Wallace, 2003; Runco, 2007; Sawyer, 2006; Weisberg, 2006). This is not the customary view of Romantic genius or authorship.

It is within literary criticism that the idea of the author as the supreme controller of meaning has received most attention. Tomasevskij argued that it was during the “individualisation of creativity” (1995, p. 82) in the eighteenth century that the creator of an artistic work, and his life, became as important to the reader as the work; before this time, the artist was anonymous. It was this view of the artist as the sole creator of Art that led to Barthes’ essay: The Death of the Author.

2.1.2.3 The author is dead

Csikszentmihalyi uses the Ptolemaic view of astronomy as a metaphor to explain the divine and Romantic views of creativity because of the assumption in these views that a person is central to creativity (1988b, p. 336). In reaction to these views of the artist, Roland Barthes, working in his post-structuralist phase, proposed the idea that creativity is found in the reception of a text and thus resides in the purview of the audience. Barthes’ essay argued against literary criticism’s earlier views about the importance within a text of the author’s thoughts and what the author meant (Culler, 1983). Burke noted that in literary criticism, the approach had traditionally been the “glorification of the author” (1992, p. 25) and Barthes’ essay challenged this view. Barthes argued that for any text “its source, its voice, is not the true place of the writing, which is reading” and “a text’s unity lies not in its origin but in its destination” (1977, pp. 147-148). He took the act of production, or meaning-making, away from the artist–author and gave it

---

4 Csikszentmihalyi (1988b) applies the Ptolemaic view of astronomy to creativity by stating that a Ptolemaic view places the individual in the centre of a system, that is, the individual is central to creativity whereas the Copernican view places the individual as one part of a system of mutual influences.
to the audience, an action summarised by the following observation: “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author” (Barthes, 1977, p. 148).

At a similar time to Barthes, Michel Foucault asked *What is an Author?* (1977) and argued for a redefinition of the term and the role of the author. Foucault maintained that it is the author’s name and what it signifies, not the actual individual, that is relevant. He noted that the idea of the author still played a role in the reading of a text although not as the creator of meaning but so that the reader could classify and understand the text. Foucault called this the *author-function* and described how an author’s name plays a number of roles: it allows classification of works; it provides a framework for authors’ rights, particularly with copyright; and, it is important in how the audience views the work.

What was important about Barthes’ and Foucault’s arguments was they recognised that reception and interpretation were just as critical in the making or creation of meaning, thus providing not only a precursor for active audience theory but also the place of audiences in providing part of the necessary source of creativity. But having recognised this vital input to creative activity in the literary world, the pendulum seemed to swing too far in the opposite direction of the author/genius view, which both of these theorists were directly challenging, and the resultant post-structuralist marginalisation of the position of the author or artist was untenable in the long term. Bennett argued that Barthes’ contention that meaning is found in the reading of the text led to replacing “the controlling, limiting subjectivity of the author with the controlling, limiting subjectivity of the reader” (2005, p. 18). The problems associated with the thesis of the Romantic view, where power to control meaning was thought to reside with the author or artist, produced the antithesis of the ‘Death of the Author’ scenario put forward by Barthes but in this case, the post-structuralist position proved to be just as problematic as the Romantic thesis. In this regard, Janet Wolff has argued: “What Barthes calls the ‘birth of the reader’ may not necessarily signify the death of the author” (1981, pp. 120-121) since, as Vera Zolberg also claimed “it cannot be said that art works give birth to themselves by some parthenogenetic process” (1990, p. 114). In light of Wolff and Zolberg’s arguments, it is important to examine what current creativity research considers to be the source of creativity and investigate how both the producer and the audience contribute to the production of a creative text.
2.1.2.4 Confluence of Creativity

It has been argued here that the divine, Romantic and post-structuralist views failed to fully address the complexity of creativity. With each of these views seen to be problematic, a synthesis has since emerged. Recent research has discounted a single source for creativity and suggested approaches where a multiple of elements must be present for creativity to occur, that is, it is recognised that an individual is only one part of a system of influences with creative activity including both the producer of a creative contribution as well as the audience. Research work that considers multiple perspectives has become collectively known as a componential (Amabile, 1996; Runco, 2007) or confluence approach. Sternberg and Lubart (2003a) state that it is within a confluence approach that the many varied aspects of creativity can be researched rationally. Rather than a Ptolemaic or person-centred view of creativity being operative, these confluence approaches offer what Csikszentmihalyi calls a Copernican view, where “the person is part of a system of mutual influences and information” (1988b, p. 336).

Examples of researchers who have examined creativity with a confluence approach include Amabile (1982; 1993), Sternberg (1992; 1996), Simonton (1999), Dacey and Lennon (1998), Gruber (2003), and Csikszentmihalyi (1988b; 1997; 2003), who developed the systems model of creativity used in this research. Confluence approaches and the systems model are discussed in further detail in the next section where the literature on creativity research is examined more fully.

2.1.3 Creativity Research

The existence of the myths surrounding creativity, such as those discussed in relation to the divine and Romantic views, has meant that creativity has been problematic to research. Albert and Runco assert: “At their beginnings and during most of their histories of development, research and creativity were not viewed as related to one another” (2010, p. 4). Researchers have stated that Romanticism contends that creativity is a mysterious, complex phenomenon that cannot be satisfactorily defined and therefore not able to be researched (Amabile & Tighe, 1993; Boden, 2004; Feist, 2003; Sternberg & Lubart, 1996). However Runco and Sakamoto (2003) insist that it is this complex nature, with multiple influences and varied forms of expression, which must be taken into account by researchers. Further to this, much of this research examines creativity in the context of artistic activity and “implicitly accepted a set of values that is culturally
and historically specific” (Sawyer, 2006, p. 5) by researching ‘High Art’ forms of culture, such as painting, music, poetry and fiction writing, and ignoring creative activity in other cultural forms.

In a brief summary, Mayer noted that while most researchers agree on the definition of creativity there is still disagreement on what creativity refers to: is it personal or social, common or rare, is it domain-specific or domain-general, and is it quantitative or qualitative (2003, pp. 449-451). As well as this, although different disciplines have examined creativity, including biology, psychology, sociology and cultural studies, and each has added a layer of information to understanding creativity, each discipline’s findings have been unable to explain creativity completely. As McIntyre states, “the factors they look at are necessary but not sufficient to explain creativity” (2009, p. 159). Regardless of the shortcomings in the different approaches, it is important to consider how these disciplines examined creativity and discuss what they have contributed to creativity research.

### 2.1.3.1 Early research

In the eighteenth century, Kant, one of the major German philosophers of his period and noted, in part, for his work on aesthetics, claimed that a creative genius works independently of any rules and can be regarded as being fully spontaneous and free in their use of imagination (in Rothenberg & Hausman, 1996). Kant stated that, “beautiful Art is only possible as a product of Genius” (1996, p. 38) and it is both completely original and unable to be directed or explained scientifically. The gift of genius was only given to a chosen few and died with that special person (Howe, 2001, p. 1). Kant’s position is in line with Boden’s (2004) claim that this view of creativity emphasises the exceptional and only people born with innate gifts and talents can be creative. Kant further argued that “the product of a genius … whom it awakens to a feeling of his own originality and whom it stirs so to exercise his art in freedom from the constraint of rules” (in Rothenberg & Hausman, 1996, pp. 41-42). This emphasis on originality as an aspect of rule breaking or rule transcendence set the ground for the assumption that freedom is a necessary prerequisite for the creation of “beautiful Art” (Kant in

---

Rothenberg & Hausman, 1996, p. 38) and that anything that is bound by rules can be excluded from being considered as creative.

Kant’s arguments for thinking of creative genius in this way provided the groundwork for future research that was based on a particular set of assumptions. These assumptions include the already mentioned need for freedom in the creative process as well as an emphasis on spontaneity in the creative act, the belief that an artist cannot explain how “he has come by his Ideas [sic]” (Kant in Rothenberg & Hausman, 1996, p. 38) and that beautiful art, unlike science, cannot be taught. Each of these assumptions have been refuted in later research (Howe, 2001; Pope, 2005; Weisberg, 1993) but early researchers such as Francis Galton (1996), Catherine Cox (1992; 1926) and Sigmund Freud (1995; 1996) appear to have conducted research without questioning the basic assumption that creativity only occurs as a product of genius (Howe, 2001; Pope, 2005; Weisberg, 1993). More recently, creative thinking approaches such as Gestaltism, associationism and bisociation each accepted as true the assumption that extraordinary thought processes lead to a creative idea, while creative problem solving proponents, such as de Bono (1967; 1968; 1977), Osborne (1963) and Gordon (1961), also based their approaches, lateral thinking, brainstorming and synectics, on the premise of creative ideas appearing out of nowhere. In addition, Kant’s writings on genius further underlined Western culture’s common understanding that the existence of structures, those underlying things thought to determine behaviour, only constrain individuals in their creative endeavours.

Cesar Lombroso, too, researched the creative genius, in the late nineteenth century, but associated it with madness. Lombroso studied creativity by using “retrospective psychiatric analyses of famous historical figures who, because of their accomplishments, can be judged outstandingly creative” (Claridge, 1992, p. 333) including Julius Caesar, Isaac Newton and Jean Jacques Rousseau. Since genius was supposedly not associated with ‘ordinary thinking’ (whatever that might be), it must be extraordinary and thus deviant, in this case to mean it deviated from the norm. With this idea seemingly entrenched, it was not difficult to associate it with other forms of deviance such as insanity. According to Lombroso’s findings, these so-called geniuses provided evidence of both abnormal and extraordinary mental and physical attributes, which Lombroso considered as evidence of degeneration of the brain. Lombroso
proposed that, in line with the thinking of the time, this degeneration caused the brain to function abnormally and this led to “a large proportion of mental and physical affections” (1996, p. 80), some of which would result in the behaviour of a genius. Lombroso claimed that there was enough evidence to prove that this degeneration of the brain and insanity were linked to geniuses. While later researchers dismissed Lombroso’s research (see, for example, Runco & Albert, 2010) with claims that the Romantic image of the artist at the time led Lombroso to “denigrate artists in general and genius and creativity specifically” (Runco & Albert, 2010, pp. 9-10), the idea of the link between creativity and madness continues to have influence both in research and with the general public, an idea discussed further in this chapter.

At a similar time to Lombroso, but taking a more empirical approach, Francis Galton (1996) attempted to prove genius by studying eminent families in Britain and concluded that genius was hereditary. Albert and Runco (2010) assert that a lasting legacy of Galton’s research is that he provided evidence that ‘genius’ was not related to the supernatural. Yet, Galton’s research was problematic in that, although he realised environmental and personality factors were elements to be considered (Vernon, 1989), his research was still based on Kant’s premise of the individual as a genius figure which, as noted previously, is a premise that has been refuted in later research. Furthermore, later research by Simonton, who conducted research into the lives of 772 artists, found opposite findings to Galton: if an artist had a sibling who was eminent, they were less likely to be famous thus showing that, seemingly, “artistic talent does not run in families” (Simonton, 1984, p. 1277, emphasis in original). Simonton’s findings are an example of an inherent problem in much creativity research that is focused on individuals alone. As will be discussed more fully shortly, it is difficult to isolate common traits that can be attributed to an individual who produces a creative contribution.

In the 1920s, Catherine Cox (1992; 1926) expanded on Galton’s research by examining whether early behaviour in ‘geniuses’ would indicate whether they would become eminent. Cox researched 301 so-called eminent men from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries in an attempt to determine their level of IQ and to ascertain what traits were evident and published the following conclusions: an eminent individual typically has an
above average heredity and superior environmental advantages, including education, and they generally have an unusually high IQ. However, Cox concluded that evidence of intelligence in childhood does not necessarily mean a child will achieve eminence. Runco and Albert (2010) claim that Cox’s research provided a more sound criteria for judging eminence than Galton because it encompassed a broader selection of subjects and also included some sociocultural information. The research recognised that promise shown in childhood does not automatically produce a high achieving adult; as argued throughout this thesis, intelligence may be only one variable an individual possesses that might contribute to a creative outcome.

These early approaches to creativity research, while providing some valuable information regarding creativity, either positive or negative, could not fully explain the complexity of creativity but these early studies shaped future research with many of the ideas continuing to influence various investigations as well as the public’s conception of creativity. The continuing focus on the person and their biological make up was one such approach.

2.1.3.2 Biological Approaches

The premise behind biological approaches is that, since creativity is assumed to be a trait of persons, creativity must be a physiological trait that can be measured (Mayer, 2003, p. 456). This approach encompasses research into genetics, the chemical make-up and structures of the brain, the relationship between intelligence and creativity, links between creativity and madness, and the effect of mind-altering substances on creative thinking. However, as with other approaches, although biology can provide important information about creativity (Sawyer, 2006, p. 78), it can only provide information on one part of what can be seen as a larger phenomenon. As Damasio noted: “It is not possible to discuss the neuroscience of creativity without considering information from a variety of disciplines outside neuroscience” (2001, p. 59).

Creativity and genetics

Damasio’s comment on neuroscience and creativity, however, was not part of the thinking of early researchers’ notions on creativity and genetics. Galton’s (1996)

---

6 Cox describes above average heredity by stating: “It is evident that the forebears of young geniuses have made a definite contribution both physically and socially to the extraordinary progress of their offspring” (1992, p. 56).
research into eminent British families, for example, claimed that it was genetics that led to genius. His initial study emphasised the genetic background of the subjects without consideration for other contextual social and cultural factors, although his later research did take factors such as family structure, including birth order, and education variables into account (Simonton, 2003a, p. 305). Lombroso also argued that genius was inherited along with madness and later studies examining creativity and affective disorders claimed creative writers have a high number of relatives who also experience mental illness (Andreasen, 1997), thus seemingly showing that affective disorders, and therefore creativity, are inherited.

While Kaufman et al. (2010) note that there is limited research at present on links between genetics and creativity, there is no specific gene for creativity that has been discovered up to this point (Greenfield, 2008; Lumsden, 2003; Reuter et al., 2006; Sawyer, 2006) although particular traits required for creativity in some domains are believed to be inheritable. Physical traits, such as sensitivity to sound or light (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003) that are helpful in domains such as music or painting, are inherited attributes but Csikszentmihalyi is careful to point out that these traits may only give someone a “genetic predisposition” (1997, p. 52, italics in original) for engagement with a domain. Other variables may be necessary in order for creativity to occur.

Similarly, Runco (2007) maintains that while genetics do play a part in creativity, genes only provide the potential for creativity. Other elements such as the individual’s environment and experience, including social and cultural elements, may also be crucial for a creative outcome.

**Creativity and brain research**

There has been a tradition of research into the brain and its effect on creativity since the beginning of the nineteenth century with early researchers, or *phrenologists* (Sawyer, 2006, p. 78), mapping the brain and its supposed cranial conformations that were thought to indicate certain mental attributes. From these inauspicious beginnings, research has continued into the connection between the brain and the mind with neurobiologists examining the brain’s neurobiological structures to ascertain how the brain works and, more precisely, how the brain develops a creative thought. However,

---

7 For further explanation on cellular organisation and how knowledge is stored and connected see Heilman (2005) pp. 27-57 and Dacey (1998) pp. 189-201.
brain research has not discovered one part of the brain that is specifically used for
creative thoughts (Runco, 2007) and there is currently no evidence that highly creative
people have different processes or brain structures than the ‘ordinary’ person (Dacey &
Lennon, 1998, p. 7; Greenfield, 2008; Heilman, 2005; Limb & Braun, 2008; Weisberg,
1993; 2006). On saying this, though, Pfenninger and Shubik do state that even though
brains may look the same and have similar structures at the general level, individual
brains function slightly differently (2001, p. 215) but this may have more to do with an
individual’s life experiences and how these experiences are stored in the brain.

Neuroscientists who examine creativity have attempted to learn what happens within the
brain during creative thinking and while the brain structures that lead to creative
behaviour are still not categorically identified (Limb & Braun, 2008), sections of the
brain that researchers have examined in creativity research include the frontal lobes, the
prefrontal cortex, the cerebellum, the corpus callosum and the temporal lobes as well as
the transmission process within the brain itself. Research that tests the functioning of
the brain has escalated in recent years due to the increasing sophistication of techniques
used to assess brain activity (Eysenck & Keane, 2005). Imaging techniques allow
neuroscientists to identify what parts of the brain are used during a task and how long
those parts stay active.8 These techniques include functional magnetic resonance
imaging (fMRI) (Howard-Jones et al., 2005; Jung-Beeman et al., 2004; Limb & Braun,
2008), electroencephalogram (EEG) (Bekhtereva et al., 2001; Flaherty, 2005; Hoppe,
1988; Jung-Beeman et al., 2004), positron emission tomography (PET) (Bekhtereva et
al., 2001), and transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) (Snyder et al., 2003).

Colin Martindale has a long history of research into the function of the brain including
how cortical arousal affects the creative process (2003; 1978; 1975). Martindale’s early
studies used EEG testing to measure the level of cortical arousal in subjects by
administering creativity and intelligence tests (1975). Results showed that lower levels
of cortical activation led to defocused attention, which relates to creativity research in
other areas, including cognitive psychology, that has suggested a relaxed brain allows
for remote associations (Ochse, 1990; Weisberg, 2006) and this could be when an
illumination, or ‘Aha’ moment can occur (Boden, 2004; Weisberg, 1993).

---

8 A full description of these brain imaging techniques can be found in Eysenck and Keane (2005) pp. 20-
28.
Further study into the effect of brain structures on creativity included investigation of “cerebral lateralization” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p. 330), or left brain/right brain hemispheric differences (Bogen & Bogen, 1969; Hoppe, 1988; 1989; Hoppe & Kyle, 1990; Sperry, 1964; Sperry, Gazzaniga & Bogen, 1969). In their initial study, Bogen and Bogen concluded that “the hemispheres are not as much ‘major’ and ‘minor’ as that they are complementary” (1969, p. 194) but their work led to an oversimplification of the understanding of the function of the two hemispheres (Hellige, 1993; Kaufman et al., 2010; Runco, 2007), particularly in popular culture. The myth that left-handed people are more creative arose from cerebral lateralization research (Hellige, 1993; Pope, 2005; Sawyer, 2006) with the left-brain supposedly controlling the logical, structured functions of the brain and the right-brain controlling the creative, ‘free’ functions. This led to the notion that because right-handed people typically have a stronger left-brain, right-handers are more logical, and thus non-creative, and with the right-brain stronger in left-handers, left-handers are more creative.

Recent research, however, has discounted either left or right brain dominance with studies showing that both hemispheres are necessary for a creative outcome (Dacey & Lennon, 1998; Flaherty, 2005; Kaufman et al., 2010; Martindale, 2003; Newberg & d'Aquili, 2000; Runco, 2004). Susan Greenfield likens the brain to an orchestra where activities require contributions from each area of the brain (2000, p. 6) although researchers have noted there may be some creative acts that depend more on the functions of one hemisphere over the other (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Heilman, 2005; Katz, 1986; Sawyer, 2006). An alternate finding by Alice Flaherty (2005) proposed a model of creative idea generation where the frontal and temporal lobes are more important than lateralisation with the neurotransmitter dopamine also playing a crucial role. Research into temporal lobe activity has suggested that this may be the area that creative drive, or motivation, originates from (Flaherty, 2005), which is an important conclusion since creativity researchers in other sub-disciplines of psychology have observed that motivation is a key component in producing a creative outcome (for example, Amabile, 1982; 1990; Boden, 2004; Collins & Amabile, 2003; Csikszentmihalyi, 1992; 1997; 2003; Hennessey & Amabile, 1997; Martindale, 1989; Sawyer, 2006; Weisberg, 1997).
The above arguments, many of which have produced contradictory results, indicate how difficult creativity research is within biological approaches. With this in mind, Greenfield (2000) proposed that rather than looking at only one brain feature as the cause for why our brains function the way they do, it is more promising to look at the entire brain along with an individual’s experiences. There is strong evidence to suggest that the structures of the brain change because of the environment and experiences of an individual including education, family life, aging, religion, and social and cultural factors (Damasio, 2001; Greenfield, 2000; Heilman, 2005). Pfenninger (2001) called this ability to change plasticity, that is, the ability of the brain to adapt and develop as various inputs are made. This plasticity continues from early development of the brain through adulthood and the relevance to this research is that Pfenninger proposed that,

… complex sets of data stored in many different circuits in the cerebral cortex may become integrated, perhaps in a novel way, in a particularly capable brain, and this may result in a new vision of, or the discovery of a new causal relationship between these data sets (2001, p. 96).

Producing novelty is only one part of what constitutes a creative outcome. In other words, this could be how little-c, or p-, creativity is produced, keeping in mind that the definition of creativity that this thesis is employing argues that appropriateness, or value, is as crucial as novelty in deciding whether or not a contribution is creative.

In general, neuroscientists have been relatively reluctant to research creativity (Flaherty, 2005) and this research has provided mixed results (Bekhtereva et al., 2001), but there is a growing understanding of how certain brain structures can assist in generating creativity. However, despite continuing and increasing research into the brain structures, there are currently no definitive results into what part of the brain structure produces a creative thought. Furthermore, it is interesting to note how research into the brain is following other disciplines in creativity research – brain structure alone cannot provide a full explanation for why something is considered creative and researchers in this area are now examining how other variables affect creative thinking.

Creativity and intelligence

Even though research into intelligence has been conducted since at least the nineteenth century, there is still no real consensus about the correlation between creativity and
intelligence (Batey & Furnham, 2006; Hee Kim, Cramond & VanTassel-Baska, 2010; Sternberg & O’Hara, 2003) although Runco (2004) acknowledged that the distinction between the two is now more accepted. Heilman defined intelligence as “the measure of a person’s ability to acquire and apply knowledge” (2005, p. 19). However, Gardner (1983; 2001) has argued that rather than explaining intelligence with a simple and singular definition, there are actually multiple intelligences. In a similar argument, Sternberg (2003b) maintained that the Western idea of intelligence is different to other cultures and this difference could be attributed to which kind of skills are emphasised within different cultures. If this is the case, it may be argued that intelligence is less important to creativity than previously thought.

One of the myths of creativity is that it correlates well with intelligence, that is, high creativity equals high intelligence and vice versa (Baer & Kaufman, 2006; Sawyer, 2006). Early researchers, such as Galton and Cox, believed intelligence and creativity were integral (Runco & Albert, 2010, p. 14) and J.P. Guilford (1950) pointed out that the accepted thinking in the 1950s was that intelligence and IQ and genius were inextricably linked. The term genius was used, in particular, to describe highly intelligent children.

These beliefs led to early intelligence tests that included exercises that attempted to measure the creativity of children by using, for example, inkblots to assess a child’s imagination (Heilman, 2005, p. 19; Sternberg & O’Hara, 2003). Not until the 1960s did research indicate intelligence and creativity were independent traits (Sawyer, 2006) with researchers examining the threshold theory of creativity/intelligence. This theory claims that a particular level of intelligence is needed to enable creativity, generally thought to be an IQ of 120, but above that, the level of IQ does not increase the likelihood of creativity (Baer & Kaufman, 2006; Batey & Furnham, 2006; Kozbelt, Beghetto & Runco, 2010; Martindale, 1989; Runco, 2007; Sawyer, 2006). Barron and Harrington (1981), after examining architects and creativity, concluded that an IQ of 120 was necessary to produce creativity in architecture but they also noted this level may be different in other disciplines. For example, Sternberg and O’Hara (2003) pointed out that a Nobel Prize winning physicist would need a greater amount of intelligence than a creative ‘artist’. This comment, of course, privileges Gardner’s logical-mathematical

---

9 Gardner’s different intelligences include linguistic, logical–mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily–kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist.
intelligence because it can be argued, using Gardner’s taxonomy of intelligences, that what Sternberg and O’Hara call a “creative artist” would need a higher amount of linguistic, spatial, musical or bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence.

Regardless of arguments about intelligence, while a level of intelligence may be important to be able to produce a creative outcome, in a similar way to other variables discussed, the conclusion appears to be that “intelligence is necessary but not sufficient for creative achievement” (Runco, 2007, p. 7).

**Creativity and ‘madness’**

Biological research into creativity has historically focused on the assumption that creativity and mental illness are linked (Dacey & Lennon, 1998; Jamison, 1992, p. 351) with creativity associated with madness. This link has occurred since Plato’s declaration that a poet can only create when inspired by a Muse and out of his mind. Becker (2000) argued that the Romantic Movement saw artists reviving the notion of divine madness to distinguish themselves from ‘ordinary’ men with madness still seen by some to be part of the ideology of a ‘true’ artist.

In this regard, Dacey and Lennon cite a number of studies that seemingly demonstrate how manic-depression or bipolar disorder (affective illness) is higher among recognised creative people, particularly within the creative arts (1998, pp. 140-144). It is pertinent to note Dacey and Lennon’s mention of creative arts here since the majority of research that has examined mental illness and its association with creativity has focused on the ‘creative arts’ and ‘artists’ principally because of the common assumption that creativity is only associated with artistic activity. Andreasen (1997), for example, conducted research that found 80% of her sample of 30 creative writers had been affected by an affective illness compared to 30% in the study’s control group of non-writers.

Furthermore, researchers believed that schizophrenia led to higher creative thinking because in Freudian thinking it was assumed that “schizophrenic thought was based more directly on primary process than is ordinary thinking” (Weisberg, 2006, p. 370). Weisberg (2006), however, after summarising current research into mental illness and its connection to creativity, challenged these findings and suggested that rather than mental illness facilitating the creative process, it may well be that certain personality characteristics lead an individual to choose particular careers. For example, a more sensitive person may choose poetry rather than, for example, journalism.
In contradiction, Claridge (1992) argued that mental illness, rather than being conducive to the creative process, actually inhibited it and further contended, in line with other theorists, that the definition of creativity itself in this context is problematic as creativity requires more than just the “ability to formulate original thoughts” (1992, p. 332); it also requires context and situational elements. More importantly, Claridge also noted that “it need not be the case that all forms of creative expression demand precisely the same set of mental operations or depend equally upon the same intellectual qualities” (ibid.). Furthermore, Eisenman (1997) suggested that if the list of symptoms of mental illness is examined, for example anxiety and inappropriate emotions, the likelihood of creative thinking is reduced. In addition, it cannot yet be categorically shown that a hypomanic episode will change thought processes into creative thinking with currently no evidence of a causal link between mental illness and creativity (Sawyer, 2006; Weisberg, 2006).

However, in an attempt to establish a link between the two, Jamison conducted research using “systematic diagnostic and psychological studies of living writers and artists” (1992, p. 351). By questioning poets, playwrights, novelists, biographers and artists who were considered creative in their domain, Jamison concluded that this group is a “high risk for affective illness” (1992, p. 355). However, this can also be explained by referring to Weisberg’s (2006) thesis that certain personality types are attracted to certain professions. Furthermore, as Becker identified, some present-day writers and artists may profess mental illness when questioned during research because of the “professional ideology of what it means to be truly creative” (2000, p. 45).

Adding to the doubts about the efficacy of Jamison’s research was that the participants chosen were part of what is considered High Art, or ‘artistic’ professions, without consideration for other groups who produce creative works such as scientists, mathematicians, songwriters or journalists. Arnold Ludwig (1992), on the other hand, conducted biographical research into 1005 eminently creative individuals from such diverse fields as architecture, sport, science, psychology, politics, religion, journalism and education as well as from writing, music, painting, theatre and dancing.10 His

---

10 Ludwig recognised 18 categories: architecture/design, art, business/entrepreneur, exploration, games/athletics, musical composition, musical performance, military, public official, physical science, social activism, social figure, spouse/lover, social science/academics, theatre, writing (expository), writing (fiction), writing (poetry) and unclassified. These categories were further divided into 68 sub-categories including the ones above.
results showed workers from professions considered artistic had a higher incidence of psychiatric difficulties than other professions but he also raised the point, in line with Becker (2000, p. 45), that certain psychopathologies may be cultivated because of either peer pressure, as is often the case with musicians and drug abuse, or expectations within that profession, for example poets who are expected to be loners who “struggle with their angst” (Ludwig, 1992, p. 351, emphasis in original).

**Creativity and mind-altering substances**

Plucker and Dana (1999) assert that the popular belief that drugs and alcohol increase creativity is a myth based on anecdotal evidence within the arts. Research that has examined creativity and *addiction theory* (Dacey & Lennon, 1998, p. 145) has found little positive results that support the contention that drugs and alcohol enhance the creative process. In fact, Heilman noted that the “mechanism underlying the relationships between substance abuse, novelty seeking, risk taking, and creativity has not been determined” (2005, p. 136). In other words, in line with other hypotheses about creativity in the biological approach, there is no causal link between creativity and one particular variable although it has been suggested that creative people may be more inclined to addiction (Heilman, Nadeau & Beversdorf, 2003). However, while studies seemingly indicate that poets, musicians or novelists have a higher incidence of substance abuse, there is little evidence to show that creative scientists, for example, are prone to addiction (Plucker & Dana, 1999).

Nonetheless, there is some support for the claim that creative thinking may occur during low cortical arousal (Heilman, Nadeau & Beversdorf, 2003), including Martindale’s work (2003; 1978; 1975), and some drugs (for example, marijuana and opium) have been found to depress the central nervous system. With this argument, drugs that heighten arousal should inhibit performance.\(^ {11}\) However, cocaine, amphetamines and opiates increase arousal and the level of dopamine in the brain (Kandel, Schwartz & Jessell, 2000), which contributes to an increase in novelty-seeking behaviour, supposedly a prerequisite to creativity, thus throwing doubt on the preceding argument. Furthermore, studies on marijuana’s affect on creativity have shown that while marijuana supposedly increased originality in associative ability tests, other important

\(^ {11}\) For a fuller explanation on how and why drugs, including alcohol, cannabis, opium, morphine, heroin, LSD, Ecstasy and cocaine, affect the brain see Greenfield (2000) pp. 77-96 and (2008) pp. 73-78.
factors in creativity, such as cognitive tasks, text comprehension, memory and motivation are negatively affected (Kneller, 1965, p. 55; Plucker & Dana, 1999, p. 609). These contradictions in drug effects indicate that research into mind-altering substances and creativity are at a similar place to other research: it is, as yet, difficult to prove how and why drugs affect creativity, or whether they do at all.

Another research area within addiction theory is the effect of alcohol on the creative process and findings up to this point have also been limited and provided mixed results (Ludwig, 1990; Rothenberg, 1990). More than half of the United States winners of the Nobel Prize for literature have had problems with alcohol (Piirto, 2005; Rothenberg, 1990) although when considering the number of writers, many do not12 (Heilman, 2005; Ludwig, 1990; Piirto, 2002, p. 175; Rothenberg, 1990). Ludwig, while researching creative artists who also drank heavily, found that more than seventy-five percent of subjects had their creative output impaired by alcohol. However, Ludwig concluded that alcohol and creativity do not have a simple relationship: it is dependent on the individual, other psychopathological elements, the amount of drinking involved, motivation, talent and productivity. Rothenberg (1990), while investigating alcoholism and writers, found the majority of his subjects did not write while under the influence and that most anecdotal reports were more likely reported to comply with the projected image of a creative writer in the West. Other research using ordinary subjects has shown that the perception of alcohol use affects how a creative work is perceived. The use of placebos in studies examining the link between creativity and alcohol has shown that when subjects believed they had ingested alcohol, they expected increased creativity (Lang, Verret & Watt, 1984; Lapp, Collins & Izzo, 1994; Norlander, 1999). Plucker and Dana (1998) argue that this is because of the commonsense belief that alcohol enhances creativity.

In summary, it can be claimed that biological approaches to creativity research provide valuable information, but as Susan Greenfield noted, “the common factor in all these different approaches is that studies of human subjects with aberrant minds/brains focus on the potential for creativity, not the momentary act of creativity itself” (2008, p. 267, my emphasis). Mayer (2003) concluded that biological approaches can only augment creativity research, with other results and methods necessary to provide a more

12 In Australia, for example, 2584 people listed their occupation as ‘Author’ in the 2006 Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008).
comprehensive approach to explain creativity. With that comment in mind, the next approach discussed, the psychological approach, provides further information.

2.1.3.3 Psychological Approaches

Sternberg and Lubart presented a summary of psychology’s contribution to creativity research by noting six approaches that have been used in an attempt to understand creativity. These were listed as mystical, pragmatic, psychodynamic, psychometric, cognitive and social-personality approaches (2003, pp. 3-15). Psychological research has followed a similar trajectory to other disciplines that have examined creativity with early research (such as psychodynamic approaches), commercial applications of creativity (pragmatic methods), and other approaches (including creative thinking, divergent thinking, creative cognitive and personality research) focusing on individual-centred theories. However, with the realisation that this person-centred approach is problematic, some researchers working on this problem in psychology have reached the understanding that more is needed to explain the complexity of creativity. The mystical, psychodynamic, psychometric, pragmatic and cognitive approaches to creativity each focus on the individual in isolation from other influences. The socio-personality approach takes a step closer to a more holistic model, with the understanding that influences outside the individual play a crucial role in creative production. However, the socio-personality approach still focuses on how these influences affect an individual rather than looking at the individual as one part of a system of creativity.

Sternberg and Lubart (2003) maintain that Western society’s view of creativity as a mystical process has hindered the scientific study of creativity. Studying creativity has been likened to studying love (Sternberg & Lubart, 1996, p. 679); creativity is thought to be a higher form of human spirituality, “humanity’s crowning glory” (Boden, 2004, p. 14), and to research it rationally could demean its value. This view assumes that the mythology of creativity as mystical and magical is correct and is also deeply rooted in the divine view where a Muse inspires an ‘artist’ to produce a creative product. As noted previously, this is a view that still resonates in Western culture. For example, a biographer of musician and songwriter Paul McCartney, writing about the composition of the song *Yesterday*, claimed that McCartney’s inspiration was mystical:

Falling out of bed one morning, he [McCartney] went straight to the piano (on which he had started taking formal lessons) and – still close to his unconscious
dream state – played as the song flowed from him with an ease that suggested divine inspiration. ‘It was one of the most instinctive songs I’ve ever written’, he said later (Salewicz in McIntyre, 2006, pp. 205-206).

While not as extreme as the mystical process described above, Freud’s research into creativity further compounded this view by reinforcing the belief that the creator only has a passive role in the creative process; it is the unconscious mind that controls the artist (Rothenberg & Hausman, 1996; Sawyer, 2006). Freud’s research is an example of the psychodynamic approach identified by Sternberg and Lubart (2003b) and this approach concentrated on unconscious thought processes and viewed creativity as an outlet for the artist to safely channel “libidinal energy into more socially acceptable directions” (Collins & Amabile, 2003, p. 297). Freud’s theories about creativity included how childhood trauma, madness, unfulfilled sexual desires and the unconscious mind affected the creativity of the conscious artist (Collins & Amabile, 2003; Negus & Pickering, 2004; Piirto, 2004; Sawyer, 2006; Ward, Smith & Finke, 2003; Weisberg, 2006). Freud maintained that there were two modes of thinking: primary-process, which he claimed generated ideas and drove the artistic mind, and secondary-process, which is rational, logical and conscious (Evans & Deehan, 1988; Weisberg, 2006) and contended that primary-process thought, as free-associative and analogical thinking, was heightened when dreaming, under hypnosis or when in a psychotic state (Martindale, 2003, p. 138). The individual purportedly has creative ideas when in the primary-process state and returns to a secondary-process state to elaborate the idea.

Freud’s research provides an example of Sternberg and Lubart’s (2003) concern about unconventional methodological approaches undermining the validity of creativity research. The case study methodology was criticised from a positivist point of view because of its subjective nature in both selection and interpretation. This critique was compounded by using this methodology in the research climate of the early twentieth century, which was influenced by positivism, and led to the isolation of creativity research as possibly unacceptable. Further to this, Freud based his research on the then current accepted beliefs of creativity, that is, the Romantic view of the creative genius with Petrie calling Freud’s research a “medicalised re-reading of the Romantic agony” (1991, p. 5). Zolberg argued that Freudian psychology depicted the artist as “a quasi-neurotic who channels his near-pathology into a socially permissible path” (1990, p.
110). Furthermore, Freud’s findings provided a basis for future research into creativity, therefore compounding these errors.

J.P. Guilford, as President of the American Psychological Association in the 1950s, criticised the lack of credible, empirical research into creativity and, in an attempt to bring credibility to creativity research, developed tests to measure psychological traits considered to be important for a creative outcome (Guilford, 1967). The psychometric approach that developed out of this research approach tested ‘ordinary’ people and emphasised divergent-thinking, a thinking style that requires flexibility in thinking (as opposed to convergent thinking where a problem is usually well defined with a single solution) (Ward, Finke & Smith, 1995). Psychometric testing measured such things as fluency of ideas, flexibility of the mind, originality and the ability to elaborate on ideas (Getzels & Jackson, 1962; Guilford, 1967; Torrance, 1963; 1997; Wallach & Kogan, 1965). These psychometric tests became prevalent in education to assess, and attempt to enhance, creativity in children. More importantly for psychology, the tests allowed researchers to compare subjects on a standard scale (Ward, Smith & Finke, 2003), crucial in quantitative research. The relevance of these divergent thinking tests to creativity research is that there are suggestions that a creative person is a divergent thinker whereas a convergent thinker is not creative (Evans & Deehan, 1988). However, other theorists argue that a creative person must have both styles of thinking: divergent to produce ideas that are novel and convergent to bring the idea to fruition (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Evans & Deehan, 1988; Sawyer, 2006).

Sternberg and Lubart (2003) argued that although the psychometric approach provided researchers with easily administered tests and easily scored results, it also raised the question of triviality and reliability. Studying ‘ordinary’ individuals using “paper-and-pencil assessment” (Ward, Smith & Finke, 2003, p. 7) was criticised as inconsequential with researchers arguing that only renowned creators should be studied. Further to this, questions were raised as to the reliability of the studies – who decided what was creative and who decided how it was to be measured? Sawyer also pointed out that, “high scores on these tests don’t correlate with real-life creative output” (2006, p. 45) a view agreed with by others (Feldman, 1997; Plucker & Renzulli, 2003; Weisberg, 1993) including Gardner (2001), who criticised the method as invalid because of this reason. It is now commonly agreed within psychology that divergent thinking tests do not necessarily
predict who will be creative (Sawyer, 2006, p. 44; Weisberg, 1993). The tests also do not identify why or how something is considered creative. Plucker and Renzulli (2003) rightly pointed out that generating ideas is only one part of the creative process but, more importantly, just because something is different or unusual does not mean it has value and it is the value judgement that ascertains whether a contribution is creative (Rothenberg & Hausman, 1996). Originality does not necessarily equal creativity (Eysenck & Keane, 2005; Runco, 2007; Sawyer, 2006).

A further approach in psychology is what Sternberg and Lubart (2003) called the pragmatic approach, where “creative thinking is extraordinary in its capacity to break out of our past experience” (Weisberg, 1993, p. 68). De Bono’s lateral thinking is an example of this approach, as are Osborn’s creative brainstorming approach and Gordon’s synectics methods (Sternberg & Lubart, 2003). The pragmatic approach is primarily concerned with developing creativity and teaching practical techniques, particularly within a commercial context, and this commerciality has meant the Academy has viewed pragmatic approaches as frivolous and without merit. But the approach also emphasises the idea that creative ideas appear in a sudden burst of insight with no allowance made for the importance of past knowledge, that is, in a similar manner to Romanticism’s view of creativity, ideas seemingly come from nowhere, a notion that rationalist research into creativity has shown may not be viable.

De Bono (1967; 1968; 1977) claimed that lateral thinking, generating new ideas by breaking away from accepted knowledge, is the tool for harnessing insight and is the way to explain the process of creativity. Lateral thinking is “a shift in thinking or perception; it is a complete break from previous thoughts or paradigms” (Puccio & Cabra, 2010, p. 160). Advertising executive Alex Osborne (1963) built on de Bono’s techniques but preferred using groups rather than individuals and proposed creative brainstorming where a group of people produces ideas: members of the group are encouraged to produce creative ideas in a non-critical environment (Nickerson, 2003). Gordon’s (1961) synectics theory expanded on brainstorming (Sawyer, 2006) and utilised analogies and metaphors within the group context to encourage creative thinking. Yet, empirical research has shown that brainstorming approaches, rather than increasing creativity can inhibit it (Paulus & Brown, 2003). Martindale’s discussion on the effects of cortical arousal on creative thinking pointed out that increased cortical
arousal is likely if others are around and his research indicated that “increases in arousal cause decreases in creativity, originality, and variability of behaviour” (2003, p. 140). Furthermore, even within the pragmatic approach itself there is criticism of brainstorming. De Bono suggested it is inefficient and outdated (1993, pp. x) with too much emphasis on the importance of “crazy” ideas while also stating that it is more effective to learn creative skills as an individual. This argument itself is problematic when examined in the context of current creativity research since the pragmatic approach fails to account for social and cultural contextual factors outside the individual as well as factors within the individual such as cognitive structures, personality, intelligence, and family and education background. Furthermore, the different techniques within this approach are not grounded in empirical research and, as Sawyer claims, “there’s almost no solid experimental evidence that any of these methods work” (2006, p. 300).

In contrast to the pragmatic approach, cognitive research in creativity has a strong history of empirical research. The cognitive approach concentrates on the mental processes a creative individual uses (Piirto, 2004; Runco, 2007; Sawyer, 2006; Simonton, 1990; Ward, Smith & Finke, 2003). Ward, Finke and Smith state cognitive psychology focuses on how the person translates their world by looking at,

… how they accumulate knowledge, organise their experiences, and recall memories; how they put their knowledge to work to make decisions and solve problems from the simplest to the most complex; how they consider and plan for the future; and how they carry out actions (1995, p. 9).

Examples of research within the cognitive approach include Ward, Smith and Finke’s theory of creative cognition and the geneplore model (Ward, Finke & Smith, 1995; Ward & Kolomyts, 2010; Ward, Smith & Finke, 2003), and Weisberg’s (1993; 1997; 2006) hypothesis that extraordinary products are produced by ordinary thinking processes. However, creative thinking theories, including Wallas’s (1926) four stages in creative thinking, the Gestalt psychologists’ theory of insight, Mednick’s (1962) Remote Association Test (RAT) and Koestler’s (1970) ideas on bisociation, although they are not specifically cognitive research, can be considered under this approach because the underlying premise of these theories is the explanation of the mental processes used to produce a creative thought. Later cognitive scientists (Eysenck &
Keane, 2005; Weisberg, 1993; 2006) dismissed these earlier theories but the theories themselves paved the way for later cognitive research.

In 1926, Graham Wallas asked how a new thought came about (1926, p. 79). Wallas described four stages in creative thinking: *preparation, incubation, illumination* and *verification*. The preparation stage is “the whole process of intellectual education” (Wallas, 1926, p. 82). The incubation stage is described as “not consciously thinking about the problem” (Wallas, 1926, p. 80). The illumination stage is “the appearance of the happy idea” (ibid.) and, finally, the verification stage is where “the validity of the idea is tested” (ibid.). Researchers have criticised Wallas’s lack of empirical testing with the comment that it describes the creative process rather than explains it (Eysenck & Keane, 2005, p. 466) and Lubart (2000-2001) affirmed that attempts to research the model have produced inconsistent results.\(^\text{13}\) The incubation and illumination stages, in particular, are currently unable to be precisely confirmed other than anecdotally (Bailin, 1988; Boden, 2004; Hausman, 1987; Weisberg, 1993). However, although Wallas first proposed these stages in 1926, researchers still use them as a basic guide to explain the creative process. Further research has attempted to both reduce (Bastick, 2003; Stein, 1963, p. 118) and increase (Amabile, 1990; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Kneller, 1965; MacKinnon, 1970; Norlander & Gustafson, 1996; 1997; 1998; Osborn, 1963; Rossman in Piirto, 2004; Pope, 2005; Von Oech, 2005) these stages, but regardless of the debate, most researchers agree that the creative process is cyclical and non-linear (Armbruster, 1989; 1997; Csikszentmihalyi & Sawyer, 1995; Kneller, 1965; Pope, 2005; Runco, 2007; Russ, 1993; Sawyer, 2006; Stein, 1963); the stages continually overlap and repeat and as the complexity of the creative problem increases, so too does the number of iterations. One important idea to come out of Wallas’s proposal was the suggestion that creative thinking must include previous knowledge and experience (the preparation stage) as well as a judgement phase (verification).

Coming from a different angle, the Gestalt school, a group of psychologists from the early twentieth century, proposed that knowledge and experience were not necessary to solve problems and argued instead that focusing on previous experiences could hinder

creative thinking (Weisberg, 1993; 1995; 2006). De Bono’s notion of lateral thinking (1967) is an extension of this approach. Gestaltists claimed that examining a problem without specific knowledge could lead to spontaneous restructuring (Weisberg, 1993, p. 51) and early research using animals seemingly supported the Gestaltist position. However, studies using human subjects (Burnham & Davis, 1969; Lung & Dominowski, 1985; Weisberg & Alba, 1981; 1982) disagreed with the Gestaltists’ claims and found past experience and knowledge played a crucial part in problem solving. Weisberg (2006) maintained that the Gestaltists’ claim of sudden insights and their negative attitude to the importance of experience in problem solving has compounded Western culture’s belief that creative thinking only occurs when a creator breaks free from past experience, a thesis similar to the Romantic view that an individual can only create when free from tradition and constraints.

In contrast to the Gestaltists, associationism argued that elements already existing in the mind are necessary for creativity. Associationism is defined as associating ideas and thoughts already in the mind to produce new ideas with the argument that if there are more ideas already available, a person will have a greater chance of associating ideas and will be more creative (Evans & Deehan, 1988, p. 49). Simonton (1988) called this chance permutation and suggested that ‘original’ thinkers have a less rigid set of associative connections than ordinary thinkers and are therefore able to produce more creative thoughts. Sarnoff Mednick defined the creative thinking process as “the forming of associative elements into new combinations which either meet specified requirements or are in some way useful” (1962, p. 221). With this in mind, Mednick developed tests to assess differences in creativity in individuals. The RAT, where a test subject is given three words with the instruction to find the common association between the words, is a further example of the psychometric approach where results can be measured (Sawyer, 2006). But, as with other quantitative creativity tests, RATs do not take social and cultural contexts into account (Weisberg, 1993) and the nature of the test defies Mednick’s definition of the creative process: the tests do not necessarily provide combinations that “are in some way useful” (1962, p. 221). Furthermore, there is a strong emphasis on novel ideas only coming about by chance (Evans & Deehan, 1988) which, again, downplays the environment but also posits the idea that each problem solving association is independent of any idea that precedes it. Results from
later studies show that this is not the case: problem solving depends on the existence and use of previous ideas as well as feedback (Weisberg, 1993).

Taking the associationists’ ideas one step further, Koestler (1970) posited the idea of bisociaction, where two disparate ideas are combined to produce a novel one. Sawyer describes bisociaction as cross fertilisation and quotes Koestler who stated: “All decisive advances in the history of scientific thought can be described in terms of mental cross-fertilization between different disciplines” (Koestler in Sawyer, 2006, p. 64). Koestler used the example of Gutenberg’s printing press, an invention that married the disparate occupations of wine making and printing, to describe bisociaction. However, according to Weisberg (2006), Koestler also subscribed to the notion of different thought processes as necessary for creative thinking and, in a similar fashion to Freud, claimed that conscious thought was based on logic and creative thought was specifically illogical (Weisberg, 2006, p. 400).

Later research dismissed the idea that creators use essentially different thought processes to generate creative thinking (Newell, Shaw & Simon, 1962; Simonton, 2000; Ward, Finke & Smith, 1995) including Weisberg (1993), who summarised and dismissed a number of theories that argued for extraordinary thinking processes in creative outcomes including Freud’s ideas about primary and secondary processing, madness and its association with creativity, incubation and intuition, insight, remote associations, and creativity training techniques. Weisberg concluded that the supporting evidence for these theories was weak and instead posited a view that claimed creative thinking is, in essence, problem solving and because problem solving is a basic human skill, creative thinking must be “a basic human capacity” (1997, p. 153).

Ward, Smith and Finke argued that new ideas are always built on ideas that already exist and that creative thinking occurs when ideas that constrain thinking are rejected and ideas considered worthwhile are extended. With this in mind, Ward, Finke and Smith proposed the geneplore model (Finke, Ward & Smith, 1995; Ward, Smith & Finke, 2003), a combination of generate and explore. The model contends that most creative activities include a generative cognitive phase, where an individual produces an idea, followed by an exploratory cognitive phase, where the individual assesses the value as a creative contribution. However, while it has been argued that the geneplore model is one of the few creative thinking models that has been extensively and
rigorously tested, and is useful to stimulate creative thinking, (Weisberg, 2006), a significant limitation is that it does not explain why something becomes culturally creative, that is, it could explain p-creativity, but with no value judgement, the creative idea cannot be considered H-creative. As Csikszentmihalyi maintains, creativity is not merely an intrapsychic process but “an interaction between producer and audience” (2003, p. 314, emphasis in original). While the cognitive approach may provide insight into the mental processes an individual uses for creative thinking, in a similar fashion to other approaches, cognitive structures are not sufficient to explain the complexity of creativity: variables outside the individual need to be examined as well.

Sternberg and Lubart’s (2003) next approach in the psychological domain, the social-personality approach, brings creativity research closer to a more inclusive view of creativity. The social-personality approach argues that it is more than mental attributes and structures that lead to creativity with this approach focusing on personality, motivation and sociocultural variables (Ward, Smith & Finke, 2003). It is in this approach that the concepts of nature/nurture can be examined, that is, the nature of an individual’s traits and the nurture of their environment. Galton’s (1996) research included examination of the family and education of his so-called geniuses and this has been expanded on in further psychological studies (Simonton, 2003a), but other factors that have been examined include family relationships, mentoring and workplace influences as well as macro-level influences such as social, cultural, political and economic factors.

Because of the view in psychology of the individual as central to the creative process, there has been a great deal of research on identifying characteristics of creative individuals, particularly personality traits (Feist, 1998; 2003; 2010). MacKinnon’s (1965) research at the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research (IPAR), for example, attempted to scientifically identify common traits that could be attributed to a creative person and examined architects, writers, scientists, engineers and mathematicians rather than the accepted ‘creative type’, that is, artists. One crucial finding in MacKinnon’s research is that these tests disproved the common Romantic notion of the creative personality who “was not only introverted but a true neurotic,

---

withdrawn from society, inept in his relations with others, totally unable to carry on a conversation with others less gifted than himself” (MacKinnon, 1966, p. 152).

Barron and Harrington (1981), after summarising personality research, compiled a set of core characteristics that they considered to be common personality traits in a creative person:

… high valuation of esthetic qualities in experience, broad interests, attraction to complexity, high energy, independence of judgement, autonomy, intuition, self-confidence, ability to resolve antinomies or to accommodate apparently opposite or conflicting traits in one’s self-concept, and, finally a firm sense of self as ‘creative’ (1981, p. 453).

However, other researchers have argued that it is almost impossible to categorically define the creative personality (Tardif & Sternberg, 1997; Weisberg, 2006) and it has been argued that different domains require individuals with different personality characteristics (Abuhamdeh & Csikszentmihalyi, 2004; Feist, 2003; Hennessey, 2003; Weisberg, 2006). Furthermore, Weisberg argued that it is almost impossible to ascertain whether the presence of certain personality traits in different domains is cause or effect (2006, pp. 500-504). Csikszentmihalyi, while reluctant to define the creative personality because of the multi-dimensional nature of creativity, describes the creative person’s personality as complex (1997, p. 55). Csikszentmihalyi catalogued the multiplicity and dichotomous nature of the creative personality by claiming that creative people had a range of personality traits including such paradoxes as energetic but often quiet, smart yet naïve, playful and disciplined, imaginative but rooted in reality, extroverted and introverted, humble and proud, not stereotyped to either masculine or feminine, but with attributes of both, rebellious and independent but a traditionalist regarding the rules of the domain, passionate about work but also dispassionate and objective, and, finally, suffering and sensitive but also able to derive enjoyment from their work (1997, pp. 58-76).

Regardless of the above opposing viewpoints, creativity researchers note that one important personality trait for creativity is motivation. Amabile (1982; 1990; 1996; 1993; Collins & Amabile, 2003) studied extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to test their effect on creative contributions – intrinsic being “the motivation to engage in some activity primarily for its own sake” (Amabile & Tighe, 1993, p. 15) and extrinsic as “the
motivation to engage in some activity primarily in order to achieve some external goal” (ibid). Amabile’s original conclusion (in 1982) was that extrinsic motivation hindered creativity. However, further studies by Amabile (1990) and others (Collins & Amabile, 2003; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Eisenberger & Shanock, 2003; Hennessey, 2003; 2010; Sternberg & Lubart, 2003) discounted this conclusion and contended both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards can motivate a creative producer. Dacey and Lennon suggested that certain types of extrinsic motivators, what they call “synergistic extrinsic motivators” (1998, p. 80), can affect the creative process positively when combined with intrinsic motivators. A further proposal is that if an activity is intrinsically rewarding this is what provides the motivation to produce (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988, p. 6).

The final element in the social-personality approach is the social environment. Research has been conducted into family variables such as birth order (Albert, 1980; Cicirelli, 1967; Gaynor & Runco, 1992; Schooler, 1972; Simonton, 2008a, p. 252; Sulloway, 1996), family size (Cicirelli, 1967; Gaynor & Runco, 1992; Runco, 2007), age gap between siblings (Cicirelli, 1967; Sulloway, 1999) and early family experiences including the loss of a parent or other trauma (Eisenstadt, 1978; Feldman, 2003; Goertzel & Goertzel, 1965; Simonton, 1999; 2010). The family environment is another variable that has been investigated (Simonton, 1986; Simonton, 1999) with studies suggesting a traumatic home life leads to a propensity for creativity. However, the findings in these studies often contradict each other and Gaynor suggested that rather than presuming that one variable will explain creativity, it is more productive to expect that “several family structural variables must be taken into account in order to understand the development of creative potential” (1992, p. 115). Again, similar to claims made within other approaches in creativity research, there is the emphasis on potential. Furthermore, the majority of these investigations are conducted using subjects that are involved in artistic activity.

Social influences external to the family include effects of education on creativity (Beghetto, 2010; Dacey & Lennon, 1998; Feldman & Benjamin, 2006; Runco, 2007; Smith & Smith, 2010) as well as mentoring (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Dacey & Lennon, 1998; Sawyer, 2006; Simonton, 1984; 2003b). Intimate and collaborative relationships have been examined (Chadwick & De Courtivron, 1996; Daughters, 2009; John-Steiner, 2000; Sarnoff & Sarnoff, 2005; Sawyer, 2007; Sonnenburg, 2004) with
Csikszentmihalyi’s (1997) study into eminent individuals also including an examination of these variables. Furthermore, Mumford and Simonton (1997) have investigated creativity in the workplace as have Runco (1995), Zhou and Shalley (2007) and Amabile (1988; 1997; 1998; 1996) with others (Amabile & Gryskiewicz, 1989; Amabile et al., 2004). Taking a step out from the individual, cultural, societal, economic and political factors all have an impact on an individual’s creativity (Feldman, 2003; Runco, 2007; Simonton, 1997; Alphonse de Candolle in Simonton, 2003a, p. 305; Simonton, 2003b).

In summing up the social influences on a creative individual, Csikszentmihalyi recognises a major difficulty in creativity research – that of identifying one characteristic:

… what is astonishing is the great variety of paths that led to eminence. Some of our respondents were precocious—almost prodigious—and others had a normal childhood. Some had difficult early years, lost a parent, or experienced various forms of hardship; others had happy family lives. A few even had normal childhoods. Some encountered supportive teachers; others were ignored and had bad experiences with mentors (1997, p. 181).

The social-personality approach in psychology steps towards including more than simply the individual in the creative process and Sternberg and Lubart (2003) commented that the social-personality approach has brought important insight into creativity research. But, so too has cognitive research and both approaches have traditionally downplayed the importance of the other with few studies recognising the importance of, and examining both of, these elements. Furthermore, most social-personality research has looked at “microsocial interactions” (Zolberg, 1990, p. 120) rather than the larger social structures with society as external to the individual (ibid.). The next approach examined, sociology, moves the individual away from the central position in cultural production but, similar to psychological approaches, initially focused on one element as the most important factor in a creative outcome before recognising that this view was not enough to explain the complexity of creativity.
2.1.3.4 Sociological Approaches

Research into creativity within sociology is typically referred to as the social production of art (Tanner, 2003; Wolff, 1993). Rather than focusing on the individual and the individual’s attributes, as psychology does, sociological research into creativity focuses on the broader picture: the cultural and social influences on art. However, again note the use of the term art. In a similar fashion to much research into creativity, sociology has conflated creativity and art. Jeremy Tanner described classic sociology theory as “centrally concerned with criticising the individualistic account of human life of which this idea of the creative artist is one strand” (2003, p. 69) and noted how sociologists examined how systems of social relationships affect artists’ production. The artist is seen as a role player, or a worker, within the institutions they are part of and sociologists examine how these structural constraints influence artists’ creativity (Zolberg, 1990). Early theorists, such as Marx, Weber, Simmel and Durkheim, provided discussion on, for example, society’s relationship to art, what artistic creativity is, and the audience’s relationship to the artwork (Tanner, 2003). However, Bourdieu (2003) argued that the classic sociological approach gave a producer no agency, that is, an individual has no choice for action, because it claimed that the structural constraints determined how a work is produced.

For example, Vytautus Kavolis (1972) proposed that cultural creativity could be explained by identifying phases within economic, political, communal and ideological processes in a society. Kavolis examined art throughout history using a phase-cycle model and suggested there were four phases in the cycle: “disturbance of equilibrium, goal-oriented action, social-emotional integration, tension reduction” (1972, p. 17). Kavolis found that artistic creativity increased in the first phase, decreased during the second, increased again during integration and, finally, reduced in the final stage of the cycle when boredom set in (1972, p. 40). Kavolis emphasised the importance of a society’s role in the production of art and specifically discounted the social organisation of a domain and psychological factors of individuals. His focus was on how “complex historical dynamics underlying the varying capacity of societies to stimulate creativity in the visual arts” (1972, pp. 20-21, emphasis in original) affected the occurrence of creativity.
Howard Becker (1974; 1982) partly addressed this shortcoming. Becker argued that sociological enquiry into art typically wrote about how the organisation or system affected the artist without investigating other participants who made up the system and the activities those participants actioned within the system. Becker called these systems *Art Worlds* and his investigation led to the conclusion of “art as a form of collective action” (1974, p. 767). In Becker’s terms, an art world is “the network of people whose cooperative activity, organised via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produces the kind of art works that art world is noted for” (1982, p. x). The artist performs the core activity but this would not be possible without the other participants performing support activities.\(^{15}\)

One of Becker’s main arguments is that the role of the participants in the art world is arbitrary, including that of the ‘artist’. This argument, of course, firmly rejects the notion of the genius individual with the division between the artist and support personnel of an art world socially constructed and in a constant state of renegotiation (Tanner, 2003, p. 74). Becker maintained that Art Worlds use deeply embedded conventions to convey meaning. Practitioners in that world, as well as the supporting personnel and audience, understand these conventions. Commonly known conventions mean that each time a performance is executed, every single nuance, gesture, meaning does not have to be redone and “artists can devote more time to actual work” (Becker, 1982, p. 30).

However, Becker depicted each Art World as discrete with little interaction between them and Zolberg (1990) disputed this as being unrealistic. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) stated that creative breakthroughs can occur when ideas from one domain merge with another. Nick Zangwill (2002) pointed out that Becker did not explain why an individual would participate in an Art World. Furthermore, Becker’s argument failed to account for why someone excels (Bourdieu, 2003; Zolberg, 1990). Later sociological research into art production (Bailin, 1988; Wolff, 1993; Zolberg, 1990) attempted to address these shortcomings by arguing that social structures, while not shaping how the creative process occurs, do go some way in identifying how and why a person becomes an artist and how the social structure chooses who will be an artist, what they will produce, and how their production will be publicly available. There is also

---

\(^{15}\) Support personnel in an Art World can include manufacturers of material, members of appropriate institutions, distributors of the artwork and the State.
acknowledgement in this later research of the importance of the individual in the process. Zolberg, for example, argued to “reinsert” (1990, p. 196) artists into sociological research and suggested that the psychological makeup of the artist is crucial for an artist to function within society’s structures.

Janet Wolff (1981; 1993) largely agreed with Zolberg but argued for the renaming of the artist to *producer* rather than *creator* (or *artist*) because, firstly, an overemphasis on the individual as creator discounts the input of others in the creative work, a similar argument to Becker, and, secondly, the concept of *creator* dismisses the social and cultural influences involved. Wolff, in line with Marx, stated that, “Art is a social product” (1993, p. 1) – what is considered art, and who is considered an artist, is determined by society. Wolff further maintained, in a similar fashion to psychologist Robert Weisberg (1997), that ‘artistic’ creativity is no different to other forms of creativity or, in fact, other work: it is subject to the same economic, historic and social structures. Therefore, to examine an artist’s work it is necessary to examine these structures but it is also important to investigate the artist’s specific influences including family and other biographical factors. Furthermore, Wolff introduced the audience as a crucial element, in a similar way to Becker (1982), with Wolff maintaining that the production of art and how it is received has rarely been integrated within the same research. Wolff argued against the privileging of the individual genius but also against the privileging of the receiver, or the audience, which is what Barthes did with his *Death of the Author* essay (1977). In Wolff’s sociology of art, both producer and receiver are of equal importance along with the social and cultural structures that the producer and audience interact with.

However, a crucial point of Wolff’s thesis was that rather than looking at these structures and influences as limiting and controlling, one of Romanticism’s core arguments, it is vitally important to understand that they can also enable production. With this in mind, Wolff maintained that both structures and the individual are necessary in cultural production.

