

**Developing psychological resources for creative writing
through challenging stereotypes in Australian food
history: a creative work and exegesis**

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SUBMITTED: AUGUST 2017

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Abstract

The necessity for innovative responses to sustain our natural environmental, social and cultural wellbeing and economic prosperity is a constant refrain in contemporary society. Creativity is the prerequisite for innovation and creativity is a driving force in the modern economy. Creative skills will be key assets for individuals, organisations and communities into the future and creative people will be seen as the source of innovative ideas. Developing creative capabilities in individuals is therefore of vital importance and advancing knowledge about creativity is essential to achieving this growth. Studying the practice of creative individuals holds significant potential to progress understanding on how to develop creativity more widely. Situated in the field of creative writing, using a food history project as the vehicle, this thesis seeks to demonstrate through the example of an individual writer's experience of creative process and performance, how creative writing research contributes to wider understanding of creativity and how it can be developed.

Through investigation of primary resources, supported by secondary material, the creative work of this thesis, 'The Colonial Kitchen' mounts a compelling challenge to the accepted notions of Australia's colonial food history – that the colonial diet was abominable and colonial cooks incompetent. It argues as a main theme that social aspiration and defence of class privilege had a significant influence on the reporting of colonial foodways. Additionally, it notably demonstrates colonial literature as a rich and largely untapped source of culinary reference. In doing so, the work offers a new, more nuanced and considered understanding of the food production, cookery and eating practices of colonial Australians, thereby making a contribution to food history.

Creativity is largely a psychological phenomenon. During the process of producing the creative work, the author documented her psychological experience in a journal with the aim to capture direct experience of the creative challenge of producing a work of measured contest to established historiography. The data resulting from this experiment was the starting point for the exegetical component of this thesis that explores the psychological resources that are utilised in the creative process and how these might potentially be developed. The exegesis employs a mixed methodology including practice-led and phenomenological elements. A review of the literature of the psychology of creativity furnishes the theoretical tools through which the psychological material of the

writing journal is explored in a series of coaching sessions between the author and a psychological coach. Through this exploration, the exegesis concludes that focused human-centered support, informed by understanding of the complex multi-factorial nature of creativity, offers a valuable approach to creativity development. A set of guidelines derived from the research findings is offered as tool for supporting the development of psychological resources for creativity in individuals.

Acknowledgements

This research higher degree candidature was supported under the Commonwealth Government's Research Training Program / Research Training Scheme. I gratefully acknowledge the financial support provided by the Australian Government.

Completing a PhD is a project of many years. It is a product of persistence and endurance as much as discovery, intellect and passion. Arriving at the point of completion brings up varied emotions in response to the different aspects of self that have been engaged in the process. On the one hand, I cannot wait to be done so I can enjoy an evening out, weekend or a holiday without feeling guilty that I should be working on the thesis. On the other, I feel trepidation and sadness looming around the loss of what has been such a compelling focus in my life over those years and the institutional support I have received from supervisors, university support staff and fellow candidates. My primary supervisor Professor Donna Lee Brien is legendary for her ability to be warmly supportive while leaving you in no doubt when you need to reconsider, re-write or junk elements of your work. She is tireless in finding opportunities for her students to publish their work and helping them build the skill and understanding towards gaining confidence in producing work for publication. I have had some tough days on this PhD journey when I got lost and confused but I knew I could rely on Donna to help me get back on track, even when it involved having to travel to a different place to the one I thought I was heading to. It has been a great pleasure to work with her on this project and I shall miss having her support and interest. I also wish to thank Professor Judith Brown for her support. I have been fortunate to undertake my PhD candidature with Central Queensland University as the level of institutional support they provide to higher research students is exceptional. I particularly want to acknowledge Research Higher Degree staff members Kath Milostic and Natasha Toons for their consistently cheerful and timely help with practical aspects of the candidature process.

I expect my family and friends might feel a sense of relief at not having to listen to my talk about this PhD. They have put up with many years of it and sometimes I have missed special events because of the demands of getting it done. Amongst my friends, Lissa Johnson and Paul Daniell have been particularly significant in their support to my achieving this project by truly listening and helping me resolve and manage many of the challenges of it. Many other friends have kindly endured hearing my woes and my hopes

throughout and have generously supported me in various ways. Thank-you Sandra See, Mark Conoley, Kirsten Grant, Verity Campbell, Jo Swiney, Sally Gudgeon, Sonie Wilson, Mary Ryliss Clark, Julie Hannaford, Meg Thomas, Ruth Hayes, Nayantara Pothen, Kiran Sandhu, Bharti Kumari, Vishu Singh, Jacqui Newling, Alison Vincent, Anna Reynolds and Anne Burgi. Finally, many thanks to my parents June O'Brien and Michael O'Brien for their support.

Declaration of Authorship and Originality

I, the undersigned author, declare that all of the research and discussion presented in this thesis is original work performed by the author. No content of this thesis has been submitted or considered either in whole or in part, at any tertiary institute or university for a degree or any other category of award. I also declare that any material presented in this thesis performed by another person or institute has been referenced and listed in the reference section.

Charmaise O'Brien

..... (Original signature of Candidate)

Date

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..... (Original signature of Candidate)

Date

A note on reading this thesis

As is accepted in the discipline of creative writing, I sought publication for the creative work as soon as it was completed. The creative work has since been published as *The Colonial Kitchen: Australia 1788-1901* (Rowman & Littlefield 2016). The creative work as presented here is the original manuscript as submitted to the publisher. It does not include any of the subsequent interventions, including editing, images, formatting and indexing, that were made by the publisher to prepare the manuscript for publication. Mindful that I was submitting work to an American publisher, the spelling used in the manuscript aligns with American English conventions. Spelling used in the introduction, methodology and exegesis is Australian English. The creative work is referenced using the Chicago notes and bibliography style as per the publisher's requirement for a submitted manuscript. Endnotes are situated at the end of each chapter of the creative work and its unique bibliography is situated at end of the creative work. The exegesis uses the Chicago author-date style and has a separate bibliography, which includes the reference list for the introduction and methodology sections.

Table of publications and presentations arising from and/or relevant to the thesis work

Publications

O'Brien, Charmaine. 2018. "The Devil at Work". In *The Routledge Companion to Food in Literature*, edited by Donna Lee Brien, and Lorna Piatti-Farnell, United Kingdom: Routledge.

O'Brien, Charmaine. 2016. *The Colonial Kitchen*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

O'Brien, Charmaine. 2016. "Social Struggle, tall tales and stereotypes: A closer look at food in colonial Australia." *The Victorian Journal of Home Economics*, 55: 12-18.

O'Brien, Charmaine. 2013. *The Penguin Food Guide to India*. New Delhi: Penguin India.

**Note: This work does not arise from the thesis, however part of the writing of it and its subsequent publication occurred during my candidature and affected my work on this thesis.*

O'Brien, Charmaine. 2013. "Text for Dinner: Plain Food in Colonial Australia . . . or Was It." *MC Journal*, 16.

<http://journal.mediaculture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/657>

**Note: This work was commended in the Sophie Coe Prize for Food History 2014*

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Presentations

O'Brien, Charmaine. "The Colonial Kitchen: Australia 1788-1901." Presentation at Great Writing 2017, Imperial College, London, June 2017.

O'Brien, Charmaine. "Dystopian Vision or Utopian Reality? Food and Cookery in Colonial Australia. Symposium of Australian Gastronomy, Melbourne University,

December 2016.

O'Brien, Charmaine. "A Taste of Class". Australian Studies Research Network: Talking About Food: Food History Panel. University of Technology, Sydney, March 2015.

O'Brien, Charmaine. "Eat Like an Aristocrat: or how history could help us win the battle of abundance." International Food Studies Conference, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, February 2014.

O'Brien, Charmaine. "Text For Dinner: 'Plain Food in Colonial Australia...or Was It? Non-fiction Now Conference, RMIT University, Melbourne, November 2012.

O'Brien, Charmaine. "How to Eat Like an Aristocrat". Popular Culture Association of Australia and New Zealand, Annual Conference, Melbourne, June 2012.

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Introduction and methodology

Faced with the problem of challenging the negative stereotypes of the foodways of colonial Australians deeply embedded in collective cultural memory, how can a writer engage with her psychological resources to support the process of creating a non-fiction work on this topic?

In 2016, the Australian Prime Minister unveiled a government “innovation agenda” that included one billion dollars to drive an “ideas boom” towards creating a “modern dynamic 21st century economy” in Australia (Borrello and Keany, 2016). The motivation was not original: it echoed a prevailing—then and now—global sentiment that future prosperity will be increasingly dependent on the generation of knowledge through innovation (Farmakis, 2014; Goepel, Hölzle and Knyphausen-Aufseß, 2012). Creativity is the prerequisite for innovation and creativity has been “coopted as the driving force in the new economy” (Throsby and Hollister 2003, 11). Consequently, creative behaviour has been elevated from a “merely positive trait to a highly sought after commodity” (Runco and Adullah, 2014, 248). “All sorts of creative people are seen as the...source of innovative ideas in inventing the future” (Throsby and Hollister 2003, 11). Fostering the creative industries will be vital to societal well-being and the ability of individuals to think creatively and mobilize creative outcomes will become core assets in respect to work futures (Farmakis, 2014; PMSEIC, 2005; Smith, 2007; Matthews, 2012). Yet the research being conducted on understanding how to best develop and support creativity is relatively minor in relation to this propounded importance (Runco and Adullah 2014, 248). If, as Runco (2004) claims, one of the key tasks of contemporary educators is to help learners build their creative capabilities, then advancing knowledge about creativity is essential to achieving this growth. Studying the practice of creative individuals holds significant potential to progress understanding on how to develop creativity more widely (Avieson, 2008).

This thesis is situated in the field of creative writing, and it is specifically about creativity and creativity development explored through writing practice. According to Webb and Brien (2006, par.10) creative writing research “clearly fit[s]...research that focuses on creativity and innovation”—it is in this domain that creative writing scholars

can “contribute [and] demonstrate [their] capacity... and build disciplinary connections”. This thesis begins in the creation of an original written work. A symbiotic exegesis examines my (as the author’s) psychological processes during the creation of this work and explores how my ‘psychological resources’ might be more effectively engaged to enhance my creative capacities. The outcomes further inform practical guidelines for supporting the development of creative capabilities in others. Thus, through close examination of the experience of an individual creative writer, this thesis aims to make a contribution to the field of creative writing, and subsequently into research that focuses on creativity and innovation through building understanding of how creative capabilities might be developed more broadly.

The two thesis components each embody further discrete aims. The creative work aims to make a contribution to the “thorough historical analysis” of the food culture of Australia’s colonial period that is lacking in Australian history (Bannerman 2011, 49; Lawrence, 2001), while the exegesis aims to contribute new understanding to how creativity might be enhanced through developing the psychological mechanisms involved in creative process. These two components have been designed to each contribute towards achieving the superordinate aim of this thesis, nevertheless each is also distinct from the other in field, domain and approach. What knits the creative work and exegesis together is the thesis’ methodological framework, which I will now outline.

Developing creatively

Sustained empirical research into creative thought and production began in the 1950s when scientists began to investigate the psychological drivers of creative behaviour (Policastro and Gardner 1999, 213). Creativity investigation has more recently expanded into other fields, nonetheless the most significant body of research on creative phenomena exists in the field of psychological science and this work predominantly draws upon it (Runco, 2015). Creativity researchers vigorously debate what constitutes creative behaviour and the standards by which a creative product might be recognised. Nor have they arrived at a universally agreed definition of creativity. However, there is broad consensus on the following points:

- for a product (an idea, process or artefact) to be considered ‘creative’ it must be novel;

- the process of original creation is complex;
- the capacity to be creative exists in most human beings;
- creative potentialities can be developed; and,
- by its very nature creativity is unique and therefore significantly individualistic, nonetheless environmental and contextual conditions exert considerable influence on creative performance.

The methodological design for this thesis is therefore based on the following assumptions: a creative product must be original; creativity is complex and individual; environment and context can impact creative performance; and creativity can be developed.

While this thesis is a scholarly work, it is also deeply personal. As a practising writer and researcher with a significant record of creating long-form publications my commitment to practice is demonstrably robust. Yet, my writing was not advancing; it was not the work I wanted it to be. In my estimation it was deficient of “artistry...precision and beauty [that makes it] compelling and entrancing”, and I felt I lacked the talent and imagination to produce the evocative imagery and insightful characterisation I aspired to create (Moorhouse 2017, 50). This sensing of a gap between my ambition as a writer and my capacity to fulfil it could be conceptualised as a “surprising phenomenon”, an “interruption [upon] some habit of expectation” that inspires a drive to inquire into this experience (Awbrey and Awbrey 1995, 48). The obvious action was to practice more, to write more—a necessity to develop any skill. Still, I perceived my impediment to creative development might be more a matter of personal psychology than technical competence, and insight into how I might more fully develop my creative potentialities might be usefully gained by asking questions of my practice—to inquire into the meaning I made of my writing and reflect on the purpose it served in my life (Igweonu, Fagence, Petch and Davies 2011, 227). I needed a process that “drew me into dialogue with the practice itself” and encouraged reflection upon, and articulation of, my creative process to reveal “the elusive obvious, [the] inhibitors of [my] creative development” (Igweonu et al. 2011, 227).

Purpose is a critical driver of creativity; it also “shapes reflective inquiry by its translation into a plan and method of action based upon foresight of the consequences of acting under given observed conditions in a certain way” (Awbrey and Awbrey, 1995,

50). My purpose in undertaking this inquiry has been to develop as a creative practitioner. The goals of this project: to develop understanding of the psychology of creativity and explore how such understanding might be applied to developing creative capability in myself, and potentially in others, were designed to fulfil my purpose. The objectives, or guidelines, of this study are:

1. To investigate my experience of creating a literary work.
2. To identify relevant psychological theories that describe my experience and could potentially inform the development of my creative performance.
3. To inform theoretical understanding and develop strategies for creativity development more broadly.

Objectives are driven by prior experience, or “foresight of consequences” (Awbrey and Awbrey, 1995, 50). My experience is that my practice of writing typically generates thoughts, such as “I am hopeless. I cannot do this. I am a fraud”, that inhibit my writing, and my prior education in psychology suggests to me to investigate my underlying psychological processes to elicit understanding of this arising phenomenon. The methodology of this project, the ‘plan of action’, has therefore been designed to achieve these objectives. The project design was aimed at striking a balance between “recognising and using constructively my own knowledge and experience and maintaining sufficient detachment to enable insightful interpretation of data with a good degree of objectivity” (Forbes 2014, 16).

I perform all the roles in this thesis. I am the writer who produced the creative work. I am the subject of investigation of the exegesis. I am the researcher who does the investigation. This thesis is an overall experiment in my own development as a creative individual. It is “important as research in its own right”, and its academic context means the findings about my own practice might be generalised to make a new contribution to knowledge (Boyd 2009, 4). In order to achieve the purpose and objectives of this project I needed to design a creative methodology that was flexible enough to accommodate all the elements—of practice, theory, criticality and self—I wanted to bring to it to.

Methodological framework

The overarching methodological strategy for this research project is creative practice-led research. It employs a range of methods to enable the creative, critical and reflective

thinking and research that underpin the development of the creative work and the interdependent complementary exegesis.

CREATIVE WORK

Originality is the hallmark of creativity (Amabile, 1983; Runco, 2004), thus the creation of a relevant and novel artefact for this thesis was critical to gaining new understanding about creative writing practice. The research question was approached in the first instance by researching and writing a book-length work of literary non-fiction, *The Colonial Kitchen: Australia 1788-1901*. The impetus for this project came from investigation of the current secondary source material on, or referring to, the production and consumption of food during Australia's colonial period and therefore involved an examination of the historiography of the subject (Marwick, 2008). Undertaking this research allows this work to be positioned within the fields of Australian history and food history. Writers of Australian colonial history have predominantly chosen to use and retell negative and unappetising stories, reports and images of the food consumption and cookery of colonial Australians, presenting these largely devoid of any examination and explanation of the background, context and circumstances that may have led to these choices, or indeed questioning the veracity of these "historiographical conventions" (Asseal 2013, 683). The aim of the creative work is to challenge the popularly accepted understanding of foodways in colonial Australia and, in doing so, contribute to the development of knowledge about Australian history and to world food history. While I cannot attest to its effect on readers a leading scholarly publisher, Rowman and Littlefield, published this work in September 2016 (see Appendix A).

The creative work is based upon the exploration and analysis of primary historical and social material, along with scholarly research from across a broad range of disciplines using an accepted historical methodology (UOC, 2006; Krauth, Brien, Watkins and Lawrence, 2014). The final manuscript resulted from applying "creative strategies and structures...to this factual material [to] weave it into a broader interpretive...narrative" (Krauth et al, 2014; see also Brien 2000).

JOURNAL

Researching, drafting and editing the creative work additionally contributed to this thesis by providing an opportunity for me to challenge my creative thinking and writing

capabilities. I documented my psychological responses to the challenges I experienced during the process of writing the creative work in a journal from July 2015 to March 2016. A practitioner writing about their own performance is an accepted field of enquiry in the creative arts as this can provide critical insight into practice more generally (Igweonu et al. 2011, 227). Miechenbaum (1975, 143) suggested that people could be asked to think aloud when doing various creative tasks to determine more specifically the thinking processes in operation during creative performance. In this journal I reflected on my experience and recorded my thoughts as they emerged during the writing of the creative work without explicitly censoring or trying to shape these, an activity that could be considered a form of ‘thinking out loud’ about creative process. I allowed myself to write in the journal when I felt compelled to do so and I wrote as much as I wanted, resulting in 20 separate dated entries totalling 14,449 words. This journal links the two components of this thesis: It captures my lived experience of creativity and becomes the “essential matrix of inquiry” through which the exegetical work critically engages with my process of creative production (Awbrey and Awbrey 1995, 40; see also Webb and Brien, 2012).