In line with Wolff’s claim, sociologist Anthony Giddens (1984) proposed that the relationship between the objective ‘structure’ and subjective ‘agent’ is symbiotic rather than oppositional. Giddens coined the term *structuration* to describe this relationship and suggested a duality of structure, a notion that states structures are necessary for
agents to act but the actions of the agents maintain and transform those structures. In line with Wolff, Giddens posited that these structures both constrain and enable an individual’s practice (1984, p. 25). Although not specifically researching creativity, Giddens’ ideas about the interdependent relationship between structure and agency can be applied to creativity research in that it supports the argument against sociological versus psychological research.

Pierre Bourdieu’s (1977; 1984; 1990; Johnson, 1993) work on cultural production also attempted to bridge the opposition between structure and agency. Bourdieu argued that a clearer understanding of cultural production would benefit from examining both structure and agency and proposed the concept of habitus to bridge the divide between the two. Habitus explains why an individual acts in a certain way in certain contexts and how they have come to act in that way. It is considered “the result of a long process of inculcation, beginning in early childhood, which becomes a ‘second sense’ or a second nature” (Randall in Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 5) and stays with the agent throughout their life; it is durable and transposable (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53). An individual’s habitus governs how the individual acts but the action also changes the habitus.

Bourdieu’s theory of cultural production encompasses a confluence between the individual’s habitus, their capital, a cultural field and a field of works. He describes it mathematically as \{habitus\} \{capital\} + field = practice (1984, p. 101) with the field of works introduced in later writing (Johnson, 1993, p. 183). Bourdieu stated that cultural production occurs when a producer’s, or agent’s, habitus, capital and position within a field converge (2003, p. 98). Habitus has already been discussed, but an individual’s capital allows the agent to operate within a field of cultural production. Randall (1993) highlighted two particular forms of capital as important: symbolic, how much prestige, honour or celebrity an individual has within a field, and cultural “an understanding of the rules, regulations and values of the field” (Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002, p. xi). Other forms of capital include educational, economic, political and social. The value of an agent’s capital is determined by the cultural field, as is the power to decide what is and is not authentic capital (Schirato & Yell, 2000).

The cultural field is a space of cultural practice that has “its own laws of functioning and its own relations of force” (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993, p. 6) and includes producers
and all those involved in the production and legitimisation of a cultural product. In this way, the theory of cultural production also allows examination of both production and reception. Agents produce within these fields using the understood conventions and codes. Bourdieu suggested that fields offer those involved in them a “space of possibles” (1993, p. 176, emphasis in original) that influences how and what will be produced. Fields engage in a constant struggle for power based on each field’s own symbolic capital, but the agents within the fields are also in a struggle for position, also dependent on their accumulation of capital. The individual’s habitus, which includes their skill in a field, determines an agent’s success.

Finally, the field of works is introduced by Bourdieu (1993, p. 183) as comprising the tools of a field including the structure and form of its past work. Toynbee called the field of works the “historically accumulated symbolic resources” (2001, p. 9).

In short, Bourdieu posited that cultural production occurs when an individual, with their particular worldview and upbringing, engages with previously produced works and the commonly understood conventions and codes in a sphere of production, and interacts with social spheres with their particular rules and influences. Randall (1993) contended that the cultural production model allows the individual, a concept that structuralism ignored, to be reintroduced into sociological enquiry via habitus, whilst grounding the individual within social actions, by using the concept of field, without privileging one over the other.

Zolberg’s explanation of the sociology of art, Wolff’s examination of the social production of art, and Bourdieu’s work on cultural production is a step toward the “reconceptualisation of creativity” (McIntyre, 2008a; 2009; McIntyre & McIntyre, 2007), that is, from focusing on one aspect of creativity, as research has done up to this point, to examining how creativity occurs within a confluence of elements.

### 2.1.3.5 Cultural studies

The understanding of creativity in cultural studies has followed a similar trajectory to disciplines such as biology, psychology and sociology with the emphasis initially on one element as responsible for creativity, before acknowledging that researchers must recognise that a multiple set of elements are necessary for a creative outcome. In the case of cultural studies, the audience has been the major focus of research.
Hesmondhalgh claims that producers have recently been ignored in cultural studies in favour of the creativity of the audience “because of an understandable but excessive reaction against the fetishisation of their work as extraordinary” (2002, p. 5). This focus has been noted by others (Frith, 1992; Garnham, 1997; Willis, 1990) including Toynbee who argued that cultural studies has recently focused on the “consumption of artefacts” (2003, p. 102) by ordinary people, that is, audience studies or reception theory.

A premise behind cultural studies is that it argues “ordinary, everyday culture needs to be taken seriously” (Hesmondhalgh, 2002, p. 39, emphasis in original), which is in direct contrast to aesthetic theories of production that perceives high culture as superior to everyday culture. Toynbee (2001; 2003), while examining popular music, claimed that cultural studies has rarely focused on creativity due to the elitist views most people have about it, that is, creativity is seen as the privilege of high art while cultural studies concerns itself with examining “the culture of the people” (Toynbee, 2003, p. 102).

Raymond Williams (1961), considered to be a founding father of cultural studies, explained that certain aesthetic notions of creativity popular in the middle of the twentieth century were examples of a Romantic view because they claimed an artist produces work through ‘inspiration’ and only artworks of superior quality could be considered art. Williams’ discussion on creativity stated that focusing only on producers and their work needed to be rejected because of the limits this places on our overall understanding of art. Furthermore, he posited the idea that the audience, or receiver, is as important as the producer:

Communication is the crux of art, for any adequate description of experience must be more than simple transmission; it must also include reception and response. However successfully an artist may have embodied his experience in a form capable of transmission, it can be received by no other person without the further “creative activity” of all perception: information transmitted by the work has to be interpreted, described and taken into the organization of the spectator. It is not a question of “inspired” or “uninspired” transmission to a passive audience. It is, at every level, an offering of experience, which may then be accepted, rejected or ignored (1961, pp. 29-30).

However, while Williams firmly stated that both transmission as well as reception and response were needed, cultural studies has tended to pursue reception theory (Schulman, 1993), or audience studies, where “the ‘moment of cultural production’ was in its
reading” (Golding & Ferguson, 1997, p. xxi), a notion echoing Barthes’ and Foucault’s post-structuralist writings on authorship. McQuail summarised reception theory when he stated that the “media text has to be read through the perceptions of its audience, which constructs meanings and pleasures from the media texts offered” (2010, p. 405).

Examples of early cultural studies research that support McQuail’s contention are the investigations conducted by researchers from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham who examined how audiences received and interpreted a text. Hall’s model of encoding/decoding (1973) claimed that a producer ‘encodes’ a text in a specific way and the audience ‘decodes’, or interprets, the message in one of three ways: dominant, negotiated or oppositional16 or, in Williams’ terms, “accepted, rejected or ignored” (1961, p. 30). The encoding/decoding model emphasised the power of the audience in making meaning. Morley (1980) expanded on Hall’s research by examining how different socio-cultural backgrounds affected an audience’s response to a message. Both of these studies focused on how the audience interpreted, or created, meaning in the message with little concern for the producer of the work.

Hartley (2008) suggested that the field of cultural studies is in opposition to, for example, journalism studies because cultural studies typically focuses on the receiver whereas journalism studies focuses on the news producer, a point agreed with by journalism researcher Barbie Zelizer (2004). Hartley criticised journalism studies as a discipline that has “fetishized the producer-provider … it ignores the agency of the consumer” (2008, p. 322). Although this may be true, Hartley fails to address the idea that the same criticism can be made against cultural studies; the ‘fetishizing’ of the audience/receiver. In other writing, Hartley’s (2002) aversion to notions of individual authorship is apparent:

Authorship is, then, a social system imposed on the domain of writing; it is not the act or trade of writing. It is a system for producing hierarchies within that domain … It seems to represent a pathological desire for an ultimate origin, a god who will finally limit the infinite potentiality of meaning (Hartley, 2002, pp. 14-15, emphasis in original).

---

16 A producer encodes with a preferred meaning (Hall, 2002, p. 304, emphasis in original) and an audience takes either this preferred meaning (dominant), accepts the preferred meaning but prefers to adapt its own application (negotiated) or rejects the encoded meaning (oppositional).
Hesmondhalgh (2002; 2006b; 2006c) argued against the marginalisation of the author in cultural studies but also against the deification of the individual. With this in mind, he maintained that it is important to include symbol creators in any theory of creativity as without an author, a text would not exist. However, Hesmondhalgh does not suggest a return to the individual genius model: he considers economic, political, organisational and social factors by suggesting a cultural industries approach, which recognises the importance of the audience as well as the producer (2002, p. 34). In a similar fashion, Toynbee asserted that an approach in popular music studies that included both production and reception would provide a more valid way of explaining creativity in music (2003, p. 103), an argument that can be made in any cultural production.

Like biology, psychology and sociology, research in cultural studies has followed the path of initially concentrating on one element, the audience, through to understanding how the audience is one part of how creativity occurs. With this in mind, it is time to investigate what this reconceptualisation has revealed in current research.

2.1.3.6 Current research

Creativity research is currently exploring confluence approaches where it is considered that more than one element must be present to produce a creative outcome. Dacey and Lennon describe the confluence approach as having an “interactionist orientation” (1998, p. 85) meaning a number of elements interact to produce a creative outcome. Csikszentmihalyi (2003) contends that psychologists have traditionally viewed creativity as a mental process only and this is an injustice to the complexity of creativity; it needs to be examined within the cultural and social milieus as well. The same can be said for biological, sociological and cultural studies approaches. Dacey and Lennon (1998) analysed biological, psychological and social research into creativity and found that any research done up to that point has emphasised biological or psychological or social influences on creativity and rather than separate the three, there needs to be a more holistic approach that encompasses all of them. With that argument in mind, Dacey and Lennon provided a framework for future research they called the biopsychosocial model with the argument that creativity is not simply about intelligence or biology or society or environment (1998, p. 224). Instead, each of these factors is significant in the production of a creative outcome.
There are many confluence approaches that researchers have suggested for examining creativity including Amabile’s *Componential Theory* (1982; 1990; 1996; 1993), Sternberg and Lubart’s *Investment Theory* (1992; 1996), Gruber’s *Evolving-systems Model* (1989; 1997; 2003), and Simonton’s *Evolution Theory* (1999). While each of these confluence models have merit, it can be argued that the approach developed by Csikszentmihalyi (1988b; 1990; 1994; 1997; 2003; Feldman, Csikszentmihalyi & Gardner, 1994), the systems model of creativity, provides a straightforward structure to analyse creativity in a form that is simple and elegant. Each of the above branches of creativity research, that is, biology, psychology, sociology and cultural studies, can be found within the systems model. Furthermore, it is a model that has not been applied to print journalism and examining journalism using a model such as this could provide fresh insight into journalists’ work practices. For these reasons, the systems model has been chosen as the primary model in this “testing-out” (Phillips & Pugh, 2000, p. 50) research.

Csikszentmihalyi answers the question of where is creativity (1990, p. 200; 1997, p. 24) by stating that, rather than being found in an individual’s production process or in an audience’s reading of a text, it is systemic and can be found when three elements interact: a domain of knowledge (the cultural context), an individual who understands and uses that knowledge to produce a novel change, and a field (the social context) that understands the domain and uses that knowledge to judge that the individual’s contribution is novel and appropriate. All three elements, domain, field and person, are equally important in producing creativity, or, as Csikszentmihalyi contends metaphorically, “the spark is necessary, but without air and tinder there would be no flame” (1997, p. 7). In other words, an individual as agent interacts with the structures of a system of cultural production, thus providing evidence of how structure and agency support each other in creative production. Csikszentmihalyi describes the systems model as:

---

17 Other researchers who have proposed confluence models include, but are not limited to: Woodman and Schoenfeldt (1990); Mumford (1988; 1991); Runco and Chand (1995); Martindale (1989); and, Feldman (2003). Bourdieu’s cultural production model can also be described as a confluence model. Weisberg (2006) argues that Guilford’s approach to creativity was an early example of a confluence approach because Guilford recognised the importance of a multitude of personality traits and motivation an individual must have to be a creative thinker. However, Guilford ignored other external factors.
… a dynamic model, with creativity the result of the interaction between three subsystems: a domain, a person, and a field. Each subsystem performs a specific function. The domain transmits information to the person, the person produces a variation, which may or may not be selected by the field, and the field in turn will pass the selected variation to the domain (1990, p. 200).

**Figure 2 – The systems model of creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p. 315).**

This model expands Dacey and Lennon’s model and can be considered a biopsychosociocultural model. The biological and psychological factors are included in the *individual* element, the social factors in the *field*, and the cultural factors in the *domain*. Although the term *biopsychosociocultural* has not been used to describe creativity research, it can be found in research in health (Astin & Astin, 2002; Berg, 1999; Feldman, 2000; Hunter & Rendall, 2007), nursing (Auger & Dee, 1983), forensic science (Silva et al., 1996) and psychology (Diaz-Loving, 2002; Johnson, 2003).

To explain how the system works, Csikszentmihalyi (2003) claims there must be an existing culture, with traditions and conventions in place for an individual to refer to, before a difference can be produced and that creativity is inherently social. Csikszentmihalyi uses the term *domain* to describe the element that encompasses

---

18 Permission to copy and communicate this work has been granted by Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi. See electronic confirmation in Appendix 7.
existing traditions and conventions and field to describe the social group responsible for verification of creativity. A domain is defined as the body of knowledge, the set of rules and procedures, the symbolic system, which is used by the individual to produce variations and there are hundreds of domains in a culture (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon, 2001). Sawyer describes the domain as “the set of conventions, past works, and standard ways of working … a kind of creativity language” (2006, p. 137). Without this language, it would be impossible for an individual to produce an innovation or for an audience to understand it. As Boden points out: “To be appreciated as creative, a work of art or a scientific theory has to be understood in a specific relation to what preceded it” (2004, p. 74). Another element in the system is the individual who is the producer of a variation within the systems model and Csikszentmihalyi contends that a person’s background, personal traits and motivation to produce enables that person to generate creativity along with their ability to internalise the rules of the domain and the expectations of the field. Finally, the field is the social structure of the system that recognises the value of the individual’s contribution. Sawyer defines the field as “a complex network of experts, with varying expertise, status, and power. After a person creates a product, it is submitted to the field for consideration, and the field judges whether or not it’s novel, and whether or not it’s appropriate” (2006, p. 124). If the field accepts the novel contribution, it is included in the structures of the domain for other individuals to use in their production, thus continuing the circular process.

Csikszentmihalyi calls the systems model a map (1988b, p. 329) and notes that the system is a model of circular causality and each element “affects the others and is affected by them in turn” (1988b p. 329). The model has also been called the DIFI model – Domain, Individual, Field Interaction (Feldman, Csikszentmihalyi & Gardner, 1994) – although this can imply the domain is the most important, as it is mentioned first, an implication that is incorrect: the germination for a creative act can come from any of the three elements (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997):

- the domain: a domain eventually gets to a point where there needs to be a change and an individual senses the tension and acts upon it;
- the individual: using the creative person’s own experiences;
- the field: where an individual is influenced by members of the field or the field requests a solution to a problem.
The systems model has been examined by a number of researchers including Csikszentmihalyi’s own study of 96 eminent individuals (1997), research by Howard Gardner into what he called “seven creative thinkers”19 (1993a, p. 4), music education (Barrett, 2005), contemporary Western popular music song writing (McIntyre, 2003; 2006; 2008a; 2008b; 2008c; 2010), Australian fiction writing (McIntyre & McIntyre, 2007; Paton, 2008; 2009; 2011), documentary making (Kerrigan, 2006; 2008; 2009; 2010), Australian children’s fiction writing (Killen, 2010a; 2010b; 2011), humour (Meany, 2007), and web development (Goldman & Goldman, 2005).

However, there are misunderstandings of and arguments against the veracity of the systems model. Runco, for example, misunderstood a fundamental concept of the model. Although he described the systems model as a confluence approach, he also stated that the model claims creativity starts with the individual who then goes on to influence the field and domain (2004, p. 661; 2007, p. 223). Similarly, Miettinen misunderstood where creativity started and stated that creativity began in the “knowledge, instruments, practices, problems” (2006, p. 174) within a domain. Both of these comments are problematic. Csikszentmihalyi specifically states that the starting point for creativity is arbitrary and can start in any of the three elements (1988b, p. 329; 1997, pp. 83-95).

Rob Pope (2005) critiqued the systems model and presented three arguments against the reliability of Csikszentmihalyi’s theory. Firstly, Pope claimed there is a privileging of the individual that downplays the collectivity of creativity, a contention that is open to question. Csikszentmihalyi strongly states that the systems model is a model of circular causality and insists creativity can only be found in the confluence of all three elements, that is, the domain, field and individual: “All three are necessary for a creative idea, product, or discovery to take place” (1997, p. 6). There is no privileging of the individual, as there would be no creative outcome without the other two elements.

Pope’s second argument claimed that the model has little allowance for inter-domain activity that would lead to “hybrid forms” (Pope, 2005, p. 68, emphasis in original). Again, this is refuted by Csikszentmihalyi who suggests that, “some of the most creative

19 Gardner’s used his idea of seven intelligences to examine the lives of seven creative individuals: linguistic (T.S. Eliot), logical–mathematical (Albert Einstein), spatial (Pablo Picasso), musical (Igor Stravinsky), bodily–kinaesthetic (Martha Graham), interpersonal (Mahatma Gandhi) and intrapersonal (Sigmund Freud). He later added ‘naturalist’ as another intelligence and examined Charles Darwin’s life.
breakthroughs occur when an idea that works well in one domain gets grafted to another and revitalises it” (1997, p. 88). Csikszentmihalyi contends that creative people know what is going on “across the fence” (ibid.), thus leading to opportunities for collaboration occurring between different disciplines.

Finally, Pope alleged that the systems model does not discuss the issue of the field ignoring innovations that are outside the realm of its understanding. Csikszentmihalyi acknowledges that the field can dismiss ideas and states: “In order to survive, cultures must eliminate most of the new ideas their members produce. Cultures are conservative, and for good reason. No culture could assimilate all the novelty people produce without dissolving into chaos” (1997, p. 41). Sternberg and Lubart also discuss the field’s dismissal of innovative ideas and attribute this to not only the field but also the wider culture who may find new ideas threatening or offensive (2006, p. 90). However, the issue may not necessarily be with the field, but with either the domain or the individual. Csikszentmihalyi himself notes that the structure of the domain may restrain what the field can and cannot accept. Furthermore, the individual may not have the necessary personality traits to communicate their creative contribution effectively, thus not allowing the field to judge its value.

Weisberg (2006) argued against the model by declaring that including value, or judgement, in the definition of creativity, as Csikszentmihalyi does, makes the criteria for assessing creativity unclear, which would lead to uncertainty within psychology research: “Since it is possible that the value of any product can change over time, it means that anything can become creative or become not creative, and can keep switching back and forth” (Weisberg, 2006, p. 65). Weisberg is seemingly arguing only from a psychological perspective by limiting creativity research to the “thought processes or personality factors” (2006, p. 66) with little consideration for social or cultural influences. This is an example of Sternberg and Lubart’s (2003) concern that unidisciplinary approaches limit our understanding of creativity – investigating creativity as merely a thought process or a personality factor does disservice to the complexity of creativity.

Weisberg further questioned the assumption in the systems model that if a creative person’s work falls out of favour with the field, that person is then considered to be non-creative. Margaret Boden’s (2004) theory of p- and H-creativity counteracts Weisberg’s
criticism. A contribution becomes H-creative because of social and cultural factors; if a contribution is not recognised by a field of experts as a creative contribution, it may be p- rather than H-creative. The systems model provides a rational structure to examine how social, cultural and individual influences affect how a creative contribution is produced. The research discussed in this thesis examines how each of Csikszentmihalyi’s three elements interacts with each of the others in the system of print journalism in Australia. With that in mind, it is time to examine research in print journalism.

2.2 A review of journalism

A number of the issues found in creativity research can also be found within journalism research. In a similar way to creativity research, journalism has been viewed within academia as a “bastard orphan discipline” (Lamble, 2004, p. 85). In journalism, this is because of its mix of professional and academic outlooks (Carey, 2000; Deuze, 2005; Josephi, 2008; Meadows, 1997; O’Donnell, 2001-02). There is also an ongoing need to justify why journalism and journalism research are important (Zelizer, 2004, pp. 1-2; 2008, p. 34). Further to this, Carey argues that much research into newsgathering has focused on limited genres of journalism and the term journalism covers a broad aspect of work:

… much of the sociology of news-gathering takes the most ordinary and mechanical aspects of journalism – beat reporting and the wire services – and makes it somehow the representative case of all journalism; the multi-form types of journalism are reduced to an essence discovered in the breaking stories from AP (1985, p. 47).

Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch continue this argument by stating that journalism research has a tendency to focus on “elite individuals, news organizations and texts” (2008, p. 12), which means most journalism production is neglected, including regional and country journalists, casual, freelance and specialist journalists, and alternative and niche publications.

Providing a definition for journalism is also as challenging as providing one for creativity. In 2001, Tapsall and Varley stated, “there is no longer – if there ever was – one colour, shape, or size of a ‘typical’ journalist” (2001, p. 6) and this declaration
confirms the difficulty of defining what a journalist is. The current state of the media, particularly new media, renders this even more complex. Roshco declared: “News is more easily pursued than defined, a characteristic it shares with such other enthralling abstractions as love and truth” (1975, p. 9), an observation Sternberg and Lubart also expressed about the ongoing debate surrounding creativity (1996, p. 679).

Again, there is the presence of a dichotomy between agency and structure in research with Zelizer (2004) contending that journalism research typically uses sociology as the ongoing standard, even though its framework may not be visible. Within this standard, journalism research has examined individual factors that influence production as well as media routines, organisational contexts, societal and ideological influences. However, most of the sociologically driven studies have tended to focus on how these structural influences constrain an individual’s choices, or agency. Even with later research acknowledging a confluence of influences on journalists’ production, little research has comprehensively placed a journalist, with their background and personal characteristics, as an equal to social and cultural structures to examine how each of these elements affects a journalist’s creative output.

2.2.1 What is a journalist?

Attempts by academics and other writers to define the term journalist have met with limited success. Zelizer summarised the confusion when she declared: “Although one might think that academics, journalism educators and journalists themselves might talk about journalism in roughly the same manner, defining ‘journalism’ is not in fact consensual” (2004, p. 13). Zelizer provided a simple definition by stating that a journalist is one who practices the actions of news work but then asks the question: “Is a teenage girl who produces daily entries in her diary and shares them with her friend a journalist? According to the above-mentioned definition, she is” (2004, p. 23) and further lists film reviewers, music critics, radio talk-show announcers, weblog producers and reality television as entities who might push journalism’s “definitional lines” (ibid).

In a legislative sense, governments have attempted to provide simple definitions. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), a print journalist is one who “collects and analyses facts about newsworthy events by interview, investigation or observation and writes stories for newspapers, magazines and journals” (ABS 2006). This definition, however, can apply to people who would be considered as non-
journalist writers for the print media – public relations practitioners, what Tapsall and Varley call “information brokers” (2001, p. 17), and specialists who write about their area of expertise. The Australian Parliament also attempted to provide a definition within the 2010 *Journalists’ Privilege Bill* by using journalists’ work practices as the foundation: “journalist means a person who in the normal course of that person’s work may be given information by an informant in the expectation that the information may be published in a news medium” (Parliament of Australia, 2010, Division 1A, 126G, lines 13-16, emphasis in original).

G. Stuart Adam also defined a journalist via their work practice as one who “expresses a judgment on the importance of an item, engages in reporting, adopts words and metaphors, solves a narrative puzzle and assesses and interprets” (1989, p. 75). However, Sheridan Burns (2002) maintained that rather than being simple, the definition of a journalist includes more than merely their practice and entails three parts: someone who earns their living from practising journalism; someone who has mastered the technicalities of the profession and is accepted by other journalists as having done that; and, someone who practices journalism as social responsibility. Tapsall and Varley claim it is easier to identify what a journalist does rather than define what a journalist is and noted: “Journalists find the truth; try to interest and engage readers, listeners, or viewers; act independently and question society; support society’s wider values; communicate clearly; and strive to be fair in their reporting” (2001, p. 5). Tapsall and Varley further add a qualifying point in agreement with Sheridan Burns: what should separate a journalist from a non-journalist is the ideal of public responsibility, an ideal noted by others (Breit, 2004; Josephi, 1998a; Quinn, 2006a; Vine, 2009) and included in the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) Code of Ethics (2008a).

William Bovée (1999) suggested that a journalist is one who does journalism, but this of course leads to the question of what is journalism. Deuze defined journalism as an ideology and listed five traits or values journalists perceive as an important part of that ideology: to provide a public service; to practise neutral, objective and fair reporting; the need for freedom and uncensored reporting; the necessity of speed in reporting; and, an ethical obligation and need for legitimacy (2005, pp. 447-450). On a more pragmatic level, G. Stuart Adam described journalism as “an invention or a form of expression

---

20 The MEAA is the Australian journalists’ union.
used to report and comment in the public media on the events and ideas of the here and
now” (1993, p. 11) and Meadows defined it as a cultural practice that “effectively
manages the flow of information and ideas in society” (2001, p. 47). It has been
described as “the practice of preparing information for dissemination to an identified
audience” (Sheridan Burns, 2002, p. 18) and “the gathering, the processing, and
delivery of important and interesting information and developments by newspapers,
magazines, or broadcast media” (Hachten, 2005, p. xiv). Conley and Lamble stated that
it “may be defined as the reporting of newsworthy events” (2006, p. 82) while Knight
added that it is “non-fiction writing (news) which relies on identifiable sources” (2000,
p. 48). The Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ) differentiates journalism from
other writing, such as Tapsall and Varley’s “information brokers” (2001, p. 17), by
stating its “essence is a discipline of verification” (1999, par. 6).

With all these above definitions in mind, and in an attempt to make the definition
relevant to this research, the definition employed by this research to define print
journalist is:

A print journalist produces news-oriented non-fiction work, primarily via writing,
using identified professional practices and presents that work to an audience via a
print or online medium.

2.2.2 Journalism research

Although Zelizer (2004) contended that most academic research into journalism is
rooted in sociology, journalists’ production has been examined using psychological
underpinnings in disciplines including psychology, communication studies and
creativity research. Researchers have examined individual characteristics such as
writing processes, cognition, thinking styles and personality. In 1989, Stocking and
Gross commented that because of the constraints a journalist works under, and the
emphasis put on research into that area, “we know very little about what goes on in the
minds of reporters and editors who process the news” (1989, p. 3). They argued that the
importance of journalism in society, and the influence it can have on society, should
mean its practitioners are researched from as many different angles as possible,
including “insights about cognitive constraints and processes – to understand better how
they do their jobs” (Stocking & Gross, 1989, p. 5). However, more than twenty years
later, psychological research into a journalist’s production is still an area of research that
is relatively unexplored (Donsbach, 2008; Machin & Niblock, 2006). Furthermore, despite the argument by Stocking and Gross about researching different areas, there is little evidence of researchers examining journalists as an equal part in a confluence of influences with many of the following psychological studies focusing on “the creative person” (Lynch & Swink, 1967, p. 372).

Despite Machin and Donsbach’s assertion about the lack of psychological research into journalists’ production, there have been attempts to examine journalists’ writing processes using psychological models, particularly from cognitive psychology. Studies examining creative thinking in journalism (Lynch & Swink, 1967), comparing journalistic writing to other forms of writing (Schumacher et al., 1989) and investigating how different levels of expertise in journalism affect the finished product (Schumacher et al., 1992) have all provided insight into journalists’ cognitive processes. In communication studies, researchers have used cognitive theories in an attempt to find out how journalists write (Conn, 1968; Ieron, 1987; Pitts, 1982; Stocking & LaMarca, 1990), make news judgements (Donsbach, 2004; 2008) and news decisions (Zhong, 2006) as well as examining journalism students' attitudes toward the writing process (Massé, 1999). However, this research, while providing valuable information on the individual journalist, fails to consider how other personal details, such as personality, family background and education, and external influences such as cultural and social structures shape a journalist’s creative output.

John Meunier, on the other hand, did acknowledge external influences, although his suggested model also drew on cognitive psychology to explain how a journalist makes decisions during news production. Meunier described news writing as a “problem-solving process” (2004, p. 1) and proposed that schemata, mental structures that govern how we incorporate new experiences into our current knowledge, are used to lighten a journalist’s cognitive load but an important part of Meunier’s claim is that there is evidence that a schema is not fully deterministic: a journalist can reshape a schema to fit the news story, that is, a journalist has agency within this mental structure.

21 Meunier describes a schema as “a mental representation of a concept stored in the long-term memory of an individual … Schemata incorporate prior knowledge about specific instances of a concept. The structure of an individual’s existing schemata will shape the way he or she interprets and incorporates experience into his or her conceptual understanding. But the process of incorporating new knowledge into schemata changes the structure of existing concept schemata and can forge new links among schematic networks” (2004, pp. 8-9).
Furthermore, the model also acknowledges that the news-writing process is not linear but recursive, a conclusion recognised by others (Pitts, 1982; Zurek, 1986).

![Story schema diagram](image)

**Figure 3 – Meunier’s proposed story schema in journalism (2004, p. 11).**

However, in contrast to other conclusions in cognitive research into journalism, Meunier recognised the importance of sociological enquiry as well, that is “the understanding of the organisational and social forces that play a role in defining the work and environment in which the journalist functions” (Meunier, 2004, p. 3), but suggested the individual is equally important in deciding how a journalist creates their work. Meunier’s conclusions took research into journalism closer to a more inclusive examination of a journalist’s creative process.

There have also been attempts in creativity research to examine journalists. Kaufman compared the lifespan of different writers (2003), including poets and journalists, and, in another study, compared the thinking styles of creative writers and journalists (2002; 2009). Journalists were also examined as part of the larger study Arnold Ludwig (1992) conducted into creative achievement and pathology. Twenty-seven journalists were included as part of the ‘Expository Writers’ group. Ludwig found this group to be more

---

22 Permission to copy and communicate this work has been granted by John Meunier. See electronic confirmation in Appendix 7.
prone to depression and alcohol-related problems, particularly after the age of 40, although, as noted previously, Ludwig also carefully pointed out that peer pressure or expectations within a profession may mean that certain psychopathologies are cultivated. Support for Ludwig’s point can be found within academic texts written about journalism: Vine’s (2010) monograph on the connection between journalistic culture and alcohol contended that part of journalism’s occupational mythology is that reporters are heavy drinkers.

But, in a similar fashion to research examining creativity, there are journalism researchers who consider that cognitive processes are not enough to explain a journalist’s production processes and have approached journalism via a personality approach. Personality research has examined general personality traits of journalists (Henningham, 1997; Khan, 2005; Lichter, Rothman & Lichter, 1986), the correlation between writing style and personality (Ruffner & Burgoon, 1981) and the temperament of journalists (Akiskal, Savino & Akiskal, 2005). Each of these studies, though, did point out that examining the personality was not sufficient to explain production with Lichter, Rothman and Lichter (1986) and Henningham (1997), who cited Lichter, Rothman and Lichter, both specifically referring to the importance of examining the structures a journalist works with:

… personality can influence a journalist’s work, in both direct and indirect ways, no less than ideology or social structure. The news is a genre whose changing character reflects the requisites of large organisations, the conventions of a profession, and, not least, the drives and desires of honourable and fallible human beings (Lichter, Rothman & Lichter, 1986, p. 131).

The above quote includes the field (the social structure), the domain (the ideology, the requisites of large organisations, the conventions of the profession) and the individual in its description of news production and sums up the importance of investigating more than individual journalists in the production process. Similar to Meunier (2004), Lichter, Rothman and Lichter and Henningham understood the necessity to include the influences of structure in examining journalism. However, Henningham also declared journalists to be “fettered and restrained” (1990, p. x) by these structures. Furthermore, these studies firmly place the individual at the centre of the production process, with
these other influences impinging on the individual rather than examining the individual as one part of a system of influences.

Other studies focusing on individual characteristics include demographic studies where biographical details such as family, education, political leanings, religion, class, cultural background and attitudes were examined internationally (Weaver et al., 2006; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986; 1992) and in Australia (Hanusch, 2008; Henningham, 1995; 1996; 1998a; 1998b; Pretty, 1993). However, there are arguments that many of these demographic studies do not connect the influence that these individual characteristics have on news content (Beam, 2008; Meadows, 1997). Beam’s research examined how these demographic characteristics place “individuals within society’s broader social structure” (2008, p. 5) and how these characteristics lead to a journalist choosing which story to pursue. His conclusion stated that individual factors were as important as the factors that sociological research has historically focused on: the “professional, organizational, economic and cultural factors” (2008, p. 10). Nevertheless, an examination of research that uses a sociological underpinning has shown little consideration for the agency of individual journalists. Furthermore, most journalism research claims that outside influences, including media routines, organisational policies and control, choice of sources, political and other cultural pressures, constrain a journalist’s production rather than considering that these structures may also enable these practices; in short, a journalist has agency and can make choices within these structural forces.

The earliest study discussed in sociological research into journalism production, and one still referred to as a classic study in journalism research, is David M. White’s (1950) gatekeeping study that examined news selection by an editor and how the editor’s background and worldview affected his choice in news selection. Other highly regarded studies into news selection include McCombs and Shaw’s (1972) agenda-setting research, and Galtung and Ruge’s (1965) examination of news values, which led to ongoing research that asks the question: “What is News?” (see, for example, Allern, 2002; Golding & Elliott, 1979; Harcup & O’Neill, 2001; O’Neill & Harcup, 2008; Shulz, 1982). However, later research argued that these early studies into news production were concerned with how news was selected rather than how it was

---

produced and proposed that news routines were highly relevant in how journalists chose
the news (Fishman, 1980; Tuchman, 1978). Tuchman coined the term “socially
constructed” (1978, p. 2) to explain how journalists make the news. However, in line
with other sociological research into journalism, neither Fishman nor Tuchman
examined the importance of a journalist’s individual characteristics. In fact, Tuchman
specifically excluded the value of the individual: “It does not consider newsworkers as
individuals with personal concerns and biases, topics better left to the psychologist”
(1978, p. 1), a quote that concisely summarises the dichotomy between agency and
structure. Interestingly, Preston’s (2009b) summary of media routine research
concluded with the observation that media routines can enable journalists’ work
practices. While Fishman maintained that news is produced within constraining factors,
such as the organisation worked for and the audience, Preston’s comment brings
journalism research into line with observations in creativity research (Wolff, 1981;
1993) that argues it is structures, and the knowledge of these structures, that also enable
creative production.

Rather than media routines, John Lloyd claimed that the most powerful influence on
news production is the news organisation and the policies that journalists internalise and
reproduce unconsciously (in Preston & Metykova, 2009, p. 72), a claim supported by
Warren Breed (1955) who questioned how a newspaper’s policy could be upheld if it
contravened the beliefs of its journalists. Breed concluded that although not explicitly
told, journalists learnt the paper’s policies through socialisation:

> Basically, the learning of policy is a process by which the recruit discovers and
> internalises the rights and obligations of his status and its norms and values. He
> learns to anticipate what is expected of him so as to win rewards and avoid
> punishments (1955, p. 328).

This is in line with cognitive researchers Steinke (1993) and Stocking and Gross (1989)
and other journalism researchers (Baker, 1980a; Barr, 2000; Berkowitz, 1997; Cameron,
1996; Edgar, 1980; Machin & Niblock, 2006; Sigelman, 1973; Turow, 1984) who also
argued journalists very quickly become sensitive to their organisation’s expectations
and practices. However, the majority of these studies claim that journalists are
constrained by their organisation with little scope for a journalist to exercise choice
within those constraints. Manning (2001) dismissed the individual journalist’s influence
by arguing that researching the individual could not explain news production and it was only through examination of organisations and their routines, and how the organisation fits into society, that the complexity of news production could be explained. Ericson, Chan and Baranek also dismissed any individual agency when they claimed, “the creation of news is not therefore a matter of the personal whim and fancy of the journalist … It is a product of the cultural and social organization of news work, not of events in the world or the personal inclinations of journalists” (1987, p. 9).

On the other hand, research into news sources and their power in news production have acknowledged some possibility of agency (Gans, 1980; Tiffen, 1989) but rather than recognising that a journalist has idiosyncratic traits that interact with the structures of journalism, this research claimed that forces outside the individual are more important. Rod Tiffen, for example, acknowledged that news workers work within a complex structure of pressures including “their various relationships with colleagues, competitors and a range of sources” (2006, p. 39), thus opening the door to a fuller examination of news work, but also asserted that understanding an organisation’s structures and their effect on news work is fundamental to the process of news production.

In Australia, a number of researchers have examined news production. As part of a larger study to ascertain how news and current affairs were produced in Australia, Pearson et al. (2001) conducted surveys and interviews with newsworkers with one of the objectives being to canvas how news producers understood the practice of news work. One of the findings relevant to print journalism was the high number of personnel who reviewed a news story before publication. Pearson et al. noted that at metropolitan newspapers at least six staff members, including the journalist, chief-of-staff, news editor, chief sub-editor, sub-editor and proof sub-editor (2001, p. 147), handled the work before publication. This finding illustrates how highly social the field of print journalism is, a finding relevant to this research project, as discussed in the Field section of the data analysis. Further research in Australia has examined the effect of public relations (PR) on journalism (Macnamara, 2001; Oakham & Kirby, 2006; Zawawi, 1994), how political reporters get information (Ester, 2001; Payne, 1999; Simons, 1999) and the government’s media relations’ department’s effect on journalism practise (for a summary see Pearson & Patching, 2008). News values and news selection has been examined in the independent and alternative press (Forde, 1999) and
country journalism (Vine, 2001) as well as public journalism’s affect on journalists’ perception about their role (Ewart, 2004). Other journalistic practices have been investigated to ascertain how everyday routines impacted on the representation of Indigenous Australians (Ewart, 1997b; Meadows & Ewart, 2001), how gender affected news (North, 2009) and what influence newsroom layout had on news production (Josephi, 1998b; 2000). Freedom of Information’s use as a tool in journalism has been studied (Lidberg, 2002) as has the ideal of the Fourth Estate and its relevance to how Australian journalists perceive journalism and how committed journalists are to the ideal (Schultz, 1998) while other research has studied the audience’s effect on journalist’s production processes (Green, 1999a; 2002; Pretty, 1993).

Australian research has also been conducted into how newer technologies have impacted on journalists (Ewart, 1998; Quinn, 1998; 2009a). Pearson’s (1999) PhD thesis on the influence of the Internet on journalists’ practices identified 169 new tasks the Internet has introduced that are transforming news production while Quinn’s (2006b) and Posetti’s (2009d; 2010) work examines how social media affects journalists’ practices.

However, while the above research in journalism can provide valuable information about influences on a journalist’s production process, they cannot provide a complete description of news production and, in some instances, the agency of individual journalists is rejected completely. Furthermore, much of the abovementioned research examined how structures impinge on a journalist and much of the literature on journalism emphasises how journalists work in a network of constraints (Baker, 1980b; Berkowitz, 1997; Edgar, 1980; Fishman, 1980; Harrison, 2006; Henningham, 1989; Hirst & Patching, 2005; Machin & Niblock, 2006; McManus, 1994; Meunier, 2004; Stocking & Gross, 1989). Dickinson goes so far as to declare that most research into journalism renders the journalist powerless within social structures with “a uniformity at the level of the individual news worker” (2007, p. 195). However, it can be shown that the interdependence of agency and structure is important in journalism production, in a similar way to creativity research, and from this perspective it is the structures a journalist interacts with that both constrains and enables a journalist to produce work. Tony Harcup provided the following summary:
Within the study of journalism, agency means the extent to which individual journalists can make a difference to media practices and content … To say that journalists have agency is not to deny that journalists operate in a world of constraints, but to argue that structural forces do not totally determine individuals’ actions (2009, p. 7, emphasis in original).

Furthermore, Manzella argued that the actions of journalists significantly affect behaviour in the newsroom: “Equally important is how the social actor empowers, enables and constrains the collective” (1996, p. 288). Manzella’s contention is that a newsroom is not an inflexible system where a journalist’s work is determined by organisational structures, but a fluid entity, where journalists are “knowing and reflexive actors who function within a system” (1996, p. 292). This description supports Giddens’ (1984) explanation of the duality of structure where he argued that structures and agents both reproduce and reform each other. With this in mind, it is crucial in journalism research to follow a similar path to creativity research by discussing how both structure and agency can be accommodated within the system of print journalism through examining confluence approaches in journalism research.

To this end, we can highlight the work of Meunier who, while recognising the importance of sociological examination of journalists, observed that news work can only be fully understood with a comprehensive “theory of journalism” (2004, p. 3). While his paper on the use of schemata by journalists initially emphasised how a journalist writes within a heavily constrained environment, he concluded that sociological forces play a direct role in how a journalist decides what to write but did not discount the crucial role played by the journalists themselves.

2.2.3 Confluence of factors in journalism

In a similar way to creativity research, much research into journalism has typically focused on one part of a journalist’s production process and has not taken into account that a confluence of influences shapes news production. However, again in a manner similar to creativity research, researchers have come to realise that journalism cannot take place in a vacuum (Adam, 1993; Conley & Lamble, 2006; Harcup, 2004; King, 1997; Machin & Niblock, 2006; Niblock, 1996). With this realisation, journalism research has started to acknowledge that a multiplicity of factors affect how a journalist produces their work. Zelizer (2004), after summarising a number of approaches to
journalism studies, including sociology, history, language studies, political science and culture studies, concluded that an interdisciplinary approach would be more able to explain journalism and its many manifestations from traditional forms, such as print media, to recent forms such as blogging. With Zelizer’s comment in mind, it can be claimed that a number of researchers have proposed models that can be considered confluence models, with each of them discussing a number of influences on news production although, typically, most of the models do not consider enough. Furthermore, there is little allowance made for the contention that individual, social and cultural elements should be considered as equal components in a system.

Early confluence studies focused on how social forces such as economic factors, political agents, source agents and audience agents (Tuchman, 2002), political pressures, source tactics and strategies, economic pressures, technology and professional culture, and organisational constraints (McNair, 1998), and markets and economic rationalism (McManus, 1994; 1995) affected a journalist’s practices. However, these early models gave little or no agency to individual journalists with McManus stating that journalists are so constrained as employees that their personal history has little influence on what is published (1994, p. 309).

In contrast to these earlier models, Preston (2009b) acknowledged individual journalists in a model that proposed five elements that influenced news production, including journalists’ characteristics as well as media routines and norms, organisational influences, cultural and ideological power, and political-economic factors. Preston called these elements clusters and suggested that they are a way of understanding the influences on news production. All of these clusters are complementary and, rather than merely one or two of these elements considered as influencing the production process, “these various layers of influences are best seen as deeply interrelated” (Preston, 2009a, p. 14).
Preston’s model is very similar to Shoemaker and Reese’s (1996) *Hierarchy of Influences* model, a concentric model that also argues five levels of influence, albeit on content rather than production: the individual, with their “professional, personal, and political” (Reese, 2007, p. 34) factors; media routines; organisation; extramedia; and, ideology.

---

24 Permission to copy and communicate this work has been granted by Paschal Preston. See electronic confirmation in Appendix 7.
25 Permission to copy and communicate this work has been granted by Stephen Reese and Pamela J Shoemaker. See electronic confirmation in Appendix 7.
Preston (2009b) concluded his summary of news production studies by condensing the five factors into three distinct elements that provides a confluence of news production influences: individual factors, an institution’s internal perspectives and, finally, perspectives from outside the institution, or macro-level.

Figure 6 – Preston’s simplified typology of five explanatory views of news influences (2009b, p. 164).

Preston’s simplified model indicates that there are overlaps between the three elements and it categorises the influences on news production in a straightforward way. The model is similar to the systems model of creativity in that it includes many of the same components, albeit in a slightly different format: the personal characteristics and journalists’ values/ethics in the Individual Level Factors are similar to the systems model individual element; the Media Industry Routines corresponds with elements of the domain; Organisational Factors can be found in the domain but “hierarchies of status, power and position” (Preston & Metykova, 2009, p. 81), as part of the Organisational Factors element, can be allied to the field; the Political Economy Factor and Cultural Air we Breathe overlaps with the systems model’s domain and, to a small degree, the field.

However, there is little allowance made for the influence of a comprehensive social field within Preston’s model. This is also a failing in Shoemaker and Reese’s model. The organisational factors element primarily means managerial and ownership influences (Preston, 2009b, p. 166; Reese, 2007, p. 36) and although there is a chapter on the audience in Preston’s book (2009b, pp. 129-143), it is not included in the explanation of the simplified model. Furthermore, Preston’s model is depicted as linear,

---

26 Permission to copy and communicate this work has been granted by Paschal Preston. See electronic confirmation in Appendix 7.
which could indicate that the first and third elements, for example, have little bearing on each other. A circular model would explain the interdependence of the elements more completely. Shoemaker and Reese’s model is circular but Josephi suggests that this model does not account for interaction between the spheres and posits a model with open channels to better allow for interaction between the spheres and “act, to differing degrees, upon the final product” (2000, p. 83). Furthermore, using a circular model, with the individual at the centre, as Shoemaker and Reese do, harks back to Csikszentmihalyi’s argument against the Ptolemaic view of creativity where the person is the central figure rather than “part of a system of mutual influences and information” (1988b, p. 336).

Regardless of these shortcomings, these two models indicate that journalism research understands that a position of confluence explains production more clearly than continuing to favour either structure or agency. Rupar (2010) argues that individual journalists must be included as part of a comprehensive study into journalism along with social, cultural and political elements. Löffelholz further notes the approaches of Giddens, Bourdieu and Habermas, who have taken the step of what he calls “social integration journalism theories” (2008, p. 22) to link the “micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of journalism” (ibid.). Reese, describing the rationale behind the Hierarchy of Influences model, posits the following:

In laying out these levels, it is possible to prioritize their importance and sequence in different ways. We can certainly make a case for stepping through them in both directions: from micro to macro, or vice versa. Does everything begin with the individual, who is progressively hemmed in by more and more layers of constraint? (That is my tendency.) Or is the macro, socio-cultural context logically prior to any actions of its member individuals? (2007, p. 37).

In the systems model, the assertion is that each of the elements is equally important. In line with this comment, this doctoral study tested out the systems model in print journalism in Australia. The model allows the researcher to look at a more inclusive system of influences on a journalist’s news production – a journalist and their interaction with the field and the domain of print journalism – and examine the interplay of structure and agency. Additionally, Bourdieu’s ideas on cultural production will be used as a support theory in an effort to explain how a journalist interacts with structural
forces to produce work. Bourdieu (1998) used his understanding of cultural production to discuss television journalism in France and, while these ideas have already been used extensively to examine journalists (Benson & Neveu, 2005; Bourdieu, 2005; Champagne, 2005; Hesmondhalgh, 2006a; Marchetti, 2005; Marliere, 1998; 2000; Schudson, 2005; Schultz, 2007a), they provide a complementary way in this research project to explain a journalist’s production. For example, Bourdieu’s notion of habitus is another way to describe a journalist’s learnt but unconscious processes, including domain acquisition, but Schultz also highlights a key argument in this thesis when she states that journalists, as agents, have relative freedom within the structures that surround them (2007b, p. 193), that is, they are not absolutely free or completely autonomous, but have conditional agency.

To compare Bourdieu’s ideas on cultural production to the systems model, the field of works have common characteristics with the domain, an individual’s habitus and cultural capital are similar to the individual element, and Bourdieu’s field aligns with the systems model’s field. Bourdieu described the journalistic field as a “microcosm with its own laws, defined both by its position in the world at large and by the attractions and repulsions to which it is subject from other such microcosms” (1998, p. 39). Within this field, it is the structure of power both within society and between the different organisations that affects what journalists can do as well as the journalist’s own position, and therefore power, within the organisation.

Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon (2001) used the elements of the systems model as a basis for a project that examined how ‘good work’ is carried out in different professions in the United States, including journalism. The Good Work project attempted to ascertain how “leading professionals in a variety of domains carry out good work. ‘Good Work’ is used in a dual sense: 1) work that is deemed to be of high quality and 2) work that is socially responsible” (Gardner et al., 2001). As one part of the project, the researchers interviewed 90 U.S. journalists. Good Work, however, did not explore the production of journalism; it explored journalists’ perception of the state of the domain of journalism in the United States. This research project uses the systems model to explore the creative practices of print journalists in Australia.
3.0 Methodology

To provide focus for the researcher, Crotty asked the following questions: “What, then, is the aim and what are the objectives of our research? What strategy seems likely to provide what we are looking for? What does that strategy direct us to do to achieve our aims and objectives?” (1998, p. 13). The aim of this research was to test out the systems model of creativity within print journalism in Australia and the objective was to discover and understand how these print journalists interact with cultural, social and individual contexts in their creative practice. Following this aim and objective, the research presented here can be seen as an example of Phillips and Pugh’s ‘testing-out’ research where an investigator attempts to discover “the limits of previously proposed generalisations” (2000, p. 50). In this case, the “previously proposed generalisation” is the systems model of creativity. In fulfilling this proposition, the aims and objectives of this research required an intensive, interpretive approach, which meant that the strategy that would provide the best results was a qualitative strategy. Following from this conclusion, and to achieve the aims and objectives, the direction that this strategy suggested was to use an ethnographic approach with ethnographic methods: observation, interviews, and document and artefact analysis. Using these different forms of data collection offered a broad foundation for analysis and provided triangulation, a way of enhancing the validity of the data (Denscombe, 2004; Machin, 2002; Punch, 2005; Robson, 2002). Punch asks, “When would the ethnographic approach be most appropriate?” (2005, p. 154) and in this instance his answer summarised the objectives of the research: “In general, when we need to understand the cultural context of behavior, and the symbolic meaning and significance of the behavior within that context” (ibid.).

In 1922, Bronislaw Malinowski, a pioneer of ethnographic research, offered this summation:

One of the first conditions of acceptable Ethnographic [sic] work certainly is that it should deal with the totality of all social, cultural and psychological aspects of the community, for they are so interwoven that not one can be understood without taking into consideration all the others (1922, p. xvi).
This comment effectively sums up the objectives of this research – to discover and understand the influence of social, cultural and individual contexts on the creative practices of print journalists in Australia.

This chapter describes how the research was conducted and discusses the rationale underpinning the methodology and the methods that were chosen.

3.1 Research approach

This section will use Crotty’s model of the research process as a guide to discuss the philosophical framework that underpins this research. While the philosophical framework may remain hidden within the research process, it is vital to recognise this underpinning as it has an enormous influence throughout the project (Creswell, 2003). The framework provides a “scaffolding … a sense of stability and direction” (Crotty, 1998, p. 2) with the epistemological viewpoint forming the foundation of the research project.

![Crotty’s model of the research process](image)

Figure 7 – Crotty’s model of the research process (1998, p. 4).

The methods and methodology for this research have already been identified and will be discussed in depth further into the chapter. However, and following Crotty’s model, the theoretical perspective and epistemology of the research project need to be recognised and examined. The theoretical perspective is the philosophical stance that provides the context for the chosen methodology (Crotty, 1998). It provides the frame that “focuses attention and allows for certain interpretations” (Jensen, 2002a, p. 258). By using a testing out model of research, where the production of journalism is examined within

---

27 Permission to copy and communicate this work has been granted by Allen & Unwin. See electronic confirmation in Appendix 7.
the systems model of creativity, the theoretical approach used to understand creativity was that creativity within print journalism is systemic – creativity can be found within a system of domain, field and individual. To define it further, creativity is constructed within the conjunction of these three elements.

Linked to this theoretical perspective is the epistemology of constructionism, a stance within the interpretive school of thought (Grix, 2004), and therefore it could be maintained that this project is underpinned by a constructionist epistemology, a statement that will be discussed shortly. According to Em Griffin, epistemology answers the question “How do we know what we know, if we know it at all?” (2000, p. 10) and he lists the two perspectives of ‘knowing’ as objectivist and interpretive. These two perspectives correlate with Crotty (1998) who names these epistemologies positivist and non-positivist. These two stances are seen as opposites on the epistemological continuum – the objectivist stance is attempting to explain social reality and the interpretivist is endeavouring to understand it (Grix, 2004).

Objectivist perspectives, for example Positivism, have been the dominant paradigm in scientific research (Crotty, 1998; Esterberg, 2002; Grix, 2004; Robson, 2002), and still are in many scientific communities (Blaikie, 1993), and its fundamental core value is objectivity, particularly in the researcher. Advocates of this stance operate under the assumption that the world exists outside of our knowledge of it and meaning is there for the researcher to discover (Baxter & Babbie, 2008; Crotty, 1998; Grix, 2004; Littlejohn & Foss, 2005). It is a perspective that is dominant within the domains of ‘hard science’ – for example, physics, chemistry, mathematics – and social scientists who work within an objectivist stance employ what are typically considered ‘hard science’ methods such as experiments, surveys and content analysis, in an attempt to, “discover a set of causal laws that can be used to predict general patterns of human behavior” (Esterberg, 2002, p. 10).

However, it has been argued that it is difficult to study humans with the same methods as hard science (Bryman, 2001; Halloran, 1998; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Jensen, 1991; Murdock, 2002). For example, Esterberg (2002) pointed out that the behaviour of humans is not mechanistic; it is changeable, particularly in a research context – the mere fact of a researcher focusing on a subject will change the subject’s behaviour. Esterberg
also argued that a researcher cannot be an objective observer because, “we are not indifferent to what we study!” (2002, p. 11 emphasis in original).

In contrast to the objectivist perspective is the interpretive school and although Crotty distinguishes between the two main epistemologies of positivist and interpretivist thought, similar to other theorists, he specifically names constructivism and subjectivism separately under the interpretivist stance (1998, p. 9). Subjectivism is described as the opposite end of the continuum to objectivism in that meaning is “imposed on the object by the subject” (ibid.). On the other hand, constructionism’s principle is that:

... all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context (Crotty, 1998, p. 42 emphasis in original).

Fundamentally, constructionism is the world-view that reality is “socially constructed” (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005, p. 19; Neuman, 2006, p. 89; Robson, 2002, p. 27). Crotty argued that constructionism is the stance that brings together the opposition of the objectivist and subjectivist stances – objects are already there to be researched, as objectivism claims, but the meaning of the object is not created, as subjectivism claims, but constructed by “humans engaging with their human world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 45).

To paraphrase Crotty’s (1998) definition of constructionism, the epistemological principle claimed here, this research is contingent on human practices within the print journalism sphere of production and how journalists interact with their world and each other. As the researcher, I acknowledge my role in the research in both data collection and interpretation and recognise that there will be multiple realities in the findings; while there are commonalities between journalists, there are also differences because of their personal subjectivities. Furthermore, although the research is primarily a testing-out model, employing other theories and staying open-minded and flexible about further theories means that it may well be a theory-generating study. It can be claimed that this approach to research is inductive whilst the testing of the systems model is deductive and this dual nature of the research process complies with Blaikie’s (1993) and Bryman’s (2001) understanding of how the research process works.
The use of a constructionist epistemology is also reflected in the ethnographic methodology since it is argued that ethnographers construct social meaning from pre-existing objects in data collection (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), interpretation of the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998) and in writing up the research results (Denscombe, 2004). Ethnographers depict their subjects as constructing their world through their interpretations and the actions from those interpretations (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). In this regard, Keith Punch described ethnography as,

… based upon meanings which people attribute to and bring to situations, and that behaviour is not ‘caused’ in any mechanical way, but is continually constructed and reconstructed on the basis of people’s interpretations of the situations they are in (2005, p. 151 my emphasis).

The following model amends Crotty’s original model and demonstrates the “scaffolding” (Crotty, 1998, p. 2) and “sense of stability and direction” (ibid.) that underpins this research project.

3.2 Methodology

Punch stressed that the “methods should follow from questions” (2005, p. 4). The question for this research, how do print journalists in Australia interact with cultural, individual and social structures in their creative process, lent itself to using ethnographic research with observation, interviews, and document and artefact analysis as the methods of choice.

28 Permission to copy and communicate this work has been granted by Allen & Unwin. See electronic confirmation in Appendix 7.
Ethnography as a methodology stems from its use in anthropology (Crotty, 1998; Jensen & Jankowski, 1991; Neuman, 2006; Robson, 2002) and allows for a “journey of discovery” (Denscombe, 2004, p. 84, emphasis in original) into the lifestyle, understandings and beliefs of a social or cultural group (ibid.). Punch portrayed ethnography as a method of “describing a culture and understanding a way of life from the point of view of its participants; (it) is the art and science of describing a group or culture” (2005, p. 149). According to Alan Bryman (2001), an ethnographic study may involve seven technical components:

- the immersion of the ethnographer in the group they are studying for an extended period of time;
- the observation of the group in their natural environment;
- listening and engaging in conversations with group members;
- gathering data through interviews with the group;
- collecting secondary data and documents relating to the group;
- developing an understanding of the group’s behaviour in context; and,
- carefully writing up the findings of the observations and research.

This research followed these technical components closely in examining the creative practices of working journalists in the contexts where they live, work and create.

However, it must be noted that ethnography has both advantages and disadvantages. Disadvantages in ethnography are similar to those found within all qualitative strategies. These include an intensive time commitment, particularly in data collection, questions of reliability and validity, and, potential researcher bias in data collection, analysis and presentation of findings. Further to this, a criticism of ethnography is the representativeness of the study when only a small number of participants are used (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Machin, 2002). However these so-called disadvantages and criticisms are only problematic from an objectivist epistemology and the advantages of an ethnographic approach highlight the appeal of the strategy as they support the aim of the research: the data is derived from direct observation rather than being second-hand; the method provides rich, detailed information; the strategy is flexible; and, it can be used to develop or test theories. Furthermore, self-awareness is part of the process, unlike quantitative methodologies where researchers sometimes
unwittingly believe they are distanced from the object of their study (Denscombe, 2004). In addition, it can be argued that the knowledge sought from an ethnographic study is different to that expected from a quantitative study. For example, Machin’s description of ethnography summarises the desired outcomes:

> What ethnography does do is create an intimate social knowledge, it gives us access to the standards, ideas and traditions through which people carry out their lives and their relationships. Ethnography allows us to examine how intelligent human beings use these creatively to live in and make culture (2002, p. 170).

In terms of examining the way culture is made, in this case from within a particular media-based culture, there is a tradition of using ethnography to research journalists’ practices. There have been a number of ethnographic studies conducted within Australian journalism (Ewart, 2004; Forde, 1999; North, 2009) and Simon Cottle (2007) provides an excellent overview of those that have occurred internationally beginning with White’s (1950) gatekeeping study. A further important study to use ethnography was Breed’s (1955) research into why journalists conform to their publication’s news policy and Tuchman (1978), Fishman (1980) and Gans (1980) all provided insight into print news production processes by using ethnographic methods. An ethnographic study of journalists in the United States conducted by Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon (2001) used the three elements of the systems model of creativity – the domain, the field and the individual – as the basis for their research work investigating how journalists carried out work that is considered socially responsible and of high quality.

**The researcher’s role**

As the primary researcher, and given the epistemological position taken here, it is advisable that I reflexively acknowledge my position and role as a researcher. In this regard, many journalism researchers have worked in the media industry (in Australia, for example, Henningham, Sheridan Burns, Oakham, Ricketson, Tapsall, Varley, Knight, Bowd, Schultz, Conley, Lamble, North, Ewart, Pearson, Knight, Meadows) and these researchers have contributed much valuable data to the study of journalism; I have not worked as a journalist and one of my concerns during the initial stages of the research and data-gathering process was a lack of direct, practical experience in the media industry. While some may insist that only an insider’s view could garner valid data, the opposite may also be true. It can be claimed that having little background in
the production of news, with few preconceived notions about the profession of journalism, I would have little trouble following the ethnographic suggestion of adopting “an appearance of naivety” (McIntyre, 2003, p. 14) within the process of data collection. There are also cases where non-journalists have obtained valuable research data. For example, Herbert Gans, author of a highly regarded ethnographic study into how journalists selected news and reported it, approached the study of journalism as a professional sociologist. He declared: “I came to the study without much knowledge of how journalists work … I also approached the study without prior explicit values” (1980, p. xii). A similar case can be made for Michael Schudson (1996; 1997; 2005), a sociologist who extensively researched the media but also did not work within the industry.

3.3 Methods

The methods used in this research process included observation, in-depth interviews, and analysis of documents and artefacts. These methods are a mixture of obtrusive (interviews) and unobtrusive (documents and artefacts analysis, observation) techniques and Kellehear maintained that this combination can “increase the validity of the findings because one method may turn up findings which can be explored by the other” (1993, p. 10).

3.3.1 In-depth interviews

The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended, designed to “elicit views and opinions from the participants” (Creswell, 2003, p. 188). For this reason, the questions were not standardised, with the list of questions merely guiding the interview process. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) noted that an interviewer in this setting usually has a list of issues rather than a list of questions and will tailor the interview to suit the situation as it occurs. Using the semi-structured style of interview provided both the researcher and the interviewee the flexibility to explore related issues that arose.

It is acknowledged that all methods have limits. For interviews, Berger (2000) pointed out that interviewees are not always accurate or honest when they are interviewed, either because they do not want to tell something, or they do not remember, or they tell the researcher what they think you want to hear. Further disadvantages are that

29 See Appendix 1 for a list of the questions that guided the interviews.
interviewing is time-consuming, both at the interview itself and in the transcribing, and the researcher may miss cues within the interview. However, in terms of the advantages, this method is flexible, with the researcher able to schedule to suit the interviewee and the transcribing done at a time to suit the researcher. Interviewing can also assist in recognising cues while conducting the observation (Berger, 2000).

There is also the issue of the researcher influencing the data-collection. Depending on the interviewee, the power may lie with either the researcher or the subject. Being a female and not an insider of the print journalism industry could have affected some interviews, whereas my age and educational status may have a different effect on others. It has been pointed out that working journalists often have an aversion to academics (Bowd, 2003; Conley, 1998; Edgar, 1980; Gans, 1980; Josephi, 2008; Machin & Niblock, 2006; Ryan, 1991; Tunstall in Tumber, 2006; Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2008) and interviewing journalists, who are professional interviewers, can be seen as both an advantage and a disadvantage. While journalists “are accustomed to being in control of the questioning and direction of an interview, and to using it as a means of gathering, not providing, information” (Bowd, 2003, p. 118), this could create imbalance between the interviewer and the journalist. However, since journalists “are more likely than most to be familiar with the ‘rules and roles’ of an interview” (ibid.), this familiarity could mean the journalist, as interviewee, is comfortable and familiar with the interview method thus allowing for responses that are more accurate.

### 3.3.2 Observation

To supplement the interview method and gain a further perspective, the research also utilised observation as a way of gathering data. Josephi (2000) argued that journalists’ working environments need to be considered in research to ensure a fuller explanation of the production of news content. Using observation within a working newsroom can provide “a rare look into the inner sanctum of media production, that privileged domain in which media professionals ply their trade, make their decisions and fashion their collective outpourings for consumption by the rest of us” (Hansen et al., 1998, p. 35).

There are a number of disadvantages in using observation as a method. Firstly, accessing a workplace can be difficult (Paterson, 2008) and, even with access, there may be resentment from some members of the group (Neuman, 2006; Underwood, 1993). There is also the problem of what to record in the field notes and what Berger
called “the problem of unrecognised selectivity” (2000, p. 166), when the observer neglects to note certain behaviours or observations. Just as a trained journalist would not engage with some activities that had become so naturalised that they seemed transparent, it is equally true to say of all observers that the experience, values and personal experiences of the researcher will influence any note taking. Further to this, the volume of field notes can lead to time-management issues. Finally, there is the issue of “reactivity” (Berger, 2000, p. 166), that is, the behaviour of the subjects being affected by the observer. Being aware of these disadvantages should allow the researcher to manage them effectively and utilising a triangulation of methods has the tendency to counteract these disadvantages.

The advantages of observation as a method is that any behaviour an interviewee may be uncomfortable about disclosing may be noticed in the observation (Creswell, 2003). The method “directly records what people do, as distinct from that they say they do” (Denscombe, 2004, p. 199, emphasis in original). More importantly, observation provides another aspect to the research – things may be observed that may not have been evident in other methods used.

3.3.3 Document and artefact analysis

The use of documents and artefacts are an example of what Kellehear (1993) calls unobtrusive methods. These documents and artefacts may be public (for example, newspapers, minutes of meetings, official reports) or private documents (for example, personal journals and diaries, letters, e-mails) (Creswell, 2003). In journalism, documents can include press releases, finalised stories for print, publications, emails and other correspondence. Altheide contended that a document, “can be defined as any symbolic representation that can be recorded or retrieved for analysis” (1996, p. 2). Artefacts are what Robson called “trace measures … things which might, through ingenuity and inference, be considered as indices of some aspect of human behaviour” (2002, p. 347). Such artefacts within journalists’ work environments can include workstations, noticeboards, keyboards, computers and other ‘tools of the trade’.

For this research, interviews with members of the field of journalism, and published in the public domain in magazines, newspapers, or on the Internet, were also examined to add further information to the data collection. Furthermore, even though Cottle noted that “insider accounts and interview testimonies … are often a poor substitute for in-
depth and critically informed academic studies” (2007, p. 5), books, particularly biographies and autobiographies, also provided further secondary information. This was useful to gain knowledge about members of the field who were not accessible, for example, newspaper owners, managing editors and other senior members of the field.

Although the accessed documents and artefacts were not specifically designed for this research, and it is imperative to ascertain if the documents are authentic and credible (Denscombe, 2004), careful use of this secondary data provided valuable insight and a broader understanding of the “language and words of the participants” (Creswell, 2003, p. 187) as well as the environment journalists work in.

3.4 Data Collection

Data collection for this study commenced in January 2007. The decision was made at the beginning of data collection to access a local newsroom to carry out observation and to recruit interviewees from the Australian states of Victoria, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and South East Queensland. This decision was based on John Henningham’s contention about the geographical location of Australian journalists:

Most are in the eastern states, and six out of ten are in the south-east grouping of New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory that dominates Australia’s politics and commerce (1998b, pp. 334-335).

The recruitment strategy used a mixture of convenience sampling and snowball sampling (Jensen, 2002c, p. 239). From a quantitative viewpoint, both these strategies could lead to a misrepresentation of the population but as Bryman pointed out, “in ethnographic research, it is not just people who are being sampled but also events and contexts as well” (2001, p. 302). Rather than looking at sampling from a quantitative viewpoint, it is important to remember the imperatives of qualitative research and as such, these sampling techniques were suitable for this design.

A serious consideration in the observation and interview methods is the size of the print journalism industry in Australia. Bowd pointed out that: “Confidentiality of data is another factor which is relevant to most types of research interviewing but which, in Australia, applies particularly to journalists because of the small pool from which research participants are likely to be drawn” (2003, p. 120). The implications here are
that with limited employment opportunities, newsrooms and journalists might have been unwilling to participate, or, if they did, reluctant to give truthful answers. Assurances of anonymity were used to counteract this potential limit and this assurance was outlined in the Information Statements, noted during the taped interviews, and relayed to staff in the observed newsrooms.

3.4.2 Participant Recruitment

Interviews

The university’s ethics approval stipulated that initial contact to recruit journalists had to be made to the editor of a publication and for this reason, Margaret Gee’s Australian Media Guide (2007), which provides contact information on media organisations and publications within Australia, was used to identify publications that could be approached. In January 2007, I initiated the recruitment process for interviews. Details of publications (including each publication’s editor, address, phone number and email address) were downloaded from the following lists on the Media Guide website:

- Metropolitan Newspapers - NSW
- Metropolitan Newspapers - Qld
- Metropolitan Newspapers - Vic
- Newspapers - ACT
- Newspapers - National
- Regional & Country Newspapers - NSW
- Regional & Country Newspapers - Qld
- Regional & Country Newspapers - Vic

Any listing that did not provide editor, managing editor or editor-in-chief details were deleted and the final list included 167 publications. The initial contact to editors was an example of convenience sampling. Forty Information Statements were mailed out to the editors of newspapers from the major cities in each of the four areas noted by Henningham as well as a random selection of regional and rural papers. There was no specific selection process except that Information Statements were sent to all the

---

30 Copies of the Information Statements and Consent Forms are in Appendix 3.
31 Many publication listings included contacts such as Personal Assistant, Advertising Executive, Marketing Manager, General Manager, etc and because the Ethics Approval stated initial contact must be made to an editor, these other publications were dismissed.
newspapers from the researcher’s area. The sample included a mixture of News Limited, Rural Press and Fairfax publications. Out of these forty approaches, eight replies were received from editors – five accepting the invitation to participate and three declining. An email was sent out to the editors that did not reply to the initial invitation but no further editors replied.

To recruit magazine journalists a similar strategy was used. Margaret Gee’s Australian Media Guide (2007) was used to provide information on publications and editor contact details. In October 2007, eighty-five invitations to participate were sent to editors and twenty-one replies were received with eleven declining and ten accepting. Again there was a random mix of publications from independent publishers through to larger corporations and the publications included men’s, women’s, children’s, youth, niche, mainstream, general interest, specialist, trade and industry publications, and general news. The publications approached, both magazines and newspapers, included a mixture of what are commonly known as ‘high-culture’ and ‘low-culture’ publications. There was also a wide variety in circulation figures.

To continue recruiting, in November 2007 twenty-one Information Statements were sent to section editors from one major metropolitan newspaper and to editors from Sydney suburban newspapers. In January 2008, thirty Statements were sent to rural and independent newspapers and in February 2008, twenty-four Statements were sent to magazine and newspaper publishers as well as newspapers in the Australian Provincial Newspapers (APN) publishing group. Two of the larger newspaper publications were re-contacted asking if they could suggest any other staff who might be interested. Out of these three recruitment drives, twenty replies were received with fourteen acceptances and six declining the invitation.

32 News Limited is the dominant newspaper publisher in Australia with up to seventy percent of the market share. It has publications in all major metropolitan cities, often the only publication in that city, as well as suburban publications via Cumberland Newspapers. News Limited’s publications include The Australian (national), the Daily Telegraph (Sydney), the Courier Mail (Brisbane), the Sunday Telegraph (Sydney) and the Herald Sun (Melbourne). Fairfax Media is the next highest publisher and publishes newspapers including metropolitan newspapers the Sydney Morning Herald (Sydney), The Age (Melbourne) and the Sun Herald (Sydney) as well as regional and suburban publications. Rural Press primarily published regional and rural newspapers but Fairfax Media and Rural Press merged in 2007. The initial approach to editors and journalists at Rural Press was prior to this merger (this information was from Conley and Lamble (2006), North (2009) and Journalism: jobs that make news (Solly, Isbister & Birtles, 2007)).
Another recruitment strategy involved using the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA), the journalists’ union in Australia. It was difficult to include freelance journalists within the study because they are not affiliated with a specific publication. The MEAA runs an annual Freelance Convention and a variation to the ethics application was completed that requested permission to recruit at the 2007 Convention. This was granted and I approached the MEAA Secretary, Mr Chris Warren, to see if an Information Statement could be included in the literature given to each participant. One hundred and seventy Information Statements were provided to the MEAA and two freelance journalists were recruited – one completed the interview by email and the other in a face-to-face interview.

It was also at this stage that two other variations to the ethics application were submitted. The Australian Newspaper History Group (ANHG) emails a newsletter to their members every quarter, a newsletter read by academics in the field as well as other interested parties. The ethics committee approved a media release33 and this was sent to the ANHG for inclusion in their newsletter. The second variation was a media release34 sent to the MEAA to be included in their Alliance Media e-bulletin, a weekly email received by MEAA members. However, no participants were recruited using these two strategies.

Editors from the publications who accepted the invitation provided contact details of any journalist who was willing to take part. These journalists were contacted and given the option of a face-to-face, email or telephone interview. Several journalists did not finalise arrangements or did not return email interviews. Thirty-six interviews were conducted35 during 2007 and 2008 with members of the field of print journalism from Australian newspapers (24) and magazines (10) as well as freelance journalists (2). The journalism level interviewees consisted of journalists (18), cadet journalists (3) and a student journalist (1). Fourteen interviews were conducted with people from management positions (editor, deputy editor or owner) although twelve of these were originally journalists and answered questions from this perspective as well as from their management position. The cohort consisted of seventeen females and nineteen males

33 See Appendix 4.
34 See Appendix 4.
35 A listing of interviewees can be found in Appendix 2. Respondents are anonymous but certain biographical information that will not identify them has been included such as age (where known), gender, job type, some publication details, and education.
ranging in age from twenty to sixty-two. The newspapers that respondents worked at included a mixture of national, metropolitan, regional, country, community and suburban newspapers published daily, weekly, bi-weekly and tri-weekly from a range of Australian publishers including Fairfax, News Limited, Fairfax Community Newspapers, Rural Press, APN News and Media, and independent publishers. Magazines that journalists worked at included weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly, niche-market and mass-market from a number of different Australian publishers.

Contrary to expectations, several of the participants did not request anonymity but the decision was made early in the interviewing process that no participant would be identified so the interviewees were able to answer questions knowing they would not be identifiable. The participants could refuse to answer questions if they wished, they could ask for an answer to be off the record and they were given the option to read the transcript and edit or delete answers if they believed they were taken out of context or misunderstood (note also that not all participants answered all the questions: as semi-structured interviews, the goal was to allow the interviews to be guided by the questions). Each journalist was assigned a number along with the letter ‘J’ (J1, J2, etc.). Similarly, each editor was assigned a number with the letter ‘E’ (E1, E2, etc.).\textsuperscript{36} No information identifying the participants is included within the thesis, but any information used from the public record, that is, from analysis of secondary data, is attributed within the thesis.

One of the disadvantages of interviewing as a method became obvious during this recruitment process – how representative is a sample when only editors who had both the time and the inclination responded and from there, only journalists who showed an interest in the research? Further to this, the discursive frameworks journalists work within influence how the journalist perceives their work practices (Steinke, 1993; Zelizer, 1997). For these reasons, it was essential to access a newsroom because observation “directly records what people do, as distinct from that they say they do” (Denscombe, 2004, p. 199, emphasis in original), thus providing a measure of triangulation of the data.

\textsuperscript{36} See Appendix 2 for a full list of participants with their coded number and details.
**Observation**

Accessing a newsroom proved difficult. Over two years a number of approaches were made to newsrooms via letter and email with no result. A senior employee of one large publisher pointed out that anonymity and time issues would be a major concern to editors and an ethics variation was applied for that allowed me to ensure anonymity. A series of requests went out to newsrooms in a wider area and replies were received from seven newsrooms: four declined the invitation and three accepted: a regional tri-weekly newspaper was observed for one day a week for four weeks (NR1); a weekly metropolitan newspaper for a full production week (five working days) (NR2); and, a weekly community newspaper for three production days over three weeks (NR3). The three different newsrooms gave a broader perspective to the research. In each newsroom, journalists were observed writing, interviewing, taking phone calls, interacting with other staff members, participating in news conferences and interacting with the audience. It should also be noted that the three newsrooms were also newsrooms where journalists, subeditors and editors were interviewed as part of the data collection in the earlier stages of this project but the interviewees and newsrooms have not been linked to ensure anonymity.

**3.5 Conclusion**

The ethnographic approach utilised in this study supplied valuable data that enabled this researcher to fulfil the aim of the research project, which was to test out the systems model of creativity within print journalism in Australia. The three different methods used, interviews, observation, and document and artefact analysis, provided a rich source of information that assisted in fulfilling the objective of the research that was recognised at the beginning of the project: how do print journalists in Australia interact with cultural, individual and social structures in their creative process. The results from this data collection are analysed and discussed in the following chapter.

---

37 For further information about the three newsrooms refer to Appendix 2. The newsrooms accepted observation under the condition of anonymity so any details that may identify them or any staff member that works in the newsroom are not included.
4.0 Analysis: the system of print journalism

If we consider the systems model in relation to print journalism, Csikszentmihalyi’s argument that creativity is found within the conjunction of domain, individual and field can lead to the assertion that creativity can be found in print journalism as the three elements are easily recognisable there. In this model, the individual is the journalist, the field is the social structure that works with the knowledge system of journalism, and the domain is the knowledge system of print journalism. Concentrating on the last of these elements, it can be seen that a domain contains all the knowledges, traditions, techniques, rules, codes and conventions that a journalist must access in order to write journalism. As will be demonstrated in the next sections, print journalism has “enough specialized knowledge [that] has been codified for smooth transmission to new practitioners” (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon, 2001, p. 22) and can, therefore, be classified as a domain.

Analysis of the data collected for this research demonstrated that Csikszentmihalyi was correct in saying the systems model is a nonlinear model with circular causality. Given the non-linearity of the system, it was initially difficult to decide for analytical purposes where certain findings should be examined. If, for example, a journalist was asked how they learnt to write as a journalist and their answer was that they learnt the rules from senior colleagues, should this be discussed as an idiosyncratic learning process of a particular individual (domain acquisition), in an examination of the domain itself (rules of journalism), or the operation of the field (the importance of work colleagues) section? With this complication in mind, the following analysis is an attempt to present, in a linear way, findings that are by their very nature non-linear and systemic.

However, this selection process led to another related question: In what order should the three elements of individual, domain and field be discussed in this analysis? With Csikszentmihalyi insisting that each element is equally important for a creative outcome, it is vital that the reader is not misled into assuming that the first element discussed is of higher importance than either of the others. Csikszentmihalyi states that the systems model is dynamic and each element is equally important for a creative outcome but he also emphasises that the starting point for creativity is arbitrary and can happen in any of the three elements (1988b, p. 329). The domain could be written about in the first instance because this is where the traditions, the rules and procedures, and
any previously produced work are stored and an individual needs to learn these traditions before trying to introduce a novel contribution. The knowledge pre-exists the individual. However, these traditions would not be available for the individual without the field accepting novel work for inclusion into the domain, but the field would not have these traditions to accept if an individual had not produced them.

With this complexity in mind, and to give a linear structure to the study, the analysis follows the sequence set up by Feldman, Csikszentmihalyi and Gardner’s (1994) DIFI model – Domain, Individual, Field Interaction – and discusses the domain in the first instance, followed by individual and field. Using the DIFI model overcomes the problem in examining creativity that emphasises an individual approach and ensures that the reader knows that the individual is not privileged but also understands that the individual is not the least important element. Thus, the argument that creativity should be examined from a Copernican viewpoint rather than a Ptolemaic one (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988b, p. 336) is emphasised: the domain, individual and field are each an equally important element in the system of print journalism.

It is also crucial to remember that the objective of applying the systems model in print journalism is not to judge the practises of journalists or the value of any genre of journalism or style of publication. Nor is it the intention of this research to judge whether a produced contribution is creative; it is a field that judges the creativity of a product, process or idea. The objective is to test out how journalists, as creative producers of media texts, use their agency, or ability to act and make choices, to interact with individual, social and cultural structures. This conditional agency, where a journalist interacts with this known set of structures, is how a journalist produces creative texts. Data analysis has shown that, in a similar fashion to any cultural producer, that without these structures a print journalist would be unable to produce at all.
4.1 The domain of print journalism

Csikszentmihalyi defines the domain as the cultural component that “consists of a set of symbolic rules and procedures” (1997, p. 27). Sawyer takes this definition further by including, “all of the created products that have been accepted by the field in the past” (2006, p. 125). The domain provides a set of structures that an individual learns and draws on to produce a creative product and these structures must be learned before a variation can be made. As Sawyer explains,

… creativity researchers think of the domain as a kind of creativity language. Of course, you have to learn a language before you can talk; it’s impossible to communicate without sharing a language. In the same way, it’s impossible to create anything without the shared conventions of a domain (2006, p. 137).

It is argued here that journalists immerse themselves in the domain of print journalism and acquire the rules and procedures as well as engage with previously created products and this domain acquisition enables a journalist to produce, or create, their work. In other words, a print journalist internalises the rules and traditions of the domain and these structures become so innate that a practitioner unconsciously uses them. Schön calls this knowing-in-action:

… there are actions, recognitions, and judgments which we know how to carry out spontaneously; we do not have to think about them prior to or during their performance. We are often unaware of having learned to do these things; we simply find ourselves doing them (1983, p. 54).

Bourdieu’s (1977) notion of habitus corresponds with Schön’s ideas: a journalist is predisposed to act because of these structures although, as Johnson argues, habitus “does not negate the possibility of strategic calculation on the part of agents” (1993, p. 5). In other words, the individual, as active agent, uses their habitus and interacts with these structures to make creative choices.

The domain a creator interacts with not only provides the traditions and rules for journalists to draw on but also for the field to use as a reference point, a contention that demonstrates the non-linearity of the systems model, that is, each element “affects the others and is affected by them in turn” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988b p. 329). As Csikszentmihalyi contends: “‘New’ is meaningful only in reference to the ‘old’” (2003,
p. 315), that is, how would we know something was creative if we had nothing to compare it to? This is what the domain provides: the ‘something’ for comparison. When a journalist produces an article using the acquired knowledge from the domain, it is presented to a field of experts, who understand the domain and use this understanding for verification that the outcome is novel and appropriate. The article is then included in the domain for future reference.

According to Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon (2001), there are hundreds of domains in a culture including the domains of such disciplines as literature, chess, mathematics, cooking, information technology and journalism. Domains can include discrete sub domains because of different procedures in work practice between different styles in a domain. In writing domains, for instance, different forms of poetry have distinct rules – haiku, with its 5-7-5 syllable format, versus limericks or sonnets – as do different genres of literature – romantic fiction versus children’s literature versus science fiction writing. Journalism has its own rules and procedures, and its own field of experts, and therefore, according to Csikszentmihalyi’s definition, it can be constituted as its own domain. Journalism can then be divided into the sub domains of broadcast and print journalism, ‘broadcast’ can be divided further into television and radio journalism and ‘print’ can be grouped into newspaper, magazine and long-form styles. It can also be argued that digital journalism is an emerging form that may eventually be able to be classified as a separate sub domain. Each of these sub domains not only has its own rules, conventions and procedures but also its own field, which judges acceptable additions to the domain. The following diagram illustrates how the domain of journalism may be viewed, including the emerging sub-domain of digital journalism. To clarify which journalists are discussed in this thesis, the print journalists interviewed and newsrooms observed were all classified as part of the sub-domains that are presented as darker in Figure 9 below.
Csikszentmihalyi (1997) lists several ways a domain can encourage or inhibit creative contributions. These include the clarity and accurateness of the symbol system, the centrality of the domain to the culture, and accessibility to new practitioners.

Firstly, how clear and accurate is the symbol system? If a domain has clear rules and procedures, it is easier to learn past knowledge. Without access to this past knowledge, an individual cannot produce a variation. The rules and conventions of print journalism, discussed in depth further in this chapter, are relatively clear, particularly in hard, or daily, news, with many of journalism’s textbooks repeating the rules, conventions and procedures that journalists need to learn. Examining journalism schools’ curriculum also shows uniformity in what have become traditional processes. However, newer tools, such as social media forms including Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, are leading to uncertainty in what constitutes the conventions, codes, rules and techniques of journalism. While academics are examining how social media is changing practises (see for example Posetti’s (2009a; 2009b; 2009c; 2009d; 2010) and Crawford’s (2011) work on journalism and Twitter, and Fenton and Witschge’s (2011) discussion of ethics
and digital media), and there are beginning to be accepted procedural processes, there is still uncertainty in the industry about how these tools should be used by journalists. As Posetti noted: “Crucially, Twitter is also raising important new questions about ethics and professionalism, and raising them faster than media organisations can answer them” (2009e, par. 8). An example of this uncertainty is the use of social media in courtrooms. In 2009, a journalist from The Australian newspaper, a publication in the News Limited stable of newspapers, as well as one from online publication ZDNet were given permission by the Federal Court in Sydney, Australia, to ‘tweet’ proceedings of a copyright case (Simons, 2009). However, two days later, News Limited stopped its journalist from reporting using Twitter because of legal concerns (Sims, 2009). On the other hand, Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) managing director Mark Scott actively encourages staff to use social media in their reporting (in Mumbrella, 2009) and has issued a Social Media Policy that provides journalists with guidelines on how to use these new platforms in their practice (Scott, 2009). Therefore, it can be argued that while the rules in traditional journalism are relatively clear and accurate, the conventions and guides for using these newer tools are currently in a state of development with many questions that need to be answered before they become a readily accepted part of print journalism, if indeed they will. An alternative is that social media journalism could become its own sub domain and take its place alongside print and broadcast with its own set of rules, conventions and procedures. As Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon suggest: “When enough specialised knowledge has been codified for smooth transmission to new practitioners, we call the resulting symbolic system a domain” (2001, p. 22, emphasis in original).

Secondly, Csikszentmihalyi asks is the domain central to the culture? If a domain is important within a culture, it will attract talented people, which would result in a higher chance of innovation. Print journalism is a key component of the cultural industries, which plays an important role in understanding the world (Boyer & Hannerz, 2006; Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon, 2001; Hachten, 2005; Harcup, 2004; Hesmondhalgh, 2002; 2006c; Machin & Niblock, 2006; Meadows, 1998; 1999; 2001; Negus & Pickering, 2004; North, 2009; O'Shaughnessy, 1999; Schultz, 1994; Sheridan Burns, 2002; Tapsall & Varley, 2001; Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2008). Rupar goes so far as to suggest that journalism still “holds a central place in the wider field of power” (2010, p. 5). On the other hand, Hallin (2006) argues that traditional press
journalism, which was seen as “the central institution of the news media” (2006, p. 1) from the end of World War Two through to the 1980s, is not as central to the public sphere as it once was and cites reasons such as a declining readership, the change from family to corporate ownership, and the erosion of the traditional professional model of journalism, including the centrality of the ideas of objectivity and social responsibility. Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon consider journalism to be a domain in crisis with practitioners in the domain “wracked by confusion and doubt” (2001, p. 6). However, they also suggest that the brightest individuals are attracted to a dynamic domain and that having these bright individuals would probably result in the domain moving forward. In relation to this suggestion, there is some evidence that journalism is still attractive to bright individuals.

In Australia, university entry scores for journalism and communication courses are often among the highest, which means that only students who receive high scores in their final secondary school results are eligible for these degrees. In 2011, for example, the Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Journalism) degree at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) had an entry score of 94.05, which, according to the University Admissions Centre (UAC) means the students performed better than 94.05% of students who completed their secondary school final exams. The Bachelor of Media (Communication and Journalism) degree at the University of New South Wales required a score of 91, that is, the students accepted into this course are in the top nine percent of all student results,38 plainly showing how students among the brightest are choosing communication professions, including journalism, as a career path.

However, Csikszentmihalyi’s third way that a domain can encourage or inhibit creative contributions states that a domain needs to be accessible to new practitioners and there is evidence that certain sections of print journalism are less accessible than others. One can see that there are no formal requirements required to practice journalism, that is, anyone can call themselves a journalist (Gardner, 2007; Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon, 2001; Hirst, 2010), and therefore this would suggest that the domain is highly accessible. The downside to this, of course, is the question of how the domain can maintain its integrity when anyone can claim to be a journalist. On this point, though, Gardner (2007) is careful to point out that there are practitioners who follow the core

---

38 This information was sourced from the University Admissions Centre (UAC) http://www.uac.edu.au/documents/atar/All-About-Your-ATAR.pdf.

102
values of print journalism who separate themselves from those who they believe do not follow these values. However, rather than following this line of discussion, which suggests arguments about whether journalism can be seen as a profession, the varying definitions of journalism, as discussed above, and how these definitions may tie in with citizen journalism, it is more pertinent for this research to examine the accessibility of Australian traditional print media, that is, newspapers and magazines. The opportunities for employment in the domain of print journalism are low with a disproportionately high number of journalism students in comparison to mainstream media jobs (Green, 1999b; Patching, 1996) with studies finding only a third of graduates locating work in the mainstream media (Callaghan & McManus, 2010, p. 13). Employment at the “elite organisations” (Scott, 2010) in Australia, which ABC managing director Mark Scott lists as News Limited, Fairfax and the ABC (ibid.), is highly desirable and difficult to attain (Alysen, 2001; 2007) and this set of circumstances is related to Csikszentmihalyi’s contention that if there is elitism in a field this would discourage new members. How the domain evolves and deals with this is vital in encouraging new members. Alternatively, new members may be more encouraged to pursue emerging domains of journalism such as online, multimedia or social media forms.

The cohort in this study was specifically asked about the structures of journalism and how this affects their practices. Journalists noted practical rules and procedures they worked with as well as knowledge of the ideological conventions that govern the domain. Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon called these the procedural and ethical standards (2001, p. 24, emphasis in original) and commented that these standards not only govern journalists’ work but also provide credibility for the community. Additionally, the respondents described their interaction with, and knowledge of, other works in the domain, that is, what Sawyer (2006) describes as previously created products.

However, what was also discovered is that these rules in the domain were not deterministic. In the research, journalists clearly demonstrated that they were able to make choices, or have agency, within these learnt structures thus giving an indication of how structure and agency are inextricably linked. This finding was an ongoing theme during the study and evidence for this finding will be discussed throughout the thesis.
4.1.1 Journalism’s rules, conventions and procedures

Creativity from the Romantic understanding generally complies with the idea that a producer must be free from constraints in order to be able to create. However, the understanding in creativity research is that all creative producers in any domain must learn the rules, what Lippmann (1932) calls *conventions*, and traditions of the domain before they can become a “skilful bender of rules” (Evans & Deehan, 1988, p. 33). Researchers of creativity stress the importance of domain acquisition and learning the rules and traditions, the structures within a domain, before an individual can make a novel contribution (Boden, 2004; Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Sawyer, 2006). As Negus and Pickering argue, rather than regarding tradition as being in opposition to innovation, “creative talent requires a tradition so that it can learn how to go further within it, or beyond it” (2004, p. 91), a view supported by Bailin (1988) who maintains it is more useful to see traditions and previous works as one of the structures to produce creative work. It can be asserted that it would be impossible to create without knowing what the rules are. E8 is an editor and commented on the importance of learning the rules from watching colleagues and how this assisted his ability to be a “skilful bender of rules” (Evans & Deehan, 1988, p. 33):

I think I owe the way I’ve developed to quite a number of people in terms of what they’ve been able to teach me, whether consciously or subconsciously, by seeing the way they’ve actually gone about assembling a story and then what they’ve written. It’s been a great help in determining the rules, and determining how you can break them, of course, once you know what they are (E8, i/v, 2007).

With this argument in mind, it can be seen that it is important for a journalist to learn the traditions and rules, the “set of symbolic rules and procedures” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 27), of the domain before they can introduce novelty and expand the domain.

The rules and procedures, or structures, in the journalistic domain have both similarities and differences to other writing genres. As David Randall notes:

Writing for papers is different from writing a novel or short story, but not as different as some would like to think. All good writing has some things in common; it is clear, easy to read, uses fresh language, stimulates and entertains. Those things are as true of the well-written newspaper story as they are of the well-written novel (1996, p. 141).
Essentially, journalism is storytelling (Adam, 1993; Bird & Dardenne, 1997) and its basic elements – language, grammar and narrative – are as important to journalism as they are to any writing genre. As well as these elements, Adam observes that: “The devices the narrator in journalism uses are those used by all storytellers: plot, characterization, action, dialogue, sequencing, dramatization, causation, myth, metaphor, and explanation” (1993, p. 34). J15 has written fiction as well as journalism and discussed his three basic rules of all writing:

When I’m tutoring, or helping, younger journalists, I always go back to the basic rules of engagement – the three basic principles laid down in classical Greek times for communication, whether written or spoken. They are the basic elements without which no piece of text can stand on its own. And they’re in no particular order. The first is grammar – you’ve got to have the rules of the road to communicate clearly; rhetoric – which is the projection of the story, the spin you put on it, the angle; and the other, which is also absolutely vital, is logic – you’ve got to build that thing logically; you’ve got to build the narrative of the story logically so that at every stage the reader is drawn through quite logically without actually having to struggle to try and understand what the writer is trying to say. Sometimes you’ll be reading a story or an article or a thesis or whatever and it’ll jump from one paragraph to the next and you think, ‘What? I don’t follow this at all’. The logic’s got to be impeccable (J15, i/v, 2007).

While these three elements remain consistent, it must be recognised that journalism’s form is also different, what J20 called journalesse style: “It’s a very particular style for, it’s not fiction writing, it’s not novel writing, it’s not essay writing, it’s reportage” (i/v, 2008). Rules that govern the structure of a journalistic story and the style of writing are quite specific, although the different genres within journalism influence this as well. For example, a hard news story is written with a different style to that of a feature story.

In journalism, it can be said that there are two kinds of ‘rules’: the applied, which govern the practical side of producing an article, and the ideological, which are the principles of journalism. There are rules that govern how a story is written (language, style and length), formal State laws such as defamation, guidelines such as ethical obligations, conventions, including news values, and ideological principles such as the notion of the Fourth Estate. Examples of procedures include working to a deadline, using technological tools, knowing how to submit a story and knowledge about the
organisation’s expectations. It is the understanding of these rules, conventions, principles, techniques, guides and procedures of the domain and, on a micro-level, the familiarity with the expectations of the organisation worked for, that enables a journalist to create their work. As Mark Fishman recognised:

… newsworkers do not invent new methods of reporting the world on every occasion they confront it. They employ methods that have been used in the past; they rely upon the standard operating procedures of their news organization and of their profession (1980, p. 14).

Csikszentmihalyi states that an important function an individual needs to master in order to work effectively within a system is to, “internalize the rules of the domain and the opinions of the field” (2003, p. 332). The data analysis here provided ample evidence for the argument that these structures become so innate that a practitioner unconsciously uses them. In line with Schön’s concept of knowing-in-action (1983, p. 54) and Bourdieu’s (1977) notion of habitus, these journalists had “internalize(d) the creative system” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p. 332) of print journalism. Gans (1980) claimed that learning and knowing these structures allow journalists to get on with what they do best; they do not have to think about what they are doing. It is this tacit knowledge (Schön, 1983) that enables a journalist to ‘do without thinking’ with the individual, as agent, making creative choices in interaction with these structures.

4.1.1.1 Practical rules and guidelines of journalism

Practical rules, conventions and guidelines inform journalists on their writing practice and provide structures that support journalists in their creativity. These structures can be found extensively in textbooks written about journalism (see, for example, Conley & Lamble, 2006; Harcup, 2004; Lamble, 2004; Perry, 2005a; Sheridan Burns, 2002; White, 2005) and organisations’ style guides. Examples of these rules and conventions include: the inverted triangle approach to reporting; answering the basic questions of who, what, why, when, where and how in a news report (Harcup, 2004; Lamble, 2004; Perry, 2005a); and, the application of news values, including impact, conflict, timeliness, proximity, prominence, currency and human interest (Conley & Lamble, 2006; Perry, 2005a; Sheridan Burns, 2002; White, 2005). Further to these writing rules, journalists need to know which laws and guidelines affect their production. Journalists need to be mindful of laws such as defamation, contempt of court, anti-terror and race-
hate laws, and intellectual property (Pearson & Polden, 2010), and guidelines issued by
the Australian Press Council (2010) that cover such areas as reporting on suicide,
mental health, disability and health issues. The media organisation also imposes its own
rules and guidelines on journalists, both directly (Cameron, 1996; Sheridan Burns,
2002) and indirectly (Berkowitz, 1997; Cameron, 1996; Context, 2002; Halloran, 1998;
Harcup, 2004; Sheridan Burns, 2001). As Ian Ward stated: “Each medium has a
distinctive news format and imposes quite distinctive rules and work practices upon
journalists working within its confines” (1995, p. 105) a point agreed with by an editor
from this study who pointed out that “a community newspaper is totally different to a
daily which is totally different to a trade magazine” (E2, i/v, 2007).

Niblock (1996) contends that there are three golden rules to good journalistic writing:
accuracy, conciseness and clarity. Examination of the data from this research showed
that journalists are aware of these ‘rules’ in their practice. A number of respondents, for
example, raised accuracy:

You don’t take facts off the Internet. You ring the people and you make sure
they’re correct and you never assume anything. We had something like that happen
here recently, which got us into a lot of trouble. You have to know it’s that
company or that person or whoever you’re talking about. It’s very, very important
to check your facts (E2, i/v, 2007).

You must triple, triple check people’s names. If you’re out on the road, people go,
‘Oh make it up. That’s what you guys always do’. But, in reality, if you get a single
letter of somebody’s name wrong, or a single thing wrong, all hell breaks loose
(laughs) (J20, i/v, 2008).

Accuracy is also mentioned in a number of academic texts (see for example Guerke &
Ricketson, 2001; Schultz, 1990; Sheridan Burns, 2002; Ward, 1995; Young, 2007)
because it provides credibility for the audience and as E13 said: “You’ve got to be
accurate; you’ve got to be credible. If you don’t have a reputation you don’t have a job
as a journalist” (i/v, 2008).

Both newspaper and magazine journalists from this study also noted Niblock’s second
rule of journalistic writing, conciseness, and listed such techniques as writing short and
‘punchy’ intros, using short words and fundamental language, and not using jargon as
examples of how they wrote concisely; as J6 said about hard news writing: “This is short, sharp and shiny” (i/v, 2007). Journalism’s textbooks reiterate the notion of short words, short sentences and short paragraphs (McKane, 2006; Perry, 2005b; Randall, 1996; White, 2005) so the audience can “glean the information easily and quickly without having to plough through irrelevant detail” (Niblock, 1996, p. 10). J14 agreed:

I suppose the important thing is you’ve got to understand it. If you’re writing it and it’s in the jargon of a press release or from police people or a politician or something and you don’t understand it, your reader’s not going to understand it so you try and make it simple (J14, i/v, 2007).

J15 recalled a dictum that older journalists taught him on his first newspaper, which enabled him to write concisely while keeping the audience in mind:

One said nothing should appear in – well, they said in this newspaper because they were referring to their newspaper – nothing should appear in this newspaper that a reader has to read twice (J15, i/v, 2007).

J15’s remark also connects with Niblock’s third rule: clarity. Niblock states that a story should be easy to understand and this understanding is achieved via the structure and flow of an article. This flow can be achieved by means of “linking” (E2, i/v, 2007; E7, i/v, 2008) paragraphs and creating a narrative throughout the story. J2 described how he constructed a story to provide clarity for a reader:

As a hard news writer, I think your only responsibility is to convey that information straightforwardly. So you’ve got all the information to hand in your head and then mentally you do two things. First of all, you pick out what is commonly called the top line or the lead, which is essentially, you try and mentally organise or classify that information around a single narrative thread, which is effectively the headline or your first paragraph. And then mentally you construct the rest of the information, or what is relevant to the information, or what you can fit into the newspaper, in a fairly essentially straightforward narrative following on from that point. Not necessarily a chronological narrative, but a thematic narrative (J2, i/v, 2007).

Besides Niblock’s ‘three golden rules’, other rules raised by respondents included attributing quotes correctly, ensuring it is the ‘new’ that is emphasised, writing in the
active voice, using few adjectives in hard news, applying news values and writing in the inverted pyramid style. J6, a hard news journalist, listed the necessary requirements for writing in that style:

… the reality is with news, you are putting your most, you are building a reverse pyramid. You are putting your most important fact in the intro. This is fact based writing. This is who, what, how, when, where and why and this is short sentences; this is very little descriptive terminology; this is, for most papers, past tense; this is very strictly governed rules on how material is written (J6, i/v, 2007).

Apart from rules that govern the practical side of writing, this cohort also seemed very aware of ethical and legal obligations, with ethics and working ethically brought up a number of times by interviewees. In this regard, the MEAA provides a Code of Ethics to guide journalists in their reporting (2008a) and several respondents referred to this as valuable in how they report. In 2004, Roy Morgan Research conducted a survey questioning journalists about ethics and found 65% thought, “ethics is the one area in Australian journalism that needs an enforceable code supported by editors and proprietors” (2004, p. 11). The Code is not currently legally enforceable but journalists in this study stated that they are mindful of it in their practice (for example, J11 said: “I have the AJA’s code of ethics on the wall above my desk and I follow them” (i/v, 2007)) and mentioned that it is another rule that can become part of their ‘doing without thinking’:

I know the MEAA Code of Practice. I mean that’s the kind of one, you don’t sit down and people go: ‘You must learn this’. It’s kind of just instilled. How is it instilled? (my question) Just the way other people around you work and when you first start and you have a problem, the editor says this is how you should deal with it (J7, i/v, 2007).

I’m aware of the Code of Ethics for instance, which I always try to adhere to. I’m aware of the various legal guidelines and the principles you’ve got to adhere to. We have in-house training as to what the law requires, what defamation is, statutory law, like contempt law and so forth, not naming juveniles and a whole pile of things like that, as well as your framing and tearing down peoples’ reputations, holding them up to public ridicule, which I’ve probably done a bit of in my career.

AJA stands for the Australian Journalists’ Association and this organisation was the Australian journalism union before being taken over by the MEAA.
And then there is in the code of ethics about doing the right thing, not trying to unduly trick people to disclose information (J5, i/v, 2007).

J5’s comment gives some indication of what requirements are necessary for a journalist to be able to practice their work but he also found it difficult to verbalise these rules and conventions: “I struggle to think of principles. I think that I might have been imbued with them at an early stage of my career and I’m at the stage where I (pause) … They’re fairly subliminal now? (My question). Yeah that’s right. Yeah, they’re buried within my professionalism” (J5, i/v, 2007). J5 had been working in the print journalism industry for over forty years and provided an excellent example of how a high level of experience in a domain means that structures such as ethical obligations and legal requirements become part of an experienced practitioner’s habitus.

J5’s comment also provides the opportunity to discuss how legal obligations both constrain and enable a journalist in their production. Formal laws passed by Australian State and Federal Parliaments provide structures journalists must learn for their practice and these rules change regularly. For example, until recently, journalists had no legal protection in Australia in regards to protecting their sources but in 2010, independent Member of Parliament Andrew Wilkie introduced the Evidence Amendment (Journalists’ Privilege) Bill 2009 to afford journalists some legal protection when they refuse to name their confidential sources.

Pearson (2007) maintains that an understanding of formal laws can assist journalists in their work but he also argues that laws can constrain, particularly if they restrict media freedoms. In fact in a later publication, Pearson cited a free speech audit conducted in Australia that found journalists were subject to more than 500 legal restrictions (2010, p. 10). Pearson clarified his argument by stating that an intimate knowledge of appropriate laws will ensure journalists report with confidence rather than timidity: “Ignorance or uncertainty about the law can have a ‘chilling’ effect on a journalist’s reporting and publishing” (2010, pp. 4-5). This thesis would argue that all laws, as part of the structures of journalism, may constrain but also enable journalists because they provide one of the structures for a journalist to perform within, an argument supported by Wolff. She suggested that, “the existence of these structures and institutions enables any activity on our part, and this applies equally to acts of conformity and acts of rebellion” (1981, p. 9).
Although Wolff’s argument is valid, an examination of secondary data found journalists have different attitudes to how laws affect their practice. Journalists Pamela Williams and Paul Barry disagreed on how defamation laws enabled or constrained how they work. Williams, an award winning print journalist, believes defamation laws are highly constraining and detrimental to her work process:

In most of the big investigations that I've written, I wouldn't write a sentence without my eye on it for legal problems, not a sentence. And I have time and time again reconstructed an entire story and then still had to go back and remove key areas literally because you can't publish (in Background Briefing, 1999).

On the other hand, Barry, while agreeing libel laws can constrain, believes the laws are important because they provide guidelines that assist journalists:

Libel laws are certainly a constraint, they're a huge constraint, and so in my view they ought to be. You ought not to be able to say things about people that you can't prove to be true … I accept that there's restriction but I personally don't think that it's an unwelcome one (in Background Briefing, 1999).

Barry’s comment indicates his acceptance of the value of these structures but it also shows how he is prepared to use his agency in interaction with those structures by recognising that they are a necessary part of the practice of journalism.

As well as understanding the broader journalistic structures and how to use them, the journalists interviewed were also well aware of the rules and procedures at the level of their organisations. For example, most respondents (16 out of the 18 journalists who were asked) discussed a formal style guide, which provides such information as how to spell words, how to use punctuation, when to capitalise letters, how to use titles and how to write numbers within that organisation’s expectations. Interestingly, although aware of the style guide, most of the respondents claimed that after a while they rarely referred to it. As they gained experience, they knew the expectations of the organisation and produced their work accordingly, which is another example of ‘doing without thinking’, in this case where the journalist has internalised the rules, guides and procedures of the organisation and can use them efficiently in their practice.

Furthermore, a number of the respondents recalled using a style guide but were unable to produce it or did not know where it was:
We had a style guide 15 years ago and I think we’ve got copies of it somewhere but very seldom does it come out. It’s basically on the job we say, ‘No, we don’t do that. This is the way we do that’. So it’s just on the go (E9, i/v, 2008).

Related to the style guide is the idea of writing to a publication’s format. Ward defines *format* in journalism production as “a systematic way of structuring the presentation of information” (1995, p. 104). It is what Conley calls *house* style: “It gives uniformity to newspaper articles and news broadcasts. It is about laying down a clear set of rules that all journalists who work for a particular organisation must abide by” (2006, p. 147). A format allows economic considerations to be managed within an organisation (Fishman, 1980) but it is also a way for the audience to know what to expect (Tiffen, 1989). J20 worked for two different newspapers over twenty years and found the contrast between the two quite difficult to grasp when he changed publications:

> Very different. [Publication name deleted] is a very unadorned style and any attempt at colouring stuff up and all that, they don’t like it at all. And so, whereas at the [previous publication name deleted] we used to colour everything up, [publication name deleted] is a very unadorned, very straight style and any time you start to get a bit poetic it all gets cut out (laughs) (J20, i/v, 2008).

When asked to name a practical rule that governed their writing, most of the journalists found this difficult to articulate. This situation may indicate that these journalists have internalised what was required of them and they could write without consciously thinking about it, thus providing further evidence that tacit knowledge is formed through domain acquisition. Internalising the rules of the domain and organisation leads to a more productive outcome because journalists can write efficiently without consciously needing to think about the structures that support their creative practices.

**4.1.1.2 Time and deadlines**

The deadline is a convention of journalism but it is deserving of its own section because of its pervasiveness throughout the evidence found in the interviews, the observation and the analysis of secondary data conducted for this research. Issues of time, in particular the perception of how constraining it is, were a constant theme that appeared throughout the collected data. There was an underlying thread of discontent with time constraints sometimes perceived to have a negative effect on journalists’ production. Yet, the Press is a time-driven industry (Fagence, 1963; Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi &
Damon, 2001; Harrison, 2006; Klinenberg, 2005; Tuchman, 1973). While it has been argued that deadlines are one of the largest constraints a journalist must contend with (Fishman, 1980; Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon, 2001; Harcup, 2004; Machin & Niblock, 2006; Manning, 2001; McNair, 1998; Sheridan Burns, 2001; Tapsall & Varley, 2001; Tiffen, 2006), deadlines are another structure the journalist works within that also enables the production of their work. The deadline is a convention of the domain and it is how a journalist, as agent, manages the time constraints and utilises both the limits and opportunities of deadlines that leads to creative media texts. As Manning notes:

It is the cycle of news deadlines that drives the journalists’ routine within a news organisation … it is this, more than anything else, which shapes how each news worker goes about her or his work, and which determines both the constraints and opportunities of the job. In other words, most news journalists and news workers have to meet deadlines as a matter of routine, and they will develop a number of techniques and organisational practices in order to accommodate this imperative (2001, p. 54).

One recurrent theme throughout the data was that journalists noted how often the story they had written was not as good as it could be because of time constraints. The deadline is a constant, ongoing demand: if interviewees do not ring back, the story still needs to be written; staff and resource shortages mean journalists are often overloaded; and, publishing online as well as writing for the hard copy version of a publication increases the pressure. Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon contend that, “Journalists speak of time pressures as a barrier to reflection, in-depth reporting, and accuracy of coverage” (2001, pp. 139-140). J2 commented that the increase in online writing has decreased his time for deeper involvement in stories:

… you lose a lot of time writing for the Internet. If I was doing a court case, say a coronial case where you’ve got better access to the people involved, if I didn’t have to spend my lunch trying to write for the internet, I could spend that lunchtime talking to people involved and maybe getting the exclusive story. I’m not saying I resent writing for the Internet because I think newspapers going online is a brilliant idea and should be developed as much as possible, but it does make demands on your time which are hard to reconcile (J2, i/v, 2007).
J2’s comment provides support for the assertion that one of the reasons for less time in
the workplace is the increasing demand for multi-skilling (Allan, 2004; Cottle, 2007).
Bromley notes that this trend is “closely associated with the ‘downsizing’ of editorial
departments” (1997, p. 344). For example, journalists interviewed from smaller
newsrooms reported that they are expected to take photos, sub-edit and maintain a
website as well as engage in the ‘traditional’ practices of journalism – interviewing,
gathering data and writing. In larger multimedia newsrooms, although there may still be
certain demarcations between occupations, for instance, larger newsrooms typically
have photographers and dedicated design staff, multi-skilling means journalists are
expected to produce stories, and continually update them, for the online edition of the
publication as well as the print version and also provide information for other news
platforms such as Pay TV. To bring this situation into the context of the systems model,
a journalist in the print journalism domain now needs to be multi-skilled to work within
the system of journalism. It can be seen that as part of an evolving domain, there are
new conventions and procedures for a print journalist to learn that will enable that
journalist to produce work that is both novel and appropriate. In this case, it can be
argued that the field’s preferences have changed, which has, in turn, changed the
structure of the domain.

The issue of time constraint can be related to Wallas’s (1926) ideas about creative
thinking. To revisit these ideas, Wallas posited that there are four stages to creative
thinking: preparation, where a person involved in a domain learns what is necessary to
solve a problem; incubation, where a person spends time away from a problem they are
working on; illumination, where an idea appears to a person in an ‘Aha’ moment; and,
verification, checking that the idea is valid and worth following through. Applying
Wallas’s ideas to the issue of time constraints, it could be argued that it is the lack of
time for ‘incubation’ that leads to less optimal work. In fact, Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi
and Damon quote a journalist from their own study who suggested this:

A print journalist explained that productivity enhancement and cost cutting have
led to the slashing of travel budgets and increased time pressures. He believes that
these types of cuts undermine his creativity as a journalist, because ‘[travelling,] that’s
the first philosophical act, to go and see something and think about it.’ He referred
to the serendipity involved in older, more time-consuming means of
retrieving information: ‘There’s less time to take the detour and learn something
else that might prove to be interesting and productive down the line.’ He further noted, ‘There isn’t a lot of time for reflection.’ (2001, pp. 132-133).

However, others have recognised that some journalists actually thrive under deadlines (Meunier, 2004). For instance, J14 (i/v, 2007) laughed and said deadlines were her motivation to write. John Hurst (1988) observed that it is surprising how accurate most journalists’ work is considering the pressures they work under and Michael Young’s discussion on the frantic pace in a newsroom tallied with observation of the newsrooms in this study:

A journalist works under considerable pressure; the steady rhythm of their early research may be measured but the actual writing of the story is quite likely to take two hours of frenzied activity as a deadline presses down on them (Young, 2007, p. 83).

Photographer’s comment to me: “It’s funny, you’ve got all week and it comes down to the last hour” (Ob. Notes NR2, 2010, Day 5).

Phones ringing, controlled chaos, proofing, subbing, stories being written, photos being inserted on to pages – Deadline looming – Time constraints leading to shortcuts – word document on CD with photos for front page story and journo cut and paste information (Ob. Notes NR1, 2009-2010, Day 1).

Hennessey and Amabile (2010) suggest that time pressure at work has recently received a lot of attention from organisational psychologists who examine creativity. In a summary of this research, they indicate that time pressure on an individual, and how the individual reacts to this pressure, is dependent on personal traits as well as the type of time pressure. In line with Hennessey and Amabile’s suggestion, a number of journalists in this research commented that deadlines suited them – if there was no deadline, there would not be the motivation to finish writing or the article would never be good enough, in their eyes, for publication:

I work well to deadlines. And you think that’s from experience? (my question). No, I think it’s, I’m basically one of those terrible, anal, organised people. It’s also good if you are one of those anal types of people to have a deadline otherwise you’d be polishing, polishing, polishing (my comment). That’s right – so take it away from me! (J18, i/v, 2008).
And that’s why journalism is great for someone like me because of the deadlines … there’s a procrastination thing happening and then there’s the anxiety and fear about the deadline and at some point the anxiety grows greater than the desire to procrastinate (J17, i/v, 2008).

Research has suggested that certain personality styles find deadlines overwhelming (Khan, 2005) but observations and analysis throughout this research has shown that personality is only one part of how a journalist reacts to time pressures. What is also vital is work experience. J20 has worked for almost thirty years in journalism and his internalisation of work practices and the structures of journalism, his understanding of what is expected from the organisation, as well as his knowledge of the expectations of the field means his creative process has become ‘second nature’. J20 is so experienced after many years of domain acquisition that when a deadline is imminent, he switches on his professional persona to complete the job:

I’ve become, for a person who’s a bit all over the place, floating around, this and that, bit of a flibbertigibbet or something, but at 4.00 every afternoon I become completely focused, coherent and articulate and bang! ’cause I’m used to, we have to file by 6 so from 4 o’clock on you pull together everything you’ve got and go with what you’ve got and work with the material or the canvas that you have (J20, i/v, 2008).

The deadline, as one of the conventions of the domain a journalist needs to learn, can be managed by drawing on not only the domain’s structures, such as the rules and techniques of newswriting, but also the individual’s resources, that is, a journalist’s habitus, which is what J20 does in his production process. Additionally, if a journalist understands the requirements of the field and uses this understanding in their production process, there is more likely to be an outcome that will be judged as appropriate by the field and included in the domain. Deadlines appear to be good motivators.

However, early research into motivation (see for example Amabile, 1982; Amabile & Tighe, 1993; Hennessey, 2003) claimed that extrinsic motivators such as deadlines

---

40 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is discussed in detail in the Individual section but, to summarise, extrinsic motivation is defined as undertaking an activity “in order to achieve some external goal” (Amabile & Tighe, 1993, p. 15) while intrinsic motivation is doing something for enjoyment. Amabile originally concluded that extrinsic motivation hindered creativity and Hennessey cited research that found five reasons for lack of intrinsic motivation: reward, evaluation, surveillance, time constraints and
have a negative impact on creativity. Further research by Amabile, Hadley and Kramer claimed that in most circumstances with high time pressure, creativity “usually ends up getting killed” (2002, p. 52). However, their research provided one qualification on this contention that is particularly apt for journalism: “High-pressure days that still yield creativity are full of focus and meaningful urgency – people feel like they are on a mission” (ibid.). Within the discourse of journalism, examples of a journalist’s ‘mission’ are discoverable: the public’s right to know, the assumption of the political watchdog role, the search for truth and wanting to make a difference. J2’s recollections into why he wanted to be a journalist highlight the sense of journalism as a ‘mission’:

I can remember as a child I read the papers a lot. The Guardian in the UK was my parents’ paper and I had so much respect for these guys that went out into the world and, it sounds naïve but, righted wrongs (J2, i/v, 2007).

As a further example of how journalism provides a sense of ‘mission’, former editor-in-chief of The Age Michael Gawenda thinks wanting to make a difference is what separates a good journalist from an indifferent one:

I’d expect all prospective young journalists to want to make a difference. I think that’s a really good quality. I think part of the reason why we’re journalists is to make a difference and I do think that young journalists that don’t want to make a difference, I think, would worry me (in Press Club Online, 2003).

After this brief discussion of the motivation of the mission of journalism in relation to deadlines, it is necessary to further examine journalists’ perceptions of the professional ideologies of journalism and how this perception informs their work practices.

4.1.1.3 The ideology of journalism

Josie Vine quoted American journalist Jack Shafer when he wrote: “Every profession needs what academics call an ‘occupational mythology’ to sustain it, a set of personal and social dramas, arrangements, and devices” (in Vine, 2010, p. 7). Although Shafer was talking about journalism’s relationship with alcohol, the occupational mythology surrounding journalism can be found in journalism’s discourses, which is reflected in journalists’ own perceptions of their profession.

competition (2003, p. 183). Later research has refuted these claims (Collins & Amabile, 2003; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Eisenberger & Shanock, 2003; Hennessey, 2003; Sternberg & Lubart, 2003).
Conboy’s definition of discourse, that is, as “systematically organized sets of statements and traditions which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution” (2007, p. 117) can be easily applied to journalism. Traditions such as truth in reporting, invocation of the public’s right to know, presenting information for citizens to make informed decisions, undertaking the political watchdog role and employing the notion of objectivity are examples of “the core traditional mission” (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon, 2001, p. 10) of journalism, or the principles that govern both the workers within the field and the public’s perception of the profession. Political reporter Laurie Oakes called these standards:

The standards also include, or should include, a commitment to accuracy, a determination to get the facts right, which often requires checking information of a number of sources. Political journalists have an obligation to inform the public to the best of their ability about issues, policies and actions of government, the political parties and people involved in the political process. And because we are in a sense, proxies for the voters, we have a duty to hold politicians accountable, and we also have a credo of objectivity. We're supposed to present things fairly (Oakes on political reporting in Background Briefing, 1999).

When asked about the ideology of journalism, respondents in this study listed very similar principles to Oakes including truth in reporting (J3, J4, J5, J9, J12, J15, J24), to inform accurately (J7, J9), objectivity (J1, J10), fair and balanced reporting (J2, J6, J12, J14, J16, J18), public’s right to know (J1, J3, J8, J10, J17, J24), social responsibility (J2), watchdog role (J5) and freedom of the press (J17). These are all part of journalism’s occupational ideology and when asked how important these core values were in their reporting, in a similar fashion to other questions, journalists commented on how subliminal their knowledge was:

I’d say they’re always there. You’re used to it but they’re not, they’re like journalistic ethics, they’re not things that run through my mind or you have day to day battles on but they’re just, I guess they’re just the fundamentals that make up how you do your job. You just know? (my question) It’s just an undercurrent to how you operate I guess (J6, i/v, 2007).

Journalism’s fundamental occupational ideology is press freedom (McQuail, 2010) with the Fourth Estate, a term originating in the eighteenth century that referred to “the
political power possessed by the press” (McQuail, 2010, p. 168), also often mentioned as a traditional mission of journalism (Berkowitz, 2011; McQuail, 2010; Schultz, 1998). These ideologies are still guiding principles in journalism. Freedom of the press is named as a universal right by the United Nations as illustrated by Point Two of the Declaration of Sofia: “All States should provide, or reinforce where they exist, constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom of expression and of press freedom” (UNESCO, 2005). Freedom of the press\textsuperscript{41} is closely linked to the idea of individual freedom (McQuail, 2005, p. 169) and arose around the same time as Romanticism with its notions of freedom, or absence of constraint. Henningham provided a definition of how important a free press is to a democratic society:

> Basic to the functioning of a free and fair society is a press which is itself free and fair. Journalists must be free to report and comment on that society. They should be free of restrictions and/or improper influences from governments, parliaments, bureaucracies, courts, business, unions and their own employers and peers (1990, p. x).

Henningham, though, continues by explaining how Australian journalism is not free but restrained by laws, institutions and owners (ibid.). This contention is an example of a Romantic view of creativity because free, as Henningham uses the term, means an absence of constraint and creativity research has shown that being ‘free’ is a misnomer (Bailin, 1988; Boden, 2004; Negus & Pickering, 2004). The notion of absolute freedom, where there are no constraints on action, is not an ideal that can be attained in any sphere of cultural production and, as argued throughout this thesis, these restrictions can and should also be seen as enablers and it is how the journalist as agent interacts with these ‘constraints’ that determine a creative outcome. As Chibnall contended:

> Professional communicators are not simply puppets on strings pulled by capitalists. Nor do they necessarily feel oppressed by the power of the machine they serve. They are men and women who exercise choice and construct their own realities within the constraining parameters set by their ideal and material interests and their professional stock of knowledge (1977, p. 224).

\textsuperscript{41} For a closer examination of freedom of the press see McQuail (2010) and for an Australian perspective see Mark Pearson’s The journalist’s guide to media law (2010).
Arising out of the tenets of press freedom (Schultz, 1998), as mentioned, is the notion of the Fourth Estate, which originally gave the Press the right to report on the other three Estates in England (Lords, Church and Commons), an important privilege and thought to be the “cornerstone of representative democracy and of progress” (McQuail, 2005, p. 169). Hanusch (2008) found that Australian journalists still strongly believed in following the ideals of the Fourth Estate with 76% of respondents believing it was extremely/very important to be a watchdog of the government and 71.4% agreeing that acting as a watchdog of business elites was extremely/very important. J4 and J2 each described their idea of how journalists held powerful interests to account:

As we said before you [as a journalist] keep governments, citizens, private citizens and public servants, all and sundry, honest (J4, i/v, 2007).

I simply don’t think society would function fairly without this slightly unruly, slightly amoral at times, force which attempts to hold the other social institutions accountable. Probably slightly unruly, necessarily unruly (J2, i/v, 2007).

While J2 seemed to show an idealised view of journalists with this comment, that is, there are similarities in his description to journalism’s occupational mythology, further into the interview he pointed out what he considers a more accurate version of journalism:

Basically, newspapers exist to sell advertising. The news articles are a way to do that so while we can tell ourselves we have an important social function we operate within a commercial framework (J2, i/v, 2007).

J8 also had a slightly different perspective on what he does as a journalist in comparison to the accepted ideologies. J8 had recently finished a university degree in communication studies and found working at a community newspaper did not quite correspond to the Fourth Estate ideals he had learnt at university:

There are times when I think, ‘I’m just over this’ when your week’s work’s just all advertising stuff and you’re sitting here and, you know I was writing essays or quoting Noam Chomsky and whoever else all through [university] and all sorts of theories about the media is the watchdog of democracy and I’m spending my time writing about the Tile and Grout Doctor. You think, ‘This is not right’ (laughs) (J8, i/v, 2007).
J8’s description of his work practices illustrates his knowledge of the ideologies but also demonstrates how the occupational mythology of journalism clashes with the necessary commerciality. As Radford comments: “Journalists write to support democracy, sustain truth, salute justice, justify expenses, see the world and make a living, but to satisfactorily do any of these things you have to have readers” (2010, par. 2).

While there is a certain disillusionment shown by the journalists in the last few quotes, the occupational ideologies of journalism continue to play a role in informing journalists on how they practice. Journalists defend what they do and how they do it by drawing on these ideological standards (Deuze, 2005). Each of the journalists asked understood the core mission of their profession. These standards had become another part of their ability to produce work that was “seen as a valued addition to the store of knowledge in at least one social setting” (McIntyre, 2008c, p. 1).

4.1.1.4 Unwritten rules

The above rules, conventions and procedures provide a crucial structure but informal rules are as much a part of a journalist’s creative process. Giddens (1984) wrote that within any structure there are both written and unwritten rules and Kopper applied this in a journalistic context: “The practice of journalism can be divided into components that follow a set of explicit (transmitted) and implicit (untransmitted) rules” (2005, p. 310). When asked, respondents from this study were able to provide examples of rules of journalism that they did not formally learn and could also provide examples of rules within their organisation that were not explicit or listed in a style guide or other formal forum.