After I completed the book manuscript I read through the journal entries three times to determine if any themes had emerged across these. At this point I was not looking to address the research question, rather to ascertain a general sense of my meaning making (Hycner, 1985). As a result, I conducted what could be characterised as a thematic analysis. I identified four distinct themes that I conceptualised as: self and identity; writing process; assumptions about creativity and creative writing; and, ambition. I allocated a colour to each theme and bracketed the entries by marking each with the relevant theme colour. Entries that did not relate to these themes were marked up as ‘general’ (Hycner 1985, 283). Entries were categorised under the four headings and repetitive or similar reflections were consolidated (7,941 words in total ; Zainal 2007, 3; Hycner, 1985; Lester, 1999). This categorised material became the seminal data from which to investigate the psychological process of my creative experience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to provide a conceptual framework through which to examine the categorised journal material, core theories and concepts in the psychology research on creativity and creative writing were located through a literature review. This study aims to develop

understanding of the psychological resources in play during the creative process so it must ask how it might be possible to know about these. A key approach to constructing theory and advancing knowledge in creativity research is collecting detailed data on eminent creative individuals (Simonton 1999, 116; Boden, 1994). Researchers might look for “developmental experiences, personality traits, or environmental factors [that might have] contribute[d] to exceptional creative achievement” (Simonton 1999, 117). There are two predominant methodologies used to study creative people: nomothetic and idiographic. Nomothetic research collects historical data on multiple eminent individuals and subjects this to statistical analysis with the aim of establishing general principles of creativity that stand up to measures of scientific validity (Simonton 1999, 116). Nomothetic methods aim to establish how creative people are alike, or like others (Wallace 1989, 26). The idiographic approach looks for knowledge about creativity from studying the psychology of individual creators (Wallace 1989, 26). Researchers taking an idiographic approach favour detailed case studies focused on understanding the “more idiosyncratic principles that govern the actions of specific individuals” (Simonton 1999, 117). Barron and Harrington (1981, 465) assert:

Gathering of rich psychological data on creative individuals [provides] good bases for predicting creative achievement ...biographical inventory is especially important to the study of life's outcomes, and to the intersection of historical or socioeconomic conditions with stage of professional and personal development.

Simonton (1999, 117) contends that idiographic research cannot formulate more generally applicable principles of creativity because of its focus on the unique aspects of particular individuals. Gardner (1993, 23) argues that studies using either nomothetic or idiographic method can both make important contributions to creativity research: the former offers “precision and copious background information” and the latter “fresh insights [towards a] comprehensive study of creativity”. An ideal research framework for understanding creativity would gather data that can be subjected to normative testing as well as elucidating unique aspects of individual creators, but short of that, the aims of the research should determine the method of data collection (Gruber 1998, 27; Policastro and Gardner 1999). As this study sought to gather deep psychological material from a single subject, an idiographic approach using a case study method was chosen.

CASE STUDY METHOD

Case studies allow researchers to closely explore complex human action through the detailed analysis of data within a specific context and elucidate holistic understanding of the process and behavioural conditions of the phenomenon under study from the “actors perspective” (Zainal 2007, 1). A distinct advantage of the case study method is its ability to illuminate a phenomenon as it occurs in real life (Zainal 2007, 4). The development of case studies is a widely used method in creativity research and personal diaries or journals are commonly used as the material from which to develop these (Amabile, Kramer and Ben-Ur, 2013; Runco, 2004). While the “microscopic” sample size of a case study significantly limits the ability to generalise from it, various methods can be applied to overcome this such as “triangulating the study” with other relevant research to try and “confirm the validity of the process”, still inferences need to be drawn tentatively (Zainal 2007, 2; Policastro and Gardner, 1999). Despite these limitations, case studies are widely used in creativity research because they allow for the individuality that is “critical in creative work [to be revealed] case by case” (Gruber and Wallace 1999, 98; see also: Policastro and Gardner, 1999). A particular limitation of the case study method in understanding creativity is that it is often “archival and therefore has the limitations of non-experimental ex post facto research” (Runco 2004, 677). The case study presented in this research offers the potential novelty of being contemporary to the subject’s experience.

To effectively interpret a case study the researcher must have an “adequate level of understanding of the work itself” (Gruber and Wallace 1999, 98). As I am investigating my psychological experience during my performance of writing I assert a claim to that adequate understanding, although the issue of biased interpretation may be considered problematic where the investigator and subject are one (Zainal 2007, 5). In response to this, I believe my professional experience, indeed my self-interest in developing through this project, enabled me to delineate each of these roles sufficiently to make my performance in each a valid one. According to Policastro and Gardner (1999, 213) the case study method allows a clear instance of the subject of interest—in this case creativity—to be examined such that “attempts to construct a social-scientific explanation, and program of research, [are] based upon a thorough understanding of the phenomenon”. The methodological design of this project therefore can be considered broadly phenomenological in its approach. Phenomenological research aims to provide

deep insight into experience in order to gain understanding as to how an individual makes sense of a given phenomenon (Hycner, 1985). Phenomenological approaches are based in a:

paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasise the importance of personal perspective and interpretation...powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions...[and are] good at surfacing deep issues and making voices heard...and [challenging] the normative assumptions nomothetic methods [aim for] (Lester 1999, 1).

Phenomenological studies use single or small numbers of subjects who are chosen because they can offer some “meaningful insights into the topic of study” (Hycner 1985, 213). Methods such as case study and personal journals are also commonly used to capture the clearest instance of the natural phenomenon as it occurs (Hycner 1985; Lester. 1999). The methodological design of this study—an author keeping a journal while creating a written work and submitting that journal to academically rigorous investigation—offers a clear instance of the experience of creativity and thereby has the potential to elucidate “meaningful insight” into this phenomenon (Hycner 1985, 213).

COACHING

The material of the journal is interrogated using psychological coaching as a tool to connect the research problem to the observed data. Coaching is a “professional helping conversation which takes place in dyadic personal relationship” between a coach and coachee (Arlø and Dahl 2014, 501). It is a dynamic form of learning, a dialogical process during which the coach listens, reflects upon what the coachee has shared to engage them in a reflective process “to examine, clarify or resolve private or professional challenge” (Arlø and Dahl 2014, 501; Stetler 2015, 508). Professional coaching is most widely used in organisations to support individuals to achieve clearly defined goals—and increasingly to develop work teams (Stetler 2015, 111; Losch, Mattausch-Traut, Muhlberger and Jinas 2016,1). Still, there are many different types and approaches to coaching most of which have been developed from therapeutic models, yet it is distinctive from most other dialogue based therapies in that it is future focused and action based (Arlø and Dahl 2014, 501). The coaching approach employed in this study is known as ‘psychological coaching’: evidence-based practice grounded in psychological theories, principles and

approaches (Grant and Cavanagh, 2007). Psychological coaching draws more explicitly and deeply on aspects of previous life experience that shape an individual's thinking and behavioural patterns than other forms of coaching such as skills or executive coaching. It must be noted that psychological coaching does not deal with the clinical issues of which psychology is traditionally concerned. Rather, it “deals with people who are basically functional albeit dissatisfied with some aspect of their lives”, for example, their creative performance as per this study (Grant and Greene 2004, 18).

Coaching is a change methodology and all coaching can be described as ‘developmental’, however the term is used here to specifically describe coaching that seeks to help the coachee develop a more complex understanding of self and how they make sense, or meaning, of their experience and to use this understanding to design actions to achieve desired change. It might also be referred to as “transformative” coaching (Grant, Passmore, Cavanagh, and Parker, 2010). The coaching approach employed in this study seeks to facilitate developmental change. It additionally draws on a model of “narrative collaborative coaching ... a transformative learning process where learning always implies an impact on identity and self-understanding” (Stetler 2012, 111). Working in collaboration, the coach helps the coachee illuminate the personal narrative operating in respect to the core challenges under consideration by “connecting the coachee’s actions with identity issues and vice versa” (Stetler 2015, 5). The coaching supports the emergence of a new narrative by “changing the person’s [understood] past history collaboratively by incorporating new events and persons and by challenging and recreating the story’s plot” (Stetler 2012, 111). According to Stetler (2015, 5):

[Personal] narratives are the vehicles which link specific events in a timeline and which have special impact on the client. If these narratives are a strain on the client, the aim is to deconstruct them in the collaborative process between coach and client. Deconstruction implies the potential for change. By reflecting on the narrative and presenting additional possible interpretations, the dialogical partner [coach] applies procedures that undermine the taken-for-granted understanding of the client’s life and identity.

Coaching is considered to be particularly effective in helping people manage change and complexity, and it is known to support personal development such as creativity (Gash 2017; Stetler 2012; NHS 2005). According to Miechenbaum (1975, 131) methods—such

as psychological coaching— which aim to help individuals “gain an understanding of past influences, background, experience, habits and present behaviour” can facilitate them to form “attitudes and personality factors that enhance creativity”. The flexibility and scope of coaching means it can be applied in a “wide range of contexts, always focused on the needs of the coachee” (Forbes 2014, 14). In a study on coaching creative writers Forbes (2014, 14) found that “coaching filled a niche not met by other forms of support for writers”.

My decision to use coaching as a method of investigation in this project was based in the first instance on my experience as a professional coach. I hold a Masters degree in coaching psychology. I work in a university institute managing the coaching component of a major research program and I coach private clients including creative practitioners. My education, qualifications and experience thus allow me to utilise a psychological coaching approach as a tool in the exegesis. Secondly, there are notable similarities between creativity and coaching. Reflection is at the heart of creativity as it is an endlessly reflective process. Reflective capacity is key in understanding our own intentions and reflective capacity is a key skill for coaches (Stelter, 2012). Coaching is a relevant approach for examining and developing creativity because it is reflective and aims to understand how an individual makes meaning: creativity is essentially a meaning making process (Stelter 2012, 138; Barron 1988, 95; Gruber and Wallace 1999,104). Coaching aims to develop a holistic understanding of individual thinking and action (Stetler 2012, 138): creativity is a holistic process. Coaching is applied curiosity: curiosity is a key skill of creative individuals. Indeed, coaching is a creative practice and process in of itself (Gash 2017).

Coaching is typically enacted as a dialogical relationship between two independent individuals, a coach and a coachee. Nevertheless, ‘self-coaching’, an autonomous learning and development process in which a individual employs coaching method and tools towards making change without the support of an external coach, is a viable alternative (Losch, Traut-Mattausch, Muhlberger and Jonas 2016, 12; Grant and Greene, 2004). Self-observation, which might take the form of narrative documents such as a journal, is an essential aspect of the self-coaching process (Stelter 2012,129; Grant and Greene, 2004). The self-coaching process is by and large the same as the dyadic model: A dynamic dialogical process whereby the individual listens to their internal dialogue through self-observational process such as writing thoughts down, reflects upon this,

challenges and supports what arises, and develops a plan of action “to examine, clarify or resolve private or professional challenge” (Arlø and Dahl 2014, 501; Stetler 2015, 508). In this study I enact a self-coaching process. I deliberately delineate my performance in the dual roles of coach and coachee in this study to allow for, and comply with the standards of, its form as a scholarly investigation. In real life, a person enacting a self-coaching process might not be so definitive in this role segregation—although as this work demonstrates such overt practice might be considered worthy of adopting as it facilitates independent action in each role.

While self-coaching is an accepted approach in coaching, the research literature directly addressing it is small but emerging (Grant and Greene, 2004). Even when working with an external coach, it is “implicit” a coachee develop self-coaching skills as they have to learn the “mind and communication skills that will help them to achieve their objectives”, i.e., they have to do the work (Nelson Jones 2006, 251). Chan and Latham (2004, 261) describe self-coaching as a form of “self-persuasion”, a strategy whereby individuals persuade themselves to change their own attitudes or behaviour with no “direct attempt from others to convince themselves of the desirability” of such change. According to Aronson (1999, 883), self-persuasion has “enormous power to affect long term changes in attitude and behaviour precisely because individuals convince themselves that a particular thing is the case”. Chan and Latham (2004, 261) claim the “effectiveness [of self-coaching] can be inferred from its self-persuasive nature”. A study by Miechenbaum (1975, 142) found that a program of self-instructional training for creativity in the form of self-statements, helped subjects to modify “both their self-perceptions and performance in the direction of more creativity”. Subject’s learnt the self-statements through experimenter modelling and subsequently used these independently to enhance their creativity, an experimental model based on an established clinical paradigm of using self-talk for behaviour change (Miechenbaum 1975, 131). Such self-talk is akin to self-persuasion. Miechenbaum (1975, 142) suggested that self-statement packages could be designed to take into account individual differences in creativity. Chan and Latham (2004, 265) consider Miechenbaum’s training procedure as a form of self-coaching. All of this has particular relevance to this study with its method of self-coaching applied to address an individual’s identified barriers to creative development.

Effective self-coaching requires “very high self-regulation, self-motivation, and self-learning competencies”, the “courage and determination to succeed”, as well as

knowledge and ability to perform designated task/s (Losch et al. 2016, 12; Grant and Green 2004, 29; Chan and Latham 2004;). Chan and Latham (2004, 274) found coaching from an external source more affective in increasing academic performance on two dependent variables than self-coaching overall. However, subjects who self-coached and had existing knowledge and ability to perform the tasks required were easily able to reach the same grade as those who were coached externally (Chan and Latham 2004, 274). Losch et al. (2016,12) found coaching more effective than self-coaching in preventing procrastination, an outcome they partly attribute to an absence of a live example or role model in the independent treatment. Still, subject satisfaction rating with either treatment was equal. Sliter and Christiansen (2012, 175) suggest that impression management might be problematic when someone has been trained to self-coach because the individual might know “how to fake it in the right direction” and give socially desirable responses. Aronson says (1999,) self-persuasive strategies have a deep and long lasting impact because “individuals convince themselves that a particular thing is the case”. This might be equally problematic though, as the individual might only see the issue from a singular point of view, theirs, and once a person has convinced themselves of something, especially if it is emotive, they might find it hard to change their mind on it even in the face of evidence to the contrary (Ecker, Lewandowsky, Swire and Chang, 2011). Taking these considerations into account, I choose self-coaching as a method confident my education and experience as a coach, along with my record of long form publication and academic achievement, allows me the necessary competencies—self-regulation, self-motivation, self-learning, courage, determination, knowledge, task ability and experience—to effectively undertake such a process. In choosing this approach, I also took into account the affordability, accessibility and suitability of working with an external coach. High quality coaching services are expensive, averaging around several hundred dollars per session (Coutu and Kauffman 2009). I was not able to identify a coach whose knowledge, experience and approach exceeded what I could bring to the process who was accessible to me. As the evidence for the value of coaching in helping people achieve professional and personal performance continues to emerge, coaching is becoming increasingly utilised across a range of sectors, however as creative writers, and many other creative practitioners, are often low waged cost might be a barrier to them benefiting from the services of an external coach (Sonesh, Coultas, Lacerenza, Marlow, Benishek and Salas 2015;Throsby and Hollister 2003). In the broader context of creative writing, enacting a self-coaching practice as part of this creative writing thesis

additionally serves as an experiment in the possibilities of this process for other writers and creative workers. Further, because of the deeply personal nature of this investigation I felt psychologically safer [see below] working through it with myself. In fact, I might have been more inclined to ‘impression management’ or restraint with an external coach in expressing the deeply entrenched negative thinking patterns I held about myself because I felt a considerable degree of shame around this.. A constraint in a self-coaching approach is that it limits the scope of the process to my own knowledge, experience and point of view. Physical expressions— body language, tone of voice, eye movement—can be useful indicators to an external coach of significant, but unconscious, mental or emotional states in a coachee, but this type of noticing might not be present in self-coaching. Working with an external coach would have brought different knowledge and perspective and the coaching sessions would have taken a different shape. However, the form the coaching sessions take through the self-coaching process are as relevant as any other. Playing the role of coach and coachee also presented the problem of how to create different viewpoints. Using theories of creativity as a coaching tool was an important strategy in this regard as applying these to exploration of my lived experience assisted me to move into and hold the role of investigator-coach. Additionally, my professional training as a coach, or a ‘skilled helper’, provides me with a strategic framework that supports an objective distance from a coachee (see: Egan 2014).

The dialogue that emerges between the coach and coachee in the coaching sessions reported in the exegesis are, as previously indicated, informed by my psychology education and practice as a psychologically minded coach and include terms that might be usefully explained here to help the reader who does not have such education, in particular ‘psychological safety’, ‘locus of control’, locus of causality’ and ‘locus of evaluation’.

Psychological safety refers to establishing an environment—such as a therapeutic or coaching relationship—in which an individual feels understood, respected and valued; free from external evaluation; and their potential recognised (Rogers 1954, 256). Locus of control describes the extent to which an individual understands the contingency between their behaviour and a desired outcome. The degree to which a person believes they have control over outcomes will impact their motivation to take creative action (Lather, Jain and Shukla 2014, 50; Weiner, Nierenberg, Goldstein 1976, 53). Locus of causality describes whether a person experiences, or attributes, the ‘cause’ or source of motivation for their behaviour as autonomous (internal) or coerced (external) (Deci and Ryan 2000b,

58). Locus of evaluation refers to the extent to which an individual judges or assesses their behaviour or work by internally developed or externally imposed standards. These aspects of psychological attribution and evaluation are further addressed in respect to their relationship to creativity in the discussion section.