However, when asked if they could name an unwritten rule in their workplace, the question proved difficult and many of the journalists paused before answering with J14 summing up the common theme: “I’m trying to think what else I do when I’m writing a story. Obviously, I don’t think about it enough, I just do it” (J14, i/v, 2007). Others denied knowledge of any unwritten rules while other respondents listed rules that are in textbooks or would have been learnt as part of a journalism course, such as writing in the inverted pyramid style: “I don’t know if they’re rules,” said J3 (i/v, 2007), “because I’ve just been doing them for so long.” These comments provide evidence for the argument that working procedures become so innate that a practitioner unconsciously uses them, in line with Schön’s knowing-in-action and Bourdieu’s habitus where the
journalist has the ability to ‘do without thinking’ because of immersion in the domain and the internalisation of rules, conventions, techniques, guides and procedures in that domain.

At an organisational level, journalists’ knowledge of unwritten rules in the workplace supported how they approached a story. For instance, J23 learnt when he was a crime reporter that dealing with sources required a different approach after he found his production was affected by the language he used:

You tried not to say, ‘Is there anything doing?’ Because you’d call so many places and it was so easy for them just to say, ‘Nuh’. You’d have to say, ‘Were there any accidents, any assaults, accidents’, etc. (J23, i/v, 2008).

Other instances of unwritten rules mentioned by the respondents within the interviews included workplace procedures such as not taking someone else’s story idea and not encroaching on someone’s ‘round’ (or beat) through to style points such as not repeating a word in a sentence. J18 noted how handling certain sources had become part of her knowing-in-action:

We had one mayor at one stage and you never rang him before 10.00. I don’t quite know why but people used to say, ‘Oh, don’t ring him before 10!’ I did say why once and no one knew; you just didn’t do it. So just bizarre, and things like certain characters in the community and you get some poor young person and say, ‘Unless you want to be on the phone for three hours you don’t ring so-and-so about such-and-such’ (J18, i/v, 2008).

J12 and J17 are both magazine feature journalists and use different writing structures than J14, J3, J23 and J18, who primarily write in a hard news style. Even so, contrary to the common assumption that feature writing gives a journalist ‘freedom’ to create (Daugherty, 1999; Maskell & Perry, 1999; Niblock, 1996; Randall, 1996; Schumacher et al., 1989) both J12 and J17 could name unwritten rules that shaped their practice:

It’s not written anywhere but the idea that you can get too far advanced without actually quoting someone else; there’s a pressure to get quotes in there. Even if you could say it better yourself. I would probably challenge you to get to the second par of anything I’ve ever written without finding a quote (J12, i/v, 2007).
There are some things you must make work and one of those things is you must, you must, have a strong opening – something that really grabs the reader. You must also, you have to break a story into sections because you can’t go on and on for 6000 words without a section break; for some reason within the journalism format it doesn’t seem to work. But beyond that, I don’t really have a thing where I think, ‘Ok I’m into section three, ergo I’m writing this stuff now’ (J17, i/v, 2008).

J17 also said: “But if you do a lot of reading and you think a lot about long articles, you figure it out, I think” (i/v, 2008). This comment summed up another finding that came out of this analysis: long immersion in the domain makes it easier to write in a way that makes a creative contribution, that is, the “valued addition” (McIntyre, 2008c, p. 1) identified in the definition of creativity used in this research. However, further on in J17’s interview, while still talking about unwritten rules, she mentioned how her editor becomes part of her creative process, thus demonstrating further the nonlinearity of the system of journalism with her editor, as part of the field, drawing on knowledge from the domain and preferences from other members of the field, such as the audience, to support J17 in her creative practice:

And it’s one of those instinctive things. I mean even when my editor is looking at a story she’ll say, ‘I feel like we’re too far away from the story at this point’. So that might actually be saying something like we need a voice or somebody’s voice here. Or you might need to speed things up; it’s too deliberate or it’s too plodding. Often if you’ve got a whole lot of facts that you need to get in, there’s a temptation to just whack them all down and when you’re doing that, sometimes it’s a good thing actually, but you need to go through them really quickly so the reader can get them, and I sometimes get bogged down in explaining everything (laughs) so she’ll say, ‘Just speed this up’. So I’ll have to go away and take all the irrelevant stuff out. So we definitely have a sense of the pace of the story and the structure but there isn’t a formal pattern we stick to every time (J17, i/v, 2008).

Ericson, Chan and Baranek (1987) contend that most publication style guides do not provide information on such journalistic knowledge as news values, the structure of news or how to discover or research stories. It is learnt, instead, “from consulting news texts, being scrutinized by editors, talking to more experienced colleagues, and doing the work” (Ericson, Chan & Baranek, 1987, p. 132). In other words, by drawing on
knowledge held by members of the field and the structures of the domain they encounter as part of their activity as journalists, a journalist learns how to write.

4.1.1.5 Use of technology

Technological tools are an important part of the domain of journalism, being one of the critical structures a journalist must learn and work with. Petrie defines technology within film-making as, “the ‘tools of the trade’ which enable film-makers to creatively intervene at each stage of the process” (1991, p. 27). Within journalism, ‘tools of the trade’ have included such things as the telephone, tape recorders, typewriters, notepads and writing implements. In fact, when asked about practical tools, respondents mentioned these as well as their contact book, camera bag, dictionary and thesaurus. However, the latest ‘tools of the trade’ that journalists use in their practice are digital technology tools including computers and computer programs, mobile phones, digital cameras, email, and the Internet. Journalists use the codes, conventions, techniques and knowledges of technology, that is, the structures governing them, to produce work and they must know these structures and work in interaction with them. In short, the use of technology not only constrains but also enables the practice of journalism. The tools allow the production of journalism to take place. Analysis of the data indicated that the influence of technology is so pervasive in what journalists do, the respondents not only mentioned it when asked specifically, but also talked about its use throughout the whole production process.

Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon claim that “developments in science and technology” (2001, p. 17) are the most important force operating in a cultural environment and contend that many innovations have transformed the domain of journalism. But this suggests that journalists’ actions are determined by the structures of technology. While it is important to recognise that the domain of journalism has always had a relationship with technology (Conley & Lamble, 2006; Thurman, 2005) it is also crucial to understand that journalists adopt technologies to improve their work process. As Stephen Hill has argued in relation to technological determinism, technological change,

… is not, by itself, productive of social change. Instead, the direction of change is a product of the particular alignment between the technological possibilities and the society and culture that exists … The technology-society relationship is interactive,
and at the same time enframing of possibilities. The key to what is produced in technology-society interactions is alignment (1988, pp. 33-34, emphasis in original).

The introduction of the telephone, for example, meant that journalists had another tool to gather information as well as phone their copy through for important stories (Pavlik, 2000). With the advent of the Internet, and the movement of the mobile phone and digital cameras into the workplace, Tapsall and Varley have argued: “Technology and technological change is a significant issue affecting the work of Australian journalists” (2001, p. 14). Digital technologies have and will continue to change journalistic writing (Klinenberg, 2005; Koch, 1991; McNair, 1998; Pavlik, 2000; Sheridan Burns, 2002), and changes within domains are a natural progression – a domain cannot remain stagnant or unchanging or it risks becoming irrelevant within the culture – but they have also been adapted to improve and support current practices.42

The majority of respondents in this study looked at technological advances favourably although there have been some negative effects identified, particularly with the issue of time pressures. One of the questions asked in the study was ‘How has technology affected how you produce your work?’ Primarily, respondents answered in the positive and this is in line with Henningham’s (1995) contention that the majority of Australian journalists believe the advent of digital technology has improved their work quality. Henningham’s national survey of Australian journalists included two questions on technology: firstly, what impact has technology had on “the quality of the individual’s work” (1995, p. 228); and, secondly, what impact has technology had “on the time taken to perform tasks” (ibid.). For this section of the research findings, the first question would seem to be more relevant as this section is discussing how journalists interact with technology in their creative process. However, while respondents in this study have seen the newer technologies as mostly positive, throughout the responses some journalists and editors saw the time constraints caused by the use of digital technology as having a negative effect on journalists’ production.43

42 It is important to remember that the data collection for this study was carried out primarily in 2007-2008, which was prior to the general uptake of social media tools such as Twitter and FaceBook as part of journalistic practise. Therefore, discussion of these particular digital tools is not included in the thesis. Personal observation during 2010-2011 showed that the number of journalists and publications using these tools increased rapidly.
43 Time and deadlines have been discussed in a previous section.
In 1963, David Cole wrote that, “the present period is the most crucial in the ever-changing history of newspapers and magazines. The problems seem more complex than previously, the dangers graver, and the demands made on every section within the industry more exacting” (1963, p. 15). When Cole wrote this, journalists used manual typewriters, walked the streets looking for stories, used pay telephones to file stories, had strict delineation in their duties and one deadline per day. Now, with the use of digital technology, a journalist can research and interview without leaving the newsroom, may be required to be the reporter/photographer/sub-editor/layout person in the newsroom, and is expected to file a story onto a number of media platforms often several times a day. During the interview process, journalists discussed how they have learnt to use digital technologies effectively to produce a creative product and the technological tools most discussed were computers and computer programs, mobile phones, digital cameras, email and the Internet.

Computers and computer programs

Overall, the respondents considered that the introduction of computers and computer programs into the domain of print journalism has enhanced their production compared to pre-computer days. Older journalists recalled how labour-intensive the writing process was, but that the introduction of computers as a tool for writing initially caused problems:

… for a long while we got paid fifteen bucks a week for the frustrations in the computer system. Extra? (my question) Extra. Because you would write a story and you’d forget to save or something and you’d be halfway through and the system would crash and you’d have six hundred words obliterated. And I have seen experienced journalists walking down the corridor, kicking filing cabinets and swearing at the top of their voice after a story they’d spent three hours on had gone west without warning (J5, i/v, 2007).

Primarily though, the introduction of computers and computer programs, word-processing in particular, has enhanced the writing process with older journalists recalling how they used to literally ‘cut-and-paste’ stories by typing stories on a sheet, cutting between each paragraph and using Clag\(^{44}\) glue to reconstruct the story. Word-

\(^{44}\) Clag is a brand of Australian glue.
processing increased journalists’ proficiency with J15 noting the ease of using computer programs compared to typewriters:

I leapt at word-processing when it came out and I still think it’s been the greatest boon to my writing. The agony of writing on a typewriter and getting to the end and making a spelling mistake. Oh! (J15, i/v, 2007).

The advent of the computer, though, has also meant less staff doing more work. The introduction of computer programs specifically designed for photography (such as Adobe Photoshop) and page layout (for example, Quark and Adobe InDesign) as well as the attempt to reduce labour costs has meant journalists are expected to do more work and more varied work. Klinenberg (2005) suggested that in the last thirty years, media companies have adopted a number of development strategies to remain viable and meet stockholders’ demands including a high investment in digital technology and a streamlining of production systems to reduce labour costs. Part of this streamlining includes training multi-skilled journalists, that is, journalists who are able to work across a number of media platforms as well as a number of jobs including photography, layout and sub-editing. As an example of the differences in work practices for print journalists, Henningham noted:

For print media the most profound change has been in the introduction of computerised typesetting, driving into obsolescence the crafts of linotype operating and compositing. The early, crude phototypesetting software which has sub-editors doubling as compositors has been succeeded by dazzling full-screen pagination software, giving subs total and immediate control over the creation of newspapers (1995, p. 225).

In the smaller newsrooms, with journalists or editors now required to do page layout, electronic pagination programs such as Quark has meant more control over the finished product with one editor noting that errors in layout can be fixed “within two key strokes” (E1, i/v, 2007). However, another editor said that the increase in multi-skilling that is expected of journalists in her newsroom has meant that a journalist’s “actual writing time becomes less and less and less. So to be a great journalist becomes harder and harder and harder” (E2, i/v, 2007). E9’s experience with technology has been mostly positive but he does point out that in rural areas, journalists do the majority of production work:
We don’t have production people now putting the paper together – the journalists do that. So, the technology has got us to the stage where we can take the photo, we download the photo, we crop the photo, we write the story, and then we put the story, the photo, and the headlines all on the page and send it to the printer. So, we’ve eliminated different areas of production along the way. So the production has made that possible but it’s also given us control, which is pretty good as well. Though it also means we’re not devoting the amount of time we should to the actual journalistic standard of our occupation (E9, i/v, 2008).

Mobile phones

Conley and Lamble (2006) consider the mobile phone to be one of the essential tools for a journalist. For the most part, journalists in this study agreed that mobile phones have made their work process easier. Uses of the mobile phone include using it to conduct interviews and file stories, but mobiles are also used by journalists to remain available for phone calls from contacts when writing a story. J12 recalled a time before mobile phones: “If you left your desk for a minute, my god you’ve missed that call! So that’s made the practice of journalism easier – people are more accessible” (i/v, 2007). Conversely, journalists also find it frustrating when contacts do not have a mobile phone contact number. J19 (i/v, 2008) works at a publication that deals with a number of community organisations that are run by volunteers who are often not available during business hours and do not have mobile phones.

However, the phone is especially important to keep in touch with other members of the field, particularly when out on the road. Mobiles have enhanced J20’s practice. As a general reporter, he is typically sent out to cover stories and remembered how difficult that was before mobiles: “We were filing from phone boxes in the pouring rain!” (i/v, 2008). The use of mobiles when on the road, though, depends on the publication worked for. For example, journalists in NR2 went out to interview sources and used their own mobile phones to stay in constant contact with the newsroom, particularly the cadets, while in NR1, there was one work-allocated mobile phone that was taken by any journalist who was going out on a job but was more likely to be used by one of the photographers.

Michael Young (2007) wrote about the importance of the mobile phone in reporting the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001. The *Sydney Morning Herald*’s
writer-at-large, Paul McGeogh, was in New York between assignments when the World Trade Centre was attacked and used his mobile phone to report what was going on back to the Herald’s newsroom in Sydney:

Now, mobile telephone in hand, he was swept along by the horror of what was happening on the streets. His eerily disembodied voice squawked from the other side of the world into the conference room in Sydney … The page-one sub-editor, Chris Henning, hands trembling at the thought of what might be happening to McGeogh and the power of the words being spoken, grabbed paper and a pencil and took down in shorthand every brittle and achingly breathless word that rasped from the conference phone … McGeogh continued to file throughout the night via his mobile phone (Young, 2007, pp. 24-26).

Although the reaction in this research to the use of mobile phones as a journalistic tool was largely positive, several respondents mentioned the problems of time management and its relation to the expectations of the profession. One respondent from a Sunday paper pointed out that “you’re never out of touch, you can be contacted 24/7” (J4, i/v, 2007) although he does “turn it off Sunday morning” (ibid.) and, referring back to smaller newsrooms, editors can find it difficult to manage the demands:

… people anticipate because they can ring you on the mobile or they can email you that you can get back to them straight away. Well, if I go out and come back I’ve got twenty messages; I can’t get back to everybody straight away … If they can’t get you on the landline, they ring you on the mobile, and if they can’t get you on the mobile they then email you. And it’s like everything isn’t instantaneous – there’s only one of me! (E2, i/v, 2007).

**Digital cameras**

The use of digital cameras and how to use them effectively has also become increasingly important in the news-gathering process for journalists. Smaller newsrooms no longer have specialist photographers – the journalists now take their own photos. Again, while this situation reduces the time spent doing journalism, it also highlights the changing nature of what it means to be a journalist engaging with the changing domain of print journalism. In reference to the systems model, the field (in this case, management) have changed the rules and structures of the domain by tightening budgets, downsizing newsrooms and changing news room culture, leading to
a variation in the domain the individual is required to learn to produce their work: in this instance, learning how to produce professional photographs for publication.

Respondents were generally positive about this aspect of news work, particularly at the regional and rural newsrooms. Before digital cameras, taking photographs on the weekend, or during breaking news stories, meant a reliance on getting the photograph developed, often a difficult undertaking. Even journalists from larger newsrooms who work with photographers see the digital camera as an important addition that has had positive ramifications:

The one that changed everything was digital photography. It wasn’t even computers … I mean I remember going on jobs and you’d have a roll of film and it’d be 5.00 at night and you’d be in a country town and you couldn’t get the film processed … We could always make a phone call and someone could type your copy out. You could go anywhere and write the story but you couldn’t go anywhere and type the picture. It changed everything (J6, i/v, 2007).

Additionally, J6 and J20 both commented on how important photos are in their production process:

Newspaper journalism is rarely about just the words. I regard it as a team sport effectively. They get a great picture and my story goes from being a page seventeen to a page one (J6, i/v, 2007).

I’ve never forgotten the value of pictures, either, in dragging a story forward in the paper. Whatever the morality or amorality of the circumstance, a picture is very valuable in dragging a story up the front (J20, i/v, 2008).

This observation was noted in work practices undertaken in NR2. On different occasions, senior editorial staff rejected stories because of the lack of a good photograph or an article was approved because the photograph ‘lifted’ the story:

Pictures as important as story – tabloid. News editor said there was a story that couldn’t be up the front of the paper because there wasn’t a good photo (Ob. Notes NR2, 2010, Day 1).

Cadet talks to photographer about story and she says that Chief of staff is not too keen on the story and the photographer said ‘wait until we see the photo’ (Ob. Notes NR2, 2010, Day 3).
NR2 is a tabloid-style publication, a form of newspaper that features large headlines, bold approaches to design and “extensive use of photos” (Zelizer, 2000, p. x); this formatting is typical of tabloid publications and is a format expected by the audience of this style of publication. It can be argued here that the editors, journalists and photographers in NR2 understand these conventions of tabloid journalism, that is, the ‘rules’ within the domain of print journalism, and understands the expectations of the field, including the audience, and use this knowledge within their production process to produce novel and appropriate texts.

**Email**

One of the interviewed freelancers succinctly summed up the majority reaction to emailing:

> Bloody brilliant – I send all images and articles to my clients around the world via email (J11, i/v, 2007).

Journalists use email throughout the production process and most believe that using it has enabled them to become more efficient in comparison to traditional information-gathering methods. Journalists use email to generate story ideas, conduct interviews (particularly important for overseas contacts who are often in different time zones) and keep in contact with other members of the field for mentoring, training and personal reasons. Editors pass story ideas on to journalists via email, accept freelance story ideas and submissions, and provide information on editorial policy. It was also noted that public relations (PR) practitioners now use email to generate interest in their message and audiences submit story ideas and pictures as well as provide feedback on articles that have been published.

However, again, small newsrooms find managing emails difficult. E9’s email Inbox had over 600 emails on the day he was interviewed. Other editors noted they received hundreds of emails a day from PR practitioners and government departments: E2 (i/v, 2007) gets 200 emails a day, E12 (i/v, 2008) receives over 100 emails a day and NR1’s editor receives over 300 per day (Ob. Notes NR1, 2009-2010). The reason for this preponderance of emails is that one method in PR for sending information out to journalists is the ‘scatter-gun’ approach, which means a media release will go to hundreds of newsrooms, and often to more than one recipient in the same newsroom,
regardless of its relevance. In response to the ever-increasing numbers of emails, journalists and editors have adapted their work practices to accommodate the demand on their time. The senior journalist in NR1 has the newspaper’s main email address on his computer station and regularly checks for incoming stories but “only when I have the time”:

Spoke to Journalist in carpark because I noticed he was checking emails from 3.45. Asked him about when he checked media releases – he does it when he has the chance. He also prefers media releases to be part of the body because attachments can take a long time to open. He would prefer more information to be in the subject line because there are so many that aren’t appropriate to this paper. He skims the first bit and then deletes if it is not appropriate (Ob. Notes NR1, 2009-2010, Day 1).

This is also the case in larger newsrooms: one senior editorial staff member in NR2 finds that often there is only one way of dealing with the number of emails she gets per day:

Inbox of [name deleted] is always full and often she bulk deletes. Who the email is from as well as the subject line is important. (Later) [Name deleted] says bulk delete of email – if it’s important and it’s been deleted, they will contact them other ways (Ob. Notes NR2, 2010, Day 1).

Further to this, the time issues inherent in a newsroom have led to timesaving techniques. When media releases come in to a newsroom by email, it is easy to ‘cut-and-paste’ the release directly into the publication. As E1 said, “it [email] saves a lot in the fact that we don’t have to retype the fax messages” (i/v, 2007). E1’s comment may seem to counter the ideals in the domain of print journalism, namely, including information directly from advocacy groups, politicians or companies undermines the notions of objectivity and fair and balanced reporting. Ferguson states that journalists are given the role of “presenting society to itself” (2006, p. 62) and with that role comes the responsibility of reporting in the role of the Fourth Estate and the public’s right to know, both roles noted earlier as ideological ‘rules’ in the domain of print journalism. However, while the practice of using media releases verbatim may be considered unethical within the domain’s accepted ethical obligations, it could be argued that this
editor has used these media releases in this way to enable his practices in a time-poor environment.

**The Internet**

The Internet is one of the “symbolic rules and procedures” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 27) within the domain of print journalism and the knowledge and techniques it presents has fundamentally changed how journalists practise. Pearson’s (1999) doctoral thesis on the Internet’s influence on journalism and journalism education identified 169 new tasks the Internet has introduced to journalists’ work practices. Although he points out that “not all journalists will have adopted all new tasks and practices as part of their work” (1999, p. 315) because some of the practices “are restricted to small sections of the media” (ibid.), it would now be virtually impossible to find a journalist who is not affected by these new techniques. Journalists find the Internet important at different stages of their creative process: generating story ideas; researching; and, receiving audience feedback.

Respondents discussed using the Internet as a matter of course within work practices. When asked to describe their work process, most started off by stating the Internet was the first place they went either to find story ideas (J5, J22), check to see what had been written about the subject previously for background knowledge or general information gathering (J4, J7, J8, J12, J14, J15, J17, J18, J19, J22, J23, J24) or to ensure the story had not been covered by a rival publication (J5, J6). The younger journalists in this research said they cannot comprehend working without it and older respondents, who remember how they conducted research before the Internet, expressed amazement at the difference it has made to their production process:

… so much time (was) spent phoning someone. You might phone a bookshop and say, ‘How do you spell this author’s name? Or this character’s name? Or what month was Hawke voted in?’ It was just astonishingly hard to fact-check a story and now it’s astonishingly easy (J12, i/v, 2007).

J12’s comment seemingly runs in opposition to the discussion in the *Time and Deadline* section where time issues are an ongoing source of frustration to journalists and editors because while tools such as the Internet have improved production they have also produced negative consequences. One of the counter arguments to these positive
outcomes the Internet has provided is that because of time constraints, a journalist could feasibly research and write a complete article without contacting anyone:

… it would be entirely possible to source, and is done regularly with things that you read in other publications, are sourced almost entirely from Internet sources … you can actually be extremely lazy and not talk to anyone in person and use the Internet (E7, i/v, 2007).

Tapsall and Varley call this the “battery hen model of news” (2001, p. 12) and note that it is one of the trends that threatens journalism. A further threat is how simple it is to employ the Internet to access and use information without attribution: plagiarism. J23 called this “vacuuming information” (i/v, 2008) and told how one of his work colleagues, through lack of time, downloaded information from an American website and failed to change the spelling to Australian English, thus signposting an unethical work practice.

However, as with other tools that form part of the domain of print journalism, the Internet is one part of a journalist’s ‘toolbox’ to gather and report information and, as argued previously, the Internet may constrain how a journalist can produce their work, but it can also enable their creative practice. The Internet can provide a means to a more productive work process and it is how a journalist uses this tool that allows them to produce work that is acceptable to the field. E7 spoke of her admiration of Australian journalist Gideon Haigh who combines old and new newsgathering practices in his journalistic process:

… he uses everything. He was even saying that he conducted an interview by text message because it was the only way to get through. But he goes into the library, picks up books, reads them, uses them as sources, looks at who wrote the book – ‘how can I find them?’ – interviews them; travels to talk to people, actually goes to their office, sits down with them and has a conversation; looks up websites; emails people. So a good journalist uses the internet as just one of their tools and then digs a little deeper (E7, i/v, 2007).

E7 further added how she believed it was still important to continue to use learned journalistic or editorial techniques to maintain credibility and accuracy, that is, marry the traditions with newer procedures to ensure the integrity of the domain. E7’s comment echoes Negus and Pickering (2004) who suggest that tradition and innovation
are not mutually exclusive and, in fact, support each other. In line with other research into creativity (Bailin, 1988; Boden, 2004; Csikszentmihalyi, 1995; 2003; Sawyer, 2006), Negus and Pickering point out the importance of traditions and knowing the traditions in the domain before a novel outcome can be produced.

**Writing in an online environment**

At many publications, there is no demarcation between writing for the paper or online version of the publication. Indeed, one journalist described his work processes thus: “Now if you’re doing a court case or a story which isn’t going to be an exclusive, you will file it halfway through the day in a condensed or brief form and then file it again for the newspaper” (J2, i/v, 2007). In 2009, the chief-of-staff at *The West Australian* newspaper emailed staff with the edict that they are now expected to file stories for both the online and paper versions of the publication:

> Every reporter is now expected to file regularly for online because there will no longer be dedicated online reporters filing for the website. I will not be telling you to file for online every time you are sent on a job -- it will be assumed that you will. Please do not forget. Please do not wait for Chris Manly to ring you for an update. It is a reporter's obligation to file in a timely fashion for the website. Failure to do so means neglecting a core part of our business (in Meade, 2009).

At the time of the interview, J6 had recently been promoted to an online editorial position at a newspaper and her comments about online writing coincide with comments made in academic texts about online journalism. For example, David Randall asserts: “The most liberating aspect of websites is that length, both of individual stories and of the number of pages, is no longer restricted. There is virtually no difference in the cost of publishing 5,000 words compared to 50” (1996, p. 212). Although Randall’s comment is in contrast to Conley and Lamble’s (2006) claim that content is becoming shorter and Klinenberg’s (2005) comment that most editors are still using the traditional print narrative forms within the Internet context, J6 agreed with the more relaxed style in word length, a change J1 also commented on:

> … online is quite different from the paper in that we don’t have to copyfit. If a story runs for a certain length it runs for a certain length; I don’t have to fit it into a gap … So that makes life a lot easier (J6, i/v, 2007).
In a web format, you don’t have the print paper restrictions so you’re less worried about length … As far as the output of news is concerned, news style and writing style, I suppose you can get a little more relaxed but not that much because you still work for the publication (J1, i/v, 2007).

J1’s inclusion of the publication in his comment further illustrates how crucial the audience, as part of the field, is in a journalist’s production: journalists need to remember the audience they are writing for. While it could be argued here that the audience is constraining, even in the more relaxed style of online writing, it should also be noted that the audience is also enabling in this instance. Without the innate knowledge of the audience of their publication, these journalists would find it difficult to produce work that is appropriate, with appropriateness being one part of the definition of creativity that underpins this thesis. The audience provides one of the frameworks that support a journalist in their production process. E14 (i/v, 2007) also noted the audience’s importance to her publication by recognising readers’ aversion to reading long pieces online and said she writes shorter articles for the online version of the magazine, and directs the reader to the longer, detailed piece in the paper version of the publication. While E14’s decision to limit online articles to shorter versions of the full story seems to contradict J6’s comments about the capacity of online publishing, what this decision shows is how intimately E14 understands the publication’s audience; she has recognised the “criteria of selection, the preferences of the field” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 47), in this case the audience as part of the field, that are necessary in the production of a creative contribution.

Additionally, what Young calls, “the nature of the web: browse, graze, read quickly and move on. Users swoop in to quickly grab the latest headlines on fast-breaking stories and move on” (2007, pp. 180-181) has affected how a print journalist produces copy. J6 described how writing practice has changed because of the nature of the Internet:

You’ve got one paragraph. So something that’s really arty and really clever and really creative that might work really well in the paper doesn’t necessarily work online. You’ve got to make people want to read the rest of it ’cause the rest of it is not there in front of them. They actually have to click to read the rest of it (J6, i/v, 2007).
With J6’s comment in mind, it can be argued that writing in journalism will return to early principles in the domain of print journalism when the telegraph was the way to convey news: tight writing with a succinct first paragraph. Although this style of writing is still the mainstay of hard news writing, knowledge of this practice and its use may also be necessary for longer forms to attract audiences. Interested parties in the industry are currently attempting to find a way to keep longer, investigative forms of journalism both interesting to an audience as well as financially viable. Adapting the short, ‘punchy’ headline and tight first paragraph may well introduce longer form journalism pieces in the future.

On a final note, while employment in traditional print journalism may be declining, journalism in the online environment is increasing and this can be shown by the training opportunities on offer to new practitioners. Alysen (2007) noted that in 2007, while entry training positions in traditional journalism had dropped, online media cadetships were increasing. Online journalism could well be the way new practitioners are encouraged into the field. Examination of employment opportunities in print journalism are discussed later in the Field section but if journalism students learn the rules, conventions and techniques of working in an online environment, the likelihood of their employment in journalism would increase.

From the examination of the above technologies, technologies that constitute an increasingly large part of the domain of print journalism, that is, computers and computer programs, mobile phones, digital cameras, email and the Internet, it can be seen that each of them both constrains and enables journalists in their work practices. Nevertheless, technology is a critical structure inside the domain of journalism that journalists must learn to use and work with. It is contended here that journalists use this structure, and the conventions governing it, to produce work and they must know these conventions and act within them. In short, the use of technology not only constrains but also enables the practice of journalism. Rather than looking at technology as shaping work practices, a technological determinist view, it is more appropriate to consider work practices and technology aligning, as Stephen Hill (1988) argued, and appreciate that one factor alone cannot determine production. It is a journalist’s understanding of these different factors and how a journalist interacts with them that contributes to the production of news. A journalist uses these rules and conventions that can be found in
part in the accumulated work done to this point, and produces a variation that they present to a social group for verification.

4.1.2 All the things that have gone before …

Sawyer (2006) maintains that the domain contains not only the rules, conventions, techniques, guides and procedures a journalist needs to be able to write but it also includes any previously produced work that has been accepted by the field – what Bourdieu called the field of works (in Johnson, 1993). Journalists learn the structures of writing via education, both formal and informal, but they also learn by immersing themselves in the domain’s products. In other words, by reading, watching and discussing what other journalists publish. Journalists use other news media to keep up with what is going on in society, for generating story ideas and for learning how to write in an acceptable style.

The journalists and editors in this study are keen consumers of other media. When asked what media they engaged with, they listed newspapers (Australian and international), television, radio, magazines and online publications. Many, for example, read multiple newspapers a day and then watch news and current affairs programs on television after work. While this allows them to keep up with the news for work reasons, it also confirms other observations made regarding journalists’ behaviour: most are curious about the world and enjoy engaging with the news. The term junkie was used on a number of occasions:

When I have time I read the New York Times, the Washington Post, Al-Jazeera, El Haaretz, the Israeli paper. I try and read Corriere della Sera and La Republica, the Italian papers … I try and read those. I read New Matilda. I subscribe to Crikey … Television? … I’m a junkie for ABC News, 7.30 Report. I hate it when I miss them. Lateline, I watch Lateline every night. Four Corners, when I can, Foreign Correspondent, Dateline (E13, i/v, 2008).

I guess I’m a bit of a news junkie. I listen to ABC702 in the car, 24/7, unless the cricket is on. And then I tend to go to Radio National. But I probably prefer my news to be a little bit more local so Sydney radio. I try to read the Herald and I

---

45 Journalists in this research typically confessed to having a love for news and this is discussed further in the Individual section.
46 While the Oxford English Dictionary defines junkie as a drug addict or drug peddler, it is also used to describe someone who is a keen follower of something. Therefore, a news junkie would be someone who is a keen follower of the news.
read the *Tele* and *Herald* online at work most days … I love to get the Saturday paper and I always try to read *News Review* and *Spectrum*, [they] are my favourite sections (J19, i/v, 2008).

This enjoyment of news and the media relates to Ricketson’s observation: “As a group, journalists keenly follow each other’s work. By necessity and usually by nature avid readers of papers and magazines, journalists pick up, magpie-like, fresh phrases, techniques and approaches” (1999, p. 180); as J24 said, “a lot has been learnt through simply reading other people's stories, looking for better ways and different ways of doing things” (i/v, 2008). Observations in the three newsrooms studied for this research showed how important previously published works are in news production. NR1 had copies of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Newcastle Herald* available on the communal desk as well as all back copies of their own publication. Journalists in this newsroom regularly referred to previous editions of their paper to clarify facts and provide background for current stories. NR2 had newspapers stacked on each desk, current newspapers on the main desk as well as a television tuned into the news: Table behind senior staff with newspapers – SMH, NMH, Tele, Age, Courier (Ob. Notes NR2, 2010 – Day 1).

Television is tuned into Channel 10 today. Senior editorial staff member keeps looking at it and turning the volume up and down depending on what she is doing (Ob. Notes NR2, 2010 – Day 5).

One of the questions asked in the interviews was where do these journalists and editors get ideas for articles and while this is described in more detail in the *Field* section, six editors (E2, E3, E9, E12, E14, E15) and twelve journalists (J3, J4, J6, J8, J10, J12, J13, J17, J18, J19, J22, J23) specifically answered that ideas come from other media. In NR1, the editor gave newspaper clippings to journalists to use as either background for a new story (copy of own publication) or to generate a new story (copy from other publications). In NR1, the editor gave newspaper clippings to journalists to use as either background for a new story (copy of own publication) or to generate a new story (copy from other publications).

Journalists also noted how they learnt to write in a journalistic style because of immersion in media. As a freelancer for dozens of newspaper and magazine publications, J11 needs to be able to change her writing style to comply with different publications’ house style and her advice for switching styles is blunt: “Read the publications for which you want to write” (i/v, 2007). J16 has read papers from a young
age and has used other publications to guide his learning while J2 believes news sense is a “gut feeling” brought about through immersion in news from a young age:

I’ve always been a great newspaper reader myself and I’ve taken on board how stories are written. I’ve always used the [Sydney Morning] Herald as my guide because I think the best journalism is through the Herald. I don’t know if that’s still the case (J16, i/v, 2008).

It’s probably, they say it’s a gut feeling but it’s probably a learnt gut feeling from reading newspapers. You see what has been news in the past. Again, templates. You see what’s been news in the past, how the events you’re dealing with can fit that template (J2, i/v, 2007).

J2’s comment about “gut feelings” connects with Bourdieu’s understanding of cultural production where he discusses how a practitioner develops “a ‘feel for the game’, a ‘practical sense’ (sens practique) that inclines agents to act and react in specific situations” (Johnson, 1993, p. 5) or, as J2 said, a “gut feeling”.

J2 made a comment that summed up the overall attitude to other media by journalists and editors in this study:

It’s funny, most journalists say something like this, when they’re on holiday after about three or four days, they actually start thinking, ‘gee, I want to read the paper. I want to spend an hour or two just reading the paper’ (J2, i/v, 2007).

4.1.3 Conclusion

The research question asks how cultural (domain), individual and social (field) influences affect how a print journalist produces, or creates, their work. Analysis of the data has demonstrated that the domain, as the cultural component of the systems model, is a major influence on a journalist’s creative process. This section has attempted to demonstrate how important rules, structures, codes, conventions, standards, values, beliefs, tools and techniques, in short the knowledge embedded in a domain, are in enabling a journalist’s creative practices. Are these structural components of the system important? Yes, but the analysis has also shown this influence is not totally deterministic. Contrary to some theorists’ arguments that it is structures that determine how a journalist produces, the data has begun to demonstrate that journalists have agency within the structure of the domain, that is they exercise a degree of choice, and it
may be that how a journalist learns and uses these structures that eventually leads to creative texts.

This point is discussed in more detail in the following *Individual* section where it is further shown that the interaction between structure and agency is inextricably linked. The abovementioned knowledge of structures, rules, procedures, conventions and so on support the journalists in their writing and while not every article produced will be considered a creative product, it is possible for a journalist of any genre to utilise these same structures as enabling factors. Sheridan-Burns suggests that, “many journalists, well aware of the constraints under which they work, find ways to write stories they can be proud of” (2001, p. 37). This conditional agency, where a journalist produces work within a known set of structures, is as valid for hard news journalists, feature writers, opinion piece writers, review writers and magazine writers. In fact, it is also just as valid for any writer in any writing domain.

The analysis has also shown how journalists know and use the domain to inform their practices and how after a time this becomes part of their unconscious work processes thus further enabling their practice. To further strengthen this argument, we can again refer to Gans (1980), Schön (1983) and Bourdieu (1977) who all contend that the tacit knowledge a journalist has allows them to ‘do without thinking’. Therefore, it can be argued that these cultural influences, these rules, conventions, techniques, tools, guides and procedures, these structures, can contribute positively to a print journalist’s creativity by providing the necessary set of possibilities and support for a print journalist in their production. With this argument in mind, it is time to examine the individual, one of the other elements in the research question, to see how a print journalist’s agency and the structures in that component of the systems model interact with each other to support and enable these journalists in the production, or creation, of their work.
4.2 Journalists as individuals within a dynamic system

In earlier studies of creativity, and in the common understanding of creativity in Western culture, the individual has been seen as central to the creative process. For this reason, as Csikszentmihalyi contends, there is a large amount of research that has looked at individual traits including “cognitive processes, temperament, early experiences, and personality” (2003, p. 327). These traits are considered important for a creative outcome but, as argued in the Domain section, and again in the Field section of this thesis, an individual with their personal traits, qualities and background is insufficient to explain the full complexity of creativity; other variables are needed as well. The systems model, with its suggestion that to produce a creative outcome an individual needs to understand how the field works and learn what is in the domain, provides a way for an individual to use their agency in conjunction with a set of dynamic structures.

In the system of print journalism, the individual is, of course, the journalist. Within the individual element, a print journalist’s personal qualities and background have an effect on their writing as does their access to the domain and field, what McIntyre succinctly calls “nature, nurture and access” (2008c, p. 3). What the individual brings to the system includes variables such as talent, genetic predisposition, cognitive structures and personality traits, which all contribute to a journalist’s unique but shared view of the world as does family, education, social class and cultural background. These are the individual structures a journalist interacts with that help constitute them as a particular agent operating within the system. A journalist uses these structures in their production, along with the cultural (domain) and social (field) structures. Each of these structures is inseparable in the production, or creative, process. However, these structures are not deterministic; a journalist, as active agent, takes action by interacting with those structures: “Newsworkers also influence news production unconsciously because, like all humans, the ‘lenses’ of their personal histories and self-interest shape news” (McManus, 1994, p. 26). McManus’s comment goes some way to explaining the inextricable link between agency and structure, namely, a journalist, who possesses agency, actively interacts with the structures of the system of journalism and contributes to change within those structures, a point Bird and Dardenne agreed with when they stated that, “in tracing the story-telling patterns in news, we must be aware that journalists are not only drawing on those patterns, they are also actively reshaping
them” (1997, p. 346). But to take McManus’s and Bird and Dardenne’s comments further, working within the domain and with the field also means the individual is constantly transforming themselves and the structures they engage and intersect with.

To apply theory to this contention, Anthony Giddens’ writings (1984; 1993; 1998) about *structuration* provide an explanation of how agents and structures enable and constrain each other (1984, p. 25). Giddens argues, according to Haralambos and Holbern, that:

Neither structure nor action can exist independently; both are intimately related. Social actions create structures, and it is through social actions that structures are produced and reproduced, so that they survive over time … structures make social action possible, and at the same time that social action creates those very structures (1995, p. 904).

Jensen discussed structuration in reference to journalism and the media and posited the following explanation:

… the press consists simultaneously of its structural properties – its economic, legal, technological, as well as cultural-conventional permanence – and of the myriad activities of journalists, advertisers, regulators, and audiences who both maintain and contest these properties. Like other social institutions, the press, and the media as such, are not only reinterpreted, but re-enacted on a daily basis (2002b, pp. 1-2, emphasis in original).

Manzella applied Giddens’ approach to structure and agency to journalism and maintained, in a manner similar to Giddens, that most social science research focused on how organisations “enable, empower and constrain individuals” (1996, p. 288) but he suggested that individuals do the same to organisations. Manzella claimed that individuals in a newsroom have a profound effect on an organisation’s structure because news is produced by the interaction between workers in a newsroom. An example of how a journalist can exercise agency is provided by Ryfe (2009) who noted that journalists apply their idea of news values to decide whether a story is newsworthy. So, while news values are a routine, learned and naturalised ‘structure’ journalists work within, journalists “actively engage in production and reproduction of routine” (Ryfe, 2009, p. 673) to make choices in their production by interacting with that structure.
Conversely, to apply Manzella’s ideas to an individual, the structures a journalist interacts with also profoundly affects the individual journalist.

According to Csikszentmihalyi, there are several criteria an individual should possess to be able to produce a creative contribution. Csikszentmihalyi maintains an individual must have a genetic predisposition for a domain and an interest in the domain as well as access to the domain and access to the field (1997, pp. 52-54, emphasis in original). As well as these criteria, the individual must also be well-trained, open to experience, curious, interested in the work they are doing and possess or accumulate what Bourdieu calls cultural capital (in Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 53). Whether an individual’s cultural capital and other factors are appropriate to the sphere of production the individual is working in is dependent on the domain with different domains needing different qualities. Crucially, though, and a comment that is highly relevant to this research, Csikszentmihalyi also strongly contends that the importance of the individual is not paramount, as is argued by some theorists, but neither is the individual irrelevant, as argued by others:

It is important to point out the tenuousness of the individual contribution to creativity, because it is usually so often overrated. Yet one can also fall in the opposite error and deny the individual any credit. Certain sociologists and social psychologists claim that creativity is all a matter of attribution. The creative person is like a blank screen on which social consensus projects exceptional qualities. Because we need to believe that creative people exist, we endow some individuals with this illusory quality. This, too, is an oversimplification. For while the individual is not as important as it is commonly supposed, neither is it true that novelty could come about without the contribution of individuals (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, pp. 46-47).

Csikszentmihalyi, however, does note several personal qualities that can contribute to an individual’s propensity to creativity (2003, pp. 329-332). Are there any special talents? For example, an ability to use language well may influence whether or not a child is encouraged in a writing domain such as journalism. Is the individual curious and intrinsically motivated? Although there are issues surrounding the notion of intrinsic motivation (Eisenberger & Shanock, 2003), Csikszentmihalyi (1997; 2003) claims that without any motivation, it is difficult for someone to spend the amount of time needed to acquire the expertise in the domain to generate novelty. Are cognitive
abilities such as divergent thinking present? Again, although *divergent thinking* is a term that is problematic (Weisberg, 1993), flexibility in thinking style and problem solving abilities provides an individual with the necessary tools to produce a creative outcome and in journalism this is necessary to work within conventions such as deadlines. Are the individual’s personality traits suitable for the domain? In journalism, for example, curiosity is a trait mentioned in academic texts as vital (Harcup, 2009; Herbert, 2000; Machin & Niblock, 2006; Mencher, 1986; Niblock, 1996; Randall, 1996; Solly, Isbister & Birtles, 2007; Tapsall & Varley, 2001; Willis, 2010).

While personal qualities are important, an individual’s background is equally significant and adds to the person’s cultural capital, which then gives the individual a greater chance to succeed in their sphere of cultural production. Csikszentmihalyi observes that the family situation, economically and socially, has an effect on an individual as does the family’s attitude to learning and its ability to provide support both in informal learning and formal education. Furthermore, whether the family situation can provide access to the field plays a role. Outside the family, schooling and other learning opportunities through mentors and the community, and the availability of resources, such as books and computers, provide an individual with important resources (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, pp. 328-329).

However, Csikszentmihalyi is very careful to highlight that while these personal qualities and background are necessary for creativity, they are not sufficient and he maintains that if,

… creativity were a strictly individual trait, then one would expect every creative person to exhibit more or less the same characteristics. But if it is a systemic trait, then the personal contribution will vary according to the states of the other subsystems (1990, p. 206).

In this case, the creative system needs to be internalised. Learning the rules, conventions, techniques, guides and procedures of the domain means the individual can work efficiently but also provides the information needed to produce work that is acceptable to the field.

The respondents in this study had some similarities in their personality, home environment and education but there were also a wide range of individual differences,
thus providing support for Csikszentmihalyi’s suggestion that a systemic explanation is a more encompassing way to explain the complexity of creativity. Individuals, with their idiosyncratic backgrounds and personal qualities, are able to internalise the structures of the domain and the preferences of the field and employ these structures in their work.

An apt summary of the individual structures a journalist interacts with to produce their work was provided by Hirst and Patching when they wrote:

Each day, in the newsroom, or out on a job, every news worker carries with them, as items in their ‘tool-kit’, a set of emotional and intellectual attitudes towards sources, their audience, and the news they report. This emotional and intellectual tool-kit has been gathered since early childhood – it’s how they see the world, and will vary from journalist to journalist depending on their family background, their upbringing, their education, their friends, the area and environment in which they grew up, etc (2005, p. 29).

This, of course, is another way of describing Bourdieu’s use of the concept of habitus, which Webb, Schirato and Danaher describe as,

… the set of values and dispositions gained from our cultural history that stay with us across contexts … Habitus is always constituted in moments of practice. It is always ‘of the moment’, brought out when a set of dispositions meets a particular problem, choice or context. In other words, it can be understood as a ‘feel for the game’ (2002, p. 38).

Using Hirst and Patching’s and Bourdieu’s explanations, the following sections will examine the different variables that a journalist interacts with to enable them to develop a “feel for the game” (ibid.) and produce a creative contribution.

4.2.1 Personal traits

Businessman John Reed made the point that successful businesspeople have a wide range of individual personal traits but it is their talent and how they perform in the domain of business that is judged:

Well, because of my job, I tend to know the guys who run the top fifty, one hundred companies in the country, and there’s quite a range. It has little to do with
the industry. It’s funny, there is a consistency in what people look at in businesspeople, but there’s no consistency in style and approach, personality, and so forth. There is not a consistent norm with regard to anything other than business performance (in Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 51).

In line with Reed’s comment, Csikszentmihalyi suggests that, “Creative individuals are remarkable for their ability to adapt to almost any situation and to make do with whatever is at hand to reach their goals” (1997, p. 51) and this is as true of print journalism as it is of business, the arts, science or any other domain. Therefore, it can be argued that journalists can adapt and use the situations they work within, be they cultural, individual or social, to produce work that is both novel and appropriate: a journalist, as an agent making choices, interacts with the structures in the system of print journalism. In this section, individual traits such as genetics, cognitive abilities, personality and motivation will be examined to show how these structures both enable and constrain a journalist in their creative process and, equally importantly, to examine what the individual contributes to the system of creativity.

4.2.1.1 Genetic predisposition

Despite research findings that claim creativity is not a heritable trait (Greenfield, 2008; Lumsden, 2003; Sawyer, 2006), there are certain physical traits that are known to be inherited. Csikszentmihalyi (2003) uses the example of musicians, whose sensitivity to sound is likely to be inherited, and painters, who have probably inherited a heightened awareness of light and colour. McIntyre (2003) noted that musicians have certain traits that may contribute to creative ability and cites Jimi Hendrix’s and Mark Knopfler’s left-handedness and the shape of Chuck Berry’s hands as inherited traits that may have contributed to their musical abilities, although, according to McIntyre, the evidence is contradictory: John Lennon, another creative musician, was right-handed. It is difficult to imagine a physical trait that would specifically assist a journalist unless it was something such as finger shape (for typing), although journalist and journalism educator Sally White claimed that to be a good journalist you need to be “congenitally inquisitive” (2005, p. ix), a notion that is explored later in this section. Paton (2008), while researching Australian fiction writers, also observed the difficulty in determining physical advantages for writers and instead suggested inherent traits such as hand-eye coordination and posture are possibly improved by training to form a “scholarly
habitus” (Paton, 2008, p. 115, emphasis in original), where the body has been tuned from a young age to adapt to learning such things as sitting at a desk and holding a pen (Watkins, 2005, p. 549) or working at a computer, in the case of contemporary writers.

However, Csikszentmihalyi makes the assertion that an individual may have a genetic predisposition (1997, p. 52, emphasis in original), what he also refers to as a talent, or innate ability, toward a domain and having this predisposition leads to encouragement in that domain by family members and other carers. Bransford summarises current research into infants’ learning abilities by stating that there is no evidence that babies are born as “blank slates” (2000, p. 81), rather they tend to favour learning particular forms of information, such as language or numbers. Csikszentmihalyi claims that this predisposition toward a domain can make it “easier to be creative if one is born with a physical endowment that helps to master the skills required by the domain” (2003, p. 329). However, it is also the environment a child is brought up in, and the encouragement given by caregivers, which enables competency in the particular form a child may have an aptitude or talent for: “Language development studies illustrate that children’s biological capacities are set into motion by their environments” (Bransford, 2000, p. 95). Connecting this statement to Csikszentmihalyi’s example of painters and musicians, while a child may genetically be sensitive to light or sound, if the environment the child is raised in is unable to provide experience or encouragement in the domain of painting or music, it is unlikely the child will become a painter or musician. In relation to print journalism, a child may have a talent for language but if the child’s environment does not provide encouragement for this ability or provide tools such as books, education, or access to the domain and field of journalism, the child has less chance of becoming a journalist. Walberg (1988), writing on creativity and talent, states that while talent may be necessary for a creative outcome there is no distinction between whether the talent is inherent or learned.

Piirto (2004) states that it is not known whether there is a gene for writing but if there is a predisposition for writing, and print journalism in particular to link with this research, this predisposition could include a talent for language or a love for knowledge, as per White’s (2005) earlier contention about inquisitiveness. Reuter et al.’s (2006) research attempted to identify key genes for creativity and preliminary findings seemed to suggest that certain genes were connected to verbal creativity and others with numeric
creativity. If this is so, which it may not be, journalists may carry the genes responsible for verbal creativity and other factors, such as family background, education, and social and cultural influences, support this genetic predisposition thus paving the way for a career in language.

J14 thought she might have a predisposition to literary pursuits. Her parents were particularly encouraging to both her and her brother when it came to reading yet her brother, brought up in the same environment, has not continued whereas she has:

On the weekend, if you weren’t doing your homework or something like that, or not playing sport, Mum and Dad’d read or whatever. You wouldn’t turn on the TV. Having said that, my younger brother doesn’t read so I suppose maybe it’s in you to start with that that’s what you want to do (J14, i/v, 2007).

J12 also reflected that genetics may be a reason for his talent with words and his comment seemingly supports the assertion that genes play a role in his writing skills:

I’m pretty useless at maths because my brain doesn’t seem to be wired that way, but it’s wired very well for grammar and writing. So genetic is part of the answer (J12, i/v, 2007).

While this form of personal observation is limited methodologically, J12’s comment could indicate a genetic predisposition for language. However, further analysis of his interview supports the contention that other variables are requirements for a creative outcome: his father was a journalist, so the family situation was conducive to encouragement in language, and his childhood recollections included an environment where the family produced plays and did public speaking. J12 also mentioned how his science teachers at school were uninspiring and he switched off during class while he lists his senior English teacher as a mentor “who was inspiring” (i/v, 2007). All these variables encouraged an enjoyment of language, leading J12 to remark that he had “found my niche” (i/v, 2007). J12’s individual history lends support to the argument made throughout this thesis: one variable cannot explain how and why something is considered creative. As with other elements, a genetic predisposition may be necessary but is not sufficient to explain the full complexity of creativity.
4.2.1.2 Cognitive abilities

Csikszentmihalyi claims that certain cognitive abilities seem to be necessary for an individual to be able to produce novelty (2003, p. 330). He lists abilities such as problem solving and flexibility in thinking style as necessary cognitive tools in a creative individual. While there are questions around the veracity of these abilities in creativity research due to their limited understanding of the complexity of creativity, it is worthwhile examining problem solving and flexibility in thinking style in the context of this research as one part of the structural components that form a journalist’s background.

Stocking and Gross asked the question ‘how do journalists think’ and suggested that little research had been done in journalism from a cognitive approach because journalists are seen as so constrained by the social and cultural structures they work within, that cognitive theories, with their emphasis on an individual’s thought processes, could not possibly provide any value (1989, pp. vii-viii). A cognitive approach, in this sense, is described as examining the, “mental processes that are shared by all individuals. Cognitive psychologists examine the representational structures of the mind, their interconnections, and the mental processes that transform them” (Sawyer, 2006, p. 37). However, note the use of the term structures, in this case cognitive structures, and again there is the problem of bridging the so-called opposition of structure and agency. Does a journalist have agency within their cognitive structures to produce work that is novel and appropriate or are these structures deterministic? Once more, it can be shown that structures, in this case cognitive structures, both constrain and enable a journalist and, while these structures may influence what a journalist produces, it is realistic to suggest that external influences, such as family, education and work experience, also play their part in altering the journalist’s cognitive structures. It is also reasonable to argue that cognitive abilities are a necessary part of how a journalist produces their work but not solely a sufficient one, an argument that is similar to Sawyer, who examined cognitive psychology’s research into creativity (2006, pp. 57-75) and concluded that while cognition may provide some answers to how a creative thought occurs it is insufficient to explain the complexity of creativity.

A further argument to suggest that cognitive structures are relevant in journalism is that cognitive theories discuss the notion of schema, which is described as,
a mental representation of a concept stored in the long-term memory of an individual … Schemata [plural form] incorporate prior knowledge about specific instances of a concept. The structure of an individual’s existing schemata will shape the way he or she interprets and incorporates experience into his or her conceptual understanding (Meunier, 2004, p. 8).

Meunier (2004) examined schemata in the news writing process and proposed that when an experienced journalist is assigned a story, a story schema that suits that story is activated in the mind, which lightens the journalist’s cognitive load. In other words, most stories follow certain patterns and an experienced journalist employs these patterns to work efficiently. Sawyer explains a schema as a mental model with “slots” where information is inserted (2006, p. 66). J2 called these schemata templates and described how they help him quickly produce:

Well, quite often a lot of what is newsworthy follows fairly established patterns because the same kind of things happen again and again. I mean the flood’s a quite good example.47 You could almost break down the coverage of the flood analytically: the first day, if you like, disaster strikes, ship runs aground, people were washed away and died; second day, the disaster gets wider in terms of scale, both in terms of geographic scale and human cost; third day, clean up operation begins; fourth day, funerals. You can pretty much follow that pattern with that kind of story and apply it, apply the template to different things. Similarly, with say a police or coronial investigation, you can almost establish templates like event or crime or death happens, police are called in, police set up the investigation, leads come in, person is either identified or arrested, and then you follow it in court. So, there are steps and you can start to expect when those kinds of things are happening. The same with political stories, I probably believe that there are templates you can adapt to that.

Those templates you were talking about, how did you learn about those? (my question).

They probably sound a bit more cynical than I meant them to actually, to use the templates. It’s nothing more intelligent than experience, I think. I mean no-one ever sat down and said to me, ‘a police investigation you do x then y then z’ (J2, i/v, 2007).

47 The floods that J2 is referring to happened in June 2007 in Newcastle and the Hunter Valley area of Australia. There were nine people killed and thousands evacuated from the flood area.
J2’s comments point to the importance of experience and how this affects how a journalist produces their work and provides support for Sheridan Burns’ contention that, “their [journalists] thinking processes, once internalized, are used almost without conscious thought” (2002, p. 32). Cognitive research by Schumacher et al. (1992) examined how different levels of expertise affected how a journalist produces a story. After conducting a review of literature on other writing styles (for example, academic, scientific and fiction writing), Schumacher et al. concluded that experts in other writing genres have four main things in common: they have an extensive knowledge base; they are domain specific writers because of the depth of knowledge needed to become an expert; they have expertise that allows them to recognise mistakes and differentiate between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ writing, thus making the process more efficient; and, in line with Schön’s (1983) notion of tacit knowledge or Bourdieu’s (1993) habitus, they have the ability to automate “a number of lower level tasks which allow them to attend to larger and more encompassing issues” (Schumacher et al., 1992, p. 254). An examination by the same authors of expert journalists discovered similar findings with the study determining that expert journalists had a highly complex set of “knowledge and processes” (Schumacher et al., 1992, p. 280) including knowledge of the world, the way the journalism industry worked, language, and news and its structure. The last finding encompasses Meunier’s theory about schemata in news writing, that is, one of the structures in news writing a journalist learns and uses is the “template” (J2, i/v, 2007), or schema, “a mental representation of a concept stored in the long-term memory of an individual” (Meunier, 2004, p. 8). However, this schema is not deterministic. Meunier specifically acknowledges a journalist’s ability for agency and describes news writing as problem-solving by acknowledging the flexibility of a schema. To clarify, a journalist may choose a particular schema, but if the information discovered during the news production process does not fit in to the schema, the schema can be modified. Additionally, Meunier’s explanation illustrates and supports Giddens’ notion of structuration. To paraphrase Haralambos and Holbern’s description of structuration (1995, p. 904): a journalist’s actions create these mental structures and these mental structures are produced and reproduced … mental structures allow a journalist to act but that action also creates the mental structures.

Meunier’s reference to news writing as problem-solving provides an opportunity to discuss the importance of these abilities in journalists as well as providing a link to
research on creativity, and the theories produced there about problem solving. Problem solving is a challenging entity in research terms. Firstly, the term has been used to describe such creativity enhancing techniques as lateral thinking (1967; 1968; 1977), brainstorming (Osborn, 1963) and synectics (Gordon, 1961), which, as mentioned previously, are approaches not thoroughly empirically tested (Sawyer, 2006, p. 300). In contrast, problem solving theories in cognitive psychology have been tested and posit that individuals examine a problem and produce a creative solution (Kozbelt, Beghetto & Runco, 2010, p. 33). However, there are also disagreements in psychology regarding how important it is. Some researchers argue creativity is a form of problem solving (Evans & Deehan, 1988; Lubart, 2000-2001; Runco, 2007; Russ, 1993; Weisberg, 1997), while others argue against this notion (Kneller, 1965) and still others add problem finding as another style of creative thinking (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Runco, 2007; Sawyer, 2003), where the “problem is not known in advance” (Sawyer, 2006, p. 183) (see also the discussions between Csikszentmihalyi (1988c) and Simon (1988) about creativity as problem solving or problem finding or both). Runco defines a problem as, “a situation with a goal and an obstacle” (2007, p. 14) and also contends that a continuum is required to explain the differences between problem solving and problem finding, “with problems that are presented to us at one extreme (no identification or definition required), problems that do require discovery at the other extreme, and various moderate possibilities in between” (2007, p. 16). What is evident, though, through an examination of creativity research, is the importance of previous knowledge in problem solving (Weisberg, 1997), which, in relation to the systems model, means learning what the field requires and the rules and traditions of the domain.

Throughout an examination of the production process, it is relatively straightforward to gather examples of how a journalist uses the cognitive ability of problem solving: during idea generation, a journalist produces story ideas that suit the audience and publication; during research, if a journalist attempts to find information and cannot find out from, for example, one website, they need to access another area; when interviewing, if one source is unavailable, others have to be organised but journalists also need to be flexible when asking questions; and, during writing, if a piece of

48 For a comprehensive summary of problem solving and problem finding theories see Kozbelt, Beghetto and Runco’s Theories of creativity (2010), pp. 32-35.
information is unable to be verified, other information can be used. These examples can be extended to an investigation of deadlines, that is, where journalists must be able to continually adapt their work processes and solve problems while keeping in mind the importance of the publication’s deadline.

However, what can be shown from these examples and the data collected in this research is how important experience is. As a journalist’s work experience increases, as they become more skilled in knowing the expectations of the field and the traditions and conventions of the domain, their problem solving abilities become more automatic. For example, J17 is a feature journalist who has recognised how an increase in experience has led to an increase in efficiency. Her problem solving ability has become more automatic as her skills increased:

> And you’ve got the experience and the expertise and so you don’t second guess yourself; you don’t think, ‘Oh, is this the right way?’ One thing I do a whole lot less of is, sometimes, especially when you start a big feature, I used to write multitudes of beginnings, started it in different ways, and I’d get to about two or three hundred words and I’d think, ‘This isn’t working’ so I’d go back and try again. And I don’t do that any more. It’s interesting, I haven’t really thought about it until now but I don’t think for the last couple of years I’ve, when I start a story, I just start and it goes from there and I don’t generally have to change it or restructure it (J17, i/v, 2008).

Observation of the newsrooms in this research showed how journalists worked around problems in their production process. For example, in NR2, one journalist was unsure if photos she had taken for a story while on an overseas trip would be professional enough for the publication:

> Journalist took photos last week for story but doesn’t know whether they will be good enough for the paper. Suggests stills from Channel 10 if necessary (Ob. Notes NR2, 2010 – Day 2).

This journalist understood what was required by the editor and the publication and was able to generate a solution to what could have been an issue in her production process. What needs to be pointed out here is that this journalist’s experience in both journalism and her publication’s requirements meant she was able to quickly solve the problem. In
other words, she understood the conventions of the domain and the expectations of the field – why a photograph was needed and what quality was expected.

Another of Csikszentmihalyi’s contentions regarding a creative person’s cognitive abilities is flexibility in thinking style. Thinking style, in this instance, is taken to mean the different ways that “people characteristically respond to or interpret information or problems presented to them. They are not abilities, but rather reflect a preference for how people choose to use their abilities” (Kaufman, 2002, p. 202). Creativity researcher James Kaufman (Kaufman, 2002; 2009), with others (Kaufman & Baer, 2009), examined the differences between thinking styles of creative writers and journalists and compared the occupations using two theories of thinking styles: Bruner’s Narrative and Paradigmatic modes of thought (1986) and Sternberg’s Theory of Mental Self-government (1997). Bruner maintained that a paradigmatic thinker is logical and scientific and “makes use of procedures to assure verifiable reference and to test for empirical truth” (1986, p. 13) while a narrative thinker “establishes not truth but verisimilitude” (1986, p. 11). Kaufman neatly summed up the difference between the two styles: “If paradigmatic thought is concerned with capturing ‘what is,’ then narrative thought is focused more on ‘what may be’” (2002, pp. 203-204). After reading this summation, it appears effortless to follow Kaufman’s logic that a journalist would seemingly think with a paradigmatic style while a creative writer would think narratively. It can also be argued that Sternberg’s Theory of Mental Self-government can be readily applied to different styles of writers. Sternberg suggested that there are three thinking styles: legislative, where an individual likes to do things their own way; executive, where an individual prefers to follow specific guidelines; and, judicial, where an individual favours judging others’ products. Again, applying this to creative writing and journalism, the logic of arguing that creative writers are legislative thinkers while journalists are executive is seemingly straightforward although Sternberg (1997) suggested that journalists who are column writers have a judicial thinking style whereas straight, or hard news, reporters would be more likely to be executive style thinkers. While these typologies appear neat and easily applied, there are some problems in application. The question can be asked: what about journalists who are columnists and hard news reporters, an occurrence that often happens, particularly at smaller newspapers? Does this situation imply that they have two radically diverse thinking styles that they switch between on demand? In relation to the propositions put by both
Bruner and Sternberg’s characterisation of styles of thinking, and Kaufman’s use of them in this instance, another question needs to be asked: how would a long form, or literary journalist, be categorised? As a journalist, using journalistic tools such as truth in reporting, the thinking style would be comparable to a paradigmatic or executive style but with literary journalism known for its use of fictional tools, the thinking style would surely be narrative or legislative. Given these problematics, it can be claimed that both Bruner’s and Sternberg’s styles of thinking may be too narrow to use to study all journalists, in which case there may be some support for Csikszentmihalyi’s contention that flexibility in thinking style is a trait needed for a creative outcome.

In addition, the journalists in this study were asked if they had ever considered fiction writing as opposed to non-fiction, considering the earlier distinction that fiction writers are commonly perceived in Western culture as ‘artistic’ and ‘creative’ whereas some types of journalist are not. As noted in previous sections, in Western culture, fiction writing is commonly regarded as a more creative form of writing than journalism because it is seen to have less structures and a seemingly more person-centric production process. These contentions have been firmly rejected by researchers who have examined fiction writers (McIntyre & McIntyre, 2007; Paton, 2008; 2009; Sawyer, 2006), but if Kaufman’s contention about journalists having different thinking styles to creative writers is correct, it would be expected that journalists would answer in the negative.

On the contrary, twelve out of the eighteen journalists who answered said they would like to write, or have written, in forms other than journalism with J8 saying that “every journalist is a frustrated novelist” (i/v, 2007), a comment J2 agreed with: “Every journo has toyed with the idea ‘just wouldn’t it be great to be a writer’…” (i/v, 2007). These figures are not surprising. David Conley (1998) suggested that the history of journalism and literature in Australia are intertwined with many of Australia’s early novelists using journalism to support themselves. However, as with other variables in an individual’s make-up discussed in this Individual section, not all the journalists in this study want to write fiction. J2 followed the last comment about wanting to write with this: “… but I remember as a kid fairly quickly realising that I wasn’t very good at making stuff up. But I was all right at writing about stuff that wasn’t made up” (i/v, 2007). J4, J5, J6 and
J16 very quickly and emphatically said no and J18 commented that she was so experienced in journalism that she would find it difficult to change her writing style:

I’d have no idea how to go about it. Did do a bit in high school but I never, which is strange because I love reading fiction … I couldn’t sustain a plot for any more than 10 pages. Perhaps because the longest story I would ever write now is 45 centimetres and I guess having spent a lifetime distilling all this down (wide hand gesture) into this (narrow hand gesture), I’m not saying that I couldn’t be retrained and re-educated but I think that’s what it is – having spent your entire life condensing I just would have no idea, if someone said, ‘Write a 250 page novel on a subject of your choice’ I would just have no idea where to start. And I’d get a chapter written and think, ‘Well, yeah, I’ve done all that now!’ (laughs) That’s my 25 centimetres! (my comment) Yep, that’s my 25 centimetres; it’s gone now! What do I do next! I don’t think I could (J18, i/v, 2008).

J18’s comment provides evidence that rather than regarding a thinking style as fixed throughout an individual’s lifetime, it is feasible to conclude that life’s experiences play a crucial role in how a person “respond(s) to or interpret(s) information or problems presented to them” (Kaufman, 2002, p. 202) an observation made by Kaufman and Baer in a later study:

An aspiring writing student may be guided by his or her thinking style into the type of writing that he or she pursues. A student may develop a preference for a thinking style after receiving repeated instruction from a given domain (such as journalism or creative writing). Indeed, a student may even “switch” from one dominant style to another if his or her domain encourages it. This study has shown significant associations between the type of writing and thinking style, but no further assumptions can be definitively made (2009, p. 213).

In line with this observation, Zhang and Sternberg also made the point that thinking styles can be changed by socialisation and include “culture, gender, age, parental style, religious upbringing, schooling, and occupation” (2006, p. 118) as influences that change an individual’s thinking style. With this in mind, it is perhaps time to reintroduce habitus, which provides an explanation as to why an individual acts in a certain way in certain contexts and how they have come to act in that way or, as Ritzer points out: “It can be thought of as a set of internalized schemes through which the world is perceived, understood, appreciated, and evaluated” (2005, par. 9).
What this section on cognitive abilities has shown is that it is more constructive to examine cognitive abilities as only one part of a journalist’s individual system. What needs emphasising is that creativity research is, as yet, unable to determine a common cognitive ability a creative person must have. While cognitive abilities are seen as an important trait for creativity, they cannot be seen as more important than any other trait an individual needs to be able to produce creative work. This brief discussion has also highlighted the inextricable linking of agency and structure, that is, a journalist, as agent, interacts with their mental structures and makes choices within those structures. At the same time, a journalist’s mental structures are changed by the individual, social and cultural experiences the journalist has.

4.2.1.3 Personality

In a study examining Australian journalists’ personality, John Henningham noted that the perception of a journalist is “gregarious, nosy, and thick-skinned” (1997, p. 616) or they are portrayed as a lovable larrikin (Vine, 2009). Sheridan-Burns described the common understanding of journalists as portrayed by literature:

… a tendency to lonely cynicism born of too much exposure to man’s inhumanity to man. The journalist, accustomed to being an outsider, fears no one and cannot be corrupted in the pursuit of truth, whatever the temptation. Always ready to drop everything in pursuit of a ‘story’, the journalist is always on the move, seldom pausing too long to reflect, and ‘tells it like it is’, whatever the personal cost. In Australia, the popular tradition of the journalist is also as a somewhat undisciplined larrikin. He (and it is a he, despite the statistical reality that the majority of journalists are female) has seen it all at least twice. He is a pub philosopher who likes nothing more than bringing the mighty to account, or championing the cause of society’s powerless (2001, p. 25).

Henningham, Vine and Sheridan Burns are providing examples of what was described in the prior Domain section as journalism’s occupational mythology, in this instance where journalists are expected to behave in a certain way. J2 provided the following comment about the culture of journalism:

Journalists, personally, literally pride themselves on being, not anarchistic but bending the rules. We’re generally fairly badly dressed for a start. Our offices are absolute pigsties … We’ve got this culture of we break the rules, we’re slightly
unruly and that’s very good because we need to be people that, we need to go the Chief of the Army and have absolutely no respect for his rank (J2, i/v, 2007).

J2’s comment merges well with the common understanding of a journalist’s personality, which appears to be at odds with the notion of interpellation (Hall, 1992; Hartley, 2002; McQuail, 2010; Morley, 1992; O’Sullivan, 1994) or variable subjectivities where “we adopt the subject position proposed for us by the discourse” (Fiske, 1987, p. 42). This position recognises the relative aspects of identity, whereas the notion of personality appears to view identity as “pre-given or innate” (Coates, 2002, p. 49). However, as with other variables, it is difficult to identify specific traits as being a crucial part of a journalist’s personality. Journalism’s texts do provide some common traits believed to be important. These include gregariousness (Henningham, 1997; Hurst, 1988; Randall, 1996; Young, 2007), curiosity (Harcup, 2009; Herbert, 2000; Machin & Niblock, 2006; Mencher, 1986; Niblock, 1996; Randall, 1996; Solly, Isbister & Birtles, 2007; Tapsall & Varley, 2001; Willis, 2010), confidence (Mencher, 1986; Niblock, 1996), and determination and drive (Randall, 1996). Lichter, Rothman and Lichter suggested that certain traits are necessary to practice journalism, which might mean “weeding out the timid, the meek, and the self-conscious” (1986, p. 94), seemingly traits that they believe would not suit the profession of journalism. Bossio (2010) argued that journalism has a strong professional identity, and this identity is considered to be consistent across all journalists regardless of their background or work environment. University websites, for example, describe what is required of their journalism students:

If you have an avid curiosity about the world, a passionate interest in news and current affairs, read, listen to and watch a wide range of news media, have strong writing skills, can work to a deadline under pressure, and have a burning desire to tell others what you find out, then journalism is for you (RMIT University in Bossio, 2010, p. 5).

However, as argued throughout this section, it is difficult to specify any particular trait that is a requirement to practice journalism especially since the journalists interviewed in this research exhibited a wide range of personality traits. Therefore, rather than attempting to distinguish a single identifiable element it is more productive to examine how a journalist may employ certain individual characteristics during their work process to produce novelty and how they interact with other variables in the system. As
Csikszentmihalyi (1997) states, it is difficult to make a generalisation about what is a creative personality with the term complexity a more appropriate description. It is more likely that an individual will adapt to a domain and field, and internalise the requirements needed, and this adaption will lead to a creative outcome. What is interesting about most research into journalists’ personality is that the research typically focuses on how personality influences writing style. However, writing is only one part of what journalists do. Ruffner and Burgoon (1981), for instance, conducted research into whether or not different personalities have different writing styles, with particular emphasis on journalistic writing styles, and found that while age, sex and education do have some affect on writing style, it is the personality of the writer that seems to have the strongest influence on how someone writes. However, Ruffner and Burgoon’s research is limited. While journalists may write, they also do interviews, research, gather data and edit. Each of these work processes requires different behaviours. For example, to gather information for an article, a journalist rings sources and interviews people and, as Henningham observes, uses “their powers of charm, persuasion and perhaps menace in order to extract a story” (1997, p. 618). Then, when writing, journalists must be able to concentrate on getting the story done as efficiently as possible. E8 related this to journalists, albeit in a slightly different way, by explaining the process of production as an inward/outward dichotomy:

It [journalism] seems to be a field that involves introverted extroverts more than anything else. So you get to be extroverted in what you present, but introverted to the extent where you’re probably in that production period, you’re assimilating your surroundings, you’re assimilating your information and you’re looking inward. You’re looking inwardly rather than outwardly but the product itself is something that everybody reads. I think that’s something that’s come home to me a lot over the years with the kind of people who are attracted to it (E8, i/v, 2007).

E8’s comment brings to mind Csikszentmihalyi’s attempt to categorise the commonalities in creative personalities when he maintained that creative people tended to “harbor opposite tendencies on the continuum between extroversion and introversion” (1997, p. 65). Csikszentmihalyi described creative people using “ten dimensions of complexity” (1997, p. 55), which listed ten features he found in his study’s cohort of eminent individuals: the creative personality is energetic/restful, smart/naïve, playful/disciplined, imaginative/rooted in reality, extroverted/introverted,
humble/proud, masculine/feminine, rebellious/traditional about the rules of the domain, passionate/dispassionate about their work, and sensitive about/but enjoy their work (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, pp. 58-76). The fifth of Csikszentmihalyi’s ten dimensions, extroversion/introversion, seems particularly apt to describe how a journalist gathers data and writes and reiterates E8’s comments about journalism being a profession that seems to attract “introverted extroverts” (i/v, 2007).

Analysis of the data from this research has shown that Csikszentmihalyi’s description of the creative personality as complex (1997, p. 55) appears fitting: the respondents listed a variety of personality traits that they believed helped their creative process in print journalism including curiosity (J1, J5, J6, J8, J15), an interest in the world (J5, J11, J12), perceptiveness (J4), being a good listener (J9, J10, J18, J24) and having the ability to talk to people (J14, J20), empathetic (J10, J19, J20) and compassionate (J18, J20), and non-judgemental (J18) and respectful (J16, J22). These traits are similar to Tapsall and Varley’s list. They suggest journalists need such traits as good communication skills, the ability to listen, empathy, an inquisitive mind and understanding (2001, pp. 9-10). But other outcomes that emerged from this data also showed that journalism’s accepted personality traits, that is the professional identity of journalism, were less important than how the journalists used some of the traits they saw in themselves to work as part of the system of journalism.

For example, and referring back to the previous discussion about extroversion and introversion, according to a number of texts a journalist seemingly needs to be gregarious or extroverted. As an illustration, Henningham (1997) recognised the common understanding of journalists as extroverted and attempted to explain this personality trait by applying Eysenck’s personality test to mainstream journalists in Australia. Henningham, in a small exploratory study, interviewed 173 Australian journalists to assess two dimensions of personality in journalists – extroversion (as opposed to introversion) and neuroticism (as opposed to stability). Henningham’s aim was to “consider personality as a variable in order to compare journalists with the population, and to explore occupational correlates of personality within journalism” (1997, p. 617). The research found that journalists are more extroverted and slightly less

---
49 Henningham paraphrased Eysenck and Eysenck when he listed traits of extroversion as seeking, lively, carefree and dominant and neuroticism as anxious, depressed, angry, embarrassed, emotional, worried, insecure, tense, irrational, shy and moody
neurotic than the general public although these findings depended on gender, socio-economic background, age and success in the domain. It is noteworthy that Henningham added these caveats given the emphasis being placed on multiple variables in this thesis. In this regard, J4 noted how his personality seemingly suited the profession:

I’m a bit of an extrovert, pretty good people skills and it’s a worthwhile occupation (J4, i/v, 2007).

Support for J4’s comment was observed during the interview, as he appeared confident in his skills and in answering the questions. On the other hand, according to the information found in this research, gregariousness and an extroverted personality do not seem to be prerequisites for journalists. J7, J12 and J14 each said that they find it difficult to work in a group situation, with J14 saying that a lack of confidence in her skills means she needs to adjust her work practices to be able to write effectively:

I’ll sit there [at media conferences] and these people ask these amazing questions and I think, ‘oh, wow, I wish I could do that’ and in the end I think oh, bugger it, I’m just not asking questions and I’ll sit down there and I’ll listen to what they’ve got to say and I’ll take down notes and then if I think of anything else I want to ask I’ll ask them after the media conference or I’ll call them later. I don’t know. I just don’t like that big crowd … I just get nervous that they’re all journalists, they’re all so smart. You’re a journalist (my comment). I know! But I’m just not like that. I’m just not good in big groups I don’t think. Because the thing is you’ll think of this question and you’ll think, ‘oh, it’s dumb’ and then the funny thing is the next person asks it. And you think, ‘Ohhh, I should’ve said that!’ (J14, i/v, 2007).

While this comment by J14 does not indicate she has adjusted her personality per se, it does illustrate how J14’s conception of how a journalist should behave affects how she does her work. Similarly, J7 expected to find working as a journalist difficult because he was shy:

I used to think when I was younger that I was never going to be a good journo because I was probably too shy. Probably a bit shy as a kid and even now I’m not really that, I mean I talk a lot one on one but I’m probably not loud in a group (J7, i/v, 2007).
To deal with this, J7 has developed mechanisms to cope with this trait by drawing on his understanding of journalism. Journalists, according to Mark Deuze, operate under a professional ideology that includes, among other things, the right to question anyone under the aegis of providing a public service, or what Deuze calls “doing it for the public” (2005, p. 447). J7 commented that acting as a journalist, that is, believing in his right to act in the ‘public good’, assisted in his production process: “I always kind of felt that it gave me a little bit more confidence like when I’d come in as a jounro suddenly I felt more confident” (i/v, 2007), a sentiment J15 agreed with:

I’m basically quite shy, I think, and maybe I find it comforting to hide behind the façade, the persona of the journalist and project myself in a way that I wouldn’t normally, go up to total strangers, as I said before. And when I first started working as a journalist that was a shock until I realised I could put on this front and come across as a different person. Put on a mask, or shield, or suit of armour – then you’re invulnerable behind it (J15, i/v, 2007).

While an outgoing or extroverted personality may not be as necessary to a successful journalist as the occupational mythology of journalism suggests, curiosity is a trait that was talked about by this study’s cohort as a highly regarded trait with journalists and editors in agreement with journalism texts. Kohanyi’s research comparing journalists to creative writers, noting that this latter term is used about writers who work in an ‘artistic’ field, found that six out of the ten journalists questioned had “passionate interest and curiosity about the world” (2005, p. 313). Australian journalist Jennifer Byrnes recalled her first meeting with Graham Perkin, the late editor of The Age: “He asked me, ‘Why do you want to be a journalist?’ and I think I said, ‘Because I’m very nosy.’” (in Hills, 2010, p. 354) a sentiment echoed by J6 who, when asked about personal qualities that assisted her journalistic endeavours, said: “I’m nosy. I can drink like a fish” (J6, i/v, 2007). Journalists and editors from this cohort listed curiosity as crucial for journalism (J1, J5, J6, J8, J15, J18, E1, E7):

I think that it’s one of the almost essential criteria for journalists is that they have a curious mind, that they have a capacity to go chasing where others might not look (J5, i/v, 2007).

Rule number one for a journalist, I guess, is you have to be curious (J18, i/v, 2008).
Curiosity is also a trait looked for by members of the field when hiring. John Trevorrow, former deputy editor of the Australian newspaper the Herald Sun, told a Melbourne Press Club conference what he expects in a new journalist:

Curiosity, a spark, an interest in the profession and I’m looking for different attributes more so than what’s on your CV in terms of educational qualification (in Press Club Online, 2003).

It is difficult to understand why people with supposedly different personality styles and traits would be drawn to journalism if the argument is made that individuals and their personalities are the primary variable in why someone chooses a profession. Kaufman (2003) theorised, in line with creativity research (Weisberg, 2006), that certain occupations attract certain personality types. However, Henningham (1997) also argued that someone’s occupation may shape their personality. This comment is in contrast to other researchers’ conclusions that personality is stable, or fixed, in adulthood (Costa, McCrae & Holland, 1984, p. 392; Ruffner & Burgoon, 1981) but Henningham’s comment also connects to the notion of interpellation and variable subjectivities. To repeat Fiske’s definition of these terms, and relate them to this research, journalists “adopt the subject position proposed for us by the discourse” (1987, p. 42) and adapts to the system of journalism by internalising the rules and traditions of the domain and the expectations of the field. Keith Negus notes that,

… something which was once taken for granted and assumed to be ‘fixed, coherent and stable’ has been called into doubt and become loaded with uncertainties. A central question has concerned the individual subject: do we have a core personality or ‘nature’ that remains unchanged over time or do we take on, acquire or simply make up and adopt new characteristics throughout our life? … yet another question has been asked about how individuals live their lives across such categories: do we possess multiple identities which are manifested in various ways at different moments? (1996, p. 99).

The answer to Negus’s question would seem to be yes we do “possess multiple identities” (ibid.) with journalists in this research indicating that regardless of their perception of their own ‘personality’ they have been able to adapt it to suit the system of print journalism.
4.2.1.4 Motivation

A number of researchers agree that motivation is a vital factor in creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; 1997; Evans & Deehan, 1988; Feist, 1998; Sternberg, 2003b; Sternberg & Lubart, 2003). However, if early research into motivation’s role in creativity is examined, the conclusion would be that the environment a journalist works in would preclude creativity as it contains a significant set of what have been called extrinsic motivators. In this regard, Teresa Amabile (1982; 1990; 1996), with others (Amabile & Tighe, 1993; Collins & Amabile, 2003), researched intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to test their effect on creative contributions – intrinsic motivation being “the motivation to engage in some activity primarily for its own sake” (Amabile & Tighe, 1993, p. 15) and extrinsic motivation is seen as “the motivation to engage in some activity primarily in order to achieve some external goal” (ibid.). Amabile concluded that extrinsic motivation hindered creativity and found five inhibitors to a creative outcome: reward, evaluation, surveillance, time constraints and competition. Journalism is an industry that is based on extrinsic rewards: journalists work for money; the audience and other members of the field judge their work; their work process is subject to scrutiny throughout the production process; there are tight deadlines; and, they work in a highly competitive environment in both workplace relations and industry expectations. According to the proposition that extrinsic motivators inhibit creativity, this sort of environment should hinder the production of novel and appropriate stories. Yet journalists produce articles on a regular, if not daily, basis. In recognition of these and similar problems, later studies by Amabile and others (Collins & Amabile, 2003; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Eisenberger & Shanock, 2003; Hennessey, 2003; Sternberg & Lubart, 2003) tended to discount the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and recognised that both could motivate a creative producer. Similarly, Dacey and Lennon (1998) stated that certain types of extrinsic motivators could affect the creative process positively when combined with intrinsic motivators arguing that the extrinsic and intrinsic motivators support and strengthen each other. Martindale provided the following in support of Dacey and Lennon’s position: “Indeed, if intrinsic rewards alone were important to creative people, it would be difficult to explain why scientists would bother to publish their findings and why artists would exhibit and sell their paintings” (1989, p. 224).
In Australian print journalism, there is, in a relative sense, little financial reward for the majority of journalists\(^5\) (Alysen & Oakham, 1996; Solly, Isbister & Birtles, 2007; Stinson, 2009), the industry is considered to be in turmoil (MEAA, 2008b), new technology and media platforms are eroding traditional journalistic values, its practitioners are accused of sensationalism and celebrity-driven reporting, and journalism is regularly in lists of the least trusted professions (Roy Morgan Research, 2009). Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon, writing from a North American perspective, claim that journalism is a profession in crisis:

… many practitioners feel that it is difficult to honor the precepts of the domain, their field is wracked by tension, the stakeholders are threatening the core values and the principal roles, and the future may well hold even worse tidings (2001, p. 35).

With such a negative work environment in these national contexts, the question can be asked: What motivates journalists to continue to do what they do?

One motivational factor can be found in the ideologies of journalism and, for this reason, it is worth revisiting Amabile, Hadley and Kramer’s contention about time constraints and motivation discussed in the Domain section when they argued that a sense of mission, or the idea that the work being done is important, provides motivation (2002, p. 52). Many journalists believe they are on a ‘mission’, that is, they are engaged in a compelling task. It is worth briefly repeating here that results from the data analysis suggested that journalists believe that they are working in a profession where “working for the public good” (Berkowitz, Limor & Singer, 2004, p. 161) is a worthwhile ideology to be working within. In support of this finding, Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon’s research found that most journalists interviewed for their study into the state of the domain of journalism still found the core mission of “informing the public accurately” (2001, p. 211) an assumption that guided their practice. Ideologies discussed earlier in the Domain section such as the public right to know, the idea of the Fourth Estate, the search for truth, the assumption of the political watchdog role and the idea that journalists should hold powerful figures to account are all ideologies that most journalists still appear to hold to. For example, journalists in this research made

\(^5\) According to Stinson, an Australian journalist’s wage ranges from AUD$525.00 per week (15-19 year age group) to AUD$1352.00 per week (over 45). In no age grouping does a journalist’s wage make the top 25 earning occupation (Stinson, 2009, pp. 15-22).
comments such as they were engaged in “keeping the bastards honest” (J8, i/v, 2007), “(being) a watchdog for the people” (E2, i/v, 2007), journalists are “the eyes and ears for the rest of the public” (E7, i/v, 2007), a belief in the “freedom of the press” (J17, i/v, 2008) and journalists should “tell the truth” (J4, i/v, 2007). All of these comments reflected their belief in the ‘mission’ of journalism. J5 summed up a common understanding of journalism and its perceived role in society when he said, “a lawyer friend of mine recently told me, [when] I enquired about a certain story I was planning to write and he said, ‘It’s good to see you’re still shining your light in those dark corners’” (i/v, 2007); as Michael Young stated: “Ask journalists why they joined the profession and the phrase ‘to make people accountable’ will soon emerge” (2007, p. 77).

Apart from a belief in the values of journalism, further motivation could be seen in the idea that journalists enjoy their work. Csikszentmihalyi’s book *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety* included a chapter on a study examining motivation in surgeons (1975, pp. 123-139). The surgeons describe their work as “fun”, “exciting”, “feels great”, “feels really good”, “aesthetically pleasing”, “dramatic and very satisfying” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, p. 124). Similar responses can be found within this journalistic sample: “passionate about writing”, “really enjoy writing”, “it’s fun”, “it’s exciting”, “I love doing it”, “I love the challenge”. Most of the sample in this study enjoys their work. J17 said: “I don’t think you’ll find many journalists who don’t really love being a journalist. It’s one of those things that people really fall in love with as a profession” (i/v, 2008). David Conley described journalism as, “one of the greatest professions on earth, so good at times that being paid to do it seems like a bonus” (2006, p. 435), a sentiment agreed with by both J6 and J15:

It pays me to be nosy. It’s always paid me to be nosy. Most fantastic thing in the world. Sometimes I get to go up in helicopters and I get to meet famous people or I get to look at dolphins or I get to go on boats or I get to go knocking on the door of bikie headquarters or I get to be sitting in on court cases where they have to ballot to see who the hell is going to get a seat. I get to do the coolest shit (J6, i/v, 2007).

I would have to say that there have been times where I’ve been in a situation where I have been so exhilarated and enjoyed it so much, I’ve had to stop and think, ‘Gee, I’m being paid for this!’ (J15, i/v, 2007).
When journalists in this cohort were asked about what motivates them to continue working as journalists, responses varied from wanting to tell peoples’ stories (E2, E3) to getting a “buzz” out of talking to people (J19) to a love of the English language (J4). But the largest response to that question was how much they appreciated the activity of writing (E13, E15, J8, J15, J24). J8 (i/v, 2007), for example, said he loved to write and loved public affairs and so the journalism profession suited him. J24 said writing was a way to purge information she has gathered: “It’s also a release in a way. If I don’t write for a while … I start feeling a bit ‘pent up’” (i/v, 2008). J15 expanded on J24’s comment by talking about how important writing was to him:

Even when I’m not working I write. I write a journal, a diary; I go into family history and memoir, that kind of thing. I can’t stop and I fear that if I stop I won’t be able to start again; I won’t be able to do it (J15, i/v, 2007).

The above responses indicate that while journalists may work within a network of what Amabile (1993) claimed are extrinsic motivators, that is, an environment that includes reward, evaluation, surveillance, time constraints and competition, it could be argued that in print journalism, there are indications that Dacey and Lennon (1998) may have been correct when they stated that when extrinsic and intrinsic motivators combine, there could be positive outcomes. Journalists enjoy their work and this enjoyment is within a paid work environment, where their work is scrutinised by workmates and an audience, and deadlines are a fundamental core work process.

This enjoyment in their work may indicate another reason that journalists could be motivated to continue writing and working within the challenges and opportunities presented by journalism. Csikszentmihalyi (1988a; 1991; 1992; 1993; 1997; Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988) suggests that flow, when a person is so involved in what they are doing that “the sense of time becomes distorted” (1991, p. 71) and the feeling that this experience generates motivates a person to continue with an activity.

Csikszentmihalyi’s early research into happiness set out to discover why people continued to pursue an activity when fame and money were not the prime motivation and he discovered it was because of the feeling of enjoyment that came from engaging with an activity (1997, p. 110). He called this feeling flow, or autotelic experience.
When flow is experienced, “there is the rush of well-being, of satisfaction that comes when the poem is completed or the theorem is proved” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 123) or, in a journalistic context, the satisfaction in a well-written article. Further research by Csikszentmihalyi led to the conclusion that flow occurs when the level of challenge of a task is equal to the level of skill. Csikszentmihalyi describes flow as:

… a sense that one’s skills are adequate to cope with the challenges at hand, in a goal directed, rule-bound action system that provides clear clues as to how well one is performing. Concentration is so intense that there is no attention left over to think about anything irrelevant, or to worry about problems. Self-consciousness disappears, and the sense of time becomes distorted. An activity that produces such experiences is so gratifying that people are willing to do it for its own sake, with little concern for what they will get out of it, even when it is difficult, or dangerous (1991, p. 71).

Csikszentmihalyi provided a diagram to explain flow:

![Figure 10 – Csikszentmihalyi's autotelic experience (1991, p. 74).](image)

When the level of skills an individual has is equal to the level of challenge, flow will be experienced (A1). If the skill level increases, typically through practice, boredom will be experienced (A2) and to return to the enjoyment of the flow channel, the individual must look for greater challenges. Alternatively, if the challenges increase, the individual will feel anxious (A3) and must improve skill level to feel flow. This cycle continues as the person is motivated to continue learning to re-enter the flow channel.

---

51 Permission to copy and communicate this work has been granted by Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi. See electronic confirmation in Appendix 7.
Nevertheless, flow cannot exist in a vacuum. It is inextricably linked to both the field and the domain. If one held to a Romantic view of creativity, it would seem that the structures of the domain and field a journalist must work within would stifle a journalist’s motivation, since, from this perspective it is believed that creators must be free of constraints, but the level of skill acquired from an engagement with the domain, or learned behaviours that are applicable to the field, are commensurate with the level of learning needed to carry out a task. It is argued here that learning and internalising these structures means journalists eventually naturalise this knowledge to the point that it becomes tacit and at some point becomes intuitive. Their work processes become automatic. Structures such as the rules, conventions, techniques, guides and procedures of the domain of journalism and the organisation worked for, as argued for in the Domain section, as well as an understanding of the “criteria of selection, the preferences of the field” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 47) enable a journalist to enter a state of flow. If Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow is correct, the feeling this generates provides motivation for journalists to continue writing.

In applying these ideas to journalism, it can be seen that if a journalist learns how the domain works and learns what the field expects as well as understanding their own methods of work and is allocated an assignment that is commensurate with those skills, a journalist could feasibly enter the flow channel. But, a journalist must also continue to find challenges within the work environment or risk boredom. Alternatively, when a journalist is expected to write without adequate knowledge of the expectations of the field or domain, anxiety will most likely occur and this distraction may lead to a less optimum outcome. It is also possible for a journalist to be overwhelmed by the rules of the domain and the expectations of the field and perceive them as constraints rather than enablers to produce work that is less than satisfactory. Amabile and Tighe label this process satisficing. By this term they mean, “Ceasing engagement in a task prior to achievement of the ultimate goal … doing the task ‘well enough’ by simply giving a response that is satisfactory, sufficient to meet demands or requirements” (1993, p. 20). As argued prior, deadlines have been recognised as a convention of journalism that can sometimes lead to “doing the task ‘well enough’” (ibid.). According to Amabile (1982; 1990; 1996; 1993; Collins & Amabile, 2003), time constraints are one of the five extrinsic motivators that should inhibit creativity. On saying this, though, there are
journalists who use the deadline as an enabling factor as has been demonstrated previously. Journalist Jewel Topsfield explains her view of deadlines:

It’s so deadline-focused, and you just go into that dark tunnel, and you are writing, and you kind of look up and realise that three hours have passed, and you’ve written something and made another deadline. I mean, how do you pull these things out of your arse? Deadlines are such a drug, and I find it very difficult to exist without them now (in Simons, 2007, p. 302).

Topsfield’s description can be seen as an adequate account of the flow state where “the sense of time becomes distorted” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 113). There were also other indications within this study that journalists seem to lose track of time and enter a flow state:

… most weeks at some stage I’ll look up and go, ‘Christ it’s three o’clock and I haven’t had lunch yet’. Most weeks at some point I’ll go, ‘Oh my God, I’ve got to go to the loo right now or I’m going to wet my knickers’. And somehow in the last hour and a half I haven’t noticed that fact but now it’s gotten to the point where I’ve reeeally got to go to the loo (J6, i/v, 2007).

When J17 was asked whether she had ever become so absorbed in a story that she lost track of time, her initial response was “not often. I mean, I find writing really painful; I find it excruciating” (i/v, 2008). However, she did continue by saying:

There’s the anxiety and fear about the deadline and at some point the anxiety grows greater than the desire to procrastinate. Or the fear, or the actual horror, of writing and that’s when I start writing – when that fear is big enough. And actually, what the weird thing is, when I’m actually really immersed in it then time does go past. And sometimes the days seem interminable when you just don’t want to write the story and I’m always saying to myself, ‘If you would just do it the time would fly by!’ And it’s funny I can, I’ll often, not often but if I’m writing well, I’ll look up at the clock on the screen and three hours have passed and I don’t remember it. I had a lovely deputy editor here, she’s now back in England, and she used to call it being in the zone (ibid.).

When the theory of flow, or autotelic experience was explained to J17, that is, if the level of preparation and the level of experience are equal, a state of flow can be achieved, she described how the theory applied to her work processes:
Isn’t that interesting? And that would probably explain why it doesn’t happen all the time because of course, there are variations in my levels of preparation or stress levels or whatever” (ibid.).

J17’s earlier reference to being “in the zone” also indicates a flow state as this phrase has been used to describe autotelic experience, particularly in sports (see for example Jackson, 2000; Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Young & Pain, 1999). Its use is typical of the way journalists working in the observed newsrooms in this study described the feeling of flow. When questioned, a journalist in NR1 said she went into a “zone” to block out noise. She had always worked in noisy environments and had learnt to “zone it out”. This enabled her to write an article quickly. When asked, a cadet in NR2 said she found it “very hard work” to write when she first started in the newsroom but she learnt to “zone out”, a comment agreed with by another journalist involved in the conversation. Observation showed that journalists often wrote in a newsroom that had ringing telephones, chatting journalists, phone interviews happening, and, in the smaller newsrooms, a public that regularly came into the newsroom. The journalists observed in these situations did not seem to hear the noise. Observations in the three newsrooms revealed that journalists showed concentration when they were writing a story or thinking about what to write, but were able to quickly bring their attention back if required such as if their phone rang or their name was called. If their attention was not needed, for example when the journalist at the next desk was talking, they could still concentrate on their own work.

J3 started his journalism career in a busy newsroom and found that to work effectively, he needed to adapt his work practices to accommodate noise, an observation agreed with by J8:

But I’ve worked in newsrooms where you’ve got, you’re monitoring, you are listening to and reporting on what is being said on Sky News, you’ve got two different radios playing, you’ve got to hear what’s going on in those two things plus answer the phone, plus keep an eye on things on your computer. That’s just what it’s like, you just become very used to it. So you sit there listening to it with one ear to see if something’s happening, you kind of are trying to listen to the radio, keep an eye on what’s going on. It’s just what you do (J3, i/v, 2007).
I think it’s just when you need to concentrate and it can be quite noisy and there’s lots of stuff going on and you know you’ve got to be switched on so you just, I don’t know, it’s something that just lets you zone everything out and I think it actually helps to be in your own world because if you listen to all the half conversations going on and if you could actually get distracted by every time the phone rang (J8, i/v, 2007).

In addition to these experiences, J15’s description of his writing process fittingly sums up the feeling of flow and the satisfaction it can provide:

"It [writing] is hard but yes I do (love it). I think everyone does this when they’re creating, in a creative mode, you struggle up this slope of research and preparation and planning and you start writing and you’re still climbing. And you reach a plateau where you’re in a different world and time is stretched and compressed, but it’s hard. It’s not pleasant being up there all the time because you’re fighting chaos; you’re trying to bring this order and it’s very difficult. And you finish it and come down off the plateau and three weeks later I read the published article and I think, ‘God, did I write that! That’s amazing! How did I write that?’ (J15, i/v, 2007).

4.2.2 Personal background

In a similar argument to that previously made in relation to genetics, cognitive abilities and personality, a journalist’s personal background, including family environment and education, may be seen as a necessary but not sufficient component that contributes to the way a journalist produces their work. Lichter, Rothman and Lichter stress the importance of a journalist’s background in their study of United States’ “media elite”52: “What do journalists’ backgrounds have to do with their work? In general, the way we were brought up and the way we live shape our view of the world” (1986, p. 23). While this is a valid point, as argued elsewhere these are only two of the many elements that journalists interact with to produce an article. With the idea of a multiple set of factors contributing to journalistic creativity in mind, this following section discusses the family background and education of this study’s cohort with a similar conclusion to the

52 Lichter et al.’s study from 1980 surveyed a cohort of journalists from what they considered to be the influential or elite news organisations in the United States. These organisations included ABC, NBC, CBS, PBS, Time Magazine, Newsweek, US News and World Report, the New York Times, the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal. Lichter et al. were attempting to discover whether world views held by journalists were different to those held by the audience and whether the journalists’ views affected how news was reported and received.
other sections emerging: it is difficult to ascertain what it is that makes a journalist a journalist by focusing on one variable alone.

4.2.2.1 Family and home environment

Csikszentmihalyi notes that the family contribution to an individual’s cultural capital (1997, p. 53; 2003, p. 329) is significant but he also contends that it is vital that the family provides access to the domain and access to the field. However, in contrast to other spheres of production, which may require very specific access such as music lessons and provision of musical instruments if a child has a musical bent, rather than direct access to the domain and field, the journalists’ families from this cohort provided access by focusing on elements of journalism such as language, news and the media.

But before we accept the assumptions of this argument, research into the effect of family variables on creative production has found contradictory results. While variables such as birth order in a family seem to suggest first-borns are more likely to excel in fields with high tradition and status whilst lower-borns excel in revolutionary or unconventional fields (Simonton, 2008a, p. 252), there is also research that argues that sibling position makes no difference to creative outcomes; instead treating a child as special because of perceived high achievement may be a root cause of why a child excels in a particular area (Albert, 1980). Furthermore, research that has examined the size of a family has found children from large families are supposedly more creative, in this case meaning artistically gifted, yet not as scholastically gifted (Runco, 2007) while other research has found family size to be irrelevant (Gaynor & Runco, 1992). Another variable is the loss of a parent (Eisenstadt, 1978) and other childhood traumas (Feldman, 2003) with Dacey and Lennon (1998) finding that creative children, meaning those that appear artistically inclined, had a higher incidence of traumatic events than children in comparison groups. However, Mockros (1996) pointed out that studies have been done that found a stable early life can also nurture creativity. Similarly, Csikszentmihalyi’s research into eminent individuals discovered that there were positive creative outcomes from a traumatic childhood but there were also positive outcomes from a less dysfunctional childhood and he elegantly summed up this dichotomy:

Yet what is astonishing is the great variety of paths that led to eminence. Some of our respondents were precocious—almost prodigious—and others had a normal childhood. Some had difficult early years, lost a parent, or experienced various
forms of hardship; others had happy family lives. A few even had normal childhoods (1997, p. 181).

Csikszentmihalyi’s comment encapsulates the argument this thesis is attempting to demonstrate: it is difficult to identify commonalities that may reside in a creative person. It is more fruitful to examine the creative individual as one part of a system of elements who interacts with each part of that system to produce work that is both novel and appropriate. In line with this argument, the journalists in this study came from a wide range of backgrounds and family situations. The majority were Australian born of Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Celtic heritage but other cultures represented included Dutch, New Zealander, German and Hungarian. Two journalists were migrants who were born in England and immigrated to Australia and one was of English background but born in South Africa. Family dynamics were diverse: elder, middle and youngest children; two-parent, blended and single parent families; only children, twins, two-child and large families; a wide range of ages in siblings; and, a mixture of single sex and boy/girl sibling combinations. J20 had a particularly traumatic childhood with an alcoholic and abusive father that led to suicide attempts and a number of other respondents cited trauma in the form of family breakdown, money problems and mental illness but even with these traumas, most recall a loving, supportive environment. The combination of backgrounds and family dynamics demonstrates Csikszentmihalyi’s contention of the difficulty involved in generalising about specific individual traits thought to be necessary in identifying a creative person.

Nonetheless, the journalists in this study did show a remarkable similarity when asked about encouragement from the family, with only two exceptions. Most of the journalists in this cohort stated that their parents encouraged them in whatever they wanted to do: out of the twenty journalists who answered the question, fifteen said they were encouraged in whatever interested them, two others indicated their parents encouraged them in pursuit of sport and one indicated their parents encouraged drawing:

Oh my parents were very good. They encouraged me in whatever I took an interest in. I mean I’m one of those kids that got taken to a whole list of activities and pursuits and I dropped out of most of them but I was provided with the opportunity and encouragement. Definitely (J2, i/v, 2007).
Anything I wanted to do basically. Me and my brother are like chalk and cheese. We’ve both been encouraged in the same way. They said as long as we were happy, they didn’t care (J8, i/v, 2007).

The two journalists who said they could not recall their parents encouraging them in anything specific were older. Both J5 and J20 were in their late fifties at the time of the interview and Australian culture at the time of their childhood could partially account for their statements, although J20 described his family as particularly dysfunctional. Australian families in the 1950s and 1960s were typically patriarchal. While women’s employment outside the home increased from the mid-1960s (Hassan, McAllister & Dowrick, 2003), in the typical family, the father was the breadwinner while the mother was the homemaker (Macintyre, 2009, pp. 222-223). In fact, J5 commented on this: “…fathers had their jobs, which took extraordinary hours, and mothers had their jobs, looking after the house and things, and kids would just get out of the house as soon as possible and come back as late as possible” (i/v, 2007).

In a similar way to the variations within the different family dynamics attributable to each of these journalists, there was a mixture of answers to the question of how much access to the domain and field the cohort’s families provided. Csikszentmihalyi maintains an individual is more likely to be creative if a family can provide access to the domain and the field with Feldman also maintaining that, “being raised in an environment where there is natural access to the domain and encouragement to participate in it seems to be very important” (2003, p. 174). In this regard, J12’s father was a journalist, which gave him a high amount of access to the domain and field, and J3 had an uncle in the news business. While these are isolated examples in this sample, there is ample anecdotal evidence that journalism is a profession where family connections are helpful in obtaining a position in the profession. For instance, Stephen Perkin, son of late *The Age* editor Graham Perkin, confirmed he was hired as a journalist because his father was influential: “the only reason I got a job was because of who I was. It certainly wasn’t because of my school marks … Nepotism was rife in those days. There were lots of sons of journalists around the building” (in Hills, 2010, p. 345). In addition, online publication *Crikey.com* (2005) has provided a list of hundreds of Australian media workers who have a parent working in the industry. In this study, apart from J12 and J3 there was very little formal access provided to journalism by the family, but examination of the data indicated that families provided
other forms of access by exposing their children to some fundamental domain aspects of journalism – language, media and news – as well as encouraging them in their chosen profession.

Although there was little formal access provided by these journalists’ families to journalism, the respondents did give examples of ways their families provided indirect access by encouraging an interest in society. J14 and J8’s families, for example, exposed them to news and current affairs from an early age while J3 and J12 noted how they were raised in households where an interest in politics was encouraged. J2 said his family were very “socially aware” (i/v, 2007). A number of the other interviewees commented on how newspapers and other forms of written media were a constant in their households and their families encouraged them to read:

I have a grandfather who used to read to me as a little girl and I think that started off, he actually used to read [Australian news magazine] The Bulletin, which was a pink covered publication at that stage, and he used to sit me down in the kitchen and then he’d read and I would just cling on to every word. And I think that gave me a love of the language and general knowledge and things that were going on in the world. We used to get the paper where I lived in the country and it was about a kilometre down the road and I used to run down and get the paper every day and read that. I just think I was very lucky to have a grandfather who started me off (E14, i/v, 2008).

Intimately connected to how much access to the domain and field these journalists had is the question of what or who influenced them to become journalists. J12, of course, noted the example at home of a father who was in the profession, but apart from J12, no other journalist mentioned a family member as an influence thus demonstrating, in contrast to Csikszentmihalyi’s contention, how little influence direct access to the domain and field of journalism a family needs to provide. Other journalists noted influences such as wanting to be “at the forefront of things” (J3, i/v, 2007), considering it an interesting occupation (J4, J5), having an interest in public affairs and writing (J7, J8) and reading other journalists’ work (J13, J15). In fact, when journalist Jennifer Byrnes told why she became a journalist, she referred to a fictional figure rather than any family influence:
There was not a single jot of journalism in my family, but it was that classic thing, because you were good at English – I got distinctions in English – [my mother said] ‘why don’t you try journalism’? [Also] I did watch a lot of Superman and I was very struck by Lois Lane. She seemed to have the life that I liked. She looked sharp, she was surrounded by men, she had adventures (in Hills, 2010, p. 353).

Jennifer Byrnes’ recollection of Lois Lane as an early example of journalism was also noted by two journalists in this study. It was fictional characters, such as Lois Lane from Superman and April O’Neill from Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and US television shows such as Just Shoot Me and Murphy Brown, which influenced J9 and J19 when they were younger:

I really like, and I’ve only thought about this in the last couple of years, but when I think about it I really liked this old show called Press Gang and it was about a student newspaper and it was English and I watched that when I was about six and I thought maybe that’s why I wanted to be a journalist. And I think it is. And also Murphy Brown as well and I think April O’Neill from Ninja Turtles (both laugh). They were just my three favourite journalist characters from when I was really young and I think it did have an impression on me (J9, i/v, 2007).

In summary, it can be seen that while few of the families of the journalists in this study had direct links to the domain and field, they were still able to provide an environment where the fundamentals of journalism were accessible. Again, though, as with other variables discussed in this thesis, it is difficult to definitively pinpoint why these individuals chose journalism over other forms of cultural production or even other forms of writing. However, it can be reasonably claimed that the individual experiences provided by these journalists’ families contributed in some degree to each journalist’s accumulation of cultural capital, thus providing some of the resources needed for a successful outcome in their chosen sphere of production.

4.2.2.2 Education

Learning the rules of writing

Journalism is a form of writing. Learning the basics of language, that is, spelling, punctuation and grammar, is a crucial component in domain acquisition and, for this reason, journalists in this study were specifically asked about how they learnt, given their location in Australia, the rules of the English language. Journalism textbooks
instruct on the basics of language as part of the overall skills of journalism writing (Grundy, 2007; Hicks, 2007; McKane, 2006; Oakham, 1997; White, 2005) but it is important to visit early experiences in writing acquisition in an attempt to discover how the skills of writing are acquired.

Research into early literacy acquisition indicates that children learn to read and write via a mixture of individual, social and cultural influences including intelligence, temperament, family, peers, education and cultural expectations (Bransford, 2000; Rowe, 2007; Teale, 1983). Teale further contends that literacy is a form of knowledge that is not a natural learning experience and not everyone will be able to develop reading and writing skills. Rather, it is the early family social environment that encourages these skills, not through formal teaching but via everyday interaction between the caregivers and child with an environment that is “finely tuned” (Teale, 1983, p. 8) to the child. Examination of the data from this research indicated that the home environment of the journalists in this study played some part toward literacy acquisition by providing a family environment that encouraged the development of literacy skills.

In addition, Bransford (2000) cited research that has shown that children whose caregivers have provided opportunities for early literacy experiences are more likely to have high literacy skills. While all children have the capacity for language development, unless a child is raised in an environment that provides the opportunity to practise language, the child will not become competent. For literacy skills, reading to the child from a young age and encouraging storytelling develops the tendency for “early independent reading” (Bransford, 2000, p. 105). A notable commonality throughout the respondents in this research was the level of interest in reading – twenty-two out of the twenty-two journalists interviewed and seven out of the eight editors asked said they read as a child, either from a very young age or from their early teenage years. Many of the journalists were encouraged to read, enjoyed reading as a child, and still read as much as possible:

As a kid, fiction, and I had this thing for quite a long time about working my way through the classics. I didn’t get there because there’s a lot of them but I read a lot of early demanding books for my age. And then as I got older I became much more
interested in the non-fiction. I probably read more non-fiction than fiction at the moment but that may change (J2, i/v, 2007).

Again, though, there was a wide range of interests among this cohort: some said they read fiction as a child, others read non-fiction; some still prefer to read fiction as adults whereas others now read non-fiction; reading interests ranged from children’s books, such as Enid Blyton and the Goosebump and Babysitters Club series of books, to comics; some read Australian writers such as young adult fiction writer Sonia Hartnett while others read classics of the English literary canon such as Frankenstein. J5 recalled how he read the family’s encyclopaedias and said, “…buying the encyclopaedia was probably the single most influential thing I can think of as a kid that both my parents had something to do with” (i/v, 2007). The commonality in all these recollections is that these journalists were immersed in language from a young age.

Csikszentmihalyi cited fiction writers in his study who emphasised the importance of reading in understanding what to write, how to write and how to judge what is considered good writing by the field (1997, p. 47). Similar findings were discovered in this research. For example, J12, whose father was a journalist, said the following: “What my father used to say was, ‘If you want to write well, you need to read well’” (i/v, 2007). Writer and journalist Helen Garner gave the following advice when asked what she would tell up-and-coming writers: “Read. Read, read, read every day” (in Eisenhuth & McDonald, 2007, p. 166). A number of journalists in this research noted how important their immersion in reading was in learning how to write correctly:

Reading, I think. Because I did a lot of reading as a child, I just picked up on things (J9, i/v, 2007).

I think if you read enough, you learn those rules, and you see words written so you learn spelling (J17, i/v, 2008).

I’ve always been a very good speller, and in terms of grammar, through reading (J18, i/v, 2008).

E13 came to Australia in primary school (aged eight) and learnt English as her third language. When asked how she learnt spelling, punctuation and grammar her immediate response was that she read:
I absorbed it by reading. I was a bookworm. I used to read five books a week … People who can’t write, I just say to them, ‘Read, read, read, read and then read some more.’ You’ll just learn it by osmosis (E13, i/v, 2008).

However, while rules of writing should be considered important in journalism, different policies in Australian education over thirty years have affected how the journalists in this study learnt how to write. In Australia in the late 1960s, what is known as the ‘grammar revolution’ took place (Bernard, 1999) where the formal teaching of grammar was abandoned because researchers claimed to have found that rote learning grammar did not improve the ability to write. Amendments to the Australian English syllabus in 1968, which “considerably reduced the emphasis upon grammar” (Nay-Brock, 1984, p. 55), led to almost thirty years of virtually ignoring the formal rules of English in a school setting (Bernard, 1999, par. 1). The personal growth era model (Bernard, 1999, sect. 4.3; Nay-Brock, 1984, p. 56) instead sought to promote “development through language, and an associated disinclination to engage in overt teaching and learning about language” (Christie, 2004, p. 152, emphasis in original). The emphasis in this latter approach was on how a child could learn grammar naturally through examination of texts rather than by rote. Instead of a formal curriculum, teachers were given the freedom to “develop their own courses according to the needs of their pupils” (Nay-Brock, 1984, p. 56), a move that created confusion among English teachers who, with no formal structure and ambiguous learning outcomes, found their role in teaching grammar confusing.

In 1994, the Australian Education Council (AEC) published a Statement on English for Australian Schools that called for a reintroduction of teaching linguistic structure that included, among other things, spelling, grammar and punctuation, in conjunction with, rather than separate from, learning about texts: “To compose, comprehend and respond to texts, students need to be effective users of the linguistic structures and features of the English language” (AEC 1994, p. 12). However, by this time, almost thirty years of little formal education in grammar meant a generation of students had limited understanding of the rules of writing.

This set of developments could explain why, out of the journalists asked about how they learnt the rules of writing, it was primarily the older journalists who indicated school was crucial although one of the younger journalists mentioned a teacher who was “mad
on punctuation” (J19, i/v, 2008). Most of the journalists under the age of 45 learnt the
rules of writing either from their parents (J8’s mother is an English teacher and J12’s
father is a journalist), through reading or at work via colleagues and using Microsoft
Word (computer word-processing program):

I went to a Marist Brothers school and the Brothers were pretty much up on parsing
and comprehension (J23, i/v, 2008: 62 years old).

I think just because my dad was such a fanatic about spelling and because I was
always writing he would always, I used to write letters and stuff and he’d have a
look at them and be like, ‘Ahhhhhhhhhh!’ (J19, i/v, 2008: 22 years old).

Word for Windows and colleagues in newsrooms, certainly not the NSW education
system (J4, i/v, 2007: early 30s).

J18 teaches journalism at an Australian university and marvelled at how little her
current students understood how to write:

I had a student last year who had no concept of how a sentence was constructed,
who had no idea of a capital letter or a full stop. It was just words on a page,
literally, words scattered on a page. And I said, ‘I just don’t get it. How did this
boy get in?’ Like how was he able to find enough subjects in the HSC, which
clearly did not require any written component, to get enough marks to get into this
course? I don’t care whether he can write or not but the problem is if he wants to be
a journalist, they have such totally inappropriate objectives because, as I say, if you
want to be something else, it’s fine if you can’t write, or spell, or have no
knowledge of current affairs, but the entire journalism industry is not going to
change (laughs) to accommodate that set of values (J18, i/v, 2008).

The above comment is in line with this researcher’s anecdotal experience teaching into
the Bachelor of Communication program at the University of Newcastle in Australia.
*Introduction to Professional Writing* is a first-year course that introduces students to
writing for the media (for example, journalism and public relations) and a high number
of students appear to struggle with sentence construction, grammar and punctuation.

**Formal education**

Even into the twenty-first century, journalism academics point out that there is a
perception that journalists are born not made (Forbes, 2010; Oakham, 2006; Sheridan
Burns, 2003). If this were true, educating journalists would appear to be to be pointless. However, in Australia, journalism courses are among the most popular university courses (Alysen & Oakham, 1996; Green, 1999b; Patching, 1996; White, 2005) and the majority of entry-level positions in the profession of journalism are now typically offered to university graduates. The history of journalism employment in Australia (see, for example, Sheridan Burns (2003)) shows that journalism training has changed from its earlier days, where training was conducted in the workplace via cadetships (Henningham, 1998a),\(^53\) to a system of university-based education.

As part of a study done in 1983 that examined journalists’ attitudes to such things as education and job satisfaction, Masterton found that 60.1% of the sample had completed secondary education only, with 16.4% of the journalists having a university degree (4.2% had a journalism degree and 11.3% had a non-journalism degree) (1983, p. 25). In 2008, a demographic study conducted on journalists found that 74 % of journalists were tertiary-educated with 75% of those graduates studying journalism or communication subjects in their degree (Hanusch, 2008, p. 102). Analysis showed that of the twenty-two journalists in this study who answered the question about their education qualifications, six (17%) had completed secondary education only and sixteen (73%) had a degree, with five of those having also completed either an Honours or a Masters degree. These figures are very similar to Hanusch’s findings. Of the tertiary educated journalists, half had completed either communication or media degrees.

It is also necessary to point out that of the six journalists without a tertiary education, one was a 20-year-old student who had just completed her first year of a Bachelor of Arts degree and was expecting to complete tertiary education, one was a 36-year-old who came through the cadet system in New Zealand, and the other four were aged in their late forties or above. The age factor here illustrates how expectations in journalism have changed with journalists now expected to have at least a tertiary degree. Hanusch’s 2008 demographic study did not include the age of the 25% of journalists who did not have a tertiary education, but informal analysis (personal correspondence with Hanusch, 2010) indicated similar results to the data in this study with older journalists more likely to have completed a cadetship with no tertiary training.

\(^{53}\) Cadetships are discussed in further detail in the Field section.
However, the discussion in the interviews for this project on the value of tertiary education differed between the journalists. Three respondents specifically noted how university education was not helpful in their practice with ‘on-the-job’ experience listed as more valuable in learning how to write in a journalistic style:

I mean you think you can pick it up at Uni and know what it is you're doing but I don’t feel that I was in any way taught particularly well what to expect (J1, i/v, 2007).

Just stylistically they’ve [colleagues] taught me how to write more than university (J13, i/v, 2008).

Learnt a bit at school, nothing at uni, and mostly on the job from other journalists (E15, i/v, 2008).

One reason for the disparity between what a journalism student learns during education and what happens in a working newsroom could be the difference in expectations students have to what actually happens when working in journalism. An Australian study done by Grenby et al. (2009) into secondary school students’ perceptions of journalism as a career found students’ ideas about what journalists do differed greatly to the reality. While the high school students understood certain aspects of a journalist’s lifestyle, for example the students identified journalism as “deadline and current affair focussed (sic), time-consuming and potentially stressful” (Grenby et al., 2009, p. 13), other answers indicated a reliance on popular perceptions of journalism (the second highest response stated that journalism was “full of travel opportunities” (ibid.)). Additionally, Fitzsimmons and Bilboe (1999), after a qualitative study examining why Australian school students chose journalism as a career, pointed out that the difference between what secondary school teachers and editors consider good writing is considerable with journalistic writing typically short, with few adjectives and easy to understand. Fitzsimmons and Bilboe further made the comment that students who were considered good writers at school often find it difficult to write in a journalistic form (1999, p. 4). J6 confirmed Fitzsimmons and Bilboe’s findings by relating an anecdote about a student who clearly did not understand journalistic style:

I never went to university but for everyone I know at university this is almost the complete antithesis to what happens at university because this is ‘don’t write a 10000 word essay’ and I had a girl who when I was in Adelaide applied for a
cadetship with us who sent off her 10000 word thesis on *Harry Potter* and to me all that showed that she had no fucking concept of what journalism was (J6, i/v, 2007).

Contrary to J1, J13 and E15’s experiences with journalism education, E11 found her experience with university beneficial but also recognised the importance of work colleagues and continuing to engage with the domain, a point agreed with by J24:

I learned a lot at Uni, I had some good lecturers, but then just working with an editor and them saying to you, ‘No we don’t do this’ or ‘Put that up there’ that’s the (pause) I think you learn the most from reading other journalists’ work (E11, i/v, 2008).

I'd say a third learnt through uni, a third on the job from superiors/sub-editors, and a third learnt from simply reading (J24, i/v, 2008).

One major point that can be elicited from E11’s and J24’s comments about education is how both of them have mentioned the importance of the field (other journalists, editors, sub-editors) and the domain (other journalists’ work, reading) illustrating the significance of each of the elements in the systems model: learning the rules, procedures and previously created products in the domain as well as the preferences of the field means an individual is more likely to produce a creative outcome. The negative comments about university education by E15, J1, J6 and J13 and the positive comments by E11 and J24, also provide reinforcement for the argument that journalists are individual agents and they use their idiosyncratic personal variables to enable their action and interact with the system of print journalism.

### 4.2.3 Aptitude for journalism

With the continuing contention that journalists are born not made, there is an argument that the best new recruits have an inbuilt talent, or aptitude, for journalism. Oakham’s (2006) research into cadet journalists and their trainers found that there is still a mythology about journalism, that is, there is the idea that there is an “it” factor present in new recruits that gives them a talent for practicing journalism. The journalism trainers in Oakham’s study used terms such as “born with it”, having a “basic predisposition”, an “innate ability”, or a “natural flair” for journalism (2006, pp. 190-191) to describe how they chose new recruits. On the contrary, an examination of the data in this research, coupled with information from the literature, has shown that while
an ability for important elements of journalism, such as language skills, may be a talent an individual has, it is equally important to take other variables into account such as home environment and education and how an individual interacts with these variables. While it can be argued that such abilities as good language skills, an interest in the world and an enjoyment for writing can mean an individual has an aptitude for journalism and are desirable abilities for print journalists, it cannot be definitively shown that certain people are born with a talent for journalism especially when one considers that journalism itself is a cultural product. In some instances, it can be shown how the individual journalists in this study can perform their job requirements regardless of what the literature claims is essential for a successful journalist.

John Henningham’s research of Australian journalists attempted to discover whether journalism was a “calling” (1996, p. 210) and also asked the question as to why the respondents in his study chose journalism as a career. Henningham found 27% of journalists entered journalism because they were good at writing with others listing glamour and excitement (19%), and an interest in current affairs (16%) as reasons for joining the profession (1996, p. 210). Jim Willis also listed several reasons as to why journalists are drawn to journalism: love for reading and writing; curiosity about what is going on; wanting to contribute to society; the ability to work independently; wanting to be on the inside and finding out things first; and, the power to develop a story and dig deeper (2010, pp. 1-12). When the cohort from this research was asked why they chose journalism as a career, the fifteen journalists who answered the question said that they enjoyed writing, or were good at writing (J4, J7, J8, J9, J10, J11, J12, J13, J14, J15, J18, J19, J20, J22, J24), seven thought the job would be interesting (J4, J5, J6, J8, J10, J11, J22), three thought it an exciting career (J1, J2, J15), and three “loved language” (J1, J4, J15). J15 has found his skills in language and writing has made journalism a rewarding career choice:

The English language has always fascinated me since I was at school, and to be able to craft it in such a way – against a set of rules of course, a newspaper’s rules – to make it perfect in that sense, as near perfect as one can in the time available, is very satisfying (J15, i/v, 2007).

54 Some of the journalists gave more than one answer.
I’ve always loved writing. I’ve always had an interest in public affairs, the news and media and I guess when I needed a career path it [journalism] made so much sense (J8, i/v, 2007).

J8’s remark sums up the characteristics that would point to an aptitude for a journalistic career, that is, an enjoyment of writing, an awareness of public affairs and interest in the media. As noted in the Domain section, journalists in this study not only keep up with current news via newspapers, radio, television and online news sites, but a number mentioned how they had always been interested in what was going on in the world:

This is so stupid because I’ve never really owned up to this, but I always read newspapers, and I’ve always been interested in news, and I’ve always watched the news, and I didn’t find anyone else that interested in news. It was always something I enjoyed and I was very interested in (J10, i/v, 2008).

Actually as a kid I always loved newspapers, always loved watching the news, always interested in current affairs, always interested in general knowledge, always had pretty good general knowledge so that was probably it initially and just writing, I was good at writing (J7, i/v, 2007).

It could be argued that J10 and J7 were born with this interest in knowing about the world, they were “congenitally inquisitive” as White (2005, p. ix) wrote, but this is an argument likely to be made by someone who claims that journalists are born not made. However, each of these journalists were given the opportunity in their home life to access newspapers and were likely encouraged to read newspapers, illustrating again how even informal access to the domain can mean someone develops an aptitude for an area. Walberg (1988), writing on creativity and talent, stated that while talent may be necessary for a creative outcome there is no distinction between whether the talent was inherent or if it was enhanced through learning; in other words, talent in an area can be improved and developed by practice and persistence. Simonton (2008b), writing on talent and genetics in relation to intelligence and personality, also emphatically argued that talent, and how it is used, is dependent on both nature and nurture.