The work of this study proceeds with the coach using the material of the journal as the starting point to investigate and understand the coachee/writer's experience of creating a written work. This takes place across four coaching sessions. The coach takes as her tools of inquiry the theoretical learning of the literature review. Theory is used by the coach to structure and synthesise the coachees experience; direct the process of the inquiry (Forbes, 2014); probe the coachees experience to ask questions of it that "extend the learner's capacity for inquiry and reflective thinking ...[with the intention] of disclosing relations not otherwise apparent" (Stelter 2012, 129); and "examine and reinterpret the assumptions of their world models" (Awbrey and Awbrey 1995, 51). Theory informs the conceptualisations the coach offers the coachee to invite them to "jump off" into further reflective thought (Gruber and Wallace 1999, 101). Understanding the "modality in which the creator thinks" is a persistent question in studying creative work, however it can take "considerable degree of expert knowledge to penetrate the tangled niches of the ...human mind" (Gruber and Wallace 1999, 104). Coaching can be "dark labouring" and it relies on the coach's skill in supporting the coachee to "recognise patterns, and to interpret significance" —to see the working out behind what they think and do—and have the courage to make sense of experience in a new way (Awbrey and Awbrey 1995, 51; Forbes 2014, 14). Psychological coaching is deep inquiry into self and it can precipitate the "bursting out of the startling conjecture" (Awbrey and Awbrey 1995, 51) that can lead to change—to the development of psychological resources.

The methodological design of this exegesis could arguably be described as autoethnographic. Autoethnography is a "form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context" with the aim to explore some aspect of daily life and reflect upon the personal, or 'insider', experience of this phenomenon (Butz and Besio 2009, 1660). The narrative produced, differs from other personal experience narrative, such as autobiography or memoir, in that the writer takes on the "dual identities of personal self and academic researcher" to systemically examine their experience and make it meaningful through a framework of theoretical and methodological tools and research literature to bring deeper understanding to a larger social or cultural phenomena (Butz

and Besio 2009, 1660 & 1665;). Autoethnographers use self-generated material such as that produced by journaling to identify patterns in self in response to the experience in which they are researching (Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011, 49). Autoethnographers subsequently describe these patterns in way that provides an account that “allows for the inner feelings and interpretations of someone involved in the phenomenon being studied” in a way that cannot be considered by those outside the experience (Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011, 49). Autoethnographic work is “most often [produced] through the use of conversation” [allowing the writer] to make events engaging and emotionally rich” (Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011, 49 through reflecting on the emotional experiences of the researcher (Butz and Besio 2009, 1662). In this way, autoethnography is the “performance of critical reflexivity...self-critical sympathetic introspection” that then provides a mode for “tracing the effect of these influences on the work we produce” (Butz and Besio 2009, 1662). Challenges of autoethnographical methodology include the “communicative dead-end of solipsism”, or the view that the self is all that can be known; being merely “confessional tales”; and presenting a risk to the self-identity of the writer (Butz and Besio 2009, 1661). Autoethnography has been used to study clinical interactions such as that between therapist and patient allowing for “outcome findings and success markers not available through more objective ...models of intervention and research” (Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011, 50).

In making myself the primary research subject in order to “understand some aspect of the world [creativity] that involve[s] but exceeds [self]” through a critical reflective process that includes drawing upon data from a journal, engaging in dialogical process [self-coaching] structured by theory and method that allows for, and works with, subjective experience including emotions, the methodological design of the exegesis can be seen to have strong autoethnographic parallels [Butz and Besio 2009, 1665]. Nonetheless “whether a representational strategy is called autoethnography depends on the claims made by those who write and those who write about the work” (Butz and Besio 2009, 1664). According to Igweonu et al (2011, 227A), creative practitioners writing about their own performance to build critical insight into practice more generally, such as this exegesis aims to do, is an accepted field of enquiry in the creative arts, yet he does not describe this approach specifically as autoethnographic and, nor do I for this work. While autoethnographers work to bring deeper understanding of a phenomenon to light, the process of affecting change through that understanding was not clear to me—or

that it was even the point of the process, although I presume it is. I, instead, wanted to employ a methodology that explicitly sought to understand, and build a plan of action for change, in this case for developing creativity. Furthermore, the nature of this thesis is particularly complex encompassing in its various elements an in-depth knowledge of Australian history, a capacity for high-quality writing, knowledge of the field of coaching psychology and experience in applying its theory through methods and tools as well as the openness, courage and curiosity to make myself the subject, of what will become publically available, intense psychological scrutiny. The concept is unique and justifiably so is its methodology.

Creative Work

The Colonial Kitchen: Australia 1788-1901

Please note: the creative work is redacted due to copyright restrictions

EXEGESIS

Exegesis title: Identifying and developing psychological resources to support creativity development in writers.

Introduction

This investigation is concerned with the development of a single subject, a creative writer, however it aims to arrive at a set of guidelines that can be used to inform the development of other writers, and creative endeavour more broadly. It begins here with an introductory exchange between the investigator/coach and the subject-writer/coachee in order to establish the coaching intervention enacted further on in this study. Next, a literature review explores the concept of ‘psychological resources’ and the relevance of these to performing creative acts, a determination that requires explication on the subject of creativity. Following from this, the investigator and subject-writer engage in a series of focused coaching sessions in which learning from the preceding review are used to bring understanding to the reported psychological processes of the subject-writer during a creative performance, and explore ways to enhance future creative literary production. In conclusion, the findings of the documented sessions are considered against the broader literature and a set of guidelines to support creativity development are proposed.

INTRODUCTION TO THE COACHING SESSIONS

I give all this background information because I do not think one can assess a writer's motives without knowing something of his early development. George Orwell
25 April 2016

Dear Coach Charmaine;

I am writing to you to ask if you might consider taking me on as a client. I understand that you have a special interest and experience in working with individuals to develop their creative capabilities. I also know something of coaching psychology myself and I understand a good ‘fit’ between coach and coachee is crucial to building the rapport and trust essential to doing the psychological work of personal change and development. I know that if you agree to take me on as a coachee it will be a symbiotic learning journey and the change I seek will be created between us in a process of reiterative effort. As a first step in this my instinct is to provide you with some background—a narrative on my creative career.

I am a writer and I want to pursue further creative development. To this end I kept a journal of my psychological state during the writing of my most recent book, which

revealed a jumble of thoughts and feelings coalesced into particular patterns of thinking I believe hinder the development of my creative capacity. I propose I send you this journal as a first step in our working together. I think it will be better for the process if I hold back the specific question I am trying to resolve just now; instead I will expand further on my history to give you more context.

I knew I was going to be a writer when I was a teenager: I had a vision of myself sitting at a desk in a book-lined study with a fire burning and a dog at my feet. I was a very lacklustre student at school, my reports were full of “could do much better” — nobody ever helped me to, though. The only subjects I performed well in were English composition and comprehension and Australian literature. I was praised for my creative writing even though it almost exclusively took as its subject typical teenage woes. When I finished school and therefore believed myself to have ‘grown up’ I stopped writing about teenage angst, and I stopped writing completely because I did not know what I wanted to write about. Yet, I maintained my ambition to be a writer without taking any action toward this, until, some years into adulthood, I read a book called *Food in History*: it was an epiphanic experience. I had discovered my subject matter—I was going to write about food history. Over the past two decades I have initiated and created a significant body of written work on Indian and Australian food history and food culture. I also decided to undertake a PHD in creative writing to expand my understanding of creative process and foster my development as a writer. My overarching purpose is to live a creative life built around the pursuit of creative inquiry lived out in the practice of research and writing.

I believe my most recent work, *The Colonial Kitchen: Australia 1788-1901*, makes a unique, and important, contribution to Australian history, and that, together, its content, language and style makes it a creative achievement. However, the field will judge if I have achieved what I claim to. As I was writing this work an idea for a novel emerged. This is what I want to pursue next, but I feel I need to restructure my self-concept, and my concepts of creativity, in order build my capability to achieve that. I hope one day to be able to write something as evocative and resonate as Patrick White did in his *Tree of Man*:

She was tremendously happy. There were whole quarters of still sullen sky, but that from which the cloud had been torn away glittered with a new jewellery of stars. As the dray reeled across the stones you could breathe the cold stars, that

shivered, and glittered, and contracted and lived (1961, 90).

I realise that in writing all this I have also given you signposts to reading my journal, nevertheless it seems necessary to give you my own historic narrative to put the journal into context. I trust in your professional capacity to be as objective, as much as any human ever can be, in your initial reading of the journal. I purposefully wrote this letter to symbolise my interest in working with you, on this inquiry into creative development in a way that explores how knowledge might be got at and expressed in alternative ways.

Yours sincerely

Charmaine O'Brien

27 April 2016

Dear Writer Charmaine;

I almost missed your letter amongst the morass of food delivery and cleaning services flyers I scooped out of my mailbox earlier today. I would be very pleased to work with you. Please send me your journal and I will read it and come back you with a plan for proceeding with this particular creative inquiry.

Looking forward to learning more about you and your work.

Warm regards

Coach Charmaine

Date 30 April 2016

Dear Writer Charmaine;

Your decision to provide a detailed history of your writing life as an introduction to the personal inquiry captured in your journal was I imagine both instinctive and informed. I deduce from what you have written that you have an understanding of some of the methodologies recommended to investigate creativity and psychological theories of its development. As you also know something of coaching I think between us we will be able to bring the complexity of thought and perspective necessary to exploring how you might build your creative writing capacity. As you point out, you might find you need to deconstruct aspects of your self-concept to achieve this development. I agree that for the

most part we shall work as equals however this needs to be a loose enough coupling to allow movement in our roles across the course of our work. There will be times when you will need me to support and guide you in a manner more parental than peer: we, as an entity will need to ebb and flow like clouds across White's night sky to allow you to reveal more of your shimmering self showing to the world. Our experience together will have its share of metaphor, possibly even poetry, but first we need to get down to some practicalities. The trust you demonstrate by sharing your history and your journal with me puts us in good stead towards creating a productive empathic working relationship.

I want to speak here of methodology and a little of theory—these can be poetic, but I want to use them in a more pragmatic way. Our shared inquiry could be best described as a phenomenological approach that seeks to illuminate the specific by understanding how you perceive and interpret your experiences. In sending me your journal and choosing to work in a dialogical (coaching) mode, you have nominated the use of two key phenomenological methods, which I anticipate will be powerful in helping us to understand your experience; gain insight into your motivation and actions; and bring to light and challenge assumptions that might be contributing to any discrepancy between your performance and your ambition. By holding ourselves in an investigative posture to examine the material of this case we will build knowledge of how you think about your writing and yourself as a writer, with the intention of probing our findings with appropriate theoretical tools to ascertain where we might best intervene to stimulate creative development.

It is appropriate to phenomenological methodology that you submitted your journal to me in the first instance free of any specific hypothesis, or research question. It has allowed me to read it relatively free of presuppositions and stay as true, as possible, to your reported experience. My first step was to read through it and 'listen' to your words to get a feel for what was being said and identify recurrent ideas and issues, which I bracketed into categories. I read these again and mind-mapped the units to identify relationships between factors and emergent themes. During this I recorded responses that inevitably arose in my thoughts in the margins to try and keep these from interfering in the raw data.

The next step is for me to share my findings with you and for us to work to identify the mindsets structuring the way you make meaning and the impact this is having on shaping your creative thought and actions. You have a well-developed capacity for self-

reflection and a profound intelligence of yourself and I am excited for your possibility. I have used theoretical tools to probe and prod the material in your journal to see how these might further illuminate what I have interpreted and what this might additionally point to. Before that happens, I need you to send me your research question so I can be more purposeful in what I am directing theory at. It is important that you see how I have arrived at my interpretations, and of course you must challenge these if they are not true to your own experience. I hope that the way we work together might contribute to expanding the boundaries of what is considered to be scholarly knowledge.

I look forward to meeting you next week.

Yours in creative scholarship

Coach Charmaine

Literature review

WHAT ARE PSYCHOLOGICAL RESOURCES?

Resources are vital for the development of creative work (Runco and Abdullah, 2014; Enko, 2014). Beyond obvious human essentials such as food and shelter, material and technological resources are required for creative production, to varying degrees, and creative people undeniably need human resources to stimulate and support themselves (Wahba and Bridwell, 1976; Gardner, 1993). All of these can be classified as external resources. Further, creative practice requires a combination of components: expertise, creative thinking skills, intrinsic task motivation and a supportive environment, elements, or resources, that are largely internal to the creator—external conditions notwithstanding, although how a creator uses their resources can shape the responses of their environment (Amabile, 1983). An appropriate approach to understanding the role of internal resources in creativity, and build understanding as to how these might be developed, is through psychology.

Psychology is concerned with understanding how the human mind functions, particularly the connection between the internal working of the mind and external behaviour. As a scientific discipline, psychology employs empirical methods to infer causal and correlational relationships between psychological and social variables with the aim of establishing general principles of human mental functioning (APA, 2017). Psychology is known to be concerned with the assessment and treatment of mental health problems, but there is considerable activity in the field focused on understanding non-pathological human activity such as creativity (Barron 1988, 77). The following overview of the fundamental schools of psychological inquiry gives a context in which to understand the concept of psychological resources.

Cognitive psychology is concerned with how we know the world. It focuses on the mental processes used to mediate information from the external environment such as memory, perception, attention, judgement, reasoning, problem solving, language production, comprehension, thinking and meta-cognition. Cognition is widely held to play a key role in creative behaviour and cognitive capacities are vital resources for creators. Emotions, or affect, also influence how individuals understand, or think about the world, and subsequently effect behaviour. Emotions are widely considered to play a key role in creative behaviour (Brand 1991; Rathunde 2000, 4; Radford 2004). Positive

affective states, such as enthusiasm and openness to experience, can be tapped to “broaden cognition and pursue novel, creative and often unscripted paths of thought and action” (Fredrickson 2001, 220). Ravenna (1991, 97) found negative emotionality, such as anxiety and stress, was an “important source of originality and insight” in women, and creative writers often leverage negative emotions (Pourjalali, Skrzynecky and Kaufman 2010). The ability to learn is essential to creativity. Behavioural psychology focuses on the study and alteration of behaviour. It holds that any person of normal functionality can potentially be trained to perform any task and that mastery is the result of repetition of behaviour. Social psychology investigates individual behaviour in a social context and the influence of the immediate environment on individual cognition and subsequently on behaviour (Amabile 1983). Social psychology is concerned with wide range of intra-and interpersonal phenomenon such as self-concept and identity, which are important in creativity. In addition, there are many themes and concepts in psychology considered to play a role in creative behaviour including personality, motivation, self-efficacy and self-regulation that might be investigated and understood from any of these approaches.

THE NATURE OF CREATIVITY

The capacity to be creative is a unique aspect of human experience: it is also a significant resource (Barron 1988,77). Creativity is the necessary precursor to innovation and creative thinking can change the course of the future. Our propensity to create in response to a perceived need for improvement ensures change as a fundamental factor of human society. Understanding creativity has exercised creative minds for millennia: ancient philosophers first conceived of it as a rare gift of the gods, divine inspiration that had little to do with human agency—an idea that still lingers in popular conceptions of the phenomenon (Gardner 1988; Cropley 2016; Chan 2013, 26). Modern scientific inquiry into the “inventive potentialities” (Guilford 1950, 445) began in earnest in the 1950s when stagnant economic conditions in the USA, and national humiliation at Soviet Russia putting the first satellite into space, was blamed on a lack of creative initiative amongst American workers. These circumstances spurred psychologists to study creativity in order to understand how it might be developed (Gláveanu 2010, 149; Guilford 1958, 3; Cropley 2016, 242).

Frenetic contemporary demand for innovation as a source of competitive edge has accelerated scientific interest in understanding creativity, and further afield (Williams,

Runco and Berlow 393, 2016; Chan 2013, 26; Chua, Roth and Lemoine 2014, 189). Research into creativity is now more or less equally represented in psychology, education, business administration and economics and the social sciences (Williams, Runco and Berlow 393, 2016; Chan 2013, 250). Scholars investigating creativity in other fields have challenged biases and assumptions in psychology research on the phenomenon; these “insights [have] coincided with an increasingly interdisciplinary approach among psychologists where creativity is conceptualised as a product not only of individuals, but also of societies, cultures and historical periods” (Chan 2013, 25). While mindful of an extensive literature on creativity beyond psychology this project has predominantly used and examined research in that discipline, confident that it holds within its scope consideration of the multitudinous factors that influence creative behaviour.

DEFINING CREATIVITY?

Despite the compelling interest in its subject matter, the field of creativity research “still lacks a consensual understanding of the creative act” (Mumford and Gustafson 1989, 27). The idiosyncratic “almost infinite [nature of creativity means it] defies precise definition” (Torrance 1988, 43); the fact that the “psychological components of creativity are unseen and possibly largely unconscious” adds to the difficulty (Cropley 2016, 238). Some researchers claim the failure to achieve a universally accepted definition of creativity impedes progress in understanding it (Runco and Jaeger 2012, 92; Sternberg and Lubart 1991, 12; Simonton 2012, 103). Others are more nonchalant that such a complicated phenomenon resists definitional reduction (Torrance 1988, 43). Researchers commonly work around this problem of classification by citing the so-called “standard definition of creativity”, to wit: “Creativity requires both originality and effectiveness” (Runco and Jaeger 2012, 92). Originality denotes a creative product that did not previously exist in exactly the same form and is, according to Runco and Jaegar (2012, 94) “absolutely necessary” for creativity. There is little dispute in the literature that to be considered creative a product must be original, although to what extent is arguable. Some theorists consider an idea sufficient to qualify as creative as long the thinker finds it to be novel; while others consider imagination, dreams or unexpressed thoughts intrinsically creative even without producing any new product (Torrance 1988, 43; Barron and Harrington 1981, 441). Gláveanu (2010, 152) points out that “producing the ‘new’ requires a

constant dialogue with the ‘old’ existing system of artifacts, norms and knowledges”. A unique idea operating in isolation might also be unrealistic and useless—it could even be maladaptive and dangerous—therefore to be considered creative “original things must also prove effective, or useful” (Runco and Jaeger 2012, 92; Cropley 2016, 239). Usefulness might be served in a practical, artistic, aesthetic or theoretical sense (Cropley 2016, 239). Regardless of its wide use, the conception of creativity as simply original and useful is also considered to be an inadequate description of a complex phenomenon and its use in research problematic (Runco and Jaeger 95, 2012; Simonton 2012). Asking: “Novel compared to what? Useful for whom?” demonstrates the potential difficulties (Gláveanu 2010, 152). McLoughlin (2016, 170) problematizes the matter further by looking beyond western cultural notions to cultures in which creative tradition is “especially valued...[and] creative individuals are less likely to produce outputs that radically depart from or challenge the domain within which the work is produced.” Some researchers elaborate the standard definition to make it more useful: Amabile (1983, 33) says a product or response will be judged creative to the extent that it is novel and appropriate, and the task is heuristic (discovery focused) rather than algorithmic (unambiguous instruction); in other words copying something that already exists does not qualify as a creative act. Simonton (2012, 103) and Boden (1994) both incorporate the element of surprise, or non-obviousness, into their chosen definition. Torrance (1988, 44) provides further examples of other elaborations.