Research by Grenby et al. (2009) into why career advisers in Australia recommended journalism as a career path found four themes emerged from the questions asked with

---

55 The four themes aspiring journalists needed were confidence, good communication skills, inquisitiveness and strong skills in English (Grenby et al., 2009, p. 26).
one, in particular, appropriate for this section: strong skills in English are required to practice journalism. In fact, an earlier paper based on the same research reported that the thirty-two secondary school career advisers “all said potential journalists needed a strong, excellent or at least ‘good’ level of English skills” (Busst, Patching & Pearson, 2008, p. 7). In support of Patching et al.’s contention, the majority of journalists interviewed in this study performed strongly in English and other humanities subjects such as history. Of the twenty-two journalists asked about subjects they liked/disliked at school, twenty-one answered English as one they liked and did well at with only one saying she “wasn’t very good at it” (J6, i/v, 2007). Of other subjects mentioned, humanities subjects (including languages, art, drama, HSIE56 [Human Society and Its Environment], media studies and general studies) were subjects either excelled at or enjoyed. Conversely, out of the eighteen respondents who mentioned maths, only four enjoyed the subject. Similar numbers noted science as a subject they found difficult, although there was a differentiation between hard sciences such as physics and chemistry and others like biology:

I was one of those kids who was absolutely humanities, both -minded and -abled. I was really good at English, really good at history and really good at art. Pretty good at biology, really crap at maths …Yeah, really bad at maths. And even worse at hard sciences like physics and chemistry. I actually got 100% in my HSC in my English exam, or the equivalent. And 27% in my physics. So that’s the kind of spread: I was really extreme (J17, i/v, 2008).

I did all history and all English in my HSC. So four-unit in each of them? (my question) Yeah. We had to do maths, I think, and I was awful at that. But the rest of my HSC was English and history – that’s always what I did well in (J13, i/v, 2008).

In reference to J13’s comment here, Busst, Patching and Pearson’s (2008) paper on career advisers’ attitudes to journalism quoted one respondent who said that if a student had narrow interests, journalism would not be suggested as a career path. If so, this adviser could well have discouraged J13. Further negative traits recognised by career advisers included lack of self-esteem or shyness. Journalism is a profession where confidence is seemingly a necessary trait and, while shyness has already been discussed,

---

56 Human Society and Its Environment is a subject offered to Australian students from a Kindergarten level through to senior high school level. Its key learning areas are the study of people and their cultural, social and natural environments.
three journalists acknowledged how difficult writing was and how easy it is to feel self-

doubt. Two of the feature writers, whose long-form journalism can take up to several

months per story, both expressed a periodic lack of confidence in their writing ability:

I always have periods where I just go, ‘Oh my God, I might have wasted two

months here. I’ve got nothing new; it’s reading like crap; I’ve lost the ability to

write’ (laughs). All these crises of confidence. Usually at the end I’m pretty proud

of what I hand in (J12, i/v, 2007).

Writing is such a lonely thing. It’s intensely lonely and very, it can be very kind of

scary. And there’s that panic about will I ever be able to write it – the horror of the

blank screen, all that stuff. I mean, you know you’ll be able to write it but you get

an anxious feeling starting a story (J17, i/v, 2008).

Each of the above examples illustrates how difficult it is to single out a specific ‘type’

who would have an aptitude for journalism: narrow interests do not rule out a successful
career; shyness and self-esteem issues may not be as detrimental as thought; and, an

interest in the world from a young age may be helpful but it can also be claimed that

encouragement in this interest from family or other carers may be just as vital; and,

while a strong result in English is helpful, an interest in maths or science does not

preclude working as a journalist. In fact, some types of journalism may find these

necessary (for example, finance or business journalism). It is, as argued throughout the

thesis, how journalists take their own particular idiosyncrasies and interact with the field

and domain that leads to a propensity for a creative outcome. Each of these examples

also demonstrates how a journalist can work with the unique but shared structures that

include a number of external influences such as home and education and evolve to a

level where they are able to work with a high ability within the expectations of this

sphere of cultural production.

4.2.5 Conclusion

This section has examined how an individual journalist interacts with their idiosyncratic

influences including a variety of personal traits such as genetic background, cognitive

structures and personality as well as influences such as family and education.

Examination of the data has shown that these influences affect how a journalist acts but

has also shown how these actions affect individual traits and other social and cultural

structures the individual interacts with. The data has also shown how an individual uses
these and other influences to produce a creative contribution. Furthermore, in agreement with Csikszentmihalyi’s contention that there is no universal trait that characterises a creative person, this research has illustrated how journalists with their differing backgrounds and personal qualities can produce within the system of journalism.

Because of the common belief that the individual is solely responsible for creativity, much research has been done on identifying characteristics of creative individuals (for a comprehensive summary of creativity and personality research see Runco, 2007, pp. 279-317; Sawyer, 2006, pp. 39-56) and these ideas are what drive many of the references in journalism’s literature. Characteristics such as divergent thinking (Guilford, 1967) – fluency of thinking, originality and flexibility in thinking – are well known. While these characteristics may be important, they are only one aspect of what constitutes a creative individual; genetics, cognitive structures, family variables and education environments need to be taken into account. Additionally, it is crucial to take cultural and social contexts into consideration. Csikszentmihalyi contends that an individual must refer to an existing culture, the traditions and conventions already in place, before a difference can be produced: “‘New’ is meaningful only in reference to the ‘old’” (2003, p. 315). This contention was explored in the Domain section.

Csikszentmihalyi (2003) also maintains that creativity is inherently social and although the abovementioned personal traits may be necessary for the individual to produce creative products, and learning the rules and traditions of the domain are also equally crucial, public recognition cannot be discounted since creativity is “a phenomenon that is constructed through an interaction between producer and audience” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p. 314). With this comment in mind, it is now important to examine the social context in the systems model, the field, and how it interacts with the individual and domain and both enables and constrains a journalist in their creative process.

Sheridan Burns makes the point that a reflective journalist, one who “is conscious of and understand the active decisions that make up daily practice” (2003, p. 71), will cope better with journalism’s challenges and produce ethical work that is responsible, thoughtful and effective (ibid.). This argument can be seen to sit well with Csikszentmihalyi’s model, that is, by learning the domain and understanding individual traits a journalist can understand the tools needed to produce work, but it needs to be
highlighted that it is equally important to understand what the field expects. Given this assertion, it is time to examine the field of journalism to understand its importance in producing creative texts.
4.3 The field as part of a dynamic system

The field is the social structure of the systems model, which provides the validation, or value judgement, that a created product, process or idea is creative. From Keith Sawyer’s perspective, the field is composed of that group of intermediaries who make decisions about what is accepted into the domain and therefore what is disseminated throughout the field (2006, p. 124). Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon (2001) list three types of practitioners in the field: the elite, who “preside over the destiny” (2001, p. 24) of the domain and “judge which changes in the domain should be sanctioned” (ibid.); the expert practitioners who are “authorised to perform within the domain” (2001, p. 25); and, “approved apprentices or students” (ibid., emphasis in original). In print journalism, and following this typology, the field would consist of, for example, editors, deputy editors and media owners (the elite), chiefs-of-staff, other journalists and sub-editors (experienced practitioners), and cadets, interns, trainees and students.

Sawyer (2006) also contends that the audience is part of the field and Csikszentmihalyi (1997) includes teachers which, in the case of this research, incorporates journalism educators at a university level.

Csikszentmihalyi defines the field as the element of the system that “has the power to determine the structure of the domain. Its major function is to preserve the domain as it is, and its secondary function is to help it evolve by a judicious selection of new content” (1990, p. 206). This explanation of the field points to the non-linearity of the systems model with the definition including both the field’s interaction with the domain as well as its impact on the individual; all three components are active and equally important. Csikszentmihalyi’s description of the field is also borne out by results from this research: the knowledges, traditions, techniques, rules, codes and conventions, the “creativity language” (Sawyer, 2006, p. 137), of the domain of print journalism are crucial in a journalist’s work, but the field is the social structure that teaches the language, assesses the creative outcome and also, importantly, decides in formal and informal ways what is included into the domain for other journalists to draw on. The field is constituted by what have been called the gatekeepers (Abuhamdeh & Csikszentmihalyi, 2004; Csikszentmihalyi, 1988b; 1990; 1995; 1997; 2003; Webb, Schirato & Danaher, 2002), or the intermediaries (Hesmondhalgh, 2002; Sawyer, 2006; Stein, 1963) to the domain and it is the field’s role to separate valuable contributions from the eccentric or simply bizarre. To summarise, the field can be thought of as all the
people who can affect the decision as to what new product, process or idea is to be included in the domain. The individual must learn “the criteria of selection, the preferences of the field” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 47) to work effectively with that field.

Journalism is an especially social and highly interactive practice but, as Sawyer (2006) pointed out, so are other forms of writing such as poetry, screenwriting and fiction writing. Perhaps saying journalism’s social structures are more visible than these other forms of writing is more apt but it is difficult to deny that one of the significant aspects of journalism is that it is a highly social process. An argument in journalism research, as indicated in the literature review, is centred on how little agency journalists appear to have and this is attributed to the supposed constraints of the social field (Henningham, 1989, p. 27; 1990, p. x; Machin & Niblock, 2006, p. 162; McNair, 1998, p. 61) whereas other spheres of writing, such as poetry and fiction writing, imbued with the Romantic image of solitary creation, appear not to have such constraints. To argue against this contention, a research project examining Australian fiction writers (Paton, 2008) using the systems model found that the field is crucial in that sphere of production. Paton’s work noted the importance of members of the field of fiction writing, such as agents, editors, critics, the media, the audience and other writers, and their effect in shaping and supporting a fiction writer’s work. It can be argued that this interaction operates in a similar fashion in the field of print journalism. While Sawyer notes that the common understanding of fiction writing is that it would seem to be a domain that is isolated from social influences (2006, p. 206), when tested by Paton, the premise that fiction writers produce in isolation simply did not hold up: “individual writers are constantly interacting with social and cultural factors that shape themselves and their work in many different ways” (Paton, 2008, p. 227).

Given that journalism is a form of writing that is dependent in many ways on social interaction one can then ask, how does the field contribute to the creative activity of the journalist? According to Csikszentmihalyi, there are three ways the field can influence the incidence of creativity: is the field reactive or proactive; is there a narrow or broad filter to select a creative product; and, how connected is the field to the rest of society (1997, pp. 43-44)? Illustrations for each of these three points can be found within the way the field of print journalism operates.
Firstly, Csikszentmihalyi contends: “A reactive field does not solicit or stimulate novelty, while a proactive field does” (1997, p. 43). Print journalism provides news, a word based on new. The field actively seeks out new content for its stories on an ongoing basis, and therefore it can be argued that the field of print journalism solicits novelty. An example of this is the notion of ‘the scoop’, where a publication breaks a story before its competition does. Journalists are actively encouraged to break news (Allan, 2005), particularly because news is a commercial enterprise. As McNair noted: “For a profit-hungry, commercially focused, globally targeted news media, speed and exclusivity are hugely important” (2005, p. 158).

Secondly, creativity can be affected by whether the filter the field uses to determine novelty is broad or narrow. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) argues that too narrow a filter can starve a domain of novelty by not allowing enough new ideas, which therefore leads to stagnation, but too broad a filter is just as dangerous. A domain may lose credibility if “a field is too open and accepts every novelty indiscriminately” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p. 326). A current concern in print journalism is about the future of journalism with the Internet and social media seen as a danger to more conventional practice (MEAA, 2008b). News bloggers, for example, are seen as a threat. Bruns defines news blogging as “the practice of covering the news through blogging – whether by doing original reporting or by providing commentary on the news as it is reported in other news sources” (2006a, p. 11). However, while Bruns also states that “the continuing trend in journalism away from investigative reporting and toward pundit commentary also makes blog-based commentary on the news highly compatible with mainstream news content” (ibid.), if members of the field accept news bloggers without fully considering the conventional “set of symbolic rules and procedures” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 27), print journalism as a credible domain, that has established itself as an institutional cornerstone of democracy, could be threatened. The nature of the blog – it can circumvent the customary media ‘gatekeeper’ role, it is easy to set up, and it does not need to apply traditional journalistic standards (Davis, 2008) – means anyone with the available technology, that is, access to the Internet and blog publishing software, can publish. As Jay Rosen said: “Freedom of the press belongs to those who own one, and blogging means anyone can own one” (2005, p. 927). This situation is an example of too broad a filter. However, on saying this, Csikszentmihalyi also notes that, “some of the most creative breakthroughs occur when an idea that works well in one domain gets
grafted to another and revitalises it” (1997, p. 88). This innovative action could happen between print journalism and blogging. Alternatively, news blogging could well become its own domain, as discussed in the *Domain* section of this analysis. Regardless, it can be seen that there are a variety of proactive filters at work in the field of print journalism.

Finally, how connected the field is to the rest of society can affect the incidence of creativity. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) claims that a well-connected field can attract resources to the domain, and this includes economic support as well as the ability to attract new practitioners, both of which are necessary for creative production. With the domain of journalism currently considered important to the way citizens and consumers find out about the world they exist in (Boyer & Hannerz, 2006; Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon, 2001; Hachten, 2005; Harcup, 2004; 2006c; Meadows, 1998; 1999; 2001; North, 2009; Rupar, 2010; Schultz, 1994; Sheridan Burns, 2002; Tapsall & Varley, 2001; Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2008), it can be argued that, for the time being, the field of print journalism is well-connected. This connection can be demonstrated in one way by the methods print journalists source the information they use in their writing: they are connected to the rest of society because powerful members of society, such as politicians, government departments and big business, utilise journalists to get their messages out to the public. They are, at this point, still a necessary part of the power structure of society.

However, this connectedness could change and the intense debate in the industry at the moment between traditional print media and the use of social media could well mean the field of print journalism could become less relevant. In Australia, for example, Premier of NSW Barry O’Farrell used Twitter to comment on his use of new media platforms and how traditional media forms found this difficult: “old media again expressing concern about my tweeting - must have missed this great piece from the Punch [http://t.co/drdd6zX](http://t.co/drdd6zX)” (Tweet sent by @barryofarrell, 17.4.11). Referring back to the second point, how the field reacts to this threat will determine the future of the

---

57 For a comprehensive discussion on journalists and news sources see Franklin and Carlson’s *Journalists, sources, and credibility: new perspectives* (2010), Carlson’s *Dueling, Dancing, or Dominating? Journalists and their Sources* (2009) and Cottle’s *News, public relations and power: mapping the field* (2003).
domain of print journalism but for now, the field of print journalism remains a strong influence on the dissemination of news.

Sawyer (2006) also discussed the field’s influence on creativity. He suggested there are more likely to be creative outcomes in a field that has structured training procedures in place, systems to identify creative young people, experienced practitioners to pass on the domain’s knowledge systems, both formally and informally, and opportunities and challenges for new practitioners. Analysis of the interview and observation data collected for this research has shown that each of Sawyer’s criteria can be found within the field of print journalism. As part of the interview process, respondents were specifically asked about their interaction with the field with questions asking them about several areas: how important work colleagues are; mentoring; interaction with management; and, training. But throughout the interviews, when formally questioned about the domain and individual, as well as during informal discussions, interviewees frequently referred to the field and its effect, both positive and negative, providing support for the argument that each element of the systems model “affects the others and is affected by them in turn” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988b p. 329). Analysis of the interviews and the data gathered during observation of the three newsrooms in the study indicated how strongly the field and journalists interact. Rather than seeing this as negative and constraining, as per a predominantly Romantic view of creativity, it is important to consider this structural interaction as also having positive effects. As Giddens (1984) and Wolff (1993) both argued, rather than being seen as simply constraining, structures can also be enabling: the field can not only limit a journalist’s activity but it also provides the impetus and support a print journalist needs to produce a creative text.

The journalists in this study noted a number of ways they interacted with the field and how the field supported their writing. For these journalists, the field is an ongoing source for stories. In addition, a journalist’s work is edited by field members before publication. As well as this, other journalists, themselves members of the field, are used for feedback on the suitability of article ideas, language, phrasing and story structure. Senior members of the field are mentors and teachers and there are formal training programs in place via university education and the workplace, all of which are used to socialise journalists into the way the field works. Furthermore, while analysis of the
data gathered showed that journalists learn what their organisation expects from them through formal communication such as style guides, emails and Internet and/or Intranet sites provided by the organisation, they also learn from the field through university education, cadetships, internships, watching colleagues, mentoring and day-to-day editing.

The following observations may not be surprising in themselves as a number of other studies have examined what we are calling the field of print journalism (for summaries see Cottle (2007) and Zelizer (2004)). However, when looked at in terms of the systems model, the findings about the field of print journalism in this study open up a useful way of examining the day-to-day creative practices of print journalists. Knowledge of the field, how the field works and what the field wants, not only leads to a more efficient production process but, as Sawyer has stated, “the most successful creative people are very good at introducing their ideas to the field. They know who the key people are, and they know how the selection process works” (2006, p. 309).

4.3.1 The field in the production process

4.3.1.1 Ideas for articles

Csikszentmihalyi’s (1997) contention that the domain, the field or the individual can be the stimulus for a creative product was identified and supported within the data analysis. From the perspective of the systems model, a journalist’s ‘creative product’ is the article they write. When asked, ‘Where do you get ideas for articles?’ the respondents listed several sources: media releases, wire services, talking to friends, other media, from ‘beats’ such as the court, the Council and police, scheduled events, cultivating contacts, and what’s going on in society – a broad cross sample of examples from the domain, the field and the individual. As one journalist said: “I guess if you’re a good journalist you’re never completely off-duty so you always have an antenna out there” (J18, i/v, 2008), an observation noticed in newsroom NR2: “Story ideas from personal experience – one journo was in Toys ‘R’ Us and thought of a story” (Ob. Notes NR2, 2010 – Day 1). However, the journalists also discussed how the field generated story ideas, in this case senior staff (such as editors, news editors or chiefs of staff), other journalists and the audience.
Results from the analysis in this research showed that editors direct journalists to do stories and this direction is done in a number of ways, both formally and informally. J8, for example, works at a community newspaper and described what happens at the weekly news conference with the editor allocating stories:

Our usual news conference, or editorial conference, would be sit down and [editor’s name deleted] would have kept an eye on, I think she has ABC radio and [TV station name deleted] news and things she might notice in the [publication name deleted] and things from around, and she’ll have a note of all that and I just know she keeps record of it and she goes, ‘oh, we should follow up’ and then she’ll have other story ideas she’s generated from her own life as well and she’ll say, ‘I want a story on this and this and this’ (J8, i/v, 2007).

Observations in newsrooms NR1 and NR2 showed how involved the senior staff members were in generating story ideas. The editor in NR1, for example, received story ideas via email and telephone and allocated stories to journalists in the newsroom if she judged them as appropriate for the publication. Senior staff in NR2 had regular formal meetings as well as ongoing informal discussion about what stories to include in the publication and received story ideas via email and from other media such as television and magazines, which were distributed to the journalists in the newsroom.

Respondents also indicated that publications conduct regular, formal news conferences with the senior staff and journalists where journalists produce story ideas, which are either encouraged or dismissed by senior staff. J18’s (i/v, 2008) daily newspaper has a formal news conference each morning where journalists are encouraged to present ideas, which are discussed by all members of the staff, with the editor making the final decision about the content of the newspaper. The editor in NR2 invited this researcher in to the weekly news conference. In this conference, journalists were expected to present at least one news story as well as two other ideas, which other staff commented on. Senior staff then made the decision to pursue a story if it was appropriate for the publication.

As well as discussion in the formal setting of a publication’s news conference, idea generation between the field and the individual is happening on an informal basis as well. As one editor explained:
We’re always talking about things we’ve seen coming to work, on the news broadcast or the ABC news of a morning or when we’re walking around town. We don’t formalise it but it’s happening all the time (E9, i/v, 2008).

Support for this comment was noticed in all three of the observed newsrooms. Discussions about story ideas between the editors and other senior staff, and between the senior staff and journalists were an ongoing process:

Journalist discusses a tip with News editor about K Rudd – News editor says to tell Senior journalist because it is a political story – also said she gave a tip about an actor to Entertainment journalist (Ob. Notes NR2, 2010 – Day 2).

Additionally, as noted in the last phrase of the observation above, journalists pass on information that is not relevant to their own area of expertise. For example, J4’s reporting included writing about national security issues and he said he willingly shares tips with other journalists as does J17, who understands where her writing strength is:

I’ll often pass those [PR requests] on to other people because I know it’s not a story I’m really knowledgeable about or it doesn’t fit my best profile for what I’m good at (J17, i/v, 2008).

The audience, as members of the field, also contributes to the idea generation process. A number of respondents, particularly at the rural and regional publications, discussed how they received phone calls, emails and ‘drop-ins’ from the public:

We also get phone calls from the community or they come into the office and go, ‘I want to do a story on this’ or bring up an issue and we’ll investigate from there (J7, i/v, 2007).

We’ve got our contacts and one of the major contacts is the public because they always seem to want to let us know when something unusual is happening here, there, everywhere, wanting us to go and investigate (J16, i/v, 2008).

The readership’s involvement was also observed on numerous occasions in both NR1 and NR3. Both, as regional publications, have an intimate relationship with their audience, an observation that Bowd (2005) notes is typical of country publications.58

58 Bowd’s research examines what she calls “country journalists”, which implies rural publications. NR1 and NR3 are classified as regional publications. However, Bowd defined a “country” newspaper as one...
Editor takes phones calls re. suggestions for stories – interaction with community generates story ideas. (Later) Stories generated by members of public re. community groups. They walk in and talk about what is happening. Photos emailed by public (Ob. Notes NR1, 2009-2010 – Day 1).

Member of public brought in info re the sports club she is part of and Editor talked to her re putting a story in editorial. (Later) Phone call to Journalist about tree falling over – told person it was probably too late for this week (Ob. Notes NR3, 2010 – Day 2).

In regional and rural publications, a feeling of ownership of the newspaper by the audience, where they are strongly bonded as a community to the publication, is a common theme in research literature (Bowd, 2005) and a process that is actively encouraged by editors. E9 includes story ideas, photos and information from the audience and made the observation that, financially, an audience’s feeling of ownership is a sound business idea because it encourages the audience to buy the newspaper, thus generating revenue:

We have people come in and actually give us stories about their golden wedding anniversaries or their twenty-firsts – that’s a social sort of thing. We actually have people who ring us and tell us about that sort of thing. I think that’s a sort of trust the people have in you. Or ownership of their newspaper by the community, which is something I’ve encouraged (E9, i/v, 2008).

While E9 is considering how his strategy is financially sound, he has also echoed Rod Kirkpatrick who suggested that, “a measure of an editor’s success is found in whether people ask the paper to tell their stories” (2002, p. 104).

The above examples indicate that the field is a crucial element in story generation. Members of the field such as senior staff, other journalists and the audience contribute to creativity in journalism by providing a source for articles thus allowing for a “productive activity” (McIntyre, 2008c, p. 1), in this case producing an article, to take place.

that is “published in towns or regional cities, published at least weekly but less frequently than daily” (Bowd, 2005, p. 106), which applies to both NR1 and NR3.
**4.3.1.2 Editing**

It is interesting to note that a reason journalism may not be seen as a creative profession is because of the prominence within journalism of the editing process. In this regard, one of the lasting myths about creativity examined by Keith Sawyer (2006) is that a creative person must produce their work with no support or input from others, that is, in the absence of constraint. This common myth has been disputed by a number of creativity researchers (Bailin, 1988; Boden, 2004; Negus & Pickering, 2004; Wolff, 1993) including Sawyer (2006) who demonstrated that even poetry, a form of writing considered to be highly creative, is itself dependent on input and editing from a social structure. Sawyer used the example of poet T.S. Eliot’s first poem, *The Waste Land*, as an example of where, despite significant editorial input to this poem by both Eliot’s more experienced colleague Ezra Pound and Eliot’s wife Vivien, the myth of Eliot as a sole creator persists whereas it is demonstrable that even this work of poetry, most typically seen as the product of an isolated individual, was a collaborative and socially embedded process (Sawyer, 2006, p. 208). Both Pound and Vivien Eliot extensively edited the original manuscript by deleting pages, adding and deleting words and stanzas, and rearranging the work. Pound reduced the original poem by half. This is an example of editing that can be similarly applied to the processes employed in a journalist’s work.

An important part of the socialisation into journalistic practice for a print journalist is gaining an understanding of the editing process, which is an accepted part of a professional journalist’s work (E7, i/v, 2007). In the editing process, crucial aspects of the domain such as the formal rules, conventions, techniques, guides and procedures of the organisation are communicated to the individual journalist through the field:

> When she [a cadet journalist] first started here, her writing style was pretty good, it still is good, but as style points will come up, I’ll just say, ‘Hey, this is how we do it here, don’t ever forget your active voice’ (E1, i/v, 2007).

It is in the editing process that a journalist’s work has a high interaction with the field. Sub-editors, or editors at smaller publications, check a journalist’s copy and corrects mistakes, check the story is appropriately written for the publication, cut out unnecessary information, and reduce or reorganise the story if necessary. The majority of journalists interviewed depended highly on the sub-editing of their work:
Sometimes too you can get caught up in a story and you know every detail about it. You’ve spent days and weeks working on it and you care about it and you’ve gotten so involved in it that you actually overlook the screamingly obvious and so it’s the sub-editor who picks up that story for the first time cold, the same way a reader does, and so that set of eyes is sometimes a whole lot less emotionally involved and a whole lot less tied up with the nuances and is actually almost in a better position to run a big red line through parts of it and say, ‘Don’t care, don’t care, don’t care. That’s in the wrong order. That’s the wrong way. This isn’t as good as it could be’ because they’re coming to it the same way a reader does. Without any of the background, without any of the baggage or any of those factors which influence how you wrote it (J6, i/v, 2007).

It is this collaboration between the field and individual that journalists in this research cohort believe assists them in their creative production. In fact, several respondents made the comment that experienced journalists expect to be edited – it is an accepted part of the process of journalism – and it is novice journalists or contributors who can find it difficult to accept:

I always say, when I hand something to my contributing editor – ‘Make it good!’ … it’s normally people who are lay-writers or people who are studying a communication degree or someone who’s never published before that you get that [complaints] from whereas journalists expect editing and in fact would be quite astounded if you let one of their spelling errors get through (E7, i/v, 2007).

Journalists also learn through editing how to write within the policy of the organisation. Ian Ward supports this assertion by stating that journalists, “will quickly learn what is appropriate from the way in which sub-editors run, cut, rewrite or ‘spike’ their copy” (1995, p. 104). Evidence supporting Ward’s statement was found in the data from this research:

I am however aware that certain stories are of no interest to my bosses because they’re pitching at this particular audience. So there’s stuff that as a journo you simply won’t attempt … So there isn’t censorship but there is effective censorship because they won’t put everything in there; they’ll only put certain things in the paper. So it’s not that you spend a whole day on a story and they just chuck it back in your face, they just won’t put it in the paper so you stop writing stories that you know won’t get put in the paper. And that’s true for every paper. How do you think
that you’ve learnt what articles will get printed and won’t get printed? (my question). I think you become quite sensitive to it fairly quickly – the kind of stories that are in the paper. And when you start off you might file stories and just see they’re not going to get anywhere (J2, i/v, 2007).

J2’s observation on learning his organisation’s policies can be verified by support from the literature in journalism. Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon contend that typically journalists are subtly directed by management as to which stories will be covered (2001, p. 139) and Edgar provided the following observation:

So it is not the unusual event of suppression, alteration or manufacture of news stories that generates bias in our news coverage in the main. Nor is it proprietorial interference or conspiracies which shape the news, although all these things do occur from time to time. Rather it is the socialisation of journalists into a profession where they need only to apply the rules of the game their organisation plays – the seeking out of particular stories, the self censorship which means you do not waste time chasing stories that papers do not want to run or stations do not want to broadcast because it does not suit their ‘style’ (1980, p. 10).

It is also important to point out that regardless of positive support and teaching provided by the field, there is also the opposite, with forceful teaching methods applied in newsrooms. A number of interviewees noted how the stereotypical ‘yelling’ editor, often seen in popular culture depictions of editors, was how they learnt to write within the expectations of the organisation:

… when I was at [publication name deleted] we had an editor who used to yell, didn’t happen that often, but he’d go through stages where he’d yell at different people and he’d pick up on little things. We all make little mistakes, like spelling mistakes or something like that, but he’d yell and call you a fucking idiot or slam the phone down or be just absolutely hideous to you (J3, i/v, 2007).

While this may seem to be an example where the field is constraining a journalist rather than enabling, and J3 commented that this editor made his writing process difficult as did other journalists who had similar experiences (J18, E14), it still provides journalists with structures that are needed to produce their work; regardless of the method of learning, the rules, conventions, techniques, guides and procedures of the domain and
organisation are being taught and become part of a journalist’s habitus, which then enables production.

4.3.2 Work colleagues

As we have seen, journalists interact with colleagues in the story generation and editing phases of their creative practice, but journalists also depend on colleagues for professional support, both formally and informally, including learning how to write, how to negotiate the workplace, and learning about the organisation and its expectations. Although most journalists in this study had formal training in journalism, such as tertiary education, via a cadetship or internship, in a post-graduate course, or through short courses provided by the organisation, the majority of respondents stated that learning on the job was the most valuable way to pick up what was required of them in their production:

I mean you think you can pick it up at Uni, and know what it is you’re doing, but I don’t feel that I was in any way taught particularly well what to expect … Editors will (send) back your work with big red marks when you’re first learning your thing, and that’s hard work and I certainly got a lot of that (J1, i/v, 2007).

J1’s comment about learning on the job is in line with the ideas of a number of theorists who also argue that journalists are socialised into the workplace (Berkowitz, 1997; Harcup, 2004). Breed’s 1955 study into social control in newsrooms detailed how a publication’s policy was learned “by osmosis” (1955, p. 328) by new staff. The claim is that journalists learn the rules, procedures and conventions of the domain and learn about the social structure partially through watching how older colleagues work as well as cultivating mentoring relationships.

4.3.2.1 Interaction with other journalists

The majority of journalists interviewed found interaction with other journalists to be influential in their creative process although the level of this influence varied between the respondents, depending on where they worked and their individual outlook, personality and experience. In this regard, Sawyer (2006) claimed that experienced practitioners are important to pass on knowledge to others and evidence of this process was found within the interview data and the observation notes. It was seen that
colleagues are used for feedback, to ‘brainstorm’ and to confirm the appropriateness of their writing:

I really bounce ideas off my colleagues. People who sit next to me probably get driven nuts because I’m constantly saying, ‘do you like this lead or that lead’ (J3, i/v, 2007).

Well, a lot of it [news generation] starts with a news conference where people would brainstorm ideas and people say, well you could check out this or you could check out that and we need a follow up on x and y that happened such and such time ago (J1, i/v, 2007).

I can write a story and give it to [name deleted] and she’ll say, ‘It’s all good and well but this, this second last sentence, that should be at the top’. So sometimes you get it right but then at other times someone else will look over it and say, ‘This is the main part’ and you’ll look at it and go, ‘Oh, that’s true’ (J14, i/v, 2007).

Observations in the three newsrooms supported the findings in the interviews of how important work colleagues are during the creative process. In each newsroom, there was ongoing interaction between journalists of all levels – senior writers, intermediate level journalists and cadets – as well as between the sub-editors and journalists. Following are some excerpts from the observation notes that support the contention that interaction is consistent:

Questions between staff re. facts, quotes, previous stories. (Later) Juniors ask senior journalists how to place text correctly (Ob. Notes NR1, 2009-2010 – Day 1).

Sub-editor asks Journalist to confirm who is in a picture she is inserting. There is no confirmation that the people listed are the ones in the order of the photo. She decides to leave names out rather than get them wrong (Ob. Notes NR1, 2009-2010 – Day 2).

Senior writers (Journalist and Journalist) discuss ideas and how to go about getting sources and stories (Ob. Notes NR2, 2010 – Day 1).

Sub-editor checks with Journalist to make sure she has put the correct details in a story (Ob. Notes NR2, 2010 – Day 4).

Journalist back – discussed stories she went out to do – Journalist has heaps of notes and will do story. Editor needs to sub it. One story needs to go past someone first before it can be written. Journalist downloads photos – Editor and Journalist
The above illustrates how important this ongoing interaction is between work colleagues on an ongoing daily basis but the journalists also noted how important older journalists were when they were learning how to write. Journalists learn what is required of them by watching how their colleagues work and there were strong indications within this data that journalists learn from their colleagues with J15 recalling how important senior journalists were to his development:

I learnt a lot from them. I mean in the early days I got a lot of support from senior journalists and I’ve never forgotten what they told me and never forgotten how dedicated they were. When I was on my first newspaper one of the first things I had to do was write a theatre review and there I was fresh from University, well two years out, thinking that I knew how to write. I’d been criticising Kafka and James Joyce and thought I knew how it was done. And I went to this play and I came back the next day to the office and couldn’t write, didn’t know how to do it, just at a complete loss. I’d made notes, I thought I had it, and nothing came out. And a senior reporter came over and said, ‘Have you got a problem?’ And I said, ‘Yes. I just don’t know how to start this.’ And he said, ‘All right, move over.’ And he sat down in front of my typewriter and said, ‘Right. Now what did you think of it? What happened? And who was in it? Who do you think was best?’ With that information, the article came out. Perfect prose … He wrote it. Ripped it out and said, ‘How does that look?’ (J15, i/v, 2007).

Oakham’s research into the training of cadets in Australia also found that cadets attached a high level of importance to learning production skills through interaction with senior member of the field and “experiential learning” and “emulation” (2004, p. 178-179) were the preferred methods of learning. This observation by Oakham is also evident throughout the responses in this study:

When I was on the [publication name deleted], I was a business reporter, my business editor there, who is now the editor of the [publication name deleted] was a guy called [name deleted] who when I got there, talking to other people, got the impression that he was the best, he was basically said to be the best business journo

---

39 Please note that NR3 had an editor and one journalist on staff and therefore interaction between them was not only on the level of editor and journalist but also as colleagues, including sub-editor.
of his generation. He was absolutely inspirational. I mean, just watching how he worked, watching how he conducted interviews and every so often he’d sit down and he’d give me a mentoring session and watching the, picking up the responsibility with which he conducted his work, how he approached it culturally was inspiring (J2, i/v, 2007).

Oakham’s (2006) research also reported that senior colleagues were not only vital in learning the practical aspects of journalism but also in how new journalists are socialised into a newsroom both through learning about the hierarchy and how to “(be) a journalist” (2006, p. 183); in other words, learning the preferences of the field. However, another point Oakham raised is how journalists often see themselves as a group apart with “very strong social bonds” (2006, p. 187):

The young reporter soon finds there is an element of kinship among journalists, not only among those from his own paper but among his competitors as well. ... It is true that we are slightly within the category of a ‘race apart’. Journalists tend to like the company of other journalists, and when a few are gathered together socially the talk almost invariably turns to ‘shop’ (Coleman, 1970, p. 14; in Oakham, 2006, p. 187).

J17 commented on this very thing when she gave an insight into her understanding of how journalists feel about their profession and organisation:

I think journalists are very clanny, very kind of cliquey … And they’re very loyal to their colleagues and to the papers they work for, generally, so they always think that they’re better than other papers. I mean, people on the Telegraph, the Tele here, think they’re much better than us because they think they get the real news stories and they get the stories people want to read. And they think that we’re all up our own backsides and we’re pompous and we’re lightweight and we don’t really go after issues. Absolutely! And I’ve had very amicable discussions with Daily Telegraph journalists about this and they’ll take the piss out of themselves about doing the death knocks and chasing the ambulances and stuff. And they’ll let you take the piss out of them and they love it, but they’ll take the piss too of you for writing a 3000 word feature on a sort of esoteric ballet (J17, i/v, 2008).

J17 continued with this theme when she discussed why she wanted to be a journalist:
The reason I knew I wanted to be a journalist after two weeks at [publication name deleted] was that I just had this sense that all the people there were exactly like me. … Newspaper journalists have a particular colour to them, I think, a particular sort of person is a newspaper journalist … I would say I’ve always had a sense of kindred spiritness with them. And I remember saying that to my former editor here, finding that group at [publication name deleted], and just thinking, ‘God, these are all my people’ and her saying, ‘Yeah, I know exactly what you mean – it’s that feeling you get when you find your tribe’ and that is what it is (J17, i/v, 2008).

The notion of a ‘tribe’ in journalism has been observed by others (Deuze, 2005; Hurst, 1988; Pearson et al., 2001; Simons, 2007; Vine, 2009) with Jay Rosen calling journalism a religion with a “nest of believers” (2004, par. 1). Zelizer cited sociological studies that found journalists prefer “informal networking” (1997, p. 403, emphasis in original) where “journalists work via a distinct sense of their own collectivity … favoring horizontal over vertical management” (ibid.) thus emphasising how important colleagues are in a journalist’s work.

4.3.2.2 Mentoring

Sawyer (2006) noted that one of the ways the field can support creative endeavours is through mentoring. Shea defines mentoring as “a fundamental form of human development where one person invests time, energy and personal know-how in assisting the growth and ability of another person” (2002, p. 3). Each of the journalists in this research project acknowledged how important mentors were in learning how to write and how to negotiate the field and domain. While none of the respondents discussed a formal mentoring program within their workplace, the majority had informal mentoring relationships with older journalists, editors and trainers and agreed on its importance in learning how to be a journalist. An MEAA survey of editorial staff at Fairfax metropolitan newspapers showed that 48% of respondents thought mentoring was important, a finding agreed with by J17:

I think it’s a really important thing within the profession; I think we could do a lot more of that … And journalists kind of mentor each other because we do talk a lot about stories and stuff. I think it’s a valuable thing and would like to see it done more formally and done better (J17, i/v, 2008).
Mockros (1996) wrote that mentors are important to communicate work ethics, professional values, work strategies and philosophies, particularly of rules and procedures that are not articulated. Journalists in this study noted that mentors were important for validation, suggestions and critiquing them in their writing practice and in imparting knowledge about the rules and traditions in the domain:

… there were a couple of guys on the desk as well who worked with me who are still there now who I just respected their ability to break stories, to find stories, to report comprehensively, and the good humour with which they approached what was certainly in the UK a very demanding task (J2, i/v, 2007).

Several more experienced men and women have helped me over the years, just by imparting the finer points of the trade … most of your workmates are pretty good like that and will answer questions. I had one in particular whose patience is endless and answers all your questions. He’s been a journalist thirty-odd years (J4, i/v, 2007).

I had great respect for my [publication name deleted] editor and I always felt that his suggestions and corrections were brilliant. He was the best briefer that I ever had. In other words, you went in there with a rough idea, you talked it over with him and you left the office just ready to rip and all these new directions opened up and everything. He was terrific in that sense (J12, i/v, 2007).

However, a mentor can do more than assist in learning about the domain; mentoring is also a way for early career journalists to learn the preferences of the field. In line with previous discussions, learning the preference of the field is as equally important as learning the rules and procedures of the domain. Hooker, Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi examined mentoring using the systems model developed by Csikszentmihalyi and defined a mentor as “a gatekeeper to a domain who furthers a novice’s access to a field, or, as we will come to discover, a mentor serves to increase a novitiate’s social capital” (2003, p. 231). Increasing social capital, that is, an individual’s ability to benefit from a social network (Hooker, Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p. 231), improves chances for recognition by the field and can enhance reputation and lead to promotion and other rewards.
Older journalists and editors interviewed in this project were also aware of how important mentoring was in their own domain acquisition and a number remarked how happy they were to pass on their practical experience to younger journalists:

I have [mentored] because we get quite a few, every year we get work experience people who are doing communications courses at University of New South Wales and UTS, etc. So having been mentored myself I feel as though I’d like to give something back so I do my best to help them and assist them and encourage them, etc (E14, i/v, 2008).

Several people have been fabulous in assisting me to get to the next level of writing and reporting. I have tried to encourage others and it’s always wonderful to see them succeed (J11, i/v, 2007).

John Trevorrow, former deputy editor at the Herald Sun, while approving of the fact that journalists are better educated now and admitting that this has produced better journalists, made the comment that, “you can’t replace the learning that you do on the job and that comes from the collective experience and wisdom of the people in your newsrooms” (in Press Club Online, 2003). However, one concern in journalism is that with commercial imperatives becoming increasingly important, a publication can save money by replacing older journalists with cadets or junior journalists. The age profile in newsrooms has changed because of, firstly, technology, with older staff sometimes unwilling to take on the newer technologies, and, secondly, commercial considerations with younger journalists both cheaper and more willing to become multiskilled (Harrison, 2006, p. 57). Former journalist Geoffrey Barker discussed how redundancies have affected newsrooms:

Some staff cuts are justified: all newspapers have non-performing staff. But newspapers make little effort to replace retrenched staff with better and brighter journalists, preferring to hire young, inexperienced people because they are cheap, uncritically enthusiastic and untroubled by the demands made upon them (2010, p. 3).

Apart from Barker’s comments on the shortcomings of younger journalists, a younger newsroom also means there are fewer experienced staff to take on mentoring roles. J5 has worked in journalism for forty years and agreed that other journalists in the newsroom regularly call on his skills, particularly in the area of law and the courts in
which he is highly experienced, but he has also noticed how the age profile has changed:

It’s an interesting situation we’re moving to where we have less and less senior staff; people are staying less and less. I wonder whether if you’ll ever see journalists staying anywhere more than twenty years (J5, i/v, 2007).

Mockros (1996) pointed out that a lack of older staff in any organisation, or overwhelming demands on older staff, means that there is less traditional mentoring occurring in workplaces. A disproportionate number of young people compared to experienced people is also reducing mentor relationships. Journalist Pamela Williams claims that a lack of mentoring in newsrooms will lead to a lessening of the values of print journalism with young journalists unaware of what their responsibilities are as a journalist:

One of the biggest threats to maintaining our standards is the fact that with news rooms so tight on staff young journalists entering the profession from techs and universities, are often not receiving the mentoring they need. The on-the-job training is as vital now as it ever was, and I think young reporters need to understand the importance of asking questions and not accepting things at face value, and keeping on making phone calls, and above all, to maintain a healthy scepticism (in Background Briefing, 1999).

Regardless of the current flaws in the mentoring system, mentoring and other support from work colleagues is crucial in how a journalist produces their work. Unlike some sociological studies in journalism that claim that journalists are constrained by members of the field, data in this analysis clearly showed journalists can also be enabled and use this support to assist them in their creative process. In terms of the former argument, Mandy Oakham made the following observation regarding the training of new journalists:

If senior journalists are incorporated as part of the method [of inculcating cadets], it has to be asked: What are the implications for innovation if what has gone before is always presented as best practice? Where indeed when one trainer explicitly states, ‘we are trying to create journalists in our own image, it is a chance to shape people’ and further, ‘we try to influence them culturally’? The constant emphasis on
replication would seem to leave little ideological space for the notions of innovation and change (2006, p. 193).

Oakham’s question can be answered by emphatically stating that it is important for a journalist to learn the traditions, the existing structures of the domain and the preferences of the field before they can introduce innovation and expand the domain (Negus & Pickering, 2004) since research into creativity clearly shows that creative producers must learn the rules, conventions, techniques, guides and procedures, or structures, and traditions of a domain before they can produce novelty (Bailin, 1988; Evans & Deehan, 1988). As demonstrated in the above findings, engagement with work colleagues and mentoring assists in this process.

4.3.3 The field as learning support

In this study, journalists discussed learning support being in place as early as secondary school with some journalists noting high school teachers as either encouraging or discouraging them in their learning process. Csikszentmihalyi (1997; 2003) maintained that teachers are part of the field and it is often early educators who initially recognise a child’s potential in a domain. Within the profession of journalism, the field provides on-the-job training for new journalists via cadetships, traineeships and intern programs. These programs include training in media law, photography, shorthand, layout and sub-editing, as well as practical writing training, and offer a way for the field to encourage young people into the profession. In addition, the publication a journalist works for and organisations such as the MEAA provide ongoing training to journalists to ensure they have the skills to continue their practice. Furthermore, university based journalism programs have predominantly taken over the role of cadetships in supplying formal education for aspiring journalists and respondents discussed their university education and educators within that system of learning as part of their learning process.

4.3.3.1 Teachers

Csikszentmihalyi (1997) claimed that in his study, school was rarely mentioned as an influence on creativity, which is contrary to most research that argues formal education stifles creativity (Dacey & Lennon, 1998; Runco, 2007; Sternberg & Lubart, 1995). Research has seemingly shown that creativity is not encouraged in schoolrooms for a number of reasons including the expectation of obedience in the classroom, a lack of
teachers who recognise and encourage creativity in students, the method of teaching (for example, direct instruction), little encouragement for risk-taking with failure often punished, and peer pressure. However, Csikszentmihalyi pointed out that in his research, respondents noted that individual teachers provided inspiration but this was more to do with how the teachers noticed and influenced the individual personally rather than via teaching, as such (1997, p. 174). Journalism researchers Fitzsimmons and Bilboe came to the same conclusion when they stated that, “effective teaching must of necessity be constituted by sound instructional practices and strategies. However our data suggests that a teacher's ability to engage students in the learning process is of equal importance” (1999, p. 4). Fitzsimmons and Bilboe conducted a survey of eighty-one Australian journalism students and found 83% said that a secondary school teacher was the main reason they chose journalism as a career but it was the personal relationship with the teacher that was just as crucial as encouragement in writing skills. J12 recalled a senior year secondary school teacher who recognised his talent in writing and English and encouraged it:

I suppose it was my Year Eleven and Twelve English teacher who was inspiring. We didn’t have any relationship over and above pupil/teacher but he had such a superb vocabulary and so eloquent I found him inspiring. And he seemed to think I had something as a writer and as an analyser in poetry and texts and so forth (J12, i/v, 2007).

J15’s family encouraged language learning in the home and he speaks six languages fluently but he found schooling difficult until a teacher recognised his educational strength and encouraged his talent in language:

I really wasn’t very good at school until I went to boarding school in England. I went there with very low qualifications. And then I had a French teacher who realised that my background in Latin languages were a real boon, a big help with my French. And he encouraged me. And I started to excel in French and it was the first time I’d excelled at anything. And from then on I did well. So language is basic to my entire academic success, I suppose you’d say (J15, i/v, 2007).

In a similar fashion, indifferent teachers also affected journalists in this study. J12 is a science writer but found the subject difficult at school because of poor teachers:
The irony is I did crap in maths and science but some of my best pieces now are science. I do actually have an ordered, scientific mind but to some extent blame the teaching. They didn’t capture the wonder at all in science teaching – it was just chemical formulas and stuff. I switched off (J12, i/v, 2007).

At university level, twenty-six Australian universities offer journalism programs and educators are often ex-journalists (Bossio, 2010; Hirst, 2010; Sheridan Burns, 2003) with up to 95% of staff teaching into journalism courses having experience in the mass media (Patching, 1997). This provides university students with valuable practical knowledge. A University of Newcastle alumnus named a journalist who taught into his degree and pointed out how valuable it was to have a teacher with experience in the industry:

Probably Alysson Watson who used to teach me at uni. I’d probably say she had a huge influence on me actually, when I come to think of it, because I probably learnt more about being a journalist than anyone from her … I’d probably say she had quite an impact (J7, i/v, 2007).

E13 works as a part-time tutor at an Australian university and in the New South Wales TAFE system and believes it is her job in that capacity to encourage promising students: “I mentor most of my students; anyone who shows promise, willingness and enthusiasm gets my time as a teacher” (i/v, 2008). However, she is also in a position to provide valuable work experience. Working as the editor/journalist on a privately owned publication that depends on a high amount of freelance contributions means she can offer students the opportunity to publish work. This gives practical experience as well as a way for students to build a portfolio of published work, thus providing an example of a way a member of the field can provide support both as a teacher and an editor.

61 TAFE stands for Technical and Further Education and provides vocational education and training. Qualifications earned at TAFE are usually of a Certificate or Diploma level rather than a tertiary qualification.
4.3.3.2 Early on-the-job training

Traditionally, print journalists learnt on the job via cadetships that consisted of three or four years\(^\text{62}\) of on-the-job training. Cadetships are not as prevalent as they were with Barbara Alysen’s (2005) study into entry level employment in journalism finding that News Limited Sydney appointed ten cadets in 2001 and one cadet in 2005. However, at the time of the interviews for this research, Rural Press newspapers still offered cadetships to school leavers with university graduates joining the company as final-year cadets while the larger magazines that interviewees worked for offered internships and work placement opportunities to university students. On the other hand, Fairfax newspapers, including Sydney’s Sydney Morning Herald and Melbourne’s The Age, currently offer traineeship programs that last for one year (Fairfax Media, 2011). While cadetships and traineeships are paid positions, internships and other work placement opportunities are generally unpaid and offered to university students to provide job readiness when the student is finished university. Work placement and internships are typically undertaken by students during their university degree and give the opportunity to experience a working newsroom. Amy Forbes (2009) noted how a key feature in Australian journalism schools is that graduates need to demonstrate their knowledge of journalism but they must also be workplace ready. Forbes contended that although many employers look favourably on degrees, students also need newsroom experience and this can be achieved through internships and work placement during university education.

While the field offer these training opportunities to provide entry level print journalists with desirable practical skills they also give young print journalists the opportunity to observe first hand how the field works. Additionally, this is a way the field can encourage young people into the profession and, as Sawyer has noted, having formal training structures in place to identify promising young people means a higher chance of creativity in a sphere of production (2006, p. 308).

During the interview process, two cadets from Rural Press (J8, J9) and a student who had just completed a magazine internship (J22) were interviewed. Each of these early

---

\(^\text{62}\) There is some conflicting information about how long cadetships lasted for. Henningham (1998a) and North (2009), for example, said cadetships lasted for four years whereas Alysen (2007) stated that cadetships were typically three years. Green and Sykes (2004) provided some clarification when they stated that cadetships could be three or four years depending on the industrial award journalists are hired under.
career print journalists found the training provided by the field to be helpful in their practice. Rural Press provided a weeklong orientation and training seminar to instruct cadets on how to work under the Rural Press banner:

> It’s all about helping your confidence and about improving anything. At first I thought why do I need to? I’ve done Uni why do I need to go away and learn any more but I wouldn’t have taken that week back from my life. It was fantastic (J9, i/v, 2007).

> But the best thing about that [cadet training] was talking to other journos and finding out that they’re all having the same sort of experiences and all, finding out I’m glad I’m in my position and just swap those sort of stories. I suppose it’s a bit of moral support (laughs) (J8, i/v, 2007).

J8’s comment about talking to other journalists suggests how important the field is to provide support and encouragement to an early career print journalist. There was a similar story from J22, who was a student at the time of the interview and had just completed a five-week internship at a magazine. J22 found the older staff intimidating and appreciated support from another young journalist:

> There was a young girl there who was only a year older than me but she’d been working there for two years and she came beside me and showed me a lot, which is good because a lot of them were a lot older than me (i/v, 2008).

Internships provide a chance for undergraduates to apply university’s formal learning to practise, to network and to impress an employer. The senior staff member who supervised J22 talked about her experience with this particular intern:

> And we’ve just recently had one [an intern] and she was just brilliant. I think this girl, she’s a Uni of New South Wales communication’s student, I think she’ll go a long way (E14, i/v, 2008).

Just as important, though, is that internships give the opportunity to not only learn and apply the rules of the domain, but the preferences of the field. As Forbes pointed out: “Through this interaction with journalists in the field, learning revolves around discovery, analysis and integration of information leading to deep-level learning” (2009, p. 1). J22’s experience at the magazine proved invaluable as she interacted with the field:
And the people in the office knew a lot as well. So for me, not knowing much about the industry or journalism at all, going, ‘Is this worth writing about?’ they’d go, ‘Yep, I think it’s great, go for it, you can get some good information from here or here or you can call this person or this person’. So it was really handy having people around who knew what to do (J22, i/v, 2008).

A further path into print journalism is work experience and J3 remarked how work experience in the Press Gallery during his university degree not only helped in his understanding of print journalism but also led to his first job:

I was really lucky to do work experience at the Press Gallery for [publication name deleted]. That was in my second year, the beginning of my second year of Uni and then a month later I got offered a job as an editorial assistant so doing things from clipping papers to holding the microphone to record sound to just doing office stuff, filing, that sort of thing so I did that through second and third year Uni but also all the way through I filed stories when I could, just basic stories that they didn’t have anyone else to do or whatever (J3, i/v, 2007).

Barbara Alysen contended that this kind of work experience in a newsroom often leads to permanent work because the field, as employers, show a “clear preference to the ‘known commodity’” (2005, p. 12) and cited the Sydney Morning Herald which, in 2004, hired trainees who had already worked as casuals or interns on the publication. As print journalist Sam de Brito wrote:

Who you know is just as important as what you know in the media and work experience gives students the chance to make the contacts that often get them the jobs once they’ve finished their studies. After a student has been in a workplace, made friends, proved themselves reliable and amiable, they are far more likely to land a gig than a stranger who’s never interacted with the newsroom (2009, p. 36).

4.3.3.3 Workplace training

The field also provides on-the-job training to maintain print journalists’ skills. Publications provide in-house training as well as professional development courses. The structured training improves the likelihood of a creative outcome by preparing journalists to practise in an evolving domain. It could even be argued that the newer technologies being introduced into newsrooms, that is the digital technology discussed
in the *Domain* section, provide opportunities and challenges for new practitioners, which Sawyer (2006) states is an integral part of a field’s likelihood for creativity.

Rural Press journalist J14 discussed how regular training is part of her process: “We get training about three times a year. He’ll [the editorial trainer] come down with us and go through individually what we need to know (i/v, 2007). NR3 had recently had a trainer in their newsroom to teach the journalist how to make the publication’s website more interactive. The journalist showed how she had put together a series of still shots to provide the audience with a slideshow of a community event. The editor at NR3 can see the benefits of this and encourages the journalist to use these skills to update the audience:

*Editor* talked about *Journalist* and how she is willing to learn new technology e.g. slideshows for website, improves website (Ob. Notes NR3, 2010 – Day 1).

In line with NR3’s experience, news organisations are attempting to update their print journalists’ skills to keep up with changes in the domain. Academic and journalist Stephen Quinn (2009b), for example, is teaching newspaper journalists about social media and how to use tools such as Twitter, RSS feeds, blogs and Google tools in their practise. The MEAA also runs courses on how journalists can use social media to improve their skills.63 A report prepared by Fiona Martin (2008) for the Australian Press Council analysed training in three Australian news organisations – Fairfax, News Limited and Australian Associated Press (AAP) – to assess how these organisations delivered training for journalists to use newer technologies in their work practices. Martin found media convergence training is now crucial in managing how a newsroom handles costs and digital media skills shortages. At the time of the report, Fairfax media were using face-to-face training methods, which were about to be supplemented with online modules, small group training and workshops, News Limited had an online training program called *Online Journalism* as well as DVDs and workshops, and AAP had taken a practical route with forty AAP staff trialling a “multimedia kit”64 (Martin, 2008, pp. 8-14).

---


64 The kit included a phone, a digital camera, an audio recorder and a video camera.
A 2008 survey into Fairfax metropolitan newspapers found that 46% of respondents thought an increase in training was important (MEAA, 2008c) and a later report prepared by the MEAA regarding training showed that 54% of respondents in a survey had received no training in newer styles of reporting with 42% receiving only “just the training I need to do my work” (2010, p. 22). The MEAA survey also found that most journalists learnt to use the new technologies informally through interaction with other journalists. Therefore, it can be argued that while senior members of the field seemingly do not provide adequate formal training, and journalists resent this lack of training, other journalists, themselves members of the field provide support for journalists’ learning with one journalist noting:

Our industry needs to be guided by the few old hands who are tech savvy, leading the twofinger (sic) typists with incomparable contacts and news sense to tell their stories in different ways, with the aid of the new digital crew. This learning from each other will benefit both and equip both groups for productive futures (in MEAA, 2010, p. 23).

4.3.4 Interaction with senior members of the field

Senior members of the field, in this context, include management positions such as editors and deputy editors, senior management positions (for example managing editors, editors-in-chief, managing directors, publishers) and media owners. As noted earlier, senior members of the field play a role in story generation, but are also valuable to journalists in such things as learning how to write, providing support during production and giving direction for stories at both an individual and an organisational level.

4.3.4.1 Editors

Both journalists and editors in this research discussed the importance of editors in their creative process. J7 provided a good summary of the value of editors when he asserted:

Essentially to a journo an editor is very, very important. That relationship is essential to your job. Being able to understand and learn off them, being a young journo as well, I’ve been really lucky that I’ve had two editors that are really experienced and really, really good editors, in different ways. It’s really important (J7, i/v, 2007).
When asked to describe their role in a journalist’s work process, the editors in this research cohort provided evidence for J7’s assertion about the value of editors and said their responsibility is to provide encouragement for journalists in learning skills (E2, E3) and give feedback on writing (E11), but other roles mentioned included teaching staff or contributors how to write (E1, E8, E13, E14), encouraging journalists to generate story ideas (E2, E14) and shaping the publication (E2, E7, E8):

If you are referring to ‘management’ as the editor, it is my role to encourage and help journalists develop their skills (E3, i/v, 2007).

I ask them [the journalists] what they’ve got for this week and they say, ‘oh, I’ve got this and I’ve got this’. And then if I think there’s something we should follow up, I say we need to follow this up (E2, i/v, 2007).

However, the role that editors play in journalists’ day-to-day production is dependent on the size of the publication. At larger newspapers, for example, while the editor will make the final decision on what is published and the direction a story will follow, there are typically several levels of editorial positions, such as a deputy editor, chief-of-staff and news editor, who more directly affect how a journalist writes as well as sub-editors who look over a journalist’s copy. Although there is often this division between editors and the daily practices of journalists, several interviewees discussed how important editors had been in the development of their journalism work habits including J20, who said he learnt how to write from an editor at a larger publication:

I also had, for a long time, a freelance column in the [publication name deleted]. On Fridays there’s [section name deleted] there, and I used to do a column in there. And I knew the editor in there from different connections and they were very kind to me. I’d bring in the copy and they’d sit there and go through it with me and teach me stuff. They were incredibly kind to me and they said they saw it as part of their role was to help people like me who were (laughs) unguided talent – who could write but really had no clear idea of what to do and how to go about it for newspapers (J20, i/v, 2008).

In smaller newsrooms, the editor is often the sub-editor, which brings them into closer contact with a journalist’s day-to-day production and respondents commented that it is from the editor that they learnt how to write. J16 worked at a rural publication and discussed how his editor taught him to write with a journalistic style:
[Editor name deleted] would’ve [taught me], in those early stages because he was editor here at the time, so he would’ve checked if I got too wordy or too many adjectives (J16, i/v, 2008).

Observation at all three publications showed that the editor in each newsroom was intimately connected to the final publication. The editors in NR1 and NR2 had separate offices from the rest of the editorial staff but both offices had glass windows, which gave the editors full access to the newsroom. In NR3, with only an editor and a journalist, both were in the same office and could easily discuss what was going into the paper. While NR2 was a larger newsroom than NR1 and NR3, the editor was involved in each section of the newspaper and was seen talking to journalists about their stories, issuing instructions on how to improve stories, accepting/rejecting suggestions regarding pictures and story ideas, and encouraging staff on what they had written.

4.3.4.2 Senior management and media owners

A research project carried out in Australia in 2001 called Sources of News and Current Affairs found that news producers consider media owners to be the second highest influence on the production of news65 (Pearson et al., 2001, p. 79) and McQuail argued that it is proprietors who “have ultimate power over content and can ask for what they want to be included or left out” (2010, p. 291). In a survey conducted in 2006, researchers questioned 378 Australian journalists about the change in Australia’s media ownership laws including questions about media owners and their influence on content. Half of the respondents said they felt obliged to consider the owner’s commercial position in their production, 32 % said the owner’s political position needed to be considered, 38% said they had been told to conform with the owner’s commercial position and 17% said they were instructed to comply to the owner’s political position (Roy Morgan Research, 2006). Considering that some theorists (Barr, 2000; Henningham, 1989; McCullagh, 2002; McQuail, 2010) suggest that owners have a high influence on content and policy these figures seem low.

A reason for these low figures could be because of journalists’ socialisation into newsrooms. Grattan (1995) maintained that editors are chosen who will reinforce an

---

65 Number one was audience/ratings/circulation, followed by, in descending order, media owners, politicians, big business, NGOs/lobby groups, other journalists, government regulators, commercial sponsors, religious groups and small business.
owner’s desired news policy and Simons cited News Limited, owned by Rupert Murdoch, as one organisation where journalists are immersed in the company’s culture from early in their career (2007, p. 337). As Barr said:

The issue here is not that some bosses actually direct their editors or journalists about what they may publish or write, but rather that media personnel internalize the values of their organization and become conditioned by their occupational environment into conventions of particular commercial institutional uniformity (2000, p. 9, emphasis in original).

However, an examination of secondary data, where senior management comment on their influence on editorial policy, seems to indicate that senior management, at least in the big organisations, suggest that they follow the traditional values of journalism such as reporting fairly and without bias. John Hartigan, CEO of News Limited, maintains he does not direct reporters: “And I would deny that any reporter or writer for News has ever been asked, or has taken a position about something that they express as self-interest of News” (in Radio National, 2002), a position he reiterated in 2010: “And I have never stood over people writing stories in 19 years as an editor” (in Elliott, 2010). J1, J4 and J6 all worked at News Limited publications and each of them refuted the argument that Rupert Murdoch, as owner of News Limited, directly influenced how they worked:

I remember having completely misfounded ideas about the media while I was at uni. It’s not until you get inside you realise that Rupert Murdoch is criticised for having direct editorial influence widely but as a journalist it’s certainly never filtered down to me (J4, i/v, 2007).