The standard definition of creativity largely describes the outcome, the “observable creation”, or *something* that has been symbolised to make it accessible, be it an idea, object or process (Runco 2010, 189; Rogers 1954, 250; Little 2014, 135; Barron and Harrington 1981, 442). It assumes a creative product [provides] the essential evidence for creativity (Runco and Pritzker 2015, 77). It does not address *whom* it is that comes up with the original ideas: the creative individual. Runco and Pritzker (2015, 77) define “creativity [as] the *ability* [my italics] to produce work that is both novel and appropriate”. What then is this ability? How does an individual think up new ideas, elaborate these into potential new products, take action to turn them into reality and continue to work over time? In addition to being new and useful, a creative product must be “judged to have some value according to external criteria” imposed by others (Wallace 1989, 28). Some researchers argue that a product does not require external affirmation to be considered creative (Torrance 1988, 43; Barron and Harrington 1981, 44). Still there is

more significant consensus that the “creative act ... must be expressed in a social context and ultimately be understood by others if it is to be creative” (Fiest 1998, 300). Certainly creativity can only be studied, or recognised, retrospectively, that is after a product has been produced and rated as creative by qualified experts (Hall and MacKinnon 1969, 73). A desire for recognition can drive creative work and it is an assumption of this project that a creator desires external acknowledgement of their work (Runco 2010, 189). How, then, do products resulting from the creative processes of a creative individual come to be valued as creative achievements?

Creativity studies are most often structured into categories of person (individual), product (artefacts), press (environmental conditions) and process (Runco 2002, 32). This categorisation helps to organise research but in reality these elements function reciprocally, with each likely to be more salient at different points of creative achievement. A recent trend in creativity research has been towards conceptualising creativity as a “emergent property of a system in action” in which all identified elements operate in consequence of each other (McIntyre 2013, 85; and Wallace 1999; Feldman 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, 1991 and 2006). Person, product, press and process form a system of creativity. The triangulation of individual, domain and field is also commonly used in the literature to describe creativity systemically (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). In this concept ‘individual’ refers to the creator’s talent, personal capabilities, cognitive profile or aptitude; ‘domain’ is the area in which the individual is working; and ‘field’ is made up of the institutions and positions (social context) that provide training and “eventually confer status upon certain persons and products which are judged to be creative” in a particular domain (Gardner 1988, 21). Where there is tension or discordance arising from the interface of system elements “the most creative acts occur” (Gardner 1988, 21). The categorisations of person (individual), process, product, press (environment), domain and field will be used to structure this review.

Scientific research on creativity seeks to “propound the laws which govern the behaviours and thought processes of [creative] individuals and the principles by which certain products come to be judged as creative” (Gardner 1988, 8). Progress has been made in illuminating various aspects of creative phenomena, but nothing is conclusive, to be sure the research can be contradictory and confusing. Opposite views of creativity exist. The “democratic” view holds it as an ordinary component of human existence, therefore all people are creative and able to turn their creativity on or off at will, while the

romantic view proposes creativity as “heaven sent” and available only to a chosen few (Cropley 2016, 239). Despite being debunked in the scientific literature the latter idea persists in the wider community most particularly the idea that creative success is predominantly due to ‘talent’ (Cropley 2016, 238; see Throsby and Hollister, 2003). Without a restrictive definition of creativity there is no barrier to the myths and misperceptions that befuddle understanding of it (Barron and Harrington 1981, 442). However, if such a definition were constructed “its implications and assumptions”, would necessarily shape, and potentially limit, the way creativity is understood (Barron and Harrington 1981, 442). The current “conceptual vagueness” might therefore be useful in trying to comprehend human creativity (Simonton 2012, 103).

The preceding discussion demonstrates that creativity is a complex phenomenon. Arriving at a true understanding of creativity will necessarily require a “broader perspective that accommodates all elements” (Cropley 2016, 239). To this end, the following definition has been chosen as a reasonable framework to anchor this research:

Creativity is the interaction among aptitude, process and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both novel and useful as defined within a social context (Plucker, Beghetto and Dow 2004, 90).

This definition is systemic (“interaction among”), broad enough to encompass all the identified elements of creativity (aptitude/person/individual, process, product) and narrow enough to usefully work as containment lines (novel, useful, social context). The use of the term “aptitude” has been used in preference to trait to suggest creativity as a set of dynamic characteristics and skills that can be changed (Plucker et al. 2004, 90). Stabilised by this definition this chapter will continue, firstly by examining the elements of creativity; secondly, exploring psychological theories and models that consider the dynamic relationship between these more systemically; thirdly, the literature on the psychology of creative writing will be reviewed and comparison made between the psychological resources required for creativity more broadly and those, if any, unique to the process of creative writing; and, finally, relevant psychological resources for creativity will be elucidated through this process.

THE CREATIVE PERSON

The creative person is an individual who regularly sees problems (gaps) and acts to “fashion novel products or ideas to solve these...which come to be valued [as] creative achievements” (Gardner 1989, 9). Creativity researchers are, naturally, interested in understanding the behaviours and thought processes of such individuals (Gardner 1988, 9). The study of the “patterns of [personality] traits...characteristic of creative persons” to ascertain the “interests, attitudes and temperamental variables” that might be significant in creative production are a bedrock of modern creativity research and remain a key area of interest in the field (Guildford 1950, 444; Gardner 1993, 20; Williams, Runco and Berlow 387, 2016; Simonton 2000, 153).

Personality refers to the unique patterns of thinking, feeling and behaviour of individuals that are stable across time and situations (Feist 1989, 290). The “essence of a creative individual is the *uniqueness*” [my italics] of their behaviour and ideas and personality studies of creative people try to determine the aspects of personality that might facilitate creative thinking and action (Kellogg 1999, 97). There is broad empirically supported consensus that a common personality profile generally holds amongst creative individuals and that personality plays a significant role in creative effectiveness (Hall and MacKinnon 1969; Guildford 1973; Little 2014, 137; Fiest 1998, 304; Feldman 1999, 174; Mumford and Gustafson 1989, 34; Runco and Pritzker 1999, 74; Piirto 2010). According to Fiest (1990, 300) the “primary function of traits is to lower the threshold for trait congruent behaviour”, for example, if someone is characteristically curious it will be easier for them to develop the broad range of interests held to be important to generating creative ideas.

Fiest (1998, 300) parses the personality attributes common to creative behavior into social, cognitive, motivational and affective “dispositional elements”. Trait based theories of personality are contentious in psychology. Personality is a multifarious subject and it is never as simple as lists of characteristics. The creative personality system is recursive and bi-causal and many of its particular traits are covariant with others; creative people often hold opposing personality traits, and the ability to express contradictory traits is likely necessary to carry out the complex work of creativity (Amabile 1987, 362; Piirto 2010, 3; Feist 1989, 300; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996b). None the less the categorization Fiest (1989) proposes forms a useful organizing framework that will be loosely used here to examine

the research on creative personality, mindful of the outlined complexities in respect to this subject.

Social dispositional elements

Social personality dispositions refer to attitudes and interactions towards others (Feist 1989, 300). Creative people frequently exhibit introverted social behaviour, preferring limited engagement with others (Barron and Harrington 1981, 454; Little 2014, 15). The nature of creative work often requires individuals to work alone for long periods, suggesting introversion, or a “relatively asocial or antisocial orientation”, might be a necessity (Fiest 1998, 300). Creative individuals tendency to be more open to experience makes them more self-aware and sensitive to their own feelings and thoughts and those of others, which can make them vulnerable to heightened emotional response and social withdrawal might be necessary to cope with the intensity of aroused feeling (Simonton 2000, 153; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996b; Hall and MacKinnon 1969, 326). Yet, if a creator is ambitious for their work to be recognised their creativity must ultimately be expressed in a social context and interacting with and influencing others is necessary for gaining this validation (Fiest 1989, 300). It might therefore be necessary for a creator to engage more extroverted aspects of self to exert this influence and creative people can be highly charming when they want, or need, to be (Little 2014, 145).

Creative individuals tend to be independent, individualistic, self-reliant, self-confident, non-conformist, autonomous and unconventional (Runco and Pritzker 1999, 74; Feist 1989, 300; Hall and MacKinnon 1969, 326; Simonton 2000, 153). These attributes support them to stand out from the crowd, make autonomous judgements and achieve via independence rather than conformity—all necessary precursors to original thinking (Gruber 1988, 36; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996b). The very nature of creative work is to bring forward new ideas that challenge the status quo. Creative products are often “perceived as deviant by the majority” and the creator might be subject to rejection or even ridicule, in the first instance (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996b). It can take time for original ideas to be recognised and independence and autonomy support an ability to be tenacious with novel concepts (Gardner 1988, 9). Risk taking, spontaneity, playfulness and courage support the discovery and promulgation of original ideas, and the “nerve” to be unpredictable (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Runco and Pritzker 1999, 74). Paradoxically creative individuals usually need to be conservative when learning the conventions of a

domain because they have to know its rules before they can transform it by breaking them (Barron and Harrington 1981, 455; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996b).

Less appealingly, creative individuals have a tendency to be self-centred, self-seeking, autocratic, conceited, dominate and hostile, traits that might be a product of the constant process of having to defend their creations and/or life choices (Feist 1998, 300). Creative people can be mercenary in their relationships, encouraging others then discarding them when they are no longer useful in helping the creator pursue their goals (Runco and Pritzker 1999, 73; Helson 1999, 91; Feist 1989, 300). They can be socially aloof and often have an aversion to “conventional and highly regulated activities”—traits intertwined with a desire to be unique from others, which in turn supports the pursuit of originality (Little 2014, 149).

Cognitive dispositional elements

Cognitive elements are the traits of creative individuals indicative of their tendencies towards performing mental tasks (Kellogg 1999, 106). Creative individuals tend to be open to, and actively seek out, new concepts and experiences. They are curious, observant and have wide interests—traits that provide them with new material to synthesis with knowledge and imagination to generate original ideas. They prefer complexity and broader meaning to details and facts; are not afraid to work with challenging concepts and ideas; prefer to take the time to reflect and understand; and tolerate ambiguity, as it is in the reconciliation of competing tensions that originality often emerges (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996b; Feist 1998; Runco and Pritzker 1999, 74; Hall and MacKinnon 1969, 326; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996a; Simonton 2000, 153).

Motivational dispositional elements

Runco (2010, 186) contends that cognitive traits are the “least” of the elements driving creative achievement. An individual might be able to generate many creative ideas but they also need to take action to turn these into communicable products and one of the strongest factors in creativity is the drive to undertake the work involved (Runco 2010, 187). Intrinsic motivation, that is doing a task for its own sake, rather than for any extrinsic rewards it may bring, is considered critical to creativity as it drives the commitment, energy and perseverance required to produce creative output (Cropley 2016, 239; Amabile 1983, 357; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996a; Gruber and Wallace 1999,98; Feldman 1991, 174; Sternberg and Lubart 1999, 10; Gardner 1988, 19 ; Runco 2010, 186). It is generally considered to take around ten years to master a domain such that a

creator can instigate novel change in it (Feldman 1999, 173; Csikszentmihaly 2006, 14). This bespeaks the characteristic ability of creative people to “work, long, hard and persistently with extraordinary concentration” (Gruber and Wallace 1999, 105). The opportunity creativity offers to actualise individual potential enhances its intrinsic appeal, and engaging in creative activity can lead to increased intrinsic motivation (Rogers 1954, 252; Ryan and Deci 2000b, 58). Intrinsic motivation engages attentional involvement in a task that increases enjoyment of it, which in turn supports persistence and experimenting with different ways of doing things (Abuhamdeh and Csikszentmihalyi 266, 2011). A study by Liang, Hsu and Chang (2013, 112) found that intrinsic motivation played a crucial motivational role in stimulating imagination—and creativity is not possible without imagination.

Intrinsic motivation is linked to purpose, and purpose might be considered the central driver of creative endeavour (Gardner 1993). Creative work inevitably involves routine tasks and activities, a sense of purpose helps the creator to persist with these (Gruber and Wallace 1999, 105). Engaging in purposeful work activates further ideas, increasing complexity and generating new projects thus the creative process is ‘driven’ (Gruber and Wallace 1999, 104). The importance of purpose is demonstrated by the fact that many creative people persist in creating work despite the lack of material benefit (Gruber and Wallace 1999, 110; see also Throsby and Hollister, 2003). Amabile (1987, 365) found that extrinsic factors such as monetary reward could actually negatively influence intrinsic motivation by causing the creative person to shift their focus from the work itself to doing what is required to get the reward. Still, creative people tend to be motivated by ambition and the prospect of extrinsic reward is not necessarily detrimental to creative achievement, indeed lack of financial recompense might undermine an individual’s ability to pursue creative achievement no matter how motivated they might be (Feist 1998, 390; Throsby and Hollister 2003, 33).

Motivation is not inherent in a person; one decides to be motivated by something: “To live a creative life is one of the intentions of a creative person” (Gruber and Wallace 1999, 94). How then does the purpose arise that inspires expression in creative activity? The source of motivation may vary from person to person but it must come from somewhere; “it might be a natural passion for a field...[or] it may be sought as refuge from difficult circumstances [or trauma]...[or from] a need to prove that one is worthy of respect and admiration ...[or] that others have underestimated their value. Any or all of

these may function to keep the process going” (Feldman 1999, 175). However, unless such experiences can be harnessed to serve creative expression they have the potential to undermine creativity development (Feldman 1999, 175). What is it then that causes purpose and motivation to become harnessed to creative behaviour? Motivation cannot be trained and research points to a strong relationship between emotion and motivation in the creative process (Liang et al. 2013, 111; Csikszentmihalyi 1996b).

Affective dispositional elements

Creative individuals process information intellectually and emotionally and creativity is as much an affective phenomenon as it is a cognitive one (Feldman 1999, 174; Radford 2004). Brand (1991, 403) conjectures, that the “whole of mind [including creativity] evolves from feeling”. Mastering a creative domain is an act of “complex informational processing” involving the deployment of “culturally acquired” emotional markers on “certain items of information or lines of connection” within the individual’s thought framework that determine “what is in and what is out” to help shape and make sense of the information (Radford 2004, 59). This emotional processing is largely unconscious (Radford 2004, 54). Information that cannot be made to fit into an existing system creates a dissonance, “it is the tension, or emotional discomfort, of such dissonances that are the impetus to creative development [as] the creative act works to release or reconcile this tension” (Radford 2004, 54). In this way it is emotion that tips off the motivation for creative action. The creative individual’s tendency to emotional sensitivity can serve them well when they are intuiting and developing new ideas, but at other stages of the creative process emotionality can become a burden that gets in the way of working, for example, by undermining focus (Gruber 1988, 29; Liang et al. 2013, 111). Creative people commonly experience affective traits such as anxiety and the relationship between mental health and artistic creativity has been a particular focus for research. A creative career can be “merciless in its demand [requiring] exacting discipline, toil without stint, and sacrifices, and it yields an uncertain reward” —the price for creative achievement might well be affective disorder (Barron 1988, 95). Creativity can also be associated with a certain amount of psychopathology, yet successful creative individuals have “compensatory characteristics” that allow them to control less effective aptitudes (Simonton 2000, 153; Simonton 2017, 25). Many creative people have no pathology at all (Helson 1999, 99).

The dispositional elements, or traits, determined to be common to a representative ‘creative personality’ will be expressed in various combinations in any individual—some will not be present and some stronger than others. Age, gender and cultural background can also influence expression of personality characteristics (Mumford and Gustafson 1988, 28; Helson 1999, 99). There is a strong theme in contemporary psychology that considers personality as constructed rather than innate, therefore it can potentially be reconceived, or reconstructed (Albertson, 2014). A creative individual might express different personality characteristics according to circumstances, suggesting these traits are “partly under voluntary control [and] with sufficient motivation and effort, one might adapt a different style to better suit a situation (Kellogg 1999, 106).

Creative identity

Personality dispositions are only part of creativity and creative people have many different personalities. Barron (1988, 94) argues that it is “the recognition of oneself as creative” that drives individual creativity. A person who holds a self-identity (the acting of self in the world) as a creative person “critical to his or her self-concept” (the way we understand self) will seek opportunities to reaffirm this identity through their behavior, thus conceiving of self as creative provides motivation to be creative (Jaussi, Randel and Dionne 2007, 248). An important variable in a creative self-identity is that the individual believes they have the efficacy to act creatively (Jaussi et al. 2007, 248). An individual with a creative self-identity will consistently choose to approach any task they want to accomplish by approaching situations with a personal style that is:

open, intuitive, alert to opportunity, interested in complexity as a challenge to find simplicity, independent of judgement, questions assumptions, is willing to take risks, unconventional in thought and allows odd constructions to be made, keenly attentive, and driven to find pattern and meaning ... coupled with the motive and the courage to create (Barron 1988, 95).