However, other journalists disagreed and noted how the publication they worked at overtly directed their work. Journalist Michelle Grattan maintained that, “it is undeniable that media organisations – managements, editors – usually handle their proprietors’ interests with more sensitivity than they accord other stories” (1995, p. 12). One editor interviewed in this research concurred with Grattan’s observation: “At one company I worked at we weren’t allowed to do stories on a certain celeb because the boss was friends with them” (E15, i/v, 2008). Alan Kohler, former editor of Fairfax’s The Age and The Australian Financial Review, compared his time at Fairfax to his later position at online publication Eureka Report: “Both times when I was an editor at
Fairfax, I got much more editorial interference than I do from [Eureka Report investors] John Wylie and Mark Carnegie” (in West, 2007) a point journalist Craig McGregor agreed with:

> When I was a cadet reporter on the [Fairfax publication] Sydney Morning Herald, we were lectured on the virtues of objectivity, detachment and lack of bias – unless you were writing about a subject in which your proprietor was involved, in which case you were expected to show a certain pragmatic common sense (in Sheridan Burns, 2003, p. 63).

E13 had worked as a journalist at a privately owned publication and found that reconciling how media owners run their publications ran counter to her values as a journalist: “The paper was there to reflect his opinion. And I think a lot of owners think like that. There’s no independence” (i/v, 2008).

E13’s mention of independence means the question of independence and freedom discussed in the Domain section needs discussion in this section as well. To revisit the concept briefly: what is independence? E13’s comment would seem to suggest that independence, or freedom, means an absence of constraint with a similar argument related to the concept of autonomy in journalism. Deuze included autonomy as one of five traits that personifies journalism’s ideology66 and argued that “journalists must be autonomous, free and independent in their work” (2005, p. 447). Researchers who have examined journalism using Bourdieu’s concept of the field, in this instance known as field theory (Benson, 2004; Benson & Neveu, 2005), have contended that a journalist’s autonomy is negatively affected (Champagne, 2005; Schudson, 2005) by the structures they work within but, given Bourdieu’s stance on autonomy, where “absolute freedom, exalted by the defenders of creative spontaneity, belongs only to the naïve and the ignorant” (1996, p. 235), Schudson’s and Champagne’s contentions can be seen as a misinterpretation of Bourdieu’s ideas. As argued previously throughout this thesis, creativity research has strongly shown that structures are a necessary part of any production (Bailin, 1988; Boden, 2004; Negus & Pickering, 2004) with Wolff (1981) arguing that rather than just being limiting factors, structures also actually enable people to act.

---

66 The five include public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy and ethics.
Ericson, Chan and Baranek claim that the structures a journalist works within are deterministic (1987, p. 101) but this dismisses a journalist’s agency. Although journalists act within management’s expectations, it is important to remember that within these structures a journalist has agency, that is they can make active choices, as discussed in detail in the *Individual* section, and can use these expectations to enable their action and generate work that is both novel and appropriate, thus producing a creative text.

Academic and journalist Margaret Simons made a valid point when she wrote:

> Like everything else about the media, the relationship between content and ownership is a complex mess of personality, business models, human fallibility, nobility and venality … It is stupid to assert that media ownership doesn’t matter. It is equally stupid to pretend that it is the only thing that matters (2007, p. 332).

Simons’ quote provides a summation of one of the key arguments in this thesis, that is, rather than focusing on one aspect of a system as a deterministic factor in production, it is more valuable to recognise that all these influences provide the structures that both constrain and enable a print journalist in their creative process.

### 4.3.5 The audience as part of the field

The audience was another influence that journalists frequently referred to throughout the interviews and observations. It is in discussing the audience that the strength of the systems model emerges. Rather than focusing on either the producer or the receiver as the principal source of creativity, as other communication studies theories such as the transmission model and the cultural context model have done, the systems model allows both the producer and receiver to be examined as equal components within a creative system. However, before discussing the audience’s contribution to creativity in print journalism, it is important to provide context for the audience and examine what it means in this research.

The term *audience*, as used here, refers to the readers of a publication. The reason this definition is being supplied is because in the systems model, an audience is identified as the receiver of a created product, process or idea: “creativity is a phenomenon that is constructed through an *interaction between producer and audience*” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p. 314, emphasis in original). In other words, when an individual produces
something, it is presented to an “audience” for social validation that it is, indeed, a creative product. **Audience**, in Csikszentmihalyi’s definition, includes those we have noted earlier as the cultural intermediaries or gatekeepers of the domain.

However, Sawyer recognised that within an audience there are different levels of experience and engagement and he contends that sociologists have discovered audience members should be classified at different levels, “depending on their level of expertise and how connected they are to the creators who work in the field” (2006, p. 127). Sawyer proposed a model of “nested audiences” (ibid.) that can be used to explain the different levels of engagement and expertise.

![Figure 11 – Sawyer's nested audience (2006, p. 127)](image)

The *intermediaries* have already been discussed above in some detail and Sawyer explained how it is the intermediaries who initially select what they believe to be worthy of inclusion in the domain. The creative contribution is then passed outward to *connoisseurs*, then *amateurs* and finally to the *public*. *Connoisseurs* are defined as those who “have been socialized into the domain, almost as thoroughly as the intermediaries of the field” (Sawyer, 2006, p. 127). Sawyer maintains that connoisseurs know almost as much about the domain as the intermediaries – they know how it works and are

---

67 Permission to copy and communicate this work has been granted by Oxford University Press. See electronic confirmation in Appendix 7.
active and opinionated. In print journalism, this could include such audience members as ex-journalists, public relations (PR) practitioners and journalism educators. **Amateurs** are people who have had exposure to the domain, typically in childhood and in school, and continue to participate and engage with the domain but not at a high level. Examples of amateurs in journalism could be ex-journalism students who are not working as journalists, audience members with a high interest in news and who actively engage with the media via letters to the editor, opinion pieces and social media, and, again, PR practitioners and journalism educators. Finally, the **public** are the audience who appear to have less control over what initially gets “recognized, distributed, and valued” (Sawyer, 2006, p. 130). It is important, however, to mention that audiences can “have an influence on the creative process, even if the creator is alone in a room in the woods” (Sawyer, 2006, p. 128). Again, any of the abovementioned examples, that is, PR practitioners, journalism educators, students and ex-journalists can be included in this section on audience along with the general public. As Sawyer mentioned, the categorisation of an audience member is dependent on the level of expertise and engagement with the domain and from the above discussion, it can be seen that rather than separation between each section of audience, which Sawyer’s model suggests, the boundaries between each border is, in fact, permeable. For this research, the audience members being discussed would definitely be classified under **public**, but may also be considered **amateurs** or **connoisseurs** depending on their level of engagement and expertise but it should be noted that when the audience is discussed in this thesis, it is referring to the general reader of a publication.

While Sawyer did not specifically examine print journalists in his analysis of audiences, a number of his contentions can be discussed in relation to print journalism. For example, Sawyer noted that intermediaries in a field often monitor audience numbers and, in many domains, these numbers are “a key measure of success” (Sawyer, 2006, p. 130). This is particularly relevant in journalism with a number of theorists (McManus, 1994; Underwood, 1993) arguing that the exercise of market-driven journalism, which suggests that audiences are a commodity to sell to advertisers, means an audience is highly relevant to a publication’s success and continued viability. Sue Turnbull is blunter: “For the commercial media, audiences mean money … It is therefore hardly surprising that newspapers, magazines and other print media pay a great deal of attention to circulation figures as a measure of their commercial success” (2006, p. 81).
Machin and Niblock state that an audience is a limitation on a journalist because “news must be designed for specific target audiences” (2006, p. 6) a statement agreed with by Schultz (1998) who, while investigating the Fourth Estate ideal in Australian journalism, found journalists were very aware of the importance of the audience but felt that their autonomy was restricted by their readers. The earlier point about independence and freedom in journalism should be reiterated here: freedom cannot be regarded as simply the absence of constraint. Freedom is, as noted throughout the thesis, conditional and the audience, as one part of the structure a journalist interacts with, can also be considered an enabling factor as without an audience the work does not happen.

Sawyer also claimed that what the public chooses to engage with only has an “indirect influence on future creative works” (2006, p. 130) but the above argument regarding market-driven journalism would suggest that the audience in journalism is one of the important influences on what gets published. Conley and Lamble, for example, suggested that many of the newer lift-out sections in newspapers have been developed to appeal to a younger demographic and thus increase circulation (2006, p. 44). This thesis would argue that in print journalism, the audience is a significant influence in deciding future creative works, although to continue with earlier contentions, it is only one part of the system. However, in support of the core argument and as argued in previous sections, while this thesis does argue that the audience is one part of a system of influences a journalist uses in their production, the journalist still has agency, a contention agreed with by others (Harcup, 2004; Manzella, 1996; Underwood, 1993).

The audience was discussed earlier because of its role in generating story ideas but it deserves further examination because of its importance throughout a journalist’s production process. During the interviews, journalists discussed how they viewed the audience and what effect this view had on their practice. They noted how important audience feedback was in both their own production process and for the publication, and how their work was edited because of the audience. Observation of the three newsrooms showed high levels of interaction with the audience, albeit different types of interaction, with the regional publications having a more intimate relationship with their readers. In the regional newsrooms, there was a high, personal interaction between the members of the newsroom and the audience with face-to-face contact as well as phone calls and emails. Bowd commented that country newspaper journalists are more involved with
their audience because of the work environment: “they [journalists] live and work within that community, often participate in community organizations and are accessible to their audience in their professional environment” (2005, pp. 126-127). Evidence of Bowd’s comment was found in the observation of newsroom NR1: a senior journalist recalled advice that her first editor at the paper had shared about working at a community paper while the intimate knowledge NR1’s journalists and editor had of their circulation area helped in their production. Further to this, observations showed how the audience accessed the journalists in NR1:

_Senior journalist_ told as a young journalist that at a community paper the story you write today will be published tomorrow and you could be having dinner with them tomorrow night (Ob. Notes NR1, 2009-2010 – Day 3).

The staff know their area well, know residents. When looking for contacts, eg for HSC story, at least one staff member knows the principal’s name or another contact (Ob. Notes NR1, 2009-2010 – Day 1).

_Journalist_ tells _Junior cadet_ she is the ‘meeter and greeter’ because her desk is at the front. Try to shield _Editor_ as much as possible – get stories from public and pass them on to _Editor_. _Journalist_ says public think they have a right to the editor (Ob. Notes NR1, 2009-2010 – Day 3).

This last observation refers back to the earlier _Ideas for articles_ section that discussed how non-metropolitan audiences believe they own their local newspaper (Bowd, 2005; Kirkpatrick, 2002) and expect a high level of access to an editor. Meanwhile, in NR2, as a metropolitan newspaper, there seemed little evidence of the editor engaging directly with the public and the newsroom received most of their feedback via online comments or emails although there were also phone calls received about stories. Audience reaction to one particular story led to discussions between the senior staff about a follow-up, thus providing evidence of how the audience can assist in the story generation process:

Good audience feedback on certain stories – audience ringing up asking questions about weekend story. (_Later)_ _News editor_ and _Chief of staff_ wonder should there be follow up to [article title deleted] – lots of audience reaction (Ob. Notes NR2, 2010 – Day 1).

Reader feedback in this newsroom, though, was not always positive. A senior journalist in NR2 told how she found some feedback quite threatening with readers sometimes
using personal insults to comment on a story via the publication’s website. During the same discussion, another journalist revealed how he dealt with such comments:

*Journalist* contacts his nasty feedback deliberately and politely thanks them for their input. They are usually sheepish when contacted (Ob. Notes NR2, 2010 – Day 1).

This journalist from NR2 also agreed that he tailored his writing to the audience because the audience is, “very important. But at the same time I’m not going to write something that I don’t believe.”

This comment by the journalist in NR2 about the importance of the audience was a common theme throughout the interviews. One of journalism’s basic tenets, and a core lesson in journalism education, is to keep the reader in mind when writing (Conley & Lamble, 2006; Maskell & Perry, 1999; Sheridan Burns, 2002). However, some research has argued that journalists are often unaware of the characteristics of the audience they are writing for (Allan, 2004; Ewart, 1997a; Schudson, 1997; White, 2005). Baker’s (1980a) research into how journalists learn and apply the news priorities of their organisation included a question that asked the sample about their perception of their readership. Baker found that out of the forty journalists he interviewed for the research, very few had specific information about the audience of their publication. However, Baker also found that journalists understood the importance of learning how to write in the style of the publication, which is typically tailored with an audience in mind. From these two seemingly contradictory findings, Baker concluded that journalists did appreciate that knowing and understanding the audience was crucial in a journalist’s work but the data also suggests support for the contention made throughout this thesis: a journalist internalises the preferences of the field and this knowledge becomes part of their habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) or their knowing-in-action (Schön, 1983). Gans, on the other hand, agreed with Baker’s first contention, that is, journalists worked with little knowledge of their audience, but took this idea of lack of interest further: “they had little knowledge about the actual audience and rejected feedback from it. Although they had a vague image of the audience, they paid little attention to it; instead, they filmed and wrote for their superiors and for themselves” (1980, p. 230). This comment by Gans was seemingly confirmed by an answer from J4 who, when asked if his work had been edited because of audience feedback, replied:
I guess that all stories are edited because of your audience because, again as a general news reporter going back to that news sense, populist perception, someone further up the line than you, who may or may not, probably do, they have a sharper news sense and they will edit accordingly probably to reach more people (J4, i/v, 2007).

So, while J4’s remark appeared to support Gans because he deferred to his superiors’ knowledge, J4’s comment became a confirmation of the earlier contention about the importance of the audience to a publication with J4 deferring to the detailed knowledge senior staff have about their readership. In fact, out of nine editors in this study who were asked about their publication’s audience, nine indicated that the audience was the highest priority in choosing what was to be published.

Within the cohort for this research, journalists who were asked about the audience for their publication provided mixed answers: some knew the specifics about who they were writing for, with answers such as “families”, “our local community, all ages”, “decision-makers”, “35-49 year old male, professional, AB”, but others were unsure. J8 laughed and replied, “Hypothetical?” (i/v, 2007). However, when asked how important the audience were in their writing, nine out of the twelve journalists asked said the audience were a factor in their writing process. One of the other three journalists, while claiming the audience did not feature in his work process (“I don’t think about my audience when I write. I will write what I believe to be the best treatment of any possible story for myself” (J2, i/v, 2007)) did note he was aware of stories that would not get published because “they’re [management] pitching at this particular audience” (ibid.). J2’s comment provides support for Baker’s (1980a) claim that learning the style of the publication ensures that the audience is targeted with J2 not needing to consciously recall who he was writing for, another example of learning to ‘do without thinking’.

A number of the editors and journalists interviewed (E1, E2, E3, E9, E11, E12, J8, J9, J14, J16, J19) worked at community newspapers and when asked how they decided if a story was newsworthy, each of them noted the importance of the audience:

As a community newspaper, we are unashamedly only interested in how it affects our community. If writing for say a State-based paper, the focus would be more general, and not as personal. State planning policy is a good example. The Sydney
Morning Herald would run a general story about the changes to the policy, the [publication name deleted] would look at how those changes affect our local council and developers (E3, i/v, 2007).

Media owner Rupert Murdoch spoke of how important the audience is to his publications:

When I was growing up, this was the key lesson my father impressed on me. If you were an owner, the best thing you could do was to hire editors who looked out for your readers' interests—and give these readers good honest reporting on issues that mattered most to them (in Boyer Lectures, 2008).

In a later speech, Murdoch further emphasised the readers’ importance but also what he believes happens when a publication ignores their audience:

I can’t tell you how many papers I have visited where they have a wall of journalism prizes – and a rapidly declining circulation. This tells me the editors are producing news for themselves – instead of news that is relevant to their customers (in Newsroom America staff, 2010).

Murdoch’s comment relates to an argument Stockwell made about how some members of the mainstream media have an “elitist attitude” (2004, p. 16) to audiences, that is, thinking that they know better than their audience, with some journalists continuing to believe in the top-down model of mass media where communicators have the power to control meaning through selecting and processing information that is to be transmitted to an audience. While this perception may hold in some instances, analysis of the data in this research indicated that this cohort, both journalists and editors, understood the importance of the audience in their production process via feedback from the audience and within the editing process.

For example, J2, J3, J4, J7, J8, J14 and J16 each said they had received feedback from the audience via email, online comments or letters, both positive and negative, on such things as stories, writing style and errors in stories. J4, for instance, has had positive feedback on his writing: “I have had some positive comments on my turn of phrase in my weekly columns … I try to use sayings I’ve heard over the years that aren’t yet cliché (J4, i/v, 2007) while J14 had the opposite when she received a letter from a reader who had an issue with how she had used commas in a story: “She wrote a lovely letter
saying, ‘just thought I’d let you know, this is how we were taught and this is the right way to do it’” (i/v, 2007).

The interview data also showed how editors use audience feedback to encourage readership at a publication. E3 remarked how audience feedback dictated the content in the publication, a point taken further by E15, whose magazine depends highly on reader response:

It would not affect our work, as we think we know our community. Audience feedback may influence content in general though. For example, the [publication name deleted] carries history, which is popular with our readers, though many regional papers do not (E3, i/v, 2007).

Every week we rely on the readers’ feedback to determine what they like – what covers they will buy, what covers they won’t and that affects what stories we write in the future (E15, i/v, 2008).

While a number of the journalists interviewed noted their work was edited indirectly because of the audience, that is, they internalised the publication’s expectations of what was expected of them and wrote accordingly, there were also examples in the data of direct editing because of audience input. An editor and a journalist in this cohort both provided examples of how the way they reported court cases was directly edited because of the audience’s sensibilities. E3 said, “we have been taken to task for being too graphic” (i/v, 2007) while J24 provided an example of how management’s perceptions of the audience of her publication changed the rules about what could and could not be reported:

Many moons ago, when I was covering court, we stopped reporting "minor" sexual assault/abuse stories, and cut down the detail in those we did cover, simply because they were too "distasteful" for our readers over breakfast. It was a shame because it downplayed the problem (J24, i/v, 2008).

J24’s account illustrates how an audience, as part of the field of journalism, can influence content. The audience, as one part of the system of journalism, joins other members of the field in supporting, or enabling, a journalist’s production both directly, such as in story generation, and indirectly, including providing guidelines for what is to be published. In this instance, the audience has influenced other members of the field,
that is, management, with the result that a structure in the domain changed. This meant that J24, and other journalists on J24’s publication, needed to consider these changed structures in their production process so their ‘novel’ product was acceptable to the field.

4.3.6 Other stakeholders

Throughout the interviews and observation, journalists identified public relations (PR) practitioners as other stakeholders who could be recognised as members of the field. It is also important to note the difficulty of which element within the system model is the most valuable for examination of this important influence. The PR structure is made up of people and, for this reason, it should be examined within the field element. Csikszentmihalyi states the field is the social structure that can “determine the structure of the domain” (1990, p. 206) and examination of the literature and this ethnographic research shows how much influence PR has on journalism’s structures. In fact, Oakham and Kirby specifically note that PR’s influence on news production “may impact on the crucial area of media accuracy and news values” (2006, p. 96), both considered to be conventions of the domain. However, Csikszentmihalyi also adds that the field’s job “involves passing judgment on performance in that domain” (1997, p. 42) and, while public relations influences the structure of the domain, PR practitioners do not have a direct influence on what products are to be included in the domain.

With this in mind, it is difficult to categorise where, in Sawyer’s nested audience model, PR practitioners could be categorised. Because they do not fully meet the criteria of the intermediaries in the field, they could be considered in the next level of Sawyer’s “audience”, that is, connoisseurs. Often, PR practitioners have worked or trained in journalism (Conley & Lamble, 2006) and have an insider understanding of the domain and field; a professional PR practitioner knows how the domain of journalism works – deadlines, structure of stories – as well as how the field works – who to send a media release to, the hierarchy of the newsroom. This definition relates to Sawyer’s description of a connoisseur but, as noted previously, the borders between each element in the model are permeable and because of this permeability, and the argument that PR’s influence on the structures of the domain is high, a precise categorisation is difficult to determine.
To provide evidence of this difficulty, research examining PR’s interaction with journalism can be cited to illustrate the influence PR has on journalists’ practices. For example, a 2010 research project conducted by the Australian Centre for Independent Journalism (ACIJ) and online publication *Crikey* found that 55% of Australian news was PR generated and in a 2004 Roy Morgan poll, 81% of journalists stated that PR and ‘spin’, described as news management to control events in a positive way (Watson & Hill, 2006, p. 192), were the most negative pressure on journalists (2004, p. 13). Jim Macnamara completed a survey of 417 journalists in Australia in 1992 and found that 86% of these journalists had ‘Very Frequent’ contact with PR practitioners (2001, p. 5). Michelle Grattan, talking about political ‘spin’, claims that: “Spin can encourage lazy journalism and distorted journalism” (1998b, p. 42) because governments and oppositions provide PR material that may go unchallenged by journalists. This situation could be because of time issues but Grattan also notes that the competition between media outlets to have access to politicians means journalists must play by the rules or be denied access, a point raised by journalist Laurie Oakes: “[Former Australian Prime Minister] Keating’s media operatives could threaten to take journalists ‘off the drip’ – in other words, deprive them of information and access if their reporting was not to the PM’s liking” (2010, p. 333).

However, Parliament is only one organisation that journalists have to deal with. The majority of government departments, government bodies, corporations, both public and private, and people in the public eye (for example, sports and entertainment people) have media advisers. Journalists in this study remarked that the increase in PR makes it difficult to do their job:

> Getting around the legions of PR people who are there to obfuscate and obstruct our access to information. … it’s hard in this day and age to cut through those barriers, especially when all and sundry, whether it be corporate, government, police services, health services have all been muzzled by this legion of spin-men (J4, i/v, 2007).

The journalists interviewed in this study seemingly have an ambivalent relationship with the PR industry with both positive and negative comments regarding how it has affected their practice. Journalists said they often find it difficult to access information and sources and this is one way the PR industry has contributed to changes in the
domain. How this affects production is in relation to the way access to sources is actioned. As J4 pointed out, “legions of PR executives now stand between journalists and the best sources, so quite often you are forced to settle for second even third best” (i/v, 2007) meaning journalists have needed to adjust their practices. Discussion with a journalist in NR2 confirmed the difficulty he has when trying to collect information:

Hates media managers and finds they lie, hold back info, reply to emails with no information. If the email says a department won’t comment, he includes THAT in the story. The email is a backup for this (Ob. Notes NR2, 2010 – Day 2, emphasis in the original).

However, J5 believes it is his job to “outflank that manoeuvre and find people who are confident enough to talk to me” (i/v, 2007) and J1 also noted that working with PR practitioners can enable production:

I don’t want to completely write off the public relations industry because they can be really, really helpful when you’re under a tight deadline. They can do an awful lot for you and I find the best public relations agents are the ones who have actually worked on the other side of things before (J1, i/v, 2007).

Similarly, J3 finds publicists assist in the creative process. J3’s job entails working with the entertainment industry and includes socialising with publicists who give tips about upcoming events and music releases, which can be followed up and used as a basis for stories (i/v, 2007).

Analysis of data gathered during this research project showed that PR can and does have a negative effect on how a journalist works and can constrain their production process. However, as with other structures that govern print journalism, journalists have learned to interact with PR practitioners and adapt their work processes and use these structures to enable their creative practices. While PR practitioners do not judge and accept new content, what the PR sphere has done is provide structures that have expanded the domain of print journalism.

4.3.7 The field’s influence on the domain

With Csikszentmihalyi claiming that each of the systems model’s three elements “affect the others and is affected by them in turn” (1988b, p. 329), it is appropriate to examine
how the field affects the domain. Members of the field of journalism influence the domain in several ways ranging from minor changes, such as accepting articles to include as part of the domain for other journalists to draw on, through to editors and owners implementing changes in an individual paper, and paradigm-changing acts such as the introduction of different styles of journalism and innovative journalistic practices.

At a publication, for example, minor decisions made by senior staff can affect how journalists are expected to write. Bell (1991) stated that editors set the guidelines that journalists use, a comment confirmed by Michael Young: “Andrew Jaspan, editor of Melbourne’s Age, has banned the use of the word ‘yesterday’ from any opening paragraph in his newspaper” (2007, p. 92). J7 (i/v, 2007) noted that one editor he worked with would not allow journalists to use the word currently and the editor at his present paper will not use the word local because of the size of the area the newspaper services. Guthrie (2010) claims that an editor’s personality is typically reflected in a newspaper and cites Eric Beecher whose editorship of Melbourne’s Herald Sun in the 1980s attempted to increase the level of intelligence in the stories he presented. An informal discussion with the news editor at NR2 revealed that the editor has a vision of how he wants the paper and typically spends hours on the front page to fulfil that vision. At industry level, Graham Perkin’s decade-long tenure as editor of The Age in the 1960s and 1970s changed investigative reporting in Australia (Hills, 2010; Nolan, 2008; Schultz, 1998). Perkin encouraged reporting in areas such as abortion, capital punishment and road toll statistics as well as changing traditional employment practices by hiring non-Anglo reporters, graduates, and women in non-traditional journalist roles, for example, outside the so-called women’s pages such as fashion.

Senior management, with its control over budgets and staff, also influences what is included in the domain. Editors and editors-in-chief are now often expected to be the publisher or manager of a publication, that is, the one who manages budgets and circulation figures as well as editorial policy. There has typically been a strong division between the commercial and editorial sections (Pearson et al., 2001), particularly in metropolitan newspapers, but evolving structures in the field, in reaction to evolving structures in the domain, has meant that the division between these two sections has become less defined. Grattan claimed that commercialisation is becoming increasingly
regarded as a core value in journalism that has “far-reaching implications for how our papers are run, how they look and what they contain – or do not contain” (1998a, p. 1).

Underwood (1993) maintained that good reporting has been forgotten at many newspapers in the pursuit of audience share with marketers that push promotional products (for example, music CDs and other promotional items) becoming more important than journalism’s core role of providing information. J2 gave an example of the importance of the influence of marketing in newspapers when he recalled a meeting between journalists and the marketing department at a newspaper he worked at:

> We had one conference from the circulation department and they showed us all these graphs of which issues of the paper had sold particularly well. And they charted them against which promotions the paper was doing, so which free CDs it was doing or which free holidays and you could see that yes, that free CD gave you double the readership that week … But he had an audience of journalists who didn’t care and someone put their hand up and said, ‘what effect does it have when you have a good old-fashioned scoop in the paper?’ And he said, ‘we’ve never measured that’. And I think that’s quite indicative, or he said, ‘we didn’t measure that for this survey’ is more accurate. That’s more indicative of the fact that these are bottom-line commercial operators (J2, i/v, 2007).

All these examples demonstrate how editors, managing editors and other senior managers in the field can affect the structures of the domain but the audience also have a large influence. Issues such as the ‘dumbing down’ of the media (Randall, 1996; Tapsall & Varley, 2001), where journalists are encouraged to aim stories at the “most vulgar interests of the public” (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon, 2001, p. 134), and the implications of the rise of the Internet with audiences having access to multiple sources of news, has led to the industry changing the way it reports both in terms of content and the structure of news stories. J6 noted how online reporting has changed because of the nature of the Internet and how the audience reads news online:

> … airy-fairy really creative intros are no good to me because on most of our pages we have a one paragraph [inaudible], which is the ‘get people in’ paragraph. And what might work on a page where the rest of the words follow on and the headline is there, the picture’s there and it all works in a package, doesn’t necessarily then work online … You’ve got to make people want to read the rest of it ’cause the rest
Supporters of journalism’s traditional values, such as truth, fairness, the public’s right to know and objectivity, argue that some of these changes by the field, in particular the rise in marketing, are eroding journalism’s established role as the Fourth Estate but without these changes by the field to the structure of the domain, print journalism could become less important and possibly redundant. The same argument was made in the Domain section and is just as pertinent here: a domain cannot remain stagnant or unchanging or it risks becoming less relevant within the culture. However, to reiterate the essential aspect of the research question, the field has accepted new rules, conventions, techniques, guides and procedures into the domain and a journalist is required to learn and use these revised rules and conventions in their production, thus learning the preferences of the field, which in turn leads to the ability to produce “a valued addition to the store of knowledge” (McIntyre, 2008c, p. 1). This complex situation again demonstrates the circular causality of the systems model as well as illustrating how important the field and the domain are in a journalist’s creative process.

4.3.8 Conclusion

Has this section contributed anything towards answering the research question, that is, how do cultural (domain), individual and social (field) influences affect how a print journalist produces, or creates, their work? It is clear via the data analysis how important the field is in a print journalist’s creative practices on the practical side of their work, such as generating article ideas and editing, but also in providing support via learning, collaboration and providing knowledge of the field. Journalists interact with the field, as one part of a system, but it was also crucial to identify how the field interacts with the domain. As Csikszentmihalyi contended, the three elements are of equal importance in generating creativity and each affects both of the other elements.

However, in print journalism, the importance of the social structure of the field is sometimes overlooked unless it is to state how deterministic the field is on a journalist’s agency (Henningham, 1989, p. 27; 1990, p. x; Machin & Niblock, 2006, p. 162; McNair, 1998, p. 61). This thesis would argue that it is just as crucial for journalists to understand and navigate the social structure, the field, of journalism as it is to learn the rules, conventions, techniques, guides and procedures, the cultural structures. Ensuring
that journalists understand how the field works, who can assist in accessing information, who selects what is published, who selects what is to be written, as well as identifying who in the field can negotiate entry into journalism, can not only clarify the way in which creativity works but also assist journalists in their careers and lead to a more efficient work process. As Sawyer contended: “The most successful creative people are very good at introducing their ideas to the field. They know who the key people are, and they know how the selection process works” (2006, p. 309).

Continuing to teach the knowledge structures of journalism, that is the domain, is a crucial part of journalism, as is knowing and understanding how a journalist’s background and personal qualities, strengths and weaknesses, can be used, but it is equally important for a practitioner to have knowledge of the field. Sheridan Burns defined a journalist as (1) someone who earns their living from practising journalism, and (2) has mastered the technicalities of the profession, and is accepted by other journalists as having done that, and (3) who believes in journalism as social responsibility (2002, pp. 16-17). The second point made by Sheridan-Burns emphasises how important the field is. This examination of the field also showed how the journalists in this study are familiar with and use the structures of the field to enable their creative processes. However, it also demonstrated that as the journalists became more proficient in understanding these structures, they again had the ability to ‘do without thinking’. In a similar fashion to both the Domain and Individual sections, journalists internalise the knowledge they need to work efficiently, in this instance the preferences of the field, which then becomes part of their tacit knowledge or habitus.
5.0 Future directions for research and conclusions

Analysis of the data has revealed that print journalists produce their work within a dynamic of cultural, individual and social influences. The interaction journalists have with these influences, or structures, as part of the system of print journalism, and the knowledge they have of these structures, is crucial to how they take part in producing, or creating, the texts of print journalism. Contrary to popular myths of individuals being at the centre of creativity, a perspective that can be described as a Ptolemaic view (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988b, p. 336), this research has demonstrated the hypothesis that social and cultural influences are just as important in the production of creative texts. This has been described as a Copernican view (ibid.) where the individual is one part of a system of important factors, all of which are necessary but not sufficient by themselves to produce creativity. What has also been demonstrated is that journalism can be seen as a creative activity in the same way as such writing genres as poetry and fiction writing once a research based understanding of creativity is applied to it. Rather than differentiating between different forms of writing as high and low culture, or creative and noncreative, as a Romantic view appears to lead to, it is more productive to recognise that all forms of writing have structures and it is in the way an individual uses agency, their ability to make choice, and interacts with those structures that leads to creative media texts. Print journalism is a system of production with a wide range of practices and practitioners. But even in the microcosm of the field of print journalism in this study – including journalists, editors, sub editors and deputy editors, rural, regional and metropolitan journalists, newspaper and magazine writers, general and specialist reporters, and participants who worked in daily, tri-weekly, weekly and monthly publications – the research was able to find common themes that related to the practice of print journalism and these journalists’ creative production.

This ethnographic research has demonstrated that a journalist’s interaction with the structures of journalism is a vital component for a creative outcome. But, more crucially, one result of the analysis of the data is the evidence that agency and structure are inextricably linked. While it can be shown that journalists work within a myriad of structures, it cannot be said that a journalist has no opportunity to make choices within those structures, that is, a journalist has agency. This conditional agency, where a journalist works and makes choices within this known set of structures, is crucial to
understanding how a print journalist produces creative texts. A journalist, as a necessary part of the interactions of the system of creativity, learns the rules, conventions, techniques, guides and procedures of the domain as well as the requirements of the field and is supported by the domain and the field thus enabling the production of creative texts. These requirements and structures not only constrain a journalist but are vital in helping them to be more productive in their creative processes.

The results have shown that models of creativity can be applied to a cultural production sphere such as print journalism and the analysis provides evidence that print journalism is indeed a creative profession, and this result is a confirmation of some understandings within the field of creativity research. The evidence from this ethnographic research shows that, in line with the systems model of creativity, the domain, the field and the individual are inextricably linked and the interactions of each are non-linear. All are necessary for a creative outcome. The individual learns the rules and procedures of the domain and uses these to produce an article. The article is presented to members of the field for verification that it is novel and appropriate for inclusion into the domain of knowledge: the systems model in action.

5.1 Implications of creativity research for print journalism

By applying current theories in creativity research to print journalism, the project examined how print journalists produce creative texts in interaction with cultural, social and individual structures. The value of this examination can be seen in the implications of the outcomes of this study where the research has pointed to several areas where the results can assist in journalism education and journalists’ professional practice.

**Journalism education and the field**

One of the findings from this research is that the three components in the system are all necessary for a creative outcome. Therefore, it is crucial that all three components are acknowledged in journalism education. However, a UNESCO paper that provided a model of suggested subjects that should be taught in a journalism course focused primarily on domain acquisition:

… journalism education should teach students how to identify news and recognize the story in a complex field of fact and opinion, how to conduct journalistic research, and how to write for, illustrate, edit and produce material for various
media formats (newspapers and magazines, radio and television, and online and multimedia operations) and for their particular audiences. It should give them the knowledge and training to reflect on journalism ethics and best practices in journalism, and on the role of journalism in society, the history of journalism, media law, and the political economy of media (including ownership, organization and competition). It should teach them how to cover political and social issues of particular importance to their own society through courses developed in cooperation with other departments in the college or university. It should ensure that they develop both a broad general knowledge and the foundation of specialized knowledge in a field important to journalism. It should ensure that they develop — or that they have as a prerequisite — the linguistic ability necessary for journalistic work in their country, including, where this is required, the ability to work in local indigenous or vernacular languages. It should prepare them to adapt to technological developments and other changes in the news media (UNESCO, 2007, p. 6).

The UNESCO description includes how to do journalism, how to act as a reflective journalist, the importance of journalism in society and a number of other theoretical ideas that should underpin journalism education but it does not include the importance of learning how the field, the social structure of journalism, works. Therefore, this section is suggesting that it is essential to teach students how to navigate the social structure of journalism. Teaching an understanding of the field – how the field works, who can assist in accessing information, who selects what is published, who selects what is to be written, as well as identifying who in the field can negotiate entry into journalism – in conjunction with domain acquisition can only assist an early journalist in their career and lead to a more efficient work process.

To present another example, Meehan (2001) pointed out that most do-it-yourself freelance journalism books emphasise learning how to write publishable articles with little emphasis on the importance of contacts in the industry. In freelance writing, for example, knowing who to contact in the industry is as vitally important as knowing how to write. The same argument can be made in any journalistic endeavour. There are journalism textbooks that include brief explanations of a newsroom’s social structure (Cole, 2005; Conley & Lamble, 2006; Frost, 2001; Harriss, Leiter & Johnson, 1985; Maskell & Perry, 1999; Niblock, 1996; White, 2005) but there are also many textbooks that merely instruct on how to write as a journalist by focusing on the domain
knowledge. Continuing to teach the knowledge structures of journalism, that is, the rules, conventions, techniques, guides and procedures of the domain, as well as theoretical subjects to encourage students to critically examine journalism and its place in society, is a crucial part of journalism education but it is equally important to increase journalism students’ knowledge of the field.

A research area that has been identified from this study, therefore, is an analysis of journalism education programs offered in Australia to ascertain whether there is any allowance made within the programs to learn about the field. The study could include content analysis of the subjects offered and their course outcomes as well as interviews with teaching staff, journalism students, university-educated journalists and the senior members of the field who hire journalists to attempt to discover how learning about the field can be incorporated more formally into a journalism degree.

G. Stuart Adam suggested that it is time that the creative process is taught within journalism research and education (1993, p. 48), a suggestion that this research emphatically agrees with. But Adam claimed that articles are “single products of the imaginations of single individuals” (1993, p. 20), which are based on templates that “reside in the culture” (ibid), a claim that one could argue covers the individual and the domain. This thesis would argue that the creative process that should be taught to journalists is a process that incorporates the individual, the domain and the field equally.

**Structures in journalism**

All journalism forms are subject to structures, as are all writing forms. It is crucial that journalists learn the rules, conventions, techniques, guides and procedures, or structures, of the domain of print journalism. It is also crucial to learn the structures of the field, and the preferences of the field, as well as understanding how their own personal traits can be adapted to the system of journalism.

With this in mind, it is a suggestion of this research that journalists need to be aware that structures in the system of journalism are not only constraining. They also need to understand that structures can enable action by providing the guides a journalist needs to work productively. In line with current thinking in creativity research, structures are a part of any sphere of production (Bailin, 1988; Boden, 2004; Negus & Pickering, 2004; Wolff, 1981) and journalists, as agents, need to learn how to interact with these
structures to produce work that is both novel and appropriate. As per Gans’ (1980) suggestion, learning and knowing these structures allow the journalist to get on with what they do best; they do not have to think about what they are doing. Moreover, when a journalist learns these structures, they become a part of the journalist’s habitus and this enables a journalist to ‘do without thinking’, thus enabling a more efficient work process.

**Agency in journalism**

This research has further demonstrated how a journalist has agency, or the ability to act, within the system of journalism, thus demonstrating that structures are not totally deterministic. Agency and structure are inextricably linked. What has been shown is that while structures do affect a journalist’s agency, a journalist also affects the structures of the system of journalism: an exemplary demonstration of Giddens’ (1984) structuration in action.

However, what has also been revealed is that there are no specific traits that give an individual a propensity for journalism and this revelation connects with Csikszentmihalyi’s contention that an individual alone is not responsible for creativity. Creativity is, instead, the product of a system and it is how a journalist uses their own idiosyncratic traits, as well as their internalisation of the domain and field, that enable them to practice journalism. If a journalist understands what is required from the field, and learns the rules and traditions within the domain, and employs their individual structures, such as personal traits or varying subjectivities, cognitive structures, family background and education, they will be able to adapt to these requirements and produce work that is both novel and appropriate: a creative product.

**5.2 Journalism now**

Changes in the print journalism domain since the start of this project have presented several opportunities for possible future directions for research. Print journalists now use different media platforms to present news to the audience and employ new digital tools in the production of print journalism. To explain these changes further, when the project commenced in 2006, social media, such as Twitter and FaceBook, were not yet used as journalistic tools and blogging as a source of news was still in its early stages (Australian Press Council, 2006b, par. 62). Online journalism was not considered a
major threat to traditional journalism, although regulatory bodies such as the Australian Press Council recognised that news publications were attempting to transform their business to adapt to an online environment (2006a, par. 7). Since then, the print journalism landscape has changed in the West. Most Western news publications now have a highly interactive online presence and many journalists use social media tools, such as FaceBook and Twitter, as a regular news gathering tool to assist them in their work practices. Individual journalists interact with their audience via blogs and Twitter, and participatory, or citizen, journalism\(^{68}\) gives the audience a voice in the media with the term *produser* (Bruns, 2005a; 2005b; 2006b) coined to illustrate the fusion between producer and receiver. Increasingly, there are dedicated online news publications in Australia, such as the Fairfax publications *Brisbane Times* and *WA Today*, with News Corp’s flagship publication *The Australian* moving a growing amount of its content toward a web-based news delivery service and Australian magazines such as *Ralph* moving fully online after thirteen years as a hard-copy magazine. Blogging, FaceBook and Youtube are becoming increasingly important. The use of Twitter is no longer abnormal. As an example, during the protests in Iran after the election in 2009, citizens used social media tools to “comment about Iran’s electoral uncertainty and political future” (Burns & Eltham, 2009, p. 299), a commentary that was used by journalists around the world as a source of news. As a further example in an Australian context, during the recent Queensland floods, official organisations such as the Queensland Police Service used Twitter to inform citizens directly (Bruns, 2011). The use of these digital tools now provide the daily working sources of news for many journalists (Farhi, 2009; Hermida, 2010; 2012 (forthcoming); Posetti, 2009d).

However, as discussed in both the *Field* and *Domain* sections, changes within spheres of cultural production are a natural progression of a dynamic system in operation and a domain cannot remain stagnant or it risks becoming less relevant within the culture. In print journalism, whether or not the field accepts these changes to the structures of the domain will determine the future of print journalism and its relevance. The field is currently struggling with how to maintain print journalism’s integrity in the digital age. There are researchers both in Australia and internationally that are examining how digital tools, online journalism and citizen journalism are affecting print journalists, the

\(^{68}\) See for example research work done by Bruns (2005a) with others (Deuze, Bruns & Neuberger, 2007), and Flew (2008) with others (Flew, Spurgeon & Daniel, 2009).
field of journalism and the domain of journalism. Other research has examined how consumers of news participate with online news and how mainstream news publications are attempting to adapt to consumers’ needs (Daniel, Flew & Spurgeon, 2009; Flew, Spurgeon & Daniel, 2009).

However, it is argued here that the systems model is a model that can explain these changes in print journalism and the challenges can be managed in one of two ways: the field can accept the changes as part of the domain or a new domain, with its own practitioners and field, can be formed. As noted in the Domain and Field sections, Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon state that new domains form when rules and procedures become specialised and can be passed on to new practitioners (2001, p. 22). Deuze claims that this is starting to happen with online journalism:

> The various online journalists interviewed and observed by the authors in this book are developing their own rituals, best practices, skillsets and norms regarding the characteristics of their medium, particularly when it comes to addressing the online user (2008, p. 208).

Deuze is seemingly proposing that digital journalism will become its own sphere of production. On the other hand, Stephen Quinn suggests that print journalism will adapt to an online platform. Quinn, while discussing citizen journalism and its affect on traditional journalism, argued that “mediamorphosis” (2009, p. 82), where mainstream media creates new reporting styles to accommodate new media forms, will likely occur. In a similar fashion to newspaper’s reaction to the introduction of radio and television, the mainstream media organisations will likely adapt their practices to absorb newer forms: “As mainstream media embrace audience-generated content, they are changing their approach to news and modifying their structures and formats” (Quinn & Quinn-Allan, 2009, p. 77, my emphasis). The systems model would explain this by declaring that the field is accepting new procedures into the domain, which is expanding to

---

69 See, for example, the International Symposium on Online Journalism held at the University of Texas, Austin, USA held on 1-2 April 2011 (http://online.journalism.utexas.edu/program.php?year=2011) and texts such as Meikle and Redden’s News online: transformations and continuities (2011), Singer et al.’s Participatory Journalism: Guarding Open Gates at Online Newspapers (2011), Domingo and Paterson’s Making online news: the ethnography of new media production (2008), Bruns’ work on blogging in journalism (2006a) and citizen journalism (2005a; 2005b; 2006b), Posetti (2009a; 2009b; 2009c; 2009d; 2010) and Quinn’s (1998; 2006a; 2006b; 2009b) research looking at social media tools in journalism, and Morieson’s (2007; 2010; 2011) examination of online newsrooms.
accommodate the new practices, thus providing individuals with new structures to learn to produce novel and acceptable products.

These ideas present several possible future applications of this research. With the advent of digital journalism, it is imperative to examine how these journalists produce their work. This could be done in a number of ways. An ethnographic study of an online newsroom or the online section of a traditional media outlet, carried out in a similar fashion to this one, would provide information as to the processes a journalist uses in online journalism production. A further study could incorporate a content analysis of a newspaper’s online sites. Examining a publication’s Most Viewed webpage, a listing that quantitatively selects the stories audiences read and lists these stories on the publication’s website, could provide insight into how the audience is affecting news practices and how journalists produce the news for an online audience. This information would offer valuable knowledge into how the rules, conventions, techniques, guides and procedures of the domain of journalism has changed, or is changing, because of new technology.

5.3 Further suggestions for future research

An examination of journalism education and online journalism would provide interesting and instructive information about print journalism but further research could also apply the systems model to other domains in journalism, for example broadcast journalism, as well as different forms within print journalism itself. Sarah Coffee (2007; 2010) from the University of Newcastle in Australia, for example, is using the systems model to examine her own creative process as a feature journalist. Research could also apply the systems model to a high-profile journalist such as Hunter S. Thompson, a journalist who is credited with pioneering gonzo journalism, a form of journalism where the writer uses fictional techniques to tell a news story. Analysing biographies, letters and interviews (with both Thompson and others) could provide insight into how social, cultural and individual influences affected how he produced his work. McIntyre (2006) carried out a similar study within his research area of Western popular music songwriting when he applied the systems model to musician and songwriter Paul McCartney by examining the production of Yesterday, a song released on The Beatles’
Help album in August 1965. Similarly, the benefit of researching a well-known or H-creative journalist such as Thompson would be to explain his creative processes and see whether or not they were any different to how an ‘everyday’ journalist creates.

5.4 Creativity in print journalism: a conclusion

An examination of journalism using a systems model of creativity has provided answers to questions asked in the Introduction: How do journalism’s cultural structures enable creative production? How do a journalist’s individual traits and background affect their creative process? How does a journalist work within the social structure of journalism? The conclusion is as follows: journalists cannot produce a creative product without information from a domain of knowledge and an understanding of the requirements of a field. Additionally, in order to understand print journalism and a journalist’s creative process, we need to understand how a journalist’s personal background and individual traits affect their creative process and how they use these elements in conjunction with the social and cultural structures of journalism. However, this is no different from other forms of writing or, in fact, from other forms of cultural production. Analysis of the data collected has demonstrated that creativity is a systemic activity and contrary to the notion of the individual being at the centre of creativity, or the deterministic argument from much of journalism’s research that places journalists in a constrained environment, what this research has demonstrated is how crucial both agency and structure are in producing creative texts. As Tony Harcup recognised:

Within the study of journalism, agency means the extent to which individual journalists can make a difference to media practices and content … To say that journalists have agency is not to deny that journalists operate in a world of constraints, but to argue that structural forces do not totally determine individuals’ actions (2009, p. 7, emphasis in original).

Marrying theories and definitions from the field of creativity research with ethnographic data and literature from print journalism confirmed these findings. Applying rationalist creativity theories and definitions to research in print journalism further strengthened the argument that print journalists are creative producers. By using the systems model, it can be demonstrated that if a print journalist, as an active agent, learns the rules and

70 McIntyre notes that while Yesterday is listed as co-written with John Lennon, there is evidence to show McCartney instigated the song (2006, p. 216).
procedures of the domain, produces an article and presents it to the field for verification, and the article is novel and appropriate, then it can be seen that a creative text is a realistic outcome.

Csikszentmihalyi’s question in creativity research, where can creativity be found, and Cobley’s fundamental question in communication studies, that is, how are messages created, are similar to the question asked at the beginning of this research project: how do print journalists produce their work? In print journalism, it can be answered by stating that creativity can be found in the confluence of an individual’s genetic makeup, personality traits, cognitive structures, home and family environment, education, and life experiences, as well as the journalist’s interaction with the field and immersion in the domain of journalism. Couple these individual traits with the rules, conventions, techniques, guides and procedures of the domain, the collection of previously written stories, and the expertise, judgement and support of print journalism’s field and we can see how creativity in print journalism can occur: a system of print journalism in action.
6.0 Bibliography

@barryofarrell 2011, old media again expressing concern about my tweeting - must have missed this great piece from the Punch http://t.co/drdd6zX [Twitter Post], http://twitter.com/barryofarrell/statuses/59393482762100736 - accessed 17.4.11.


Baxter, L. and Babbie, E. 2008, 'The basics of communication research', in *Researching media: texts, audiences and industries.*, (Eds) Deakin University School of Communication and Creative Arts Flexible Learning Program and Deakin University Faculty of Arts and Education Flexible Learning Program, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria, pp. 46-68.


Bruns, A. 2005a, Gatewatching: collaborative online news production, Peter Lang, New York.


Coates, G. 2002, Identifying with the organisation: a case study analysis of how organisational commitment arises, Writers Club Press, California.


Crotty, M. 1998, *The foundations of social research: meaning and perspective in the research process*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW.


Csikszentmihalyi, M. 1988a, 'Motivation and creativity: toward a synthesis of structural and energistic approaches to cognition', *New Ideas in Psychology*, 6(2), pp. 159-176.


Fishman, M. 1980, *Manufacturing the news*, University of Texas Press, Austin.


Hanusch, F. 2010, *Email communication*, to J. Fulton, 24.1.11.


Ieron, J.A. 1987, A protocol analysis case study of five student journalists, Masters thesis, Ball State University, Indiana.


Maskell, V. and Perry, G. 1999, *Write to publish: writing feature articles for magazines, newspapers and corporate and community publications*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW.


Mumford, M.D. 2003, 'Where have we been, where are we going? Taking stock in creativity research', *Creativity Research Journal, 15*(2 & 3), pp. 107-120.


Patching, R. 1996, '900 into 300 won't go: are Australia's journalism courses producing too many graduates?' Australian Journalism Review, 18(1), pp. 53-65.


Quinn, S. 2006a, 'Better journalism or better profits?: a key convergence issue in an age of concentrated ownership', *Pacific Journalism Review*, 10(2), pp. 111-129.


Schultz, J. 1990, *Accuracy in Australian newspapers*, University of Technology, Sydney (Australian Center for Independent Journalism), Broadway, NSW.


Snyder, A.W., Mulcahy, E., Taylor, J.L., Mitchell, D.J., Sachdev, P. and Gandevia, S.C. 2003, 'Savant-like skills exposed in normal people by suppressing the left fronto-temporal lobe', Journal of Integrative Neuroscience, 2, pp. 149-158.

Solly, R., Isbister, H. and Birtles, B. 2007, Journalism: jobs that make news, Career FAQs, Ultimo, N.S.W.


Vine, J. 2010, "'If I must die, let me die drinking at an inn": the tradition of alcohol consumption in Australian journalism", *Australian Journalism Monographs*, 12, pp. 1-40.


Weisberg, R. 2006, Creativity: understanding innovation in problem solving, science, invention, and the arts, John Wiley and Sons Ltd, New York.


http://www.nordicom.gu.se/reviewcontents/ncomreview/ncomreview200/Ytreberg.pdf - accessed 15.5.06.


http://hdl.handle.net/1903/3516 - accessed 8.1.08.


7.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Questions for interviews

1) Background information
   a) Name
   b) Publication
   c) Job description – classification of journalist
   d) Educational background
   e) Cultural background
   f) Family background
   g) Employment background

2) What Is A Journalist?
   a) How would you describe the journalist’s work?
   b) Do you believe that a journalist can be creative? How?
   c) Are different genres of journalism more creative than others? How?

3) Writing an Article
   a) Where do you get ideas for articles?
   b) How do you decide whether a story is newsworthy?
   c) What do you think makes a great story?
   d) After the story idea is decided, what are the steps you take when putting an article together?
   e) If you were writing for a different publication would you change those steps?
   f) What style of writing do you do for the publication you are currently at? (e.g. inverted pyramid, feature, etc)
   g) How do you know what structure you need to write within for the different publications? (e.g. inverted pyramid, narrative, etc.)
   h) How did you learn to write as a journalist?
   i) What do you believe are important tools you use in your writing? (this could be personal e.g. good at something, or it could be an external tool e.g. computer, spelling rules, etc).
   j) Do you ever become so involved in writing that time seems to fly by and writing the article seems effortless?
   k) Can you give me one example of when this has happened?
   l) Why do you think this happened?
   m) What motivates you to write?
   n) Do you have a piece that you are particularly proud of? Why this piece? (if you have agreed…) May I have a sample?
   o) Is there an example of an article you have produced that you believe is good enough but probably not your greatest effort? If so, why did you compromise?
   p) English rules are very important in writing. How did you learn spelling/punctuation/grammar rules?

Extra questions for freelance journalists

q) When writing for different publications, do you change those steps? How?
   r) As a freelancer, how do you learn to write within the different styles of different publications?
   s) How do you know what structure you need to write within for the different publications? (e.g. inverted pyramid, narrative, etc.)

4) Journalism
a) Can you give some examples of the rules of journalistic writing (practical rules)?
b) What do you believe are the guiding principles of journalism (idealistic)?
c) How do these rules and principles translate into what you do? (i.e. are they important in your everyday writing)
d) How important do you believe journalism is in our culture? Why?
e) How independent do you believe journalism is in society?
f) Do you believe there is any elitism within journalism? If so, how has this affected you?
g) What do you like about the profession of journalism?
h) What do you dislike about the profession of journalism?
i) Does the industry react to change or innovation in a positive or negative way?

5) The workplace
   a) In what way have work colleagues been important to the way you work?
   b) Have you had a mentor and how did this relationship help you in your work?
   c) What are your earliest recollections of access to others who work in journalism?
   d) How does management encourage innovation and originality?
   e) Please give an example of the main way that taking risks in your writing is encouraged or discouraged in your workplace?
   f) Has management edited your work? If so, why do you think this happened?
   g) Does the publication you work for have its own code of professional practice?
   h) Is there a formal style guide?
   i) Are there unwritten rules in your workplace in regards to writing? If so, please give an example.
   j) How do these rules/codes/style guide affect how you write?
   k) Give an example of how technology in the workplace has affected your work?

Extra questions for freelance journalists
   l) Do the publications you work for have their own code of professional practice?
   m) Are there formal style guides?

6) The Audience
   a) How would you describe the main audiences for your current publication?
   b) How does the audience influence your writing?
   c) Can you give an example of where audience feedback has affected your work?
   d) Has your writing been edited because of the audience?

7) You
   a) Why did you become a journalist? Is this still relevant?
   b) What, or who, do you believe were the major influences in your decision to become a journalist?
   c) Why do you continue working as a journalist?
   d) Have you considered fiction writing and why/why not have you followed this path?
   e) During your schooling, were there any particular subjects you enjoyed or excelled at/disliked?
   f) Did you have any particular hobbies or interests as a child?
   g) Were you a reader as a child and if so, what did you like to read?
   h) What did your family encourage you in (sports, school, hobbies, etc.) and how did this tie in with you choice of career?
   i) Do you believe that you were brought up in an environment that encouraged creativity/originality?
j) How important was your family background in choosing this profession and why is this so?
k) Do you have specific qualities and/or talents that help you in your work?
l) Any that may hinder your work?
m) Do any of your personal values affect the production of your work?

8) **Do you have anything else you would like to add?**

**Extra questions for editors**

9) **For you as an editor**

   a) How do you approach the challenge of managing creative and ambitious people?
   b) Are there incidents when you have to put priority on the institutional needs?
   c) Does this produce conflicts with individual needs of people working with you?
### Appendix 2: List of interviewees and newsrooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>Job Description</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Degree (if app.)</th>
<th>Journalism training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>Managing Editor</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Leaving Certificate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Tri-weekly</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cadetship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E6</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Bi-monthly</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E7</td>
<td>Deputy Editor</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Fortnightly</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Writing/sub-editing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E8</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Bachelor of English with Honours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E9</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Tri-weekly</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cadetship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E10</td>
<td>Editor/Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E11</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Communication with print journalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E12</td>
<td>Editor/Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E13</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E14</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E15</td>
<td>News Editor</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td></td>
<td>Internship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J1</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J2</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Honours in English and Philosophy</td>
<td>Post-grad Diploma in Journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J3</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Bachelor of Communication</td>
<td>cadetship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J4</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Post-grad</td>
<td>BA with Honours plus Masters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J5</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>57?</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td></td>
<td>cadetship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J6</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td></td>
<td>cadetship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J7</td>
<td>Cadet Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Bachelor of Communication</td>
<td>cadetship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J8</td>
<td>Cadet Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Bachelor of Communication</td>
<td>cadetship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J9</td>
<td>Cadet Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Bachelor of Communication</td>
<td>cadetship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J10</td>
<td>Features Editor</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>BA with Honours</td>
<td>Post-grad Diploma in Journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J11</td>
<td>Freelance</td>
<td>Freelance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Masters in Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J12</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>BA in Arts</td>
<td>cadetship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J13</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Writing degree at UTS</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J14</td>
<td>Senior Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J15</td>
<td>Freelance</td>
<td>Freelance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td></td>
<td>cadetship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J16</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Tri-weekly</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Intermediate certificate</td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J17</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>BA with Honours</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J18</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>48?</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td></td>
<td>cadetship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J19</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>BSc with Honours (Media and Comms)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ref.</td>
<td>Job Description</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Degree (if app.)</td>
<td>Journalism training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J20</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J21</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Did not return questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J22</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>currently doing BA (English)</td>
<td>Internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J23</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Intermediate certificate</td>
<td>cadetship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J24</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>Bachelor of Business (Communication)</td>
<td>cadetship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J25</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Tri-weekly</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Did not return questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J26</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Tri-weekly</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Did not return questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Newsroom 1:** Metropolitan, weekly, >10 journalists  
**Newsroom 2:** Regional, tri-weekly, 5-10 journalists  
**Newsroom 3:** Community, weekly, <5 journalist
Appendix 3: Letters

- Information Statement – editors (interview)
- Information Statement – journalists (interview)
- Information Statement – freelance journalists (interview)
- Information Statement – editors (participant observation)
- Information Statement – journalists (participation observation)
- Consent Form – interviews
- Consent Form – participant observation
• Information Statement – editors (interview)

INFORMATION STATEMENT

Information Statement for the Research Project:

Print Journalism and the Creative Process

My name is Janet Fulton, and I am a PhD student at the University of Newcastle under the supervision of Dr Phillip McIntyre and Mr Michael Meany. As part of my research, I am examining the creative processes of print journalists when they produce an article. Your workplace is invited to participate in this research project.

Using Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model theory, I am investigating the creative practices of print journalists within the structures of their work. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) believes that creativity occurs from, “the interaction of a system composed of three elements: a culture that contains symbolic rules, a person who brings novelty into the domain, and a field of experts who recognise and validate the innovation.”

Aim and purpose of the research

The aim is to do an ethnographic study of different genres of journalist within the print industry through a series of recorded one-on-one interviews and participant observation within a newsroom. The print industry is one of society’s core cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh, 2002) and as such, it is important as a circulator of cultural texts, it influences “our understanding of the world” (ibid. p3). The cultural importance of the print industry is a key motive for studying its workers, and the texts they produce. The value of this study is that it could not only illuminate these important processes but also lead to better education for print journalism students by demonstrating how to be creative in a profession that is often disparaged as unoriginal and formulaic.

What would you be asked to do

This invitation is for your staff to take part in one-on-one interviews. They will be in the form of a recorded, semi-structured interview that should take approximately one hour. These interviews can be done at the location of the journalist’s choice, including over the telephone. A consent form and an Information Statement will be provided for each staff member that is prepared to participate in this study.

Risks and benefits of participating

We cannot promise you or your staff any direct benefit from taking part in this research but benefits may be gained by you becoming part of the documentation of the profession’s processes. Potential risks may be incurred in the form of damage to reputation. However, at every point, care will be taken to ensure that information that could harm any individual will not be reported. If requested, anonymity will be granted, particularly if your staff requests this. Any information that is damaging to individuals or libellous will be deleted.

How will the information be used

The information will be used within the thesis and for journal submissions. However, the nature of the study also means that the data could be of historical value or a resource for other researchers. For this reason, participants will be asked if the material can be stored in the University archives. This decision will only be requested after the participant has had the opportunity to review the contents of the interview.

Feedback will be supplied via mail or email to inform you and your staff of the outcome of the study and you will be invited to view the finished thesis if you wish. The thesis will remain the property of the researcher until the thesis has been accepted and the degree awarded, when it will become part of the public record. It is hoped that a complete version will be published and made available in the public domain.

What choice do you have?
Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary and if you or your staff decides not to participate, the decision will not disadvantage in any way and will not affect any future relationship with the University of Newcastle. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason. Participants will also be given the opportunity to review the interview recording and/or transcript to edit or erase anything they have said.

How will your privacy be protected

The researcher and the Project Supervisor will be the only people with access to the information that is collected. All recordings and transcripts will be stored in a secure cabinet in the Study Supervisor’s locked office. References in the thesis, apart from those existing prior in the public domain, will only be credited to an individual with the specific permission of those involved, otherwise, no direct references will be made to any individuals. If requested, anonymity will be granted.

It would be appreciated if you could email or write to Dr Phillip McIntyre with your willingness to participate in this research or your wish to decline the invitation. If this is not received, a follow-up telephone call will be made after a month.

Thank you for the time you have taken to consider this invitation.

Please keep this Information Sheet. Any enquiries about the study can be directed to Dr Phillip McIntyre, School of Design, Communication and Information Technology, Faculty of Science and Information Technology, The University of Newcastle, telephone: 02 4985 4522.

Regards,

Mrs Janet Fulton
Student Researcher
School of Design, Communication and Information Technology
Janet.Fulton@studentmail.newcastle.edu.au

Dr Phillip McIntyre
Project Supervisor
Lecturer in Communication
School of Design, Communication and Information Technology
T +61 2 4985 4522
F +61 2 4921 6944
Phillip.McIntyre@newcastle.edu.au

Ethics approval no-H-211-0406. The University requires that all participants are informed that if they have any complaints concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or if an independent person is preferred, to the University's Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Branch, Chancellery, University of Newcastle, 2308, telephone 4921 6333, email human-ethics@newcastle.edu.au.
Information Statement – journalists (interview)

INFORMATION STATEMENT

Information Statement for the Research Project:

Print Journalism and the Creative Process

My name is Janet Fulton, and I am a PhD student at the University of Newcastle under the supervision of Dr Phillip McIntyre and Mr Michael Meany. As part of my research, I am examining the creative processes of print journalists when they produce an article. You are invited to participate in this research project.