In this conception creativity is a dynamic response enacted by an individual because they understand self as creative and in possession of the capability to express self in creative productivity (Jaussi et al. 2007): Descartes maxim *cogito ergo sum* comes to mind.

CREATIVE PROCESS

An individual initiates the process that results in the creation of a novel idea or product (Barron 1988, 80). Building understanding of the processes the individual engages in to generate this original product is essential to understanding creativity (Ward, Smith and Finke 1999, 190). In the first instance, the individual thinks up an idea in response to a problem they are unsure how to progress but are motivated to work out how to do so (Kellogg 1999, 106). Thinking, or cognition, involves using mental processes such as attention, judgement and evaluation, memory and imagination and planning to mediate information from the external environment to “create, manipulate and communicate ideas” (Kellogg 1999, 10). The mental acts involved in generating creative ideas include “retrieval, association, synthesis, transformation, analogical transfer, categorical reduction, an ability to search data for patterns, to understand how things are in relation to one another and looking for ways to make different connections” (Sternberg and Lubart 1991, 8). While creative thinking is complex all its processes belong to everyday cognitive activity and all “people of normal intelligence have the potential to be creative to some degree” (Ward et al. 1990, 190; Nickerson 1999, 392). Nevertheless, some people produce more creative work than others, and some produce more notable work, and it is how, and why, an individual uses their cognitive skills that is more important in influencing creative behaviour than mere possession of these (Barron and 1981, 445). Individual differences in using cognitive processes to produce novel and effective products might be understood to lie on a “continuum of creative functioning” (Ward et al. 1990, 191).

In its early throes, creativity research tended towards a reductionist approach to understanding the phenomenon (McIntyre 2013, 86). Researchers focused on identifying singular component skills of creative thinking, such as divergence and intelligence, and developing psychometric instruments to measure these, leading in turn to the erroneous understanding that these elements represented the totality of creative ability (Barron and Harrington 1981, 463; Torrance 1988, 45; Williams, Runco and Berlow 2016). Divergent thinking does generate novel ideas but convergent thinking is equally important in exercising choice and discrimination about the usefulness of these (Onarheim and Friss-Olivarius 2013, 4). A certain degree of intelligence is necessary to produce original and effective ideas but high intelligence does not necessarily equate with higher creative achievement (Sternberg and O’Hara 1999, 269). Creativity is more than the production of

ideas and it might be more usefully conceived of as “intelligent action” driven by cognitive capacities that facilitate continuous “construction of multiple representations of reality, processing of these representations, conceiving of possibilities and selecting data” rather than a product of native intelligence (Barron and Harrington 1981, 442).

Creativity is a complex entity that cannot be fully understood by “simply considering the individual parts” (McIntyre 2013, 85). Imagination, for example, is an essential cognitive skill for creativity, but possession of imaginative capacity does not necessarily equate with creative productivity (Liang et al. 2013, 111). Numerous component cognitive skills are simultaneously involved in thought processes (Kellogg 1999, 10). Operationally, creative thinking is a “multifactorial and dynamic” system in which elements interact in “dense, extensive, and interrelated networks” that cannot be separated (McIntyre 2013, 85). By its nature creative thinking is a complex system. Complex systems are “chaotic, highly nonlinear and essentially impossible to explain and predict from mechanisms and laws”, and it is the interactions between multiple components in a system that are important (McIntyre 2013, 85). A range of other factors such as cultural values and environmental conditions also influence the “likelihood of creative production”, but these “achieve their impacts by way of cognitive functioning” (Ward et al. 1990,190). It is the way these elements are used together that facilitates creative contribution (Mumford and Gustafson 1988, 34).

Novel inventions tend to emerge incrementally. Ideas are generated, explored and reintegrated in a reiterative process that can be “messy” and take time (Cropley 2016, 239). An individual’s effectiveness in terms of this process might be influenced by a variety of attributes including individual differences in cognitive capacities to “identify patterns in information, take different perspectives on the problem, the richness and flexibility of stored cognitive structures to which the processes are applied [and] the capacity of memory systems” (Mumford and Gustafson 1998, 32). The specific cognitive processes applied to integration of information will either “facilitate or inhibit creative functioning” and thus impact the resulting creative product (Ward et al.1990, 190). The individual’s cognitive capacities will be influenced by personality traits such as curiosity, openness and tolerance of ambiguity as this allows them to bring more information into cognition and process it such that they will have “multiple understandings available” to draw on for problem solving (Mumford and Gustafson 1998, 32). That individuals have a predisposition towards offering original solutions influences the development and

utilisation of their cognitive processing capacities (Gardner 1988, 10). This cognitive activity often happens outside the conscious awareness of the creative individual because their mind is psychologically “prepared to process information in ways...conducive of creative achievement” (Cropley 2016, 241).

A key facility in creative thinking is the ability to break established mental sets, “subconscious tendencies to approach a problem in a particular way” shaped by past experiences and habits, during problem solving (Amabile 1985, 365). Well-developed mental sets are the structures through which information is processed, these are crucial to “negotiate day-to-day existence [as they] allow us to predict likely outcomes based on incomplete information”; mental sets are also necessary for the creative process (Synder, Ellwood and Chi 2017, 110). A mental set is built from general cognitive machinery (imagination, divergent thinking, intelligence, problem finding skills) and a well-developed knowledge and comprehension of a given domain, as well as assumptions, perceptions and beliefs. Building mental sets takes time and hard work and the commitment the individual makes to achieve this gives them the faculty to consistently produce work from these sets. Conversely mental sets can become fixed such that new ideas are structured in predictable ways limiting the individual’s creative capacity by keeping them within the boundaries of what they know and “less receptive, perhaps even resistant to novel interpretations” (Ward et al. 1990,191; Synder et al. 2017, 110). Recent work in neurology has trialled the use of non-invasive brain stimulation that allows recipients a temporary window during which [they] can access a different cognitive style and enhance creative insight (Synder et al. 2017, 111). Short of accessing this sort of technology, psychological techniques can be used to change mental sets more persistently. Meta-cognition —thinking about thinking —is an effective cognitive strategy for changing established mental sets (Liang et al. 2013, 111). Illuminating the mental structures being used to make sense, or think with, opens these to modification, for example by taking a different perspective thereby pushing open new pathways for perceiving problems (Ward et al. 1990, 190; Runco 2015, 296). Challenging the assumptions mental sets are built upon can also lead to “creative insights...[w]hen individuals question their assumptions, they are often able to shift perspectives on a problem, or perhaps even get out of a conceptual rut” (Runco 2015, 295). “Transcending the constraints” of prevailing modes of thought is believed to be significant in level of creative achievement (Feldman 1999, 183). Challenging mental sets to form new

articulations can also pose considerable intellectual and emotional challenge (Albertson 2014, 77). The driving force to make such fundamental change is purpose: the “overriding criterion in creative thinking is meaningfulness” (Kellogg 1989, 10).

Boden (1994), proposed two different levels of creative achievement. ‘P’, or personal, creativity is that which is merely new to the individual and ‘H’, or historical, creativity which is new to society and is transformative. The idea that there are different levels of creativity has become established in the creativity literature, although Runco (2015, 296) calls it a false dichotomy and says it is problematic in educating for creativity. Gardner (1998, 10) suggests creative achievement might be better conceived to lie on a continuum between “everyday and exemplary creativity”. Elaborating on Boden’s theory Radford (2004, 54) describes the process of creativity occurring within a “conceptual space” or mental framework in which information is processed to make sense:

The framework offers the possibilities within which information is combined and separated, grouped and regrouped and may be seen to define the boundaries of that which makes sense both within the space and at its parameters” (Radford 2004, 54).

Individuals who stay working within their known boundaries of sense, “solving problems by making use of what they already know and can already do”, are likely to only make minor creative achievements. Those who challenge the boundaries of their conceptual space—which can be understood to be analogous to mental sets—to “reorganise and restructure” to transform the way they process information might make major creative achievements (Cropley 2016, 242). The “cognitive strategies” a creator uses can “differ markedly, depending on whether creative production involves the generation of new understandings or the application of existing understanding” (Mumford and Gustafson 1989, 38). Weisberg (2009, 24) claims innovative advances in any field come from “staying in the box” and building upon the foundation of established expert and domain specific knowledge.

DOMAIN

All creative individuals use their general cognitive capacities to create novel ideas and products. Nevertheless, there is no one absolute creative process but, rather, a set of

processes differentially related to alternative types of creative endeavours and each creator must also utilise specific skills and knowledge structures relevant to the domain in which they work (Mumford and Gustafson 1989, 38). A domain is the stable cultural and symbolic aspect of creativity in which new products are preserved and transmitted (McIntyre 2013, 85; Baer, 2012). Creativity occurs when a person makes a change in a domain, therefore a domain is essential “because it is impossible to introduce a variation without reference to an existing pattern”—there has to be something to be compared to be able to see difference (Csikszentmihalyi 1999, 315). It is essential for a creator to have learnt the symbol system, for example writing or music, and the rules and concepts of a domain in order to make novel and effective change to it (Csikszentmihalyi 1999, 314). Each domain requires a creator to develop and utilise distinct mental and technical processes to be able to work in it and communicate their discoveries (Baer, 2012; Gardner 1993, 373; Mumford and Gustafson 1989, 38).

Thorough education in a domain is a prerequisite for creative achievement (Gardner 1993, 362). In a study of eminent creative individuals Gardner (1993, 373) concluded significant creative achievement arose from the creator finding a domain they could “commit to”; that the motivation to commit to it arose from discovering a “fit” between the domain and the individual intelligences of the creator and this connection allowed them to thrive in it and rapidly develop their creativity. The domain a creator committed to was often linked to childhood experiences. Feldman (1999, 173) argues that the fit between an individual and domain at a particular period in time might be more significant to creative achievement than the level of mastery of it, adding that the role of domain on the development of creativity is not yet well understood.

CREATIVE PRODUCT

Particular thought processes can only be considered creative if they result in a product that is deemed creative (Amabile 1983, 359). In order to understand creative process a “backwards through time” approach is required, whereby creative accomplishment is studied to elucidate the processes that led to it (Mumford and Gustafson 1989, 28). A person might have a creative personality, and, provided their mind has ordinary functionality, they will have the cognitive capacities required to process information creatively, but it is only through products that is it possible to ascertain their creative ability (Amabile 1983, 359). The creative product acts “as an operational referent for

studying creative processes and determining the meaning of creative potential” (Mumford and Gustafson 1989, 28). However, the product itself needs to be validated as creative to stand as a referent to work backwards from. Just as process and product cannot be separated, creative product cannot exist except in relationship to a field: “creativity is a process that can be observed only at the intersection where individuals, domains and fields interact” (Csikszentmihalyi 2006, 3).

FIELD

As a general principle, it is held that creative work needs to be deemed important by others who belong to a relevant field (Gardner 1988,10; McIntyre 2013, 90). The term ‘field’ in this context specifically refers to the social aspect of creativity, the institutions that hold domain knowledge and are structured around this (Csikszentmihalyi 1999, 315; McIntyre 2013, 89). A field is the “group entitled to make decisions as to what should or should not be included in the domain and whose judgment is accepted by others” (Csikszentmihalyi 1999, 315). An individual creator works to produce some variation in the existing information of a domain (McIntyre 2013, 89). To be considered creative this variation has to be accepted and selected for preservation in the domain by the field (Csikszentmihalyi 1999, 324). The creator therefore needs to “negotiate the changes through the field” to achieve this (McIntyre 2013, 89). This can mean that what is selected as creative might not always be judged by objective measures and might be more indicative of acceptance by a particular field of judges (Csikszentmihalyi 1999, 324). The idea that creativity should be defined by “virtue of consensus on the part of knowledgeable contemporaries” and what it is that might entitle someone to decide whether or not something new is accepted into a domain is certainly challenged (Gardner 1989, 10). Even so, a field can have a “profound effect on creative actions” such that it can determine how creativity develops, or even if it develops (McIntyre 2013, 90; Feldman 1999, 178). If an individual’s progression in a domain is reliant on performance in the field then a creator’s ability, or otherwise, to self-promote comes to the fore in gaining validation for their work (Gardner 1993, 377). A creator therefore needs to find avenues for influencing others and making contacts in the field (Feldman 1999, 179; Csikszentmihalyi 1999, 326).

The characteristics of a field tend to shift across time and the varied expression of these characteristics at any period can impact the creative development of individuals in

that field (Feldman 1999, 178). Individuals might be inspired or oppressed by the field. If there is a good fit between the individual's purpose, motivations, talents and domain, there is more chance this will cause significant shift in the creator's development in order to meet the particular challenges of that domain (Feldman 1999, 179). Alternatively, a creator might be well served in being a misfit as it is often the ability of individuals to notice and exploit asynchronies in the domain-field system that results in significant creative achievement (Gardner 1993, 381). An individual who is too ensconced in a field may not see tensions in the system that can be profitably exploited to create change, or they might feel they have too much to lose in challenging and transforming the domain they are comfortably working within (Gardner 1993, 381). Highly creative individuals might even enjoy "being on the edge" and be able to withstand the concomitant strain of this, yet working at "the edge of one's creative powers... is often a highly affective process for the creator and their need for unconditional support is unprecedentedly great" (Gardner 1993, 383). Creativity is both an act of "rebellion and conformity" (McIntyre 2013, 90). Individuals have to achieve some degree of fit within a field otherwise their ideas might be considered too "weird" to be acceptable and they will be unlikely to receive the level of support they need (Gardner 1993, 383).

ENVIRONMENT OR PRESS

According to Csikszentmihalyi (1999, 25), culture and society "are as involved in the constitution of creativity as the individual". Influences on creative development are broader than those of domain and field: the time and place of one's existence, greater social and cultural conditions and historic events can all impact on individual creative development—the happenstance of being in the right place at the right time probably plays as great a role as any other factor (Feldman 1999, 181). To imagine that great creativity is independent from context is "absurd" (Feldman 1999, 177). How a culture values different creative pursuits influences creativity development. If a culture values a particular creative activity it will be "tuned to detect potential [in that domain] to develop the talent to its fullest, and to richly reward excellence at the highest levels" (Feldman 1999, 180). A "great deal of what is necessary for creativity" might very well be "beyond the control of the individual (Feldman 1999,179).

While an individual might possess particular skills, talent and motivation, the sociocultural environment plays a significant role in influencing a person to respond

creatively, or not, to challenges in the environment (Simonton 2013, 71; Amabile 1985). That creativity is a social-psychological phenomenon is demonstrated in the growing focus on a “context dependent view of creativity” and understanding the role of the sociocultural environment on creative production (Chan 2013, 22). The “attributes of the situation influencing evaluation of the individual’s productive efforts might be detrimental to creative output (Mumford and Gustafson 1998, 28; McIntyre 2013, 90). A restrictive, rigid, inflexible and punitive environment can hinder an individual’s creativity even if they have an enduring high level of interest in a task (Amabile 1983, 357). A supportive, evaluation-free environment can promote the translation of creative thoughts into creative behaviour (Sternberg and Lubart 1991, 8). Major creative contributions often emerge in situations where the parameters, or boundaries, are less restrictive; firm goals and stricter requirements for assessment often limit creators to making relatively minor contributions (Mumford and Gustafson 1988, 38). A poor environment might be overridden by high motivation on the part of the creator (Sternberg and Lubart 1999, 11). But, rather than relying on the individual’s strategies for dealing with external challenges, it is possible to foster social conditions to encourage the development of psychological prerequisites for creativity (Cropley 2016, 245; Amabile 1983, 366). Environments in which a creative effort is explicitly encouraged, supported, recognised and rewarded, particularly in the exploratory stages of the creative process, help establish a climate in which an individual perceives they have the freedom to take risks in invention, are more likely to inspire creative activity (Cropley 2016, 245; Mumford and Gustafson 1988, 37). Because the environment is constantly changing the creative person also has to be able adjust and alter the resources they bring to it to in order generate novel possibilities responsive to the demands of their environment (Gardner 1988, 7).

CREATIVITY AS A SYSTEM

There is a trend in the creativity research to conceptualise the phenomenon systemically (Feldman 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, 2006 and 1999; Gruber 1988). In a review of recent research McIntyre (2013, 92-95) concluded, “it is difficult to refute” that creativity is “an emergent property of a system in action” and that a “systems view of creativity that recognises a variety of interrelated forces operating at multiple levels” and “reconceptualise[s] [it] as a property of complex systems” might best serve to understand it. Interactions in complex systems are by nature unpredictable therefore by its very

nature creativity is unpredictable (Cavanagh 2006). In order to generate ideas that are recognised as original the creative individual “organises their resources” in novel ways that “depart from existing norms” (Gardner 1988, 8). When these original ideas are communicated into the system (domain and field) they can cause a deviation in it, potentially sending it off in a new, unpredictable direction. Other developing areas of creativity research are neurobiological, genetic and computational, however it is beyond the scope of this research to review these areas (see: McLoughlin 2016; Dietrich 2004; Martindale 1999; Boden 1988).

PSYCHOLOGY OF CREATIVE WRITING

Writing is “part of a wider creative process” sharing the “universal cognitive bases” of all creative thinking (Harris 2009). Like all creative activity, it is problem solving, but its form is linguistic (Lubart 2010, 149). Creative writing is often defined as the production of fictional prose, poems and scripts, however, it is also recognised that there are forms of non-fiction writing which are highly creative, including creative non-fiction, literary journalism, poetic biography and many others (Barbot, Tan, Randi, Santa-Donato and Grigorenko 2012, 209). Runco (2012, 186) declares “by the very nature of writing every writer —provided they are not just copying material —is creative ... [although] it might be best to use a continuum ... with highly imaginary writing [at one end] and factual records at the other” to indicate how creative the work is. Barron (1966, 157) defines creative writing as that which “communicate[s] in an original manner, the writer’s interpretation of experience”. According to Piirto (2010, 3) creative writing is “largely an attitude”, shown in particular ways of thinking, responding to the imaginative and taking deliberate action to write. “Intention and interest [drive creativity] ... effort is not expended unless there is some drive ... [it is] self-concept and recognition of oneself” as a creative writer that informs the values and goals that drive “taking the time and effort” to do the intentional work of writing (Runco 2010, 187). If that work is original and effective then it is ‘creative writing’ whether it is fiction or non-fiction (Runco 2010, 187). Creative writers are described thus because of how their work is received not how they are—“the analysis comes afterwards” (Harris 2009).

Much of the research on the psychology of creative writing focuses on investigating the characteristics of creative writers (Forgeard, Kaufman and Kaufman 2013, 321). Understanding creative writers can lead to “enlarged understanding of all creative

individuals [and] to a broader concept of the entire field of creativity” (Barron 1966, 157). Creative writers, “with their prominent communication skills, can provide insightful perspectives on the processes of creative thinking and art-making” (Enko 2014, 10). The personality of creative writers largely holds with the general characteristics of creative people as previously described herein. Barron (1966, 158) found that creative writers were most characteristically highly intelligent, independent and autonomous, with strong verbal fluency, and well-developed aesthetic sensibility. Additionally, they were productive, philosophical, highly aspirational and unconventional thinkers; as well as candid, forthright, interesting, interested, and ethical practitioners (Barron 1966, 158). He concludes though that creative writers “are no different” from other creative individuals (Barron 1966, 159). Other psychological portraits of creative writers tend to be less flattering: “great writers often demonstrate a fundamental character [that] reveals significant failure along developmental lines, that is a basic lack of maturity... synthesised with tremendous fear, rage or other powerful emotions” (Piiro 2010, 7). Barron and Harrington (1981, 456) claim creative writers tend to be less stable, less venturesome and more prone to feelings of guilt. Traits of openness and trust are particularly relevant to writers as they often explore their own experience for ideas, yet doing so can entail exposing personal thoughts and feelings in their work and emotional risk taking can leave a writer feeling vulnerable (Kellogg 1999, 111). Anxiety tends to be a predominant trait in creative writers (Pourjalali, Skrzynecky and Kaufman 2009, 24). Writing can be a difficult process for many writers and anxiety might arise from difficulties in work process or fear of criticism—which in turn can negatively impact information retrieval and concentration and get in the way of the creative writing process (Kellogg 1999, 113). It might be that conditions of the creative writing domain and field influence this as much as any personal neuroticism. Creative writers are faced with having to continually generate new material from one’s imagination; low barriers to entry into the field make it extremely competitive; and the precarious nature of trying to earn a living as a writer and a tendency for institutional support to be directed to only a few writers, might account for any relationship between mental health issues and creativity (Pourjalali et al. 2009, 24; White 2017; Moorhouse 2017). Kellogg asserts if society supported and encouraged creativity more widely any such relationship might not exist (Kellogg 1999, 118). Conversely creative writing has been found to be supportive of psychological well-being (Pourjalali et al. 2009, 25). Freud (1908) believed creative writing had psychological

benefits for the writer as an outlet for neuroticism that might otherwise find less productive expression.

The psychological perspective on creative writing can tend to emphasise cognitive processes, however writers themselves prefer to focus on their experience of their actions and the “inner forces by which they live and write” (Bardot et al. 2012, 209). To understand what is important in writing it is necessary to “follow and analyse the experience of the writer writing” (Nelson, 2008). Runco (2004, 667) emphasises the necessity of taking into account the subjective experience of creative individuals as the value of creativity is in originality and difference not the sameness, or generalizable principles, that scientific research looks for.

Motivation is critical to creative writing (Runco and Pritzker 1999, 74; Kellogg 1999, 109). In his classic study of creative writers Barron (1966, 159) found the “most impressive of all [characteristics] was the extent to which motivation played a role both in the writer’s becoming a writer and in the way in which creative writing served a more general philosophic purpose”. Much is made in the literature of writers doing the work of writing because they are intrinsically motivated to do it (Amabile 2001, 333). The source of intrinsic motivation in creative people is often postulated to have its roots in emotional needs arising from earlier developmental stages and that creative behaviour is an attempt to satisfy these innate psychological needs (Deci and Ryan 2000b, 57; Freud 1908; Gardner 1993; Runco 2004, 669). “In theory, writing performance should depend partly on emotional factors [as] it is a task of meaning making” (Kellogg 1994, 113). The eminent writer George Orwell (1946, par.2) describes his own motivation for writing:

I had the lonely child's habit of making up stories and holding conversations with imaginary persons, and I think from the very start my literary ambitions were mixed up with the feeling of being isolated and undervalued.

Orwell (1946, par.11) also pronounced the process of writing as a “horrible, exhausting struggle”. The heavy cognitive load of creative work sustained over decades, often with little financial reward, public recognition or other support, and the criticism and enormous expectations of a writer if success is achieved suggest that it is “inner abiding resources”, such as the need to resolve strong emotional needs, that might have the power to drive a writer’s efforts in the face of such conditions (Deci and Ryan 2000b, 58). Certainly, there are also many positive emotional benefits to creative writing such as the

opportunity for self-expression, pleasure in working with words and immersion in imagination, as well as some writers reporting that they find writing relaxing (Amabile 1985, 398). If writing generates positive feelings a writer is more likely to spend more time doing it. Taking action, in this case writing, enhances feelings of competence; feeling competent as a writer reinforces intrinsic motivation for the action of writing (Deci and Ryan 2000b, 58; Enko 2014).

The “orientation of motivation concerns the underlying attitudes and goals that give rise to action” and the nature and focus of motivation likely matters more than any amount of it (Deci and Ryan 2000b, 55). Amabile (1985, 398) found that motivation to write for extrinsic ends could undermine creative performance. The role of extrinsic motivation however, is more nuanced (Baer 1998a, 18). Extrinsic motivation may be useful in creative performance in some conditions such as in expectation of audience reaction or deadlines (Baer and McKool 2009). Kellogg (1994, 106) advises caution in pointing to intrinsic motivation to explain “creative achievers tendency to stubborn labour” by providing examples of successful creative writers clearly indicating extrinsic motivations for their work. Chan (2013, 23) warns against “romantic ideas” —such as doing it for the love of it—about working in the creative industries [in general] that “fuel ambition” and cause workers to accept “fierce competitiveness” and precarious employment conditions (See also: Thomas 2013; Tokumitsu 2014). The key to creative writing is committing the time and effort to it, and this investment might be inspired by the opportunity “writing affords as a vehicle for [the] meaning making which is critical to human beings”, alternatively “social recognition from peers and readers may well be a still more potent” driver (Kellogg 1994, 103). An individual’s intrinsic and extrinsic motivations might both be psychological factors in creative writing (Kellogg 1994, 105). Individual creative writers develop and change across their lifetime (Lindauer 1993, 221; Simonton 2000, 151; Gardner 1993). Situations and capacities change as we age, bringing “various pressures to adapt”, which also impact creative capacities, approach and style (Runco 2010, 183). These adaptations are often tied to values, preferences and self-concept and change across the lifespan might even be a necessity for creative individuals (Runco 2010, 182). External forces play a well-attested role in the writing process and the judgement of others in the field such as readers, experts, critics and reviewers can also encourage adaptation and change (Lindauer 1993; Harris 2009).

Creative writing requires particular imagination and the ability to portray emotion, but whether individuals are attracted to this domain because they have those skills or whether working in it develops such capacity is uncertain (Lee and Min 2016, 306). The use of metaphor is common across creative individuals but creative writers are distinctly pronounced in using it to “probe and understand reality [and] create unity and pattern” in their work (Dowling 1985, 457). Creative writers are further distinguished by their ability to devise original and acceptable analogies and their capacity for emotionality and fantasy (Runco and Pritzker 1999, 74; Kellogg 1999, 109). A study by Barbot et al. (2012) elucidated an “essential” set of skills for creative writing across all writing domains:

- general knowledge and intelligence – verbal intelligence, working memory, topic and writing knowledge, observation and visualisation
- creative cognition – originality and selective combination, imagination
- executive function – planning, concentration
- linguistic and literacy factors – vocabulary, generating details, knowledge of organising structures such narrative framework

The creative writer works in wide field of “gatekeepers” that includes critics, readers, editors, educators, publishers and directors and producers in terms of script and screen writing (Simonton 2013, 73). Any creative person has to be able to convince the field of the quality of their work and for this they need the contacts and personality traits that make it possible to be taken seriously (Gardner 1993, 12). If the field values different elements or aspects to the creator, or they do not have the resources to effectively navigate the field their work might not be recognised and supported; this is particularly true in “low consensus fields” of creative endeavour such as creative writing where success might depend more on “the extent to which the individual is representative of the field as a whole” (Simonton 2013, 77). Yet, creative individuals, including creative writers, often have a tendency to avoid conformity to the status quo (Simonton 2013, 77). Significant creativity can emerge in a disjuncture between a creator and field but an enduring problem in any field is that its established members may not like new ideas as these might threaten their own livelihood or status (Simonton 2013, 79). According to Amabile (1985, 334) an ideal environment for creative writers is one that “provides opportunities for learning effective work skills [and] support[s] active, deep engagement with challenging work”. The reality is that few experience such environments and “most

creative writers face considerable challenges in pursuing their particular creative practice”(Amabile 1985, 334). Developing the motivations, attitudes and skills required for creative writing is more often entirely reliant on individual effort.

THE PROCESS OF CREATIVE WRITING

Writers create work by drawing upon their imagination and other creative processes to solve problems, uniquely expressing their resolution in literary form (Barbot 2012, 209). The process of writing is “thinking, researching, planning, writing drafts, consciously revising, consciously manipulating the unconscious and being unconsciously riven by it” (Harris 2009). It is these processes that creative writers are most interested in therefore understanding the processes involved is important to understanding creative writing (Runco 2010, 181; Nelson 2008). Lubart (2010, 151) describes various models of the cognitive processes writers use and summarises these into three main stages: “planning what to write; generating or drafting text; and editing or revision”. Many “elements are present simultaneously” at the various stages of writing and the writing process is both linear —moving through the stages of production —and recursive, involving both cognitive and metacognitive skills (Barbot et al. 2012, 209). Idea generation and elaboration are particularly important aspects of creative writing. A writer generates a “guiding idea” as a “starting point from which the rest of the text will be developed”, this primary idea is then elaborated upon leading to further idea generation and expansion (Lubart 2010, 152). The evolving nature of writing means it “best suits” people with a reflective thinking style (Lubart 2010, 152). The more a writer elaborates an idea, the more information they bring to it and the richer the associations contained in it. This, in turn, relies on interactions between various cognitive and non-cognitive aspects such as the writer’s capacity to retrieve information from memory. This particular capacity further relies upon what has been chosen to be stored in memory to build a “conceptual knowledge base”, and what is added to this mental store is influenced by aspects such as curiosity and observation, which are activated by motivation and affect (Lubart 2010, 152; Kellogg 1999, 108).

Movement between the cognitive spaces of writing (planning, problem solving, decision making, evaluation, revision) and text production (turning mental representations of ideas into text or spoken word) is the natural process of all creative writing (Lubart 2010, 152). Emotional associations as well as cognitive ones are involved in this process.

It is these associations that bring information into working memory where it can be worked upon (Radford 2004, 57; Forgeard et al. 2013, 321; Lubart 2010, 152). Writing is created in the incremental but constant movements between these various sub-processes, and it might be that it is creative process *per se* that organises all these various sub processes to function together (Lubart 2010, 156).

PERSONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL RESOURCES FOR CREATIVITY

Identifying qualities in individuals and environments that might promote the development of creativity is an enduring goal of creativity research (King, McKee, Broyles 1996, 190). The preceding review of creativity research indicates that most individuals hold significant psychological resources that can be potentially be drawn upon for creative endeavour. These include interrelated intellectual abilities, knowledge, styles of thinking, personality, motivation and environment. While individuals will have different capacities across these resources, these can be systemically developed in order to enhance creative capability (Barron 1988, 79).

The development of intellectual resources for creativity relies upon noticing, paying attention, maintaining an openness to experience, exploring, information processing, remembering and persisting, collectively these tendencies can be subsumed into the overarching trait of curiosity (Kashdan, Gallagher, Silvia, Winterstein, Breen, Terhar and Steger 2009, 987). “Constant curiosity” is a salient psychological resource for creativity and curiosity might play a role in individuals willingness to escape the boundaries of conventional thinking by fostering tolerance for ambiguity, uncertainty and discomfort that can arise when exploring outside the boundaries of the ‘known’ (Kashdan et al. 2009, 988). Central to curiosity is the “self-regulation of attention to find new experiences and sustain engagement” and “actively acting on curious feelings” (Kashdan et al. 2009, 989). The ability to support curiosity by asking questions —of self, others, system—is an important skill for creativity (Torrance 1988, 71).

Self-regulation and motivation are also key psychological resources for creative writers (Amabile, 1985; Eschleman, Madsen, Alarcon and Barelka, 2014, 593; Sternberg 2006, 89). The self-regulation of behaviour, including attention, is linked to goals and values, which are driven by motivation, but one decides to be motivated by something and curiosity might drive that (Zimmerman and Risemberg 1997; Sternberg 2006, 89; Kellogg 1999, 153). The motivation to achieve is a particularly valuable psychological

resource, as the need for success will drive an individual to work and the time spent on writing is the chief determinant of the productivity of creative writers (Kellogg 1999, 102). An essential feature of creative work is that it is purposeful work and purpose is a meta-psychological resource for a writer. Purpose is aligned with holding a vision of achieving a creative life and persistence with holding purpose over time and through difficulties entails tolerating ambiguity (Gardner 1993, 22). A creative thinking style marked by a preference to think and decide in new ways, to overcome obstacles and take sensible risks is linked to motivation and purpose (Sternberg 2006, 88).

Personality characteristics such as an ability to delay gratification, independence, self-discipline, self-efficacy and lack of need to conform are psychology resources that can facilitate a writer's ability to retrieve and creatively apply knowledge (Kellogg 1999, 97; Liang et al. 2013). A community and environment that is nurturing and rewarding of creativity is important to development of creativity and a writer's socio-cognitive skills in connecting and engaging to influence others, building strategic relationships and gaining support for their work is a considerable resource (Gruber and Wallace 1999, 100). On the other hand an "internal locus of evaluation" is also needed (Rogers 1954, 255). An important psychological resource for creativity then is a mature level of emotional development that allows the creator to seek and accept the support they need (Gardner 1993, 386). Ultimately, creative accomplishment is "a developmental matter" arising from change in perception and thinking that results in new constructions of knowledge that "transcend the constraints of current cognitive processing structures...and results in change in certain "emotional markers" such as "change in aesthetic or critical judgements" which can lead to changes in products, ideas, beliefs and technologies (Feldman 1999, 170). Personal capacity for change is a critical resource for the development of creativity (Kashdan et al. 2009, 989).

The practice of creative writing might require writers to draw more on a particular expression of these psychological resources (Barron 1966, 158). In addition each individual writer will have a style and approach to their work that is a unique expression of these qualities. The psychological resources any one writer might want or need to develop to promote their creative capacity will likewise be singular. It will depend on their purpose, motivation, identity, experience and personality. Understanding a writer, or any individual, in their distinctiveness is a necessary precursor to supporting their creative

development. In the next chapter I will explore a particular approach to building understanding of an individual creative practitioner to support them to develop.

Findings

The following chapter documents four coaching sessions in which the investigator acts as coach (C) and the writer-subject (W). The standard structure of a coaching session is to begin with a light conversational exchange between coach and coachee. As the course of the intervention progresses the coach would invite the coachee to reflect on the previous session and any actions they had agreed to implement. A critical difference between coaching and therapy is that coaching is action orientated and coaches often end a session by having coachees write down actions they will take to effect change towards their stated goals (Stetler, 2015; Grant and Greene, 2004). The nominated actions arise from the interaction of the coach and coachee during the session. The sessions documented in this chapter do not include these opening and closing exchanges as my acting as coach and coachee meant I did not need to create the conditions of socio-psychological comfort and responsibility these serve to create.

Coaches, in common with therapists, approach their work open to what emerges from the dialogue between coach and coachee (Rogers 1969, 193; Stetler, 2015). The coachee sets the agenda; the coach asks question arising from whatever the coachee wishes to talk about to help illuminate patterns in their thinking and make connections with their behaviour. It is common for a coachee to reiterate the same matter several times, or more in order to achieve insight into what it is they are seeking to understand. This reiterative aspect of coaching process is something it has in common with creativity (Fitzpatrick 2014, 161; Forbes, 2014). It is considered possible and effective to coach yourself (Grant and Greene, 2004). The four sessions documented herein were a genuine coaching exchange, an experiment conducted between myself as a creative writing practitioner and a professional psychological coach. I conducted this coaching exchange through writing backwards and forwards between the two roles. I documented this interaction, which went on over the course of a week, in its emergent unruly totality. The version presented here has been edited to bring it to congruence for the reader; align with standards of scholarly writing; and fit within operational boundaries (word limit). Rogers (1969) offers examples of the unwieldy, and often incomprehensible, nature of unedited verbatim therapeutic exchange.

COACHING SESSION ONE

C: I noted four distinct categories of thought in your journal: self and identity; the writing process; creativity and creative writing and what you think that is; and ambition. I thought we could approach our work through these themes. We will undoubtedly find these aspects are interrelated and that your thinking will often sit at the confluence of these themes (Feldman 1999, 169).