Using Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model theory, I am investigating the creative practices of journalists within the structures of their work. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) believes that creativity occurs from, “the interaction of a system composed of three elements: a culture that contains symbolic rules, a person who brings novelty into the domain, and a field of experts who recognise and validate the innovation.”

Aim and purpose of the research

The aim is to do an ethnographic study of different genres of journalist within the print industry through a series of recorded one-on-one interviews and participant observation within a newsroom. The print industry is one of society’s core cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh, 2002) and as such, it is important as a circulator of cultural texts, it influences “our understanding of the world” (ibid. p3). The cultural importance of the print industry is a key motive for studying its workers, and the texts they produce. The value of this study is that it could not only illuminate these important processes but also lead to better education for print journalism students by demonstrating how to be creative in a profession that is often disparaged as unoriginal and formulaic.

What would you be asked to do

This invitation is for you to participate in a recorded one-on-one interview. The interview will ask for your input on several issues related to yourself and your work, the industry you work in (the domain of journalism) and the people within the domain (the field). Completion of the interview will take approximately one hour and can be undertaken at your convenience at a location of your choice. If you would prefer, this can be done over the telephone. The questions are simply asking for your input – there are no right or wrong answers. You will be given the opportunity to review, edit, or erase the recording and the transcript. You may also be asked for samples of your work.

Risks and benefits of participating

We cannot promise you any direct benefit from taking part in this research but benefits may be gained by you becoming part of the documentation of the profession’s processes. Potential risks may be incurred in the form of damage to reputation. However, at every point, care will be taken to ensure that information that could harm any individual will not be reported. If requested, anonymity will be granted. Any information that is damaging to individuals or libellous will be deleted.

How will the information be used

The information will be used within the thesis and for journal submissions. However, the nature of the study also means that the data could be of historical value or a resource for other researchers. For this reason, you will be asked if the material can be stored in the University archives. This decision will only be requested after you have had the opportunity to review the contents of the interview. Feedback will be supplied via mail or email to inform you of the outcome of the study and you will be invited to view the finished thesis if you wish. The thesis will remain the property of the researcher until the thesis has been accepted and the degree awarded, when it will become part of the public record. It is hoped that a complete version will be published and made available in the public domain.
**What choice do you have?**

Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary and if you decide not to participate, the decision will not disadvantage you in any way and will not affect any future relationship with the University of Newcastle. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason.

**How will your privacy be protected**

The researcher and the Project Supervisor will be the only people with access to the information that is collected. All recordings and transcripts will be stored in a secure cabinet in the Study Supervisor's locked office. References in the thesis, apart from those existing prior in the public domain, will only be credited to an individual with the specific permission of those involved, otherwise, no direct references will be made to any individuals. If requested, anonymity will be granted.

It would be appreciated if you could email or write to Dr Phillip McIntyre with your willingness to participate in this research or your wish to decline the invitation. If this is not received, a follow-up telephone call will be made after a month.

Thank you for the time you have taken to consider this invitation.

Please keep this Information Sheet. Any enquiries about the study may be directed to Dr Phillip McIntyre, School of Design, Communication and Information Technology, Faculty of Science and Information Technology, The University of Newcastle, telephone: 02 4985 4522.

Regards,

---

**Mrs Janet Fulton**  
Student Researcher  
School of Design, Communication and Information Technology  
Janet.Fulton@studentmail.newcastle.edu.au

**Dr Phillip McIntyre**  
Project Supervisor  
Lecturer in Communication  
School of Design, Communication and Information Technology  
T +61 2 4985 4522  
F +61 2 4921 6944  
Phillip.McIntyre@newcastle.edu.au

---

Ethics approval no-H-211-0406. The University requires that all participants are informed that if they have any complaints concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or if an independent person is preferred, to the University's Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Branch, Chancellery, University of Newcastle, 2308, telephone 4921 6333, email human-ethics@newcastle.edu.au.
INFORMATION STATEMENT

Information Statement for the Research Project:

Journalism and the Creative Process

My name is Janet Fulton, and I am a PhD student at the University of Newcastle under the supervision of Dr Phillip McIntyre and Mr Michael Meany. As part of my research, I am examining the creative processes of print journalists when they produce an article. You are invited to participate in this research project.

Using Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model theory, I am investigating the creative practices of journalists within the structures of their work. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) believes that creativity occurs from, “the interaction of a system composed of three elements: a culture that contains symbolic rules, a person who brings novelty into the domain, and a field of experts who recognise and validate the innovation.”

Aim and purpose of the research

The aim is to do an ethnographic study of different genres of journalist within the print industry through a series of recorded one-on-one interviews and participant observation within a newsroom. The print industry is one of society’s core cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh, 2002) and as such, it is important as a circulator of cultural texts, it influences “our understanding of the world” (ibid. p3). The cultural importance of the print industry is a key motive for studying its workers, and the texts they produce. The value of this study is that it could not only illuminate these important processes but also lead to better education for print journalism students by demonstrating how to be creative in a profession that is often disparaged as unoriginal and formulaic.

What would you be asked to do

This invitation is for you to participate in a recorded one-on-one interview. The interview will ask for your input on several issues related to yourself and your work, the industry you work in (the domain of journalism) and the people within the domain (the field). Completion of the interview will take approximately one hour and can be undertaken at your convenience at a location of your choice. If you would prefer, this can be done over the telephone. The questions are simply asking for your input – there are no right or wrong answers. You will be given the opportunity to review, edit, or erase the recording and the transcript. You may also be asked for samples of your work.

Risks and benefits of participating

We cannot promise you any direct benefit from taking part in this research but benefits may be gained by you becoming part of the documentation of the profession’s processes. Potential risks may be incurred in the form of damage to reputation. However, at every point, care will be taken to ensure that information that could harm any individual will not be reported. If requested, anonymity will be granted. Any information that is damaging to individuals or
libellous will be deleted.

**How will the information be used**

The information will be used within the thesis and for journal submissions. However, the nature of the study also means that the data could be of historical value or a resource for other researchers. For this reason, you will be asked if the material can be stored in the University archives. This decision will only be requested after you have had the opportunity to review the contents of the interview.

Feedback will be supplied via mail or email to inform you of the outcome of the study and you will be invited to view the finished thesis if you wish. The thesis will remain the property of the researcher until the thesis has been accepted and the degree awarded, when it will become part of the public record. It is hoped that a complete version will be published and made available in the public domain.

**What choice do you have?**

Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary and if you decide not to participate, the decision will not disadvantage you in any way and will not affect any future relationship with the University of Newcastle. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason.

**How will your privacy be protected**

The researcher and the Project Supervisor will be the only people with access to the information that is collected. All recordings and transcripts will be stored in a secure cabinet in the Study Supervisor’s locked office. References in the thesis, apart from those existing prior in the public domain, will only be credited to an individual with the specific permission of those involved, otherwise, no direct references will be made to any individuals. If requested, anonymity will be granted.

It would be appreciated if you could email or write to Dr Phillip McIntyre or myself with your willingness to participate in this research.

Thank you for the time you have taken to consider this invitation.

Please keep this Information Sheet. Any enquiries about the study may be directed to Dr Phillip McIntyre, School of Design, Communication and Information Technology, Faculty of Science and Information Technology, The University of Newcastle, telephone: 02 4921 6391.

Janet Fulton
Student Researcher

Dr Phillip McIntyre
Research Supervisor

Ethics approval no-H-211-0406. The University requires that all participants are informed that if they have any complaints concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or if an independent person is preferred, to the University's Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Branch, Chancellery, University of Newcastle, 2308, telephone 4921 6333, email human-ethics@newcastle.edu.au.

*Information Statement for freelance journalists for participation in one-on-one interviews*  
*Version 1 – 13/10/06*
• Information Statement – editors (participant observation)

INFORMATION STATEMENT

Information Statement for the Research Project:

Print Journalism and the Creative Process

My name is Janet Fulton, and I am a PhD student at the University of Newcastle under the supervision of Dr Phillip McIntyre and Mr Michael Meany. As part of my research, I am examining the creative processes of print journalists when they produce an article. Your workplace is invited to participate in this research project.

Using Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model theory, I am researching how cultural, social and individual influences affect how the print journalist produces their work.

Aim and purpose of the research

The aim is to do an ethnographic study of different genres of journalist within the print industry through a series of recorded one-on-one interviews and observation within a newsroom. The print industry is considered to be one of society’s core cultural industries and as such, it is important as a circulator of cultural texts, it influences “our understanding of the world” (Hesmondhalgh, 2002, p. 3). The cultural importance of the print industry is a key motive for studying its workers, and the texts they produce. The value of this study is that it could not only illuminate these important processes but also lead to better education for print journalism students by demonstrating how to be creative in a profession that is often disparaged as unoriginal and formulaic.

What would you be asked to do?

This invitation is for your workplace to be a studied newsroom in the observation section of the research. The observation will involve my presence at your workplace for a period of time (this will be flexible to suit your newsroom), observing how the workers in your newsroom practice their profession on a day-to-day basis. Observation entails observing the participants and the context they work within and the physical environment. Therefore, the newsroom as a whole will be observed. It may also involve talking to the staff on an informal basis but this is also negotiable. A Consent Form and Information Statement will be provided for each staff member prepared to participate in this study.

Risks and benefits of participating

We cannot promise you or your staff any direct benefit from taking part in this research but benefits may be gained by you becoming part of the documentation of the profession’s processes. Potential risks may be incurred in the form of damage to reputation. However, at every point, care will be taken to ensure that information that could harm any individual will not be reported and all identifying information will be removed. Any information that is damaging to individuals or libellous will be deleted.

How will the information be used?

The information will be used within the thesis and for journal submissions. However, the nature of the study also means that the data could be of historical value or a resource for other researchers. For this reason, participants will be asked if the material can be stored in the University archives.

Feedback will be supplied via mail or email to inform you and your staff of the outcome of the study and you will be invited to view the finished thesis if you wish. The thesis will remain the property of the researcher until the thesis has been accepted and the degree awarded, when it will become part of the public record. It is hoped that a complete version will be published and made available in the public domain.

What choice do you have?
Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary and if you or your staff decides not to participate, the decision will not disadvantage you in any way and will not affect any future relationship with the University of Newcastle. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason.

How will your privacy be protected?
The researcher and the Project Supervisor will be the only people with access to the information that is collected. All notes will be stored in a secure cabinet in the Study Supervisor’s locked office. References in the thesis, apart from those existing prior in the public domain, will not be credited to an individual and no direct references will be made to any individuals.

It would be appreciated if you could email or write to Dr Phillip McIntyre with your willingness to participate in this research or your wish to decline the invitation. If this is not received, a follow-up telephone call will be made after a month.

Thank you for the time you have taken to consider this invitation.

Please keep this Information Sheet. Any enquiries about the study can be directed to Dr Phillip McIntyre, School of Design, Communication and Information Technology, Faculty of Science and Information Technology, The University of Newcastle, telephone: 02 4985 4522.

Regards,

Mrs Janet Fulton
Student Researcher
School of Design, Communication and Information Technology
Janet.Fulton@studentmail.newcastle.edu.au

Dr Phillip McIntyre
Project Supervisor
Lecturer in Communication
School of Design, Communication and Information Technology
T +61 2 4985 4522
F +61 2 4921 6944
Phillip.McIntyre@newcastle.edu.au

Ethics approval no-H-211-0406. The University requires that all participants are informed that if they have any complaints concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or if an independent person is preferred, to the University's Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Branch, Chancellery, University of Newcastle, 2308, telephone 4921 6333, email human-ethics@newcastle.edu.au.
Information Statement – journalists (participation observation)

INFORMATION STATEMENT

Information Statement for the Research Project:

Print Journalism and the Creative Process

My name is Janet Fulton, and I am a PhD student at the University of Newcastle under the supervision of Dr Phillip McIntyre and Mr Michael Meany. As part of my research, I am examining the creative processes of print journalists when they produce an article. You are invited to participate in this research project.

Using Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model theory, I am researching how cultural, social and individual influences affect how the print journalist produces their work.

Aim and purpose of the research

The aim is to do an ethnographic study of different genres of journalist within the print industry through a series of recorded one-on-one interviews and observation within a newsroom. The print industry is considered to be one of society’s core cultural industries and as such, it is important as a circulator of cultural texts, it influences “our understanding of the world” (Hesmondhalgh, 2002, p. 3). The cultural importance of the print industry is a key motive for studying its workers, and the texts they produce. The value of this study is that it could not only illuminate these important processes but also lead to better education for print journalism students by demonstrating how to be creative in a profession that is often disparaged as unoriginal and formulaic.

What would you be asked to do

This invitation is for you to participate as part of the observation of the newsroom. The observation will involve my presence at your workplace for a period of time, watching how you practice your profession on a day-to-day basis. Observation entails not only watching the participants but also the context they work within and the physical environment. Therefore, the newsroom as a whole will be observed. As part of this process, I simply ask that you go about your day-to-day procedures within the workplace as normal.

Risks and benefits of participating

We cannot promise you any direct benefit from taking part in this research but benefits may be gained by you becoming part of the documentation of the profession’s processes. Potential risks may be incurred in the form of damage to reputation. However, at every point, care will be taken to ensure that information that could harm you will not be reported and all identifying information will be removed. Any information that is damaging or libellous will be deleted.

How will the information be used

The information will be used within the thesis and for journal submissions. However, the nature of the study also means that the data could be of historical value or a resource for other researchers. For this reason, you will be asked if the material can be stored in the University archives.

Feedback will be supplied via mail or email to inform you of the outcome of the study and you will be invited to view the finished thesis if you wish. The thesis will remain the property of the researcher until the thesis has been accepted and the degree awarded, when it will become part of the public record. It is hoped that a complete version will be published and made available in the public domain.

What choice do you have?
Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary and if you decide not to participate, the decision will not disadvantage you in any way and will not affect any future relationship with the University of Newcastle. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason.

**How will your privacy be protected**

The researcher and the Project Supervisor will be the only people with access to the information that is collected. All notes will be stored in a secure cabinet in the Study Supervisor's locked office. References in the thesis, apart from those existing prior in the public domain, will not be credited to an individual and no direct references will be made to any individuals.

It would be appreciated if you could email or write to Dr Phillip McIntyre with your willingness to participate in this research or your wish to decline the invitation.

Thank you for the time you have taken to consider this invitation.

Please keep this Information Sheet. Any enquiries about the study may be directed to Dr Phillip McIntyre, School of Design, Communication and Information Technology, Faculty of Science and Information Technology, The University of Newcastle, telephone: 02 4985 4522.

Regards,

**Mrs Janet Fulton**
Student Researcher
School of Design, Communication and Information Technology
Janet.Fulton@studentmail.newcastle.edu.au

**Dr Phillip McIntyre**
Project Supervisor
Lecturer in Communication
School of Design, Communication and Information Technology
T +61 2 4985 4522
F +61 2 4921 6944
Phillip.McIntyre@newcastle.edu.au

Ethics approval no-H-211-0406. The University requires that all participants are informed that if they have any complaints concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or if an independent person is preferred, to the University's Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Branch, Chancellery, University of Newcastle, 2308, telephone 4921 6333, email human-ethics@newcastle.edu.au.
CONSENT FORM

Consent form for the Research Project: Print Journalism and the Creative Process


Principal Supervisor: Dr Phillip McIntyre
Co-Supervisor: Mr Michael Meany
Researcher Student: Mrs Janet Fulton

Consent Statement
I agree to participate in the above research project and give my consent freely.

I understand that the project will be conducted as described in the Information Statement, a copy of which I have retained.

I understand I can withdraw from the project at any time and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.

I consent to (please tick appropriate box) Yes No

- Participating in recorded interview
- Providing copies of work if requested

Please tick appropriate box
I do not want to be identified in any reports arising from this research and I understand my personal information will remain confidential to the researchers
I agree that the researchers may identify me in reports arising from this research

I have had the opportunity to have questions answered to my satisfaction.

Print Name: ____________________________

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________

I understand that this information may be of historic value to other researchers. I have had the opportunity to review the contents of the interview and consent freely to the material being archived at the University of Newcastle.

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________
CONSENT FORM

Consent form for the Research Project: Print Journalism and the Creative Process

Version 4, dated 12/8/09

Principal Supervisor: Dr Phillip McIntyre
Co-Supervisor: Mr Michael Meaney
Researcher Student: Mrs Janet Fulton

Consent Statement
I agree to participate in the above research project and give my consent freely.

I understand that the project will be conducted as described in the Information Statement, a copy of which I have retained.

I understand I can withdraw from the project at any time and do not have to give any reason for withdrawing.

I consent to (please tick appropriate box) Yes No

- Participating in the observation of the workplace
- Answering informal questions within the above

I understand I will not be identified in any reports arising from this research and my personal information will remain confidential to the researchers

I have had the opportunity to have questions answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that this information may be of historic value to other researchers.

Print Name: ____________________________________________

Signature: __________________________ Date: ______________
Appendix 4: Media Releases

- ANHG Media Release

Print journalists and the creative process

University of Newcastle PhD student, Janet Fulton, is conducting research into the social and cultural contexts a journalist works within to produce their work. She is looking for print journalists to participate in interviews, either face-to-face, by telephone or email. Interested journalists can email her supervisor for an Information Sheet – Phillip.McIntyre@newcastle.edu.au.

- MEAA Media Release

Print journalists and the creative process

University of Newcastle PhD student, Janet Fulton, is conducting research into the social and cultural contexts a journalist works within to produce their work. She is looking for print journalists, staff or freelance, to participate in interviews, either face-to-face, by telephone or email. Interested members can email her supervisor for an Information Sheet – Phillip.McIntyre@newcastle.edu.au. If requested, anonymity can be assured.
Appendix 5: Co-authored published paper


Creativity: a keyword in print journalism

Janet Fulton
PhD candidate, University of Newcastle
janet.fulton@studentmail.newcastle.edu.au

Dr Phillip McIntyre
Head of Discipline, Communication and Media, University of Newcastle
Phillip.mcintyre@newcastle.edu.au

Abstract

Rather than focusing on the core ideas in journalism’s domain, such as news, media, and journalism, or keywords that represent journalism’s ideals, like objectivity, watchdog and truth, this paper argues that creativity is a keyword that should be investigated more fully within the print journalism domain. Journalism, particularly hard news, is a form of writing that is seldom thought of as a creative activity. The cultural and social structures journalists work within are seen as constraints on how journalists produce their texts. This is an example of the Romantic view of creativity where an artist must be free from constraints in order to be creative.

However, if a rationalist approach is used, it can be demonstrated that it is these very structures, and the knowledge of these structures, that actually enable a journalist to produce their work. By using Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model of creativity, a rationalist approach, as the principal theory, this paper provides evidence that by investigating print journalism within a rationalist framework, a print journalist can be seen as a producer of creative cultural texts. Furthermore, by acknowledging that different genres of print journalism have different structures, it can also be argued that a journalist working in any genre has the capacity to produce creative texts.

This paper is part of a wider qualitative study into the creative practices of the print journalist in Australia that is examining the individual journalist’s production within cultural and social contexts. Analysis of the literature has demonstrated that by marrying theories and definitions from the creativity research domain with literature from the print journalism domain, creativity can be found and explained within the print journalism domain. Furthermore data analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with print journalists in Australia demonstrated that they are very aware of the devices used, and the requirements of the field, to produce texts that are both novel and appropriate: a creative text.

Janet Fulton is doing a PhD in Media and Communication at the University of Newcastle, Australia. Her research is an ethnographic study investigating the creative
practices of the print journalist in Australia and how social, cultural and individual influences affect how a print journalist produces their work.

Dr Phillip McIntyre is the Head of Discipline of Communication and Media in the School of Design Communication & IT at the University of Newcastle. His research work is focused on communication, creativity and cultural production.

**Creativity: a keyword in print journalism.**

When thinking about journalism, keywords that come to mind include *objectivity*, *watchdog* and *truth*, but what about *creativity*? The two words, *journalism* and *creativity*, do not often go together. Interestingly, if creativity is mentioned, a different set of keywords is commonly thought of: *genius, freedom, imagination* and *originality*. These keywords are all examples of terms used in association with the Romantic view of creativity where an Artist is seen to be a lone genius who produces work in spontaneous bursts of inspiration out of nowhere but the imagination of the creator and is believed to be free from society and any constraints. This is not, however, a universal understanding of creativity but a predominantly Western perspective (Becker 1982; Sawyer 2006; Weisberg 1993) and, furthermore, it is a relatively recent understanding of what creativity is. As such, it can be seen that it does not hold true across cultures nor across time.

Therefore, rather than using a Romantic view of creativity, this paper offers a Rationalist perspective and relates it to the domain of print journalism in Australia. From this perspective, creativity is based on Aristotle’s definition of ‘being’ in *Metaphysics*, where he states that “whatever comes to be is generated by the agency of something, out of something, and comes to be something” (1960, p. 142). According to Rothenberg and Hausman (1996), Aristotle held that the processes of creativity could be explained within previously known conditions and that resources used by the producer were “both necessary and sufficient” (Rothenberg and Hausman 1996, p. 28 emphasis in original) for the producer to create a product. A simple definition was provided by Barron who said that creativity is the “ability to bring something new into existence” (1969, p. 10). In line with Aristotle, Barron also noted that the act of creation can only occur by utilising existing physical or mental resources, either by reconstituting an existing form or generating something from an existing form (ibid.). However, the understanding of creativity as something new is not enough.
If all ‘new’ acts were to be included in the culture, chaos would ensue (Csikszentmihalyi 1997). Therefore, building on the Aristotelian and Barron definitions, recent definitions of creativity include novelty but add the qualification of social validation (Amabile and Tighe 1993, p202; Feldman et al. 1994; Gardner 1993; Rothenberg and Hausman 1996; Sawyer 2006; Ward et al. 2003; Weisberg 1993). Csikszentmihalyi provides the following definition:

Creativity is any act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one … It is important to remember, however, that a domain cannot be changed without the explicit or implicit consent of a field responsible for it (1997, p. 28).

A more recent definition is supplied by McIntyre who says,

creativity is an activity whereby products, processes and ideas are generated from antecedent conditions by the agency of someone, whose knowledge to do so comes from somewhere and the resultant novel variation is seen as a valued addition to the store of human knowledge (2006, p. 202).

With these definitions in mind it becomes feasible to test their veracity in the specifics of various professions. Print journalism is one such area.

The larger research project this analysis comes from is centred on a doctoral research study using Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model of creativity (1988; 1990; 1997; 2003; Feldman et al. 1994), a Rationalist approach, to investigate creative practices of print journalists in Australia. By examining the way a journalist operates within the structures of their social and cultural influences, it has been found that rather than the structures of journalism constraining their activity, these structures can actually enable a journalist to produce their work. Furthermore, rather than comparing different genres of journalism, by recognising that each genre has different structures, it can be argued that a journalist working in any genre of journalism can produce creative texts.

An analysis of the literature on journalism provided mixed messages concerning creativity in journalism. It appears to be a common perception that the genres of journalism such as feature writing, opinion pieces and literary journalism provide an outlet for creativity (Daugherty 1999; Lichter et al. 1986; Maskell and Perry 1999; Niblock 1996; Ricketson 2004; Schumacher et al. 1989), but the hard news genre is
regarded as formulaic and restrictive and is thus seen as not being creative (Ricketson 2004, p. 228). While a number of texts do call for journalists to be creative (Conley and Lamble 2006, p. xiv; Sheridan Burns 2001, p. 33; Tapsall and Varley 2001, p. 4; Willis 2003, p. 66), other texts argue that journalism’s structures constrain the journalist (Henningham 1989; Hirst and Patching 2005; Stocking and Gross 1989). However, an examination of primary data from interviews with members of the print journalism field and document analysis of secondary data, supported by evidence in the literature about journalism indicates that it is common for journalists to consider themselves creative producers of text. Furthermore, although a number of the interviewees indicated they believed feature writing, colour stories and personality stories allowed more creativity, most respondents included writing hard news as a creative endeavour. As suggested above, this finding runs contrary to the commonsense understanding of hard news where it is seen as being too constrained by structures and thus cannot be nominated as creative.

Despite this commonsense understanding, in a time where *creative industries* and *creativity* are the ‘buzz words’ and many schools of journalism are either included in the same faculty as creative writing or include creative writing subjects as part of a journalism degree, it is important to identify the existence of creative practices within the profession of journalism. Investigating this inside a Rationalist framework, and providing evidence that print journalism is indeed a creative profession, could lead to a better understanding of creativity within the research world and within the journalism domain and alter journalists’ own perspectives of their professional practices.

**A brief look at creativity**

The mystical Romantic implications surrounding creativity have traditionally made it problematic to research with any sense of scientific rigour. Albert and Runco assert that: “At their beginnings and during most of their histories of development, research and creativity were not viewed as related to one another” (2003, p. 17). From the perspective of the Romantic it is contended that creativity is a mysterious, complex phenomenon that cannot be satisfactorily defined and therefore not able to be researched (Amabile and Tighe 1993; Feist 2003; Hausman 1987). Studying creativity has been likened to studying love (Sternberg and Lubart 1996); it is thought to be a higher form of human spirituality, “humanity’s crowning glory” (Boden 2004, p. 14), and to
research it rationally could demean its value. In 1950, however, the president of the American Psychological Association (APA), J.P. Guilford, used his presidential address at the annual conference of the APA to call attention to the lack of empirical research into creativity. This address is recognised as the catalyst for legitimate scientific research into creativity (Csikszentmihalyi 1988; Feldman et al. 1994; Gruber and Wallace 2003; Isaksen 1987; Mayer 2003; Mumford 2003; Pope 2005; Rothenberg and Hausman 1996; Runco 2004; Sawyer 2006; Ward et al. 2003). From here, creativity researchers have investigated this phenomenon from within the areas of personality and cognitive psychology, biology, sociology, cultural studies and history (Sawyer 2006).

Arguments about the source of creativity have shifted along a continuum from a phenomenon that is divinely inspired, to a view of the Romantic artist as individual source, to a poststructuralist focus on the audience as the primary maker of meaning (Barthes 1977; Foucault 1977). Stillinger (1991) argues that philosophers and literary theorists have long debated the question of where creativity can be found. Can it be found within the author, within the text or within the reader? (Note the use of the Communication triad – sender, message and receiver).

Plato’s reference to the Muse in his reflections on poets provided a precursor to the divine, or inspirational, (Boden 2004) view of creativity. Plato asserted that, “for all good poets … compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed” (1971, p. 220). In summary, this view, which has sustained itself in Western culture for some time, believes that the artist is inspired to create by the Other – by their Muse, by God. Vestiges of the Divine view persist today (Piirto 2004; Sternberg and Lubart 2003; Tomasevskij 1995; Ward et al. 2003) with creative producers referring, or deferring, to their Muse as a means of inspiration. Jane Piirto lists a number of poets who call on their Muse when writing (2005, pp. 10-11) and quotes songwriter Tori Amos who said: “You can begin to feel a presence when she comes. I call it a she, like it's a bath product. I would start to know when she's coming. And when that happens, I know I have to remember it. I'll write on my hand or something” (Amos in Piirto 2005, p. 10).

During the Renaissance, the emphasis changed from God as Creator to the artist as genius when “the divine attribute of great artists and artisans was recognised and often emphasised as manifestly their own and not of divine origin” (2003, p. 18). Margaret
Boden (2004) claims that although this view of creativity is less extreme than the divine view, it still emphasises the exceptional and leads inevitably to an idea that only certain people born with innate gifts and talents can ever be creative. Negus and Pickering (2004) maintain that the transference of the source of creativity from God to Man was a reaction against the Enlightenment’s claim of reason as the paramount human faculty. Romantics argued that the imagination was a necessary and valuable part of the human psyche with the Rationalist position of science seen as a stance of, “intellectual disengagement, neutrality and calculation” (Negus and Pickering 2004, p. 7) that would not provide the “moral or spiritual dimension necessary for personal fulfilment and cultural nourishment” (ibid.). In other words, Rationalism was a cold, calculating way of looking at the world and Romanticism countered this by emphasising freedom and imagination.

Janet Wolff (1993) notes two clear stages in the historic development of the Romantic ideal: firstly, “the rise of individualism concomitant with the development of industrial capitalism” (1993, p. 11), a view confirming Negus and Pickering’s argument; and, secondly, “the actual separation of the artist from any clear social group or class and from any secure form of patronage, as the older system of patronage was overtaken by the dealer-critic system, which left the artist in a precarious position in the market” (ibid.). The second stage suggests that the artist exists outside of normal society. The Romantic ideal is of the “starving” artist, the tortured soul, (Petrie 1991; Pope 2005; Wolff 1981), full of Romantic agony (Petrie 1991), and commentators remark, often mockingly, about the image of the suffering genius (Csikszentmihalyi 1997; MacKinnon 1966; Pope 2005). Zolberg (1990) lists ‘alienation’, ‘genius’, ‘neuroticism’ and ‘otherness’ as terms used to describe the stereotype we typically associate with allegedly true artistic types while Berger notes that artists have been perceived as “geniuses who must be allowed to live their lives as they desired and who could not be expected to conform to social norms” (1995, p. 153). This comment by Berger points to another core belief in Romanticism: to be truly creative, an artist must be free of any constraints. This image still persists (Negus and Pickering 2002).

In reaction to the Romantic model of the artist as supreme in the act of creativity, Roland Barthes, working in his poststructuralist phase, proposed the idea that creativity is found in the reception of a text and thus resides in purview of the audience. Barthes argued that for any text, “its source, its voice, is not the true place of the writing, which
is reading” and “a text’s unity lies not in its origin but in its destination” (1977, pp. 147-148). He took the act of production away from the artist and gave it to the audience, an action summarised by his memorable line: “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author” (1977, p. 148). However, Barthes’ contention that the source of meaning is found in the reading of the text is as problematic as the Romantic notion of the author as source. Andrew Bennett argues: “Barthes replaces the controlling, limiting subjectivity of the author with the controlling, limiting subjectivity of the reader” (2005, p. 18). Furthermore, it must be noted that Barthes’ attempt to remove the author from production is untenable. As Vera Zolberg claims: “it cannot be said that art works give birth to themselves by some parthenogenetic process” (1990, p. 114) and Ryan concurs: “Every book must have an author, every score a composer, every film a writer, director and cast of actors” (1991, p. 45).

It can be argued that the problems associated with the thesis of the Romantic view produced the antithesis of the ‘Death of the Author’ scenario put forward by Barthes. With both of these views on creativity problematic, a synthesis has emerged. Recent research has discounted a single source of creativity, the Artist as per the Romantic view or the audience according to Barthes’ argument, and suggests approaches where a multiple set of elements must be present for creativity to occur. Research work that takes this perspective has become collectively known as a confluence approach. Sternberg and Lubart (2003) believe that it is within a confluence approach that the many varied aspects of creativity can be researched rationally. Examples of researchers who have examined creativity utilising confluence approaches include Amabile (1982; 1993), Sternberg (2003), Feldman (2003), Simonton (1999), Gardner (1993) and Csikszentmihalyi (1988; 1997; 2003), whose systems model of creativity is the basis for this research.

Despite divine and Romantic myths about the source of creativity continuing to hold sway, the concept of creativity has now been empirically researched using rational theories as a basis for that research (For a list of rational and empirical approaches to creativity research see McIntyre 2008, p. 41). The outcome of the research this paper draws on has shown that rather than creativity being seen as something that comes from what is believed to be nowhere and something that is entirely person-centred, it can, in fact, be defined as a complex interaction between multiple elements.
Description of the research

The findings highlighted in this paper are drawn from ongoing doctoral research investigating the creative practices of print journalists in Australia. Paraphrasing the earlier definition from McIntyre, creativity within the profession of print journalism can be defined as: “both a product and process where the journalist uses prior knowledges to write an article that is different to what has been published before and presents it to a field of experts for valuation and acceptance into the domain of journalism” (Fulton 2008). With this definition as its basis, and using Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model of creativity as the theoretical framework, the research explores how cultural, social and individual influences affect the print journalist’s production.

The systems model of creativity developed by Csikszentmihalyi contends that creativity can be found in the interaction of a system of three elements: a domain of knowledge (the cultural element), a field (the social element) and an individual. In the systems model, the domain consists of the rules and procedures the individual must learn before a creative product is produced. In print journalism, this includes practical rules such as the style of writing, defamation laws, ethical guidelines, news values, and ideological rules such as the public’s right to know, the notion of the Fourth Estate, and the idea of the journalist as watchdog. The domain also includes “all of the created products that have been accepted by the field in the past” (Sawyer 2006, p. 125). The field is “made up of experts in a given domain whose job involves passing judgement on performance in that domain” (Csikszentmihalyi 1997, p. 42) and in journalism this includes, for example, other journalists, sub-editors, editors, media owners and the audience. The third element in the model, the individual, learns the domain, produces a variation and presents it to the field for verification that it is novel and appropriate. It is then included in the domain for other individuals to use. The systems model is a model that has circular causality (Csikszentmihalyi 1988, p. 329) with the three elements seen to be of equal importance in producing a creative outcome. Csikszentmihalyi provides the following analogy comparing creativity to fire in an effort to describe the model: “The spark is necessary, but without air and tinder there would be no flame” (1997, p. 7).
Methodology

The study uses an ethnographic approach with semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document and artefact analysis as the primary methods of choice. Additionally, content analysis of newspapers will be used as an added measure to provide triangulation and further strengthen the findings.

It is important to note that data collection for the research is ongoing and the following information is from preliminary data including interviews conducted by the researcher with members of the print journalism field and secondary data from document analysis. Further methods utilised in the doctoral research itself will include participant observation of a newsroom and content analysis of Australian newspapers, a strategy that provides a triangulation of methods and thus a way of enhancing the validity of the data (Denscombe 2004; Machin 2002; Punch 2005; Robson 2002). As Berger (2000) argues, interviewees are not always accurate or honest when interviewed: they may not want to tell something; they do not remember accurately; or, they tell the researcher what they believe the researcher wants to hear. Further to this, the discursive frameworks journalists work within influence how the journalist perceives their work.

---

Permission to copy and communicate this work has been granted by Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi. See electronic confirmation in Appendix 7.
practices (Steinke 1993; Zelizer 1997). However, this triangulation of methods will go some way to counteracting this criticism. In particular, the use of participant observation will provide an attempt to counteract the tendency of journalists to give answers from within their own discursive frameworks because it “directly records what people do, as distinct from what they say they do” (Denscombe 2004, p. 199) in actual journalistic practice. Nevertheless, the data collected to this point has provided valuable information and further research will add to the initial data.

Up to submission of this paper (November 2008), 36 interviews had been conducted with members of the field of print journalism from Australian newspapers (24) and magazines (10) as well as freelance journalists (2). The journalism level interviewees consisted of journalists (18), cadet journalists (3) and a student journalist (1). Fourteen interviews were conducted with people from management positions (editor, deputy editor or owner) although twelve of these were originally journalists and answered questions from this perspective as well as from their management position. Overall, seventeen females and nineteen males ranging in age from twenty to sixty-two were interviewed. The newspapers the respondents worked at included a mixture of national, metropolitan, regional, country, community and suburban newspapers published daily, weekly, bi-weekly and triweekly from a range of Australian publishers including Fairfax, News Limited, Fairfax Community Newspapers, Rural Press, APN News and Media, and independent publishers. The different styles of magazines included weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly, niche and mass from a number of Australian publishers.

The interviews conducted were semi-structured and open ended and this meant other issues that arose could be explored. The respondents were asked about the three elements of Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model and the interviews included questions about the rules of journalism, how an article is written, how they learnt to write, how the field edited their work, how the audience influenced their writing, their perception of the rules in the workplace, both formal and informal, how other journalists affected their production, and their family, educational and professional background.

Creativity in print journalism: what does the literature say?

Rural Press was taken over by Fairfax in May 2007. The interviews were arranged with the Rural Press journalists prior to this.
Can print journalism be considered a creative activity? When considering ‘creative journalism’ it is common to apply the term to genres such as feature writing (Daugherty 1999; Maskell and Perry 1999; Niblock 1996; Ricketson 2004) but often hard news is dismissed as too formulaic or too tightly structured to allow for creativity.

However, in applying McIntyre’s definition of creativity any print journalism genre has the capacity to produce creative work. Support for this contention can be found in the literature on journalism. For example, Ian Ward asserts that “each news story told is not created afresh. Rather it is written against the backdrop of – and borrows from and adds to – similar, previously written stories” (1995, p.113) and Adam notes that the journalist is “shaping new experiences to established forms” (Adam 1993, p.118). Both of these clarify the “antecedent conditions” important in McIntyre’s definition of creativity by implicating a pre-existing set of knowledges and conventions a journalist must access in order to produce new work. As also argued by Negus and Pickering (2004) new works don’t simply occur in a vacuum. Pre-existing works form the basis of new material and the judgement as to their originality must always occur against these background structures. Following this, and referring back to McIntyre’s definition, a number of writers point out that journalists can make choices, or have “agency”, within the structures they work within (Chibnall 1977; Harcup 2004; Manning 2001; Schudson 1996; Tuchman 2002) and Sheridan Burns, discussing good journalism, says: “every journalist has some power to practise responsibly, thoughtfully and effectively. The power is quite literally within the individual and is demonstrated with every decision about what news is, what questions to ask, what to include and omit and so on” (2004, p. 20). Finally, discussion of how journalists provide “novel variation” can also be found in the literature. Randall argues that “the whole point of articles in newspapers is to give readers something they have not had before – information, insights, observations, thoughts” (1996, p.145) and Bird points out that “journalists do not merely use culturally determined definitions, they also have to fit new situations into old definitions” (1997, p. 345). These examples are as true of the hard news story as they are of the feature article, the review, the opinion piece or literary journalism.

---

73 As a reminder: “creativity is an activity whereby products, processes and ideas are generated from antecedent conditions by the agency of someone, whose knowledge to do so comes from somewhere and the resultant novel variation is seen as a valued addition to the store of human knowledge” (2006, p. 202).
Regardless of this support for the definition of creativity within the literature, there are several reasons why journalism is not seen as creative. Vestiges of the Romantic view of creativity still affect how journalism is perceived. In Western culture, the idea that a creative product is completely original and comes from nowhere but from the imagination of the Artist still resonates. Within this Romantic view there is also the idea that the Artist must be free, generally taken to mean the absence of constraint, and the environment a journalist works within, particularly a hard news journalist, is perceived as highly structured, and therefore highly constrained, thus acting as an inhibitor to the journalist’s agency. Further to this, the current state of the industry, including media ownership issues, entertainment as news, and journalism as a market-driven industry, leads to arguments that a journalist cannot be creative. However, all the above arguments can be refuted using a Rationalist view of creativity.

Following the Romantic view of a creative product as something that is completely original and coming from nowhere, if a piece of journalism was referred to as creative, the initial reaction would be to believe the story was made up. Creating a story, or making up a story, is anathema to journalism’s fundamental philosophy. Mark Fishman (1980) points out in *Manufacturing the News* that, although his research is about the creation of news, he uses the term ‘creation’ warily because of the connotations associated with the word. Academic and journalist Margaret Simons agrees: “… I think the word ‘creative’ confuses people, people who are not journalists. When I've raised that in nonjournalistic circles they think it means that you're going to make things up” (The Media Report 2004). This, however, is not the case here. Following the definition set up earlier in this paper, a definition grounded in empirical and rational research, the commonsense understanding of creativity as simply ‘making things up’ falls short.

Another Romantic myth is the idea that a creative person can be seen as a lone genius. Pope summarises the popular image of the so called ‘True Artist’:

… the ‘romantic artist’ lives in a garret, starves for his art and is, by the neat and necessarily contradictory logic of aesthetic elevation and social exclusion, both a great genius and greatly misunderstood. It goes without saying that ‘he’ is indeed a man – a lone hero and, by extension, a loner and social misfit” (2005, p. 236)

This description is the antithesis of the journalist who works within a collaborative environment and presents their writing for editing before publication. However, the idea
of genius has been challenged a number of times in the literature (Feldman 2003; Howe 2001; Negus and Pickering 2004; Sawyer 2006; Weisberg 1993). The idea that creative works can necessarily even be attributed to a single individual, be they a ‘genius’ or not, have also been challenged (see, for example, confluence models proposed by Amabile (1982; 1993), Sternberg (2003), Feldman (2003), Simonton (1999), Gardner (1993) and Csikszentmihalyi (1988; 1997; 2003). For further discussion on confluence models see Sternberg and Lubart (2003, pp. 10-11)). Although Henningham maintains that the “group nature of journalistic production is itself a major constraint on individual control” (1989, p. 27), Sawyer’s (2006) argument that all writing is socially embedded runs contrary to the lone author myth. Sawyer illustrates this contention with T.S. Eliot’s first poem, *The Waste Land*. The original manuscript was extensively edited by both Ezra Pound and Eliot’s wife, Vivien, who both deleted pages, added and deleted words and stanzas, and moved the work around. Pound reduced the original poem by half. This is an example of editing that can easily be applied to the processes employed in the journalist’s work and yet, as Sawyer says:

> At first glance, writing seems to be far removed from social and contextual influences. You don’t need anyone’s help to write poetry; you don’t need to use complex tools and you don’t have to collaborate in a system of cooperative work. If you think of poetry as the private, personal expression of a person’s inner vision, you might think that this story [Eliot’s] is abnormal … In fact, many successful writers seek out good editing, listen very closely to such comments, and are grateful for them. Eliot’s story shows us that creative writing is often the result of collaboration” (2006, p. 206).

These ideas are also linked to the contention that journalism does not come out of the ‘imagination’ of the writer. This is, as Sawyer (2006) asserts, a common myth applied to such genres of writing as fiction writing and poetry. Journalism is a form of non-fiction writing based on factual accounts of events; it is not seen as ‘literature’ with all the connotations of that word, although as David Randall points out, “newspapers are not literature, but then nor is most literature” (1996, p.141). This exclusion of journalism as non-creative is simply premised on the false assumption that artistic works are the only works that are creative and all others are not. The research work on creativity to this point does not make this conflation. Work produced in science, engineering and mathematics, for example, also displays all the hallmarks of basic
human creativity (Csikszentmihalyi 1997; Gardner 1993; Sawyer 2006). To put this another way, the ascription of imagination as the chief source of creativity echoes many of the claims of the Romantic view. Does any form of writing come from nowhere as it were? Keith Sawyer argues that all writing is in fact hard work, conscious and directed, and collaborative and socially embedded (2006, pp. 206-210) and this set of practices includes the writers of poetry, one form of writing most often considered in a highly Romantic way.

Sawyer (2006) notes that contemporary Western culture is inclined to only view fine arts as creative – products that serve no function beyond pleasure. In a Western cultural hierarchy, the fine arts are seen as more worthy than objects we use every day, such as craft objects. In this regard, Guerke and Hirst contend that, “the journalist is seen as the journeyman rather than the professional, a craftsperson rather than an artist” (1996, p. 122). However, Vazquez in Janet Wolff argues that work and artistic work, “are both creative activities by means of which man produces objects that express him, that speak for and about him” (1981, p.16). Referencing back to the Rationalist definition of creativity one can ask, can a journalist produce work that is both novel and appropriate to the context it is produced in? The answer is, of course, yes. Work is not produced out of ‘nowhere’ but by learning and using the traditions and conventions, or structures, in the domain, writing an article that is novel and appropriate, and presenting it to the field for verification just as all writers in all writing domains do.

However, the structures a journalist produces their work within are perceived to be constraints but it needs to be argued that there are other factors in play. By using Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model and his thesis that an individual must learn the rules and procedures of the domain and the preferences of the field, these very constraints can, and should, be seen as enabling factors (Gans 1980). Wolff (1981) maintains that structures, of the type seen in convention and tradition, and the social and institutional frameworks people work in, not only constrain but also enable people to act. She points out that everything a creative individual does is located inside, and thus affected by, the structures they deal with.

It does not follow from this that in order to be free agents we somehow have to liberate ourselves from social structures and act outside them. On the contrary, the existence of these structures and institutions enables any activity on our part, and
this applies equally to acts of conformity and acts of rebellion…all action, including creative or innovative action, arises in the complex conjunction of numerous determinants and conditions. Any concept of ‘creativity’ which denies this is metaphysical, and cannot be sustained (Wolff 1981, p. 9).

It can be argued therefore that it is by their agency that journalists produce novelty within the domain through learning these structures and writing articles that are novel in a way that is acceptable to the field. Tony Harcup reinforces this position by arguing that:

Within the study of journalism, agency means the extent to which individual journalists can make a difference to media practices and content … To say that journalists have agency is not to deny that journalists operate in a world of constraints, but to argue that structural forces do not totally determine individuals’ actions (Harcup 2004, p. 6, emphasis in original).

Tradition, and learning the traditions of a domain, is commonly seen as inhibiting and opposed to innovation (Negus and Pickering 2004). However, Csikszentmihalyi contends that, “without rules there cannot be exceptions, and without tradition there cannot be novelty” (2003, p.315). Sawyer calls these rules, these conventions, these structures the ‘creativity language’: “Of course, you have to learn a language before you can talk; it’s impossible to communicate without sharing a language. In the same way, it’s impossible to create anything without the shared conventions of a domain” (2006, p. 137). Some examples of the ‘creative language’ of journalism’s domain include news writing practices (style of writing, news values, style guides), technological, ethical and legal considerations (Gardner et al. 2001; Harcup 2004; Negus and Pickering 2004; Sheridan Burns 2002; Tapsall and Varley 2001), and deadlines (Fishman 1980; Gardner et al. 2001; Harcup 2004; Machin and Niblock 2006; Manning 2001; McNair 1998; Sheridan Burns 2001; Tapsall and Varley 2001; Tiffen 2006). The publication worked for also has conventions (Harcup 2004; Ward 1995) that must be learned.

Finally, another reason for viewing journalism as non-creative can be seen in the industrial nature of the industry. A journalists’ production is affected by the commercial nature of the industry (Harcup 2004; Hesmondhalgh 2002; Negus and Pickering 2004; Randall 1996; Tapsall and Varley 2001; Underwood 1993). Machin argues that news workers are so constrained in their production that it is not actually news events that
dictates what is published but “the drives of proprietors, shareholders and advertisers” (2006, pp. 21-22). With newsroom budgets decreasing and management’s desire for audience share and profits increasing, it is easy for a journalist to take shortcuts to produce a story, that is, publish stories directly from news wire services, use easily accessible sources and use the ‘cut-and-paste’ word-processing function to use press releases from public relations (PR) people word for word. Unfortunately, as Carlyon says: “Bad journalism can also produce good money” (1982, p. x) and it is possible for the journalist to be overwhelmed by the industrial and commercial networks surrounding them and perceive them as constraints rather than enablers to produce work that is less than satisfactory. Amabile and Tighe call this ‘satisficing’: “Ceasing engagement in a task prior to achievement of the ultimate goal … doing the task ‘well enough’ by simply giving a response that is satisfactory, sufficient to meet demands or requirements” (1993, p. 20). However, it is a truism that a journalist’s production is only affected negatively by the industrial and commercial nature of the industry. Without these structures, without this support, a journalist would not be able to produce at all.

Regardless of the above concerns, there is confidence that good journalism can still occur (Conley and Lamble 2006; Gardner et al. 2001; Grattan 1995; Randall 1996; Sheridan Burns 2001; 2002; Underwood 1993) and if a journalist learns the conventions in the domain and the preferences of the field, and uses this knowledge, a creative outcome is possible.

Creativity in print journalism: what do journalists say?

The larger research project this paper is derived from includes information and analysis of the systems model with the three elements shown as having “dynamic links of circular causality” (Csikszentmihalyi 1988, p. 329). Therefore, it is important to note that although the analysis in this section is focusing on the individual element of the systems model, in no way does this imply that the field and domain are of lesser significance or that the individual alone can generate creativity. Analysis of the data gathered up to this point has shown that, in line with Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model, both the field and the domain, and the individual’s relationship to both, have a significant role in the production of creative texts. With this caveat in mind, the following analysis, which ties the empirical evidence to the literature and the theoretical
model presented above, concentrates on the devices the respondents talked about as being part of their creative process.

So what about the print journalists themselves? What do they think about the journalist as a creative cultural producer? When asked, the majority of the journalists interviewed emphatically agreed that journalists can be creative. In fact, most of them stated that a journalist must be creative in order to capture the audience and hold its attention to the end of the story. As one respondent said, journalism is “about reporting the facts but you can make it enticing for your readers” (J14 2007).

Interestingly, in contrast to the common-sense view of creativity as ‘making something up’, a number of journalists, in line with the journalism literature, differentiated between making the news and making up the news (Berkowitz 1997; Harcup 2004; Manning 2001; Rosen 1999; Schudson 1997; Tuchman 1976).

Creative in a sense of, not creative in the sense of inventing facts, but creative in the way that you do a story? Absolutely. There’s so many ways to differentiate a story from how it’s been tackled previously (J12 2007).

For the news journalist there’s an element to any story that you have to create … And that’s actually not to say you have to get creative with facts and what people say … (J10 2008).

A number of the interviewees noted the idea that a creative journalist ‘constructed’ a story.

… there’s so much room within the form of writing to be creative. And I think the best journalists are always creative in the sense that they are building something. There are some incredibly beautiful writers who are news journalists and they bang it out every day (J17 2008).

This observation agrees with claims that journalists ‘construct’, or make, the news by using journalistic processes to decide how the story is to be written – what to leave out, what to lead with and what to research (Harcup 2004; Sheridan Burns 2002). Sheridan Burns compares news-writing to constructing a house and argues: “There are many ways that the builder can put the parts together to make a house, and how he does that is a reflection of the budget or resources available, and also the style of house his customer wants” (2002, p. 110). Sheridan Burns’ argument also provides evidence on how the
commercial nature of the journalism industry enables creativity (Wolff 1993) by providing the “budget or resources” (Sheridan Burns 2002, p. 110) to support the journalist in their work.

Another journalist, who works as a general reporter and primarily writes within the hard news format, compared journalism to other forms of cultural production and provided evidence for the notion that it is the structures worked within that shapes the cultural form:

It’s [journalism] a very creative process. It’s like a painter with a canvas – he has a certain range of colours, he has a certain theme, he has a certain space to work on. They’re all parameters, they’re all defined. But he will make, out of the material he has, a thing of beauty or interest or whatever. And journalism’s much the same – you have a defined amount of information … you try and get as much information from as many different angles as possible within the time allowed. So that’s a finite thing because come four o’clock so many people will have rung back, and you try and get the pros and cons on everything, even things you haven’t thought of, you try and get every possible angle of it and whoever’s rung back by four o’clock, that’s what you’re working with. You have a defined time because you have to file by six at the latest, really, these days and you’re working within a certain structural format (J20 2008).

This comment can be considered as support to the argument that any style of journalism can be creative within its own structures. However, it is important to note that a number of the journalists, when asked if some forms of journalism were more creative than others, answered in the positive. Similar to the view expressed in the academic texts (Daugherty 1999; Lichter et al. 1986; Maskell and Perry 1999; Niblock 1996; Ricketson 2004; Schumacher et al. 1989), formats other than hard news writing were seen as an outlet for more creativity.

Feature writing where you can use sort of more flairy language … With that you can be a lot more creative in terms of using imagery or description or take a slightly left-field approach to a story (J8 2007).

I used to do CD reviews for the [publication name deleted] and that was kind of like my favourite thing to do because it was my chance to be creative and do a bit more of a creative colour piece. So you’ve got them, they’re more creative. Then you’ve got travel stories, you can add a bit more colour to what you write. Sports
stories can be colourful at times – the good ones are – and I think they can be
creative and so there’s a few. Then you get your legal stories which are quite dour
and making sure you get the facts right and telling the story (J7 2007).

Both of the above can be seen as examples of a Romantic view of creativity where the
journalist has simply conflated creativity with artistic activity and believes that feature
writing has less structural constraint than hard news. However, as argued previously,
learning the different structures for the different genres and utilising them to write can
lead to novel and appropriate texts.

Interestingly, several of the journalists originally attempted to assert that some genres
were more creative but changed their mind during the answering process. It would seem
that when a journalist is prompted to think about creativity, rather than depending on the
understood, common-sense definition alone, the act of contemplating what this means
leads to a deeper awareness of creativity and the way it operates in different forms.

Perhaps not so much in direct news reporting, but certainly in magazines and in
feature writing. Even in news writing a journalist can be creative in the way they
present the story or the angle they choose to follow (E15 2008).

It depends on what kind of journalism you do, though. There are different, a
straight up journalist I would say is, to say it’s uncreative is wrong – it’s creative in
a different way. I think probably most of what you do in journalism is either fact-
gathering or creating something into a piece of writing so even hard news has got a
creative element to it (E7 2007).

On the other hand, there were also journalists who stated all journalism is a creative
endeavour.

You would initially say that creativity and hard news stories, and the objectivity
that one assumes goes along with it, no matter how hard that is to achieve, would
preclude creativity. Colour stories, feature stories would give you more range of
creativity. While you’ve still got an objective base, there’s more scope for creative
use of language, for example. I guess if you think about it further, though, the
whole writing process is creative. So, if you take the fact that writing is creative as
your premise, then hard news stories can be creative as well (J18 2008).
I think it applies to all kinds of journalism. You know, hard news has to follow a particular structure or formula but you’ve also got to be able to choose the material to slot into that formula and that’s your creative input (J16 2007).

When asked the question, ‘How can a journalist be creative?’ a theme that emerged from the data is that journalists are aware of what is necessary to enable the production of creative texts both in what devices to use within the production process and what the field and domain expected. The respondents noted several different devices that can be used within the writing process to “slot into that formula” (J16 2007) and allow them to produce a creative text. These devices constitute structures that both enable and constrain the journalist as a creative individual and include symbolic systems, codes, convention, work habits, knowledge of the members of field and other elements initially identified in the systems model (1988; 1990; 1997; 2003; Feldman et al. 1994) that are pertinent to constructing a story within the form of journalism. As indicated by the respondents in this study these included words and language, lead and angle, and story ideas.

**Words and language.** Language is the fundamental tool of journalism, as it is with all writing, and respondents note that word use, both the words chosen and the way words are used, can provide the tools for novelty in a news story. As Sheridan Burns comments: “Deft use of language and grammatical devices is the way writers add depth and colour to their writing” (2002, p. 151). The respondents in this study supported the comment.

… creativity can just be in the word selection … and there doesn’t have to be a single flourish, or a single personal moment, but it is still a creative thing (J17 2008).

I think the language. We have such a wonderful language. We can be creative in the way we write with the language. In fact we must be or people aren’t going to read our copy (E14 2008).

I mean obviously you have those constraints – it still has to be a journo story – but you, over time you learn how to be creative in that. And there definitely are ways. There is probably nothing out there that hasn’t been done before for sure … But there’s always new things you can do – little slants and just like finding nice little anecdotes for openings, that sort of thing, and new ways to say stuff (J7 2007).
**Lead and angle.** Tied in with word selection is the choice about what to lead with. This is what “sets the tone” (Harcup 2004, p. 110) for the rest of the story. The lead is also crucial in that it entices the reader to continue reading (Conley and Lamble 2006; McKane 2006; Perry 2005; Randall 1996) and this was discussed with the respondents from the study.

The way you write your lead brings your reader into your story and then down through your story otherwise they only read the first two paragraphs (E2 2007).

And corresponding with the lead is the choice for the angle the journalist can pursue.

To make something into a story you’ve got to think of the angle as well. You’ve got to be able to see a massive annual report and go, ‘Actually that’s news!’ (E7 2007).

**Story ideas.** Finally, journalists also identified ideas for stories as an area where novelty can occur, including how a story can be approached. Donald Murray (2000), in his book *Writing to deadline: the journalist at work*, writes that to see an old story in a new way is one way to make an article novel and this idea was borne out within the interview process for this study.

Sometimes, you can be assigned to what seems like a boring story, but if you look for an alternative angle, you can get a story that might be something that you might not expect … e.g., Airlines pulled out of local airport. Journo runs to tourism industry spokesperson and gets typical “moan and groan” story, but if journo thinks “out of the box” a bit and looks for the reverse angle, there's a story to be written about residents under the flight path rejoicing because late night flights are going to stop (J24 2008).

One journalist even mentioned a way to get a story idea past the editor:

… there’s an old trick which you can always teach journalists, it’s an old trick but it works a charm – you hit any editor with three ideas; you have three ideas. You can easily come up to an editor and say, ‘You know the parking is chaos in Chippendale and it’s causing all this stress on the elderly’ or whatever story you want and they go, ‘No’. And you go, ‘Well, what about blah, blah?’ and they’ll say no to that. And by the time you get to the third one, if they say no they look completely unreasonable … sooner or later they have to say yes. It’s very easy for
an editor to dismiss one story idea, but if you’ve got a few of them they can’t
dismiss them all and sooner or later they’ll pick one of the ideas you have. And the
minute they’ve picked it and said, ‘Yeah, I like the one about whatever’ away you
go. And because they’ve said they like the story, they’ve commissioned you to do
it; it’s their idea, it’s not your idea (J20 2008).

The above comment demonstrates that a journalist’s knowledge of the “criteria of
selection, the preferences of the field” (Csikszentmihalyi 1997, p. 47) can lead to the
production of a creative text.

Conclusion

Looking at journalism with a common-sense, Romantic view of creativity precludes
journalism from entering the canons of creative endeavour. However, by using a
Rationalist approach, and examining how a print journalist produces their work within
social and cultural structures, it can be argued that a journalist is indeed a creative
producer. Furthermore, writing in any journalism genre can produce creative texts and
when a journalist understands what a creative text entails and what is needed to generate
creative work they are more likely to produce good journalism (Conley and Lamble
2006; Gardner et al. 2001; Grattan 1995; Randall 1996; Sheridan Burns 2001; 2002;
Underwood 1993). With these ideas in mind, the above findings indicate that it is
important to regard creativity as a keyword in print journalism, that is, creativity in a
Rational sense, because of the implications it could have on journalists’ perceptions of
their work. Information from the literature and data from the interviews demonstrates
that the journalists in this study are aware of devices to use to produce creative texts and
that it is when the journalist understands these, as well as other rules and procedures of
the domain, that novel and appropriate texts are produced. Although data collection is
still ongoing there is valuable evidence gathered so far that demonstrates the journalists’
views on creativity which gives an insight into their creative practices. Continuing data
collection using the methods of participant observation and content analysis will
provide further valuable data that will allow comparison between what journalists
perceive as their creative practices and what journalists are observed to do.

Additionally, marrying theories and definitions from the domain of creativity research
with literature from the domain of print journalism confirms these findings and applying
Rational creativity theories and definitions to empirical research within the domain of
print journalism further strengthens the argument that print journalists are creative. By using Csikszentmihalyi’s systems model it can be demonstrated that if the print journalist, as individual, learns the rules and procedures of the domain, produces an article and presents it to the field for verification, and the article is novel and appropriate, then it can be seen that a creative text is a realistic outcome.

Bibliography

Adam, G.S. 1993, Notes towards a definition of journalism: understanding an old craft form, The Poynter Institute for Media Studies. pp. 1-56
http://www.poynter.org/media/product/20030123_141216_24094.pdf - accessed 24.3.06


Daugherty, G. 1999, You can write for magazines, Writer's Digest Books, Cincinnati, Ohio.


E2 2007, Personal Interview, conducted 28th August, NSW, Australia.

E7 2007, Telephone interview, conducted 12th December, VIC, Australia.

E14 2008, Telephone interview, conducted 26th March, NSW, Australia.

E15 2008, Email interview, conducted 5th May, NSW, Australia.


Fishman, M. 1980, *Manufacturing the news*, University of Texas Press, Austin.


Guerke, L. and Hirst, M. 1996, 'Across the Genres: how journalism is changing in the 1990s', *Australian Journalism Review*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 117-133


Henningham, J. 1989, 'Why and how journalists should be professionalised', *Australian Journalism Review*, vol. 11, pp. 27-32


J7 2007, *Personal Interview*, conducted 21st June, NSW, Australia.


J12 2007, *Personal Interview*, conducted 11th December, NSW, Australia.


J24 2008, *Email interview*, conducted 9th April, QLD, Australia.


MacKinnon, D.W. 1966, 'What makes a person creative?' *Theory into Practice*, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 152-156

Maskell, V. and Perry, G. 1999, *Write to publish: writing feature articles for magazines, newspapers and corporate and community publications*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, N.S.W.


McIntyre, P. 2006, 'Paul McCartney and the creation of 'Yesterday': the systems model in operation', *Popular Music*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 201-219


Mumford, M.D. 2003, 'Where have we been, where are we going? Taking stock in Creativity Research', *Creativity Research Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2 & 3, pp. 107-120


CREATIVITY: A keyword in print journalism

Creativity in journalism: where to position now?

"Creativity in journalism involves the generation of new ideas, concepts, and ways of thinking about and presenting information to the public." (Fournier, 2013, p. 12)

Appendix 6: Co-authored published poster

Mrs Janet Fulton
University of Newcastle Australia

Dr Philip McIntyre
University of Newcastle Australia
Appendix 7: Electronic copies of copyright permissions

- The systems model of creativity developed by Csikszentmihalyi (pp. 6, 58, 325).
- Csikszentmihalyi’s autotelic experience (p. 168).
• Meunier’s proposed story schema in journalism (p. 67).
• Preston’s five domains of influences: making the news (p. 75).

• Preston’s simplified typology of five explanatory views of news influences (p. 76)
Shoemaker and Reese’s hierarchy of influences model (p. 75).
• Crotty’s model of the research process (p. 80).

• Amended Crotty’s model of the research process (p. 83).
Sawyer’s nested audience (p. 224)