W: That sounds like a good way to begin.

C: Let's start with self and identity as there is a strident expression throughout the journal that you experience 'you' as getting in the way of your development as a creative writer?

W: I rarely become totally immersed and focused while writing because I find it hard to get myself out of the way. I think my inability to 'lose' myself when I write gets in the way of my creativity.

C: You write of experiencing the 'you' that gets in the way as an immature aspect of your self, you use the word 'teenage' to describe this self.

W: I experience my emotional self as immature. I often find myself mentally reacting to experience in the same way I did as a teenager: I want instant gratification. I want everything to be about me. I want my needs to be met easily. I don't want to try.

C: Could you elaborate on how your sense of yourself as immature gets in the way of your creative process?

W: It undermines my effort. I give in and think this is too hard; I can't do it. I feel sorry for myself and complain. It's like my teenage self is sulking and dragging my attention away.

C: Tell me more about thinking you "can't do it".

W: Writers often report an ability to lose themselves in their work such that words flow out (Csikszentmihalyi 1996c). It seemed to me as a teenager that if you were good at something it occurred naturally and if you had to try it meant you weren't any good at it. Writing feels like a grind to me. When I read of well-known writers saying they write just 'because they love it' (Amabile 2001) it makes me feel I am not creative, because that is not my experience.

C: So if you experience yourself as not easily being 'good' at something, you give up?

W: I do not recall being encouraged to try as a child. I think that is how I developed the idea that ‘if I have to try I am no good’ (Dweck 1996).

C: Yet you have persisted with writing even though you say it is hard for you?

W: It was the only thing I was praised for at school and I found it easy to do, then, now the more I write the harder it gets. I think it’s because my ambition had grown and I feel my ability does not match up to that. I feel like I am falling short —that I don’t have what it takes to be a successful writer.

C: You write in your journal that you feel like you “have to get it right” and “there is always something “out of reach” and you “keep walking down the same path every time”?

W: Because my internal teenager keeps grabbing my hand and taking me down it.

C: I wonder why you let her?

W: I feel stuck emotionally at that age. I keep setting off from that same point in the same direction but something gets in the way every time to stop me getting to my destination. It’s like I am on a quest but I never get there. I don’t understand why I fail so I just try again in the same way. A thought that has just emerged is that I want to be rescued and everything made perfect —this is what I mean by having the emotional maturity of a teenage girl. I have this fantasy that things should just happen... writing should just ‘flow’ out of me and I will be recognised and admired. It is embarrassing to admit this.

C: You have shared rich data through your journal and this conversation so far. I think we could effectively use theories and ideas from creativity research as tools to examine your story further and gain insight into how you can use your psychological resources to develop your creative capabilities. In the spirit of this inquiry we will get creative about your development, therefore we need to approach it with openness to what emerges from our dialogue (Rogers 1969, 193).

W: I feel both excited and apprehensive about what might come out.

C: Undoubtedly, this process will elicit such feelings. Emotions play an important role in creativity and perhaps we can help you learn to make use of emotions as part of your development (Radford 2004).

W: My sense is that my emotions are an underutilised resource.

C: Let me summarise where we are so far: You feel emotionally immature and this gets in the way of your development as a writer as it keeps you stuck somewhere you don't know how to move on from; you find writing hard work but you think it should be easy so this stops you trying; and you fear you don't have the capacity to fulfil your ambitions. Have I captured what you were expressing?

W: Yes.

C: You experience your 'teenage self' as detrimental to your creative process but studies of eminent creative people have found they often have a certain emotional immaturity and their creative drive and inspiration is linked to early life experience (Gardner 1993; Csikszentmihalyi 1996b). I wonder if you can think of how an adolescent aspect of self might be experienced as "resourceful state" for creativity (Gash 2017, 177)?

W: It could be a source of energy, maybe ego; a drive to explore self and forge identity by trying new things, definitely risk taking. I suppose a teenager is in a state of flux and open to experience. I can see how those things are valuable to creativity but I feel like my teenager sulks and narrows things down and off we go on the same path.

C: Your internal teenager is currently stuck, but what if you helped her to grow up a bit, to move on from where you feel she is detained emotionally?

W: How?

C: You mention openness to experience as a possible benefit of adolescence, and it is a key trait of creative individuals. Still, you describe your teenager as "narrowing" down, a defensive action which is the "polar opposite" to being open (Rogers 1969, 187). People typically act defensively in response to:

experiences ...perceived or anticipated as threatening, as incongruent with the individual's existing picture of [self] ...in relationship to the world. These threatening experiences are temporarily rendered harmless by being distorted in awareness, or being denied to awareness (Rogers 1969, 187).

If you are open to experience you are open to letting things in but that also leaves you open to potentially being changed by new understanding and "we all fear change" (Rogers 1969, 18). I wonder why your teenager is shutting things down? What threatens her?

W: She does not know herself to be good at anything so she doesn't want to try because having to try for something means you are not very smart and therefore not loveable (Dweck 2006, 67). I did not feel "entitled to ask questions" when I was young (Shonstrom 2014, online). If I did not know something there was never any encouragement to work it out so I ended up thinking that I if I didn't know something I must be stupid, I did not "feel worthy of seeking" (Shonstrom 2014, online). I think putting up the defence is actually an excuse for her/me to not try—that feels comfortable even though it concurrently feels awful, but it's a defence against feeling stupid and unworthy.

C: Being open to change can bring up emotional discomfort, ambiguity and tension. It is a leap into the unknown and many people won't take the risk of heading into uncharted territory. Part of human nature is a "conservative tendency made up of instincts for self-preservation, self-aggrandizement and saving energy" (Nickerson 1999, 411). For many people this is the stronger tendency because they don't know how to cope with the emotional discomfort it can bring. It is a tendency that can limit creative capacity because new experience is shut down by being processed in the same way to ensure 'fit', even if it is an unhappy alignment (Rogers 1969, 189). Successful creative people stay open to newness and change, even deliberately seeking it out to stimulate creative ideas (Csikszentmihalyi 1996b). I wonder if we might be able to "grow" your teenage self such that she is more able to be open to experience, and engage her youthful energy in this task?

C: I think I am open to experience in the sense of seeking new things out in the world, but my teenager is deeply resistant to being open to new ideas about me and this limits my exploration of new things. It seems I have some psychological issues to resolve before I can use my psychology to develop creatively.

C: One of the ways coaching works is to help people to take action as a way of creating an experience of 'not' having the problem even while the same internal conditions exist (Stetler, 2015). I have an idea if you would like to hear it?

W: Yes.

C: How much does your teenager get to play?

W: She does not like games ...she understands them to be about "winning" and does not think she can 'win' so she does not try. She does not play much at all.

C: I wonder if we could move you towards more fulsome creative capability by supporting your teenage self to be more playful and develop her curiosity as “openness to experience overlaps with curiosity” (Kashdan et al. 2012, 142).

W: I often shut down on ideas and emotions without playing around with them, and I understand how that might limit the development of my creativity (Nickerson 1999, 410).

C: You say your teenage self was not helped to learn, to search for new knowledge and experience?

W: I had to try and work out what was going on from my own limited knowledge. I suppose that is why I narrow down and choose to “cram and twist” my experience to fit into my existing mental structures (Rogers 1969, 189). You mentioned tension before, how it is experienced in the process of exploration because we don’t know. I am not very tolerant of tension and therefore feel the need to resolve it quickly, which I expect is why I revert back to the same processes.

C: People often feel conflict between the urge to approach or avoid new stimuli. What you describe is known as “cognitive closure” and it is a common response to coping with tension (Kashdan et al. 2012, 142). Yet “curious people are psychologically flexible in that they are adept at committing effort toward interesting and deeply cherished goals despite the presence of tension” (Kashdan et al. 2012, 143). You clearly demonstrate your ability to commit to goals with your significant achievements in research and writing. How do you reconcile the evidence of your work with how you describe experiencing yourself?

C: My writing is about motivation. I am highly motivated to prove I am not stupid and to be noticed and acknowledged. It stems from exactly the same source that causes me to shut down on ideas.

C: That helps me understand where to help you look. But let’s stick with curiosity just now. Curiosity is not just settling for the first idea, the obvious or the usual, but being open to other ideas, taking a different perspective on things, looking for evidence to the contrary, deliberately seeking out the opposite (Nickerson 1999, 410; Kashdan et al. 2012, 142). I noticed you ignore the evidence of your own work completed and published so far, in making your appraisal of yourself as someone who “shuts down” on things.

W: I feel I don't know how to be curious, to be creative, in the way I want to be so perhaps I am not seeing what I already have, what I have achieved, because I don't feel like it is good enough.

C: You are motivated to develop as a creative person, as a writer, but you seem more focused on outcome—being 'good enough' to get acknowledgement—than process and this might be interfering with the transformation you are seeking (Nickerson 1999, 410). Developing curiosity can help as it is about seeking things out for their own sake and being confident you can handle any “unwanted emotions and thoughts elicited by” such exploration (Kashdan 2012, 143). It seems your teenage self was not parented, or grown up, in a way that built confidence in exploratory behaviour and learning (Kashdan et al., 2012, 142; Shonstrom 2014, online). I wonder if it might be possible for you to play that role?

W: You mean to grow myself up?

C: Yes. Engage your teenager to help you to be more creative by supporting her to grow. Help guide her off familiar mental pathways: Take her hand when she wants to shut down and walk her down a different route. If she asks: “where are we going?” tell her that you are not sure but you can find out together. Ask her: “what can we do to find out?” You can support her to experience her naiveté as an exploratory tool and encourage her to a sense of wonder by making it safe to make mistakes, to help her learn to ask questions that deepen understanding, to take an active interest in learning, even encourage uncertainty and reward her for it. Look for solutions other than the first one (Nickerson 1999, 410). Walk her up new hills so she can get alternative perspectives on things. Help her seek out evidence to the contrary, about herself in the world as much as anything.

C: This discussion has made me realise that in allowing my teenager to respond in a pattern that was so strongly shaped by others I am demonstrating an external locus of control. Growing her up will help me build a more internal locus of control and trust myself to go down new, unknown, paths (Pourjalali, Skrzynecky and Kaufman, 2010; Rogers 1969, 189).

C: Believing that “how one's mind is developed and used is one's personal responsibility” is one of the most important principles for creative development (Nickerson 1999, 415).

W: Obviously my teenager is my mind. I feel resentful no one helped her grow up in a positive and effective way, but I can see that if I am going to develop I need to take responsibility for that. I also realise the myth that creativity is either something you have or you don't have has been operating, in a subtle way, on my thinking (Dweck 2006, 67).

C: Despite all of this you have not given up on your writing though.

W: My persistence is driven by my motivation, however I do not experience that drive altogether positively. My ideal creative self would have a strong affiliative motivation, i.e., doing work for the work's sake, whereas I experience myself as having an achievement motivation focused on outcome that undermines my creativity (Nickerson 1999, 413; Amabile 1985). It seems a bad motivation to have.

C: Motivation is crucial to creative behaviour so let's discuss this more next session. In the meantime we have created a small behavioural experiment for you to try out. Let's write down what we discussed into a plan you can start to act on it.

COACHING SESSION TWO

C: In your journal you say: "other writers can get it right easily —that [the writing] just comes out". Can you elaborate on that?

W: I often hear writers say they write because they love to do it as if they have no other motivation for writing. I know writers who get very focused and seem to get work out more easily than I do. This concept of flow, of being utterly engaged and immersed in what you are doing, that creative people reportedly experience bothers me as I rarely have that experience (Csikszentmihalyi 1996c). I find writing hard work; I don't 'love it' when I am doing it and I often avoid starting a piece of writing. I worry about my motivation.

C: The idea of flow in creativity is sometimes overstated but ultimately it is just an element of a more comprehensive process (Csikszentmihalyi 1996c). Creative people do not exist in an endless state of flow and many do not experience it to any great extent. What is key in flow is attention and where you place your attention and it seems you struggle with that (Abuhamdeh and Csikszentmihalyi 201; Runco 2004, 667). In your journal you say you allow yourself to be distracted by what is going on in your head. Can you tell me more about that?

W: My attention is all over the place. I put my attention on what I experience as my lack of ability, but my deeper concern is really about my motivation because I know the real

reason I started writing was to try and get the recognition and admiration I did not get as a child, and that I feel I have also failed to get as an adult. I see this as a faulty, even shameful, motivation. I think I should be focused on ‘art for arts sake’ and have a noble purpose. I know I am trying to do the work for effect, to get attention and recognition—the outcome—and I know it undermines my work.

C: An “intrinsic interest in creativity activity for its own sake” is needed and “is important in higher levels of creative production” (Nickerson 1999, 413). Nevertheless, it is common for the motivation for creative work “[to be] fuelled, in part, by the desire for recognition of accomplishment” (Nickerson 1999, 413; Runco 2010; Kellogg 1999).

W: That gives me a more helpful perspective on my motivation.

C: That is not all though, “desire for recognition, if too strong, can work against creative productivity; and is unlikely to be effective ... what is important is whether the motivator focuses attention on the task or the goal: internal motivators typically focus attention on the task whereas external ones typically focus it on the goal, and creativity suffers in the latter case” (Nickerson 1999, 413). People with very high levels of motivation [can become] too focused on the goal to concentrate effectively on the work itself (Nickerson 1999, 413; Runco 2004, 667). On a scale of 1-10 where would you rate your motivation to write?

W: 10! I am trying to resolve myself as a person, prove myself as worthwhile through it and there is probably nothing more motivating than that. I want to be a creative writer and lead a creative life.

C: “Wanting to be creative is probably the most potent motivator” (Nickerson 1999, 413). It is motivation that sets you off to get the knowledge to improve your practice and to do the hard work of creativity (Nickerson 1999, 420). Your motivation is an important psychological resource for you as a creative writer, it has maintained you through the years of continuing development required to achieve a creative vision, and it is driving you to seek further cognitive and emotional development essential to growing creativity (Nickerson 1991, 408). The work we are doing here is evidence of that.

W: Sometimes I can’t believe I have come this far with my writing. It does not seem possible that someone like me could do it. I know some success would boost my confidence in myself as a writer. Logically though I know I cannot control that.

Acknowledgement seems to be very random. Getting to be ‘talented’ seems to comprise a good dose of luck.

C: In the main though you perceive your motivation to be a weakness?

W: Yes.

C: Might it be possible that it is actually your belief around your motivation that is problematic (Rogers 1969)? You say you focus on external outcomes while you are creating the work because that is where your motivation lies, even though you feel this undermines your work?

W: Yes.

C: If you accepted your motivations for writing, with all its fear and uncomfortable feelings I wonder what effect you think that might have for you, for your writing?

W: If I were more accepting of what I perceive as the bad motivation fuelling my drive to write it would have less influence over me. Not giving it any attention will probably allow me to focus more fully and engage with the work (Abuhamdeh and Csikszentmihalyi 2011).

C: If success and recognition are a normal aspect of the creative process at what part of the writing performance is external evaluation important?

W: Mainly when the book is finished, published and out in the world.

C: But you focus considerable attention on recognition when you are in the production phase?

W: Yes.

C: Do you have any ideas about how you can utilise your motivation more productively?

W: I think if I could focus my attention on the writing while I am writing and see it as a learning process I could improve my writing as my energy would be focused, and when it is done I can turn my attention to the next phase of the performance and focus on promoting the book and building influence in the field.

C: “Becoming an active manager of one’s cognitive resources [is]” partly a matter of paying attention to one’s own thought processes and of taking responsibility for one’s thinking” (Nickerson 1999, 416).

W: Holding an internal locus of control and evaluation (Rogers 1954, 254)?

C: Yes. “The goal should be to reinforce and strengthen internal motivation and to use external motivators to that end” (Nickerson 1999, 413). It means making an effort to “discover conditions that facilitate one’s own creative work”, which is exactly what we are doing here (Nickerson 1999, 417).

W: I think about the reader when I write and focus on making sure what I have written makes sense and reads well. I do this largely by reading the work out loud. I receive positive feedback about the voice and rhythm in my work. When I think about my readers it motivates me to write well. I feel confident I can give readers something worthwhile. Yet when I think about the fields of creative writing and history these feel variously cliquy, judgemental, pedantic and nepotistic. I do not feel I ‘belong’ to either. Luck seems to play big role in being recognised in the creative writing domain, nevertheless there seem to be levers to that ‘luck’ that I am not sure how to pull. In talking this out I’ve realised this replicates my adolescent circumstances, wanting attention and recognition from my parents and being confused as to what I need to ‘do’ to get it and therefore never seeming to get it ‘right’. It seems I have transferred my need for parental recognition onto an equally unavailable and perplexing field.

C: You feel like you have no control over getting recognition?

W: Yes. And because I feel like I have no control it distracts me. When I focus on creating a good experience for my reader then I do feel in control and I can focus on the writing for its own sake.

C: Receiving “positive competence information” is known to be important in supporting internal motivation and subsequently creativity development (Bandura 1977; Nickerson 1999, 412). If holding positive feedback in mind helps you focus when you are writing I wonder how you can use this understanding to better engage your motivation to help you develop as a creative writer?

W: I think it’s the growing up analogy again. It is about taking responsibility—taking myself seriously as a writer, as a grown-up with agency. I need to shift my attention to what is relevant to the stage of the writing performance I am at and not allow information from other stages to intrude. I could make more effort to influence the field instead of expecting it to just happen. Into the future I want to support other creative people to grow and develop. I have not had much support to grow creatively, which is not an uncommon

experience in the creative world, and I would like to extend such support to others. People would value my support more if I had recognition and success...there I am going back into what others value!

C: Do you ask for help from others? Do you actively seek support and feedback?

W: That's a good question. This relates back to not being encouraged to ask questions as a child and the resulting understanding that I was just expected to 'know', therefore I tried to work things out for myself. Of course I often got things wrong but I was not helped to see that as a learning experience, to value the effort rather than the outcome (Dweck 2016). I don't seek feedback because I don't feel confident I can manage it. I just keep on going ...repeating patterns...feeling like there are some rules out there that I don't understand but if only I could "find the correct formula, then everything else would be magically straightened out" (Kopp 1976, 111). Yet another part of me rebels against the 'establishment'—the rules—so I think 'bugger you I am going to do it my way'. Then I complain I don't win the 'prizes' even though I won't play the games for which such prizes are handed out.

C: You have good insight into how the beliefs you use to make meaning of your experience were formed and how they play out: I wonder what would be "most at risk for you if you failed to live out those beliefs "(Garvey Berger 2006, 96)?

W: If I did not have the motivation to be recognised and prove myself I am not sure what would drive my work. I think I have done enough writing to keep doing it for its own sake, but without this motivation...I feel unsure...if I was not writing I do not know who I might be and that makes me feel anxious. If I let go of the beliefs and assumptions that shape my thinking and behaviour I would have to let new thinking in and expand my conceptual space—I do not know what might happen if I took that risk.

C: Could you be open to the experience and curious about it?

W: Adopting that stance could help me manage what I expect might be destabilising.

C: Ok. Let's get curious: You wrote about your ambition in your journal?

W: It surprised me to see that expression of ambition. I did not realise how ambitious I am. I understand myself to be essentially lazy and not very talented so ambition does not fit with those beliefs.

C: What does ambition mean to you?

W: It means being competitive; wanting to beat others; needing to win; being ruthless. I avoid anything that implies competitiveness. I do not think I have what it takes to win so it is easier not to try in the first place. I can then make excuses for not performing, such as being lazy or not having enough natural talent. This leaves me with room to save my self-worth: If I actually tried and failed there is nowhere to go.

C: What you are describing is a “fixed mindset”, of which a defining feature is low effort and making excuses not to perform (Dweck 2006). The antidote is a “growth mindset”, which you can learn (Dweck 2006). But, I want to inquire a little further into your beliefs about your ambition. You have made enormous effort with your writing. You have published a significant body of work. Writing is a very competitive field. I am curious how you hold this idea of yourself as a person who does not compete?

W: When I am writing I do not see myself as ‘competing’ as it is something you do by yourself. The only area I experienced myself as having any competence as a young person was writing, and it seemed that writers got attention and recognition, and what I wanted was to feel I was good at something through getting attention and recognition. This process of reflection has helped me see that I held the idea that if I produced work that I would be recognised through that sheer fact—like magic, the wishful thinking of a teenager. Once I started to publish work I realised that the way writers are valued is related to their public success. As I have not had much of this success, I interpret this to mean that my work is not of value to others, therefore why should I value it?

C: If you had such success what do you expect that would bring you more of?

W: Confidence that I was a good writer and therefore to keep on working. Recognition would make people want to engage with and work with me, value my input. I could become valued as a mentor. Having success would help me pursue my idea to support others to develop creatively.

C: You write in your journal that getting better at writing will help you achieve this success. You see your development as a writer as key yet you remain focused on outcome?

W: It gives me the motivation to keep going but I am so focused on getting the work ‘done’ that it makes it hard going (Runco 2004, 667). At the end I am exhausted and do not have the energy to promote my work; then I complain about it not getting any attention—I feel demoralised and do not value my work.

C: It seems you point your attention towards the future, something you have little control over, and a place you experience as being controlled by others. Your attention is a valuable resource in creativity (Abuhamdeh and Csikszentmihalyi 2011). You describe utilising your psychological resources such as attention and motivation to try and validate your worth through writing, which then exhausts you.

W: I know I need to learn to use my resources in a more renewable and enduring fashion.

C: What if you turned your attention to understanding your writing as a learning process, to focus on growing your capabilities as a writer (Dweck 2006).

W: How could I do that?

C: Allow yourself to pursue your dream of developing as a writer and working to develop others?

W: But I am!

C: You have told me that what you are really pursuing is the attention you never had from your parents. Children will often try and imagine another self that their parents might like better and accept if they are “unsure about being valued and loved” (Dweck 2006, 219). This can be a good adjustment to the situation as it provides some “security and hope” but you can get stuck on this self (Dweck 2006, 219). This self has served a purpose for you but its time “escort [yourself] into a framework of growth” (Dweck 2006, 211).

W: I am afraid I will lose my motivation, my ambition if I change. I might lose my drive for individuality. If I gave up on needing recognition and validation I might stop writing, then who would I be?

C: You do not have to give up your ambition. In fact, I think you need to really own your creative ambition and take responsibility for it. You are the one who has originated ideas and done the work to produce publications, but the way you tell your ‘writing’ story is to give others ‘credit’ for your motivation and the power to say whether your work has any worth.

W: Now that you reflect it back to me I can see how I am stuck in a narrative in which I am powerless. I am scared of challenge, struggle or feedback as I don’t think I can cope. I use this to avoid taking responsibility so I can deflect any negative feedback and use my powerlessness as an excuse for not working hard or facing up to challenge.

C: How do you think you might change your story to help you embrace your ambition?

W: I think my internal narrative needs serious re-writing to one in which I am more supportive of myself. In my new story, I could be a character who faces up to challenges, actively seeks feedback, and copes with setbacks. I need to reassess my purpose and my vision for my work so these are linked to my values and not what I think others want. I think I need to challenge myself to step up and be the hero in my story, to take on the risk of really pursuing what I want. I need to include others in my story.

C: I hear a growth mindset developing. Can I also suggest you might consider approaching challenges by asking: “what can I learn from this?” (Dweck 2006, 213). You have a strong learning focus, which is associated with curiosity and you could call that into service to support yourself. It is possible to enhance one’s curiosity about the world simply by training oneself to “be more observant, to pay closer attention to aspects of daily experience to which we tend to be largely oblivious” (Nickerson 1999, 410). It is important that you have a plan for this change so let’s work out a plan so you can start to take action.

COACHING SESSION THREE

C: In your journal you say that you write through the same “framework” and that you want to change this “system” in order to develop as a writer. Can you elaborate on this?

W: I feel like my work all comes out the same. I realise this is what ‘style’ is but I also feel I am stuck at a particular place with my writing. I see gradual improvement in it over time, yet it is also not changing. It feels like I am writing between the same boundaries.

C: You often wrote that you felt fearful, worried or overwhelmed about writing. It seems these feelings get in the way of your creative process. I wonder if the way you think about creativity and creative writing might be getting in the way of the development you seek?

W: Some of the worry I expressed is probably a normal part of the writing process (Kellogg 1999), but I heighten this in the way I make meaning of what I am doing. We talked about the framework of self I hold and how that was getting in the way of my creative development in a more global sense. I expect I have other interrelated frameworks operating in my creative system.

C: Creativity is a complex process that draws on and integrates many different facets of individual experience so your sense of interconnectedness seems accurate (Gardner 1988; Feldman 1999). Might you also be held in the same place by “some intimidating fantasy about the Great Writer” (Dweck 2006, 67)?

W: My idea of a ‘good writer’ is someone who easily and clearly expresses their ideas; can remember prodigious amounts of information; is able to work for long periods of time and stay focused and inspired. This is not how writing happens for me: it is often hard to clearly express what I want to say and I procrastinate about starting. If I was a ‘great writer’ I imagine I would experience writing as a joy. Also I would draft and redraft over and over again but I am slow and I run out of time for this.

C: Many great writers find writing hard (Kellogg 1999). Might your ideal writer be a variation of the creativity myth that idealises creativity as a magical gift that recipients are able to use effortlessly? (Cropley 2016).

W: Objectively, I know that creative work requires effort, but perhaps I am a more subject to that myth than I realised.

C: If a miracle happened over night and you turned into the writer you want to be, how would you know things were different?

W: I would wake up full of enthusiasm for my writing. I would be focused on it for hours at a time, words would flow out, and my inbox would be full of invitations to talk and attend events.

C: What would you be writing?

W: An epic novel.

C: Why do you specifically want to write an epic novel?

W: I enjoy reading long works and I like taking on big projects that can be worked on for a longer time. Maybe I want to do this because everything seems to need to be ‘immediate’ these days and being able to design and persist with an enduring project thwarts that societal trend.

C: Creative people have the capacity and inclination to take on big projects (Gardner 1988,12), and they often like to be separate and unique from others as it makes it “easier to develop one’s own individual perspective” (Fiest 1998, 300). Your instinct to not

follow the crowd is a good resource for creativity, and probably a necessity to write an epic novel. How do you think you need to develop to achieve that?

W: Great novels have emotional resonance. I experience myself as emotionally immature—lacking in emotional understanding therefore unable to portray emotions. My sense is that I want to write this novel to grow myself up, personally and creatively—which are probably inseparable for me.

C: “Many, perhaps most...creations...have been motivated by purposes having more to do with personal interest...the individual creates primarily because it is satisfying to him (Rogers 1954, 252). Creativity is a holistic enterprise and your development as a writer will likely impact other aspects of your life. We need to come up with concrete actions for you to escort yourself towards the future you want. Do you have any ideas about how you might work to develop your creativity and creative writing skills?

W: I need to be more observant and curious about other people so that I notice more and can collect information: snippets of conversation, names for characters, characteristics of my characters, the way people move and express themselves, and how they react emotionally: My aspiration is to be able to create characters, both real and imagined, to “see what they did not see, say what they did not say” (quoted in Webb and Brien 2011,195). But, this is where I lack the ability to do the emotional work of this.

C: Can you say more about that?

W: For example, to develop the story in my novel I will need to ask questions of the characters. I need to be tuned into emotions to do that; to notice how feelings are expressed in real life and how other writers portray emotions. I feel I lack emotional resonance with self so it is going to be a symbiotic process developing myself emotionally alongside my characters.

C: You wrote in your journal that you see parallels between yourself and the people you were writing about in the book. Can you elaborate on that?

W: Colonial Australia was a class-conscious society that held a particular regard for ‘respectability’ because of its foundation as a penal colony. Colonial Australians were concerned to make sure they followed the social rules to demonstrate their respectability. If someone slipped up socially they might be ostracised but these rules were often arbitrary so it was hard to know how to do the ‘right thing’ and this made people anxious. I see parallels between this and my writing—I am trying to work out how to follow the

rules so I can be accepted as a writer —and the idea that if you get things ‘right’ everything you want is going to fall into place. For colonial Australians it was about being recognised as respectable citizens; for me it is about being recognised for my work; underlying both this communal and individual aspiration is the feeling that you cannot make mistakes because it equals failure.

C: You say you lack emotional understanding of others, but you have just expressed understanding of others’ emotions.

C: Colonial Australians were fearful their supposed social inadequacies might be detected. I can pick up on that because that is how I feel as well. I can relate to it.

C: Do you think they might have had other emotions besides those?

C: They might have felt hopeful in forging new lives in a new place; they might have experienced pleasure to be in the natural environment, and curiosity about it; pride at their achievements; moments of happiness, and sadness, at life events.

C: You just told me that you can imagine how others might feel. How did you do that?

C: Imagined myself in their place. Imagined how I would feel.

C: What does that tell you?

C: That if I have an emotion that other people, even if they are historic or imaginary characters, could have those emotions as well; that I need to trust my own feelings. That if I can imagine how I might feel in a situation it might be a reliable point to start out from to explore how a character might be feeling and imagine what she might do.

C: And what does that tell you?

W: That I do have some emotional intelligence.

C: How do you think you might be able to develop this further to support your creative ambitions?

W: Being curious and open to experience? But that is also frightening. If I am open how do I know what might come into self? I might lose my sense of who I am. I think it is a risk for me to create different work.

C: You wrote in your journal that you would like more support? What does more support mean to you? Would it help you take more risks?

W: I imagine that I would like to know more writers, but I often find talking about my work with other writers, at least when I am working, kind of threatening. I need to keep my ideas to myself. Yet, I do want support when I am writing—it can be a lonely process. I want more of this type of support [coaching] because it can address all aspects of being a creative person. I think that is why I have a strong drive to support others because I know the serious pursuit of a creative practice is often poorly financially rewarded, acknowledged and supported.

C: You have strong empathy for the emotional toll that creative practice can incur for practitioners (Runco 2004, 667; Shaw 2015).

W: I see I have more emotional understanding than I credit myself with. This process has been useful in helping me to crack open my fixity around the idea that I lack emotional capacity.

C: Great. We need to finish here today. Next week is our last session and we will explore how else this coaching work might have supported you towards your aim to develop creatively.

COACHING SESSION FOUR

C: I noticed you expressed a lot of anxiety about writing in your journal. I am curious to know more about why you persist with writing?

W: Because I do not know who I am without writing. It is what I corral my ideas into. I have put so much time and effort into it and to building up ideas for future works. I cannot willingly let those ideas go. Writing is purposeful work for me.

C: “Purpose ... a deep and abiding intention to develop one’s creative potential [and] a long term interest in some form of creative expression” are essential to creative development (Nickerson 1999, 408). You have strong internal motivation to develop as a writer yet the conditions of the field make you doubt yourself and cause anxiety. It would seem this is a real point of tension for you.

W: Yes it is.

C: Do you have any ideas about how you might explore this tension to see what it might give you?

W: I have never thought of it as useful. Maybe it is holding me in position, like the tension ropes on a swing bridge, perhaps it is actually a driver, and if the tension dissipated maybe I would stop writing.

C: What if you went towards the tension, what would that look like?

W: Being gentler on myself; trying to create a place for myself in the field; lowering my defences by being more curious about others and being open to experience.

C: What else, if anything, has been useful for you in this coaching engagement?

W: Overall what has been most useful is the dialogue you have put me into with my practice. It feels like we have held my writer self up between us and prodded her with questions to see what we could shake out. What has come to light has often been the “elusive obvious”, things I immediately recognised once I saw them in front of me—like I knew they were there but I had not been able to see them clearly (Enko 2014). We brought beliefs I have been subject to—that is I have been unable to see how they operate on my thinking—into my view; in other words we have made them object. I believe seeing these beliefs objectively will allow me to work to change them (Kegan 1994).

C: Can you share some examples?

W: Realising I am looking to discover “rules” I can just follow to become a successful writer and how that ties in with my concern about being emotionally immature as looking for others to lead the way and living by rules can be indicative of a less complex/mature level of psychological development (Kegan 1994, 132). The developmental step I need to take more responsibility for my creative career, to take more control of the issues we have uncovered rather than have them control my behaviour. If I can embed this new learning and make behaviour changes I should—theoretically—move towards a developmental shift that will transform and expanded my psychological resources (Kegan 1994, 133). Given that creativity is intertwined with the self I anticipate ‘shifting’ things in myself will give me more space to think and imagine into.

C: What else?

W: Surfacing tensions: Discovering my strong need for others to tell me what to do was confronting. I see this coming from a deep-seated schema, a childish place in me. I feel like I have been trying to win a game that I don’t know the rules of, but I have been playing hard hoping I will get it, only to finally realise there are no rules. The way out of

this situation is to work from my own internal values and live with the tensions that making my own choices will entail. But if I am flexible and curious I can manage those tensions.

C: You describe a considerable impact.

W: I feel somewhat deconstructed by this process (Stetler 2015, 5; Albertson, 2014), however we have also surfaced ideas for how I can reconstruct my self-concept, especially my concept of myself a self-determining. Another insight is realising the tension between wanting rules and wanting to be unique. I think this unconscious conflict has been detrimental to my creativity because it causes me to get fixated on repetitive thoughts about how I am never going to succeed as a writer.

C: Another term for what you are experiencing is “self-actualization” and this process of making ‘actual’ more of the self is considered to have great “motivational force” (Rogers 1969, 8). It is a process of growing one’s psychological resources towards taking actions that support you to develop.

W: I feel this process of gaining more self-knowledge has significantly enhanced my motivation to improve my writing practice and the way I perform as a writer. It has helped to illuminate beliefs that have been limiting my creative process. I will have to keep on working to change these beliefs but now they have become object I can work to shift them. All this time I have been looking for a set of rules to gain creative recognition and I have seen I actually have a set of rules operating that has been narrowing my creative capacity...talk about the elusive obvious.

C: Making “more of a claim on the world” as a creative person might help you to live more of the creative life you want (Kopp 1976,116).

Discussion

The study has proceeded on the assumption that creativity can be developed. A comprehensive review by Nickerson (1999) affirmed that is the case, however he tendered this conclusion advisedly as the complex nature of creativity means that individuals express the phenomenon in different ways, and there is no incontrovertible evidence that any particular method of creativity development is superior to another. Current approaches tend to be focused on building “thinking and problem solving [skills] with the aim to develop cognitive capacities to generate new ideas, problem finding, conceptual combination [and] idea generation” (Scott, Leritz, and Mumford 2004, 363). This approach can be effective in enhancing cognitive skills for working with available knowledge, but not the expertise on which these skills operate (Scott et al. 2004, 381). Weisberg (1988, 172) argues that the mental processes targeted in creative thinking training are part of everyday thought and therefore it is “neither necessary nor possible to increase anyone’s capacity to be creative” through this approach. Runco (2004, 680) questions whether divergent thinking and problem solving are even necessary to creativity, suggesting that development of these skills in respect to creative performance might be redundant. Still, developing cognitive skills can “lead to feelings of efficacy [and] motivate creative efforts” and be a “valuable aspect of creativity development” (Scott et al. 2004, 383).

Another common approach to creativity training is focused on developing domain relevant skills (Onarheim and Friis-Olivarius 2013, 2). Domain skills play a critical role in creative achievement as producing something original in a domain requires mastery of it—an accomplishment that takes a great deal of work over a long time (Simonton 2017, 24; Nickerson 1999, 409; Gardner 1993). No matter how much raw talent an individual has, or how fluent their thinking might be, it is “motivation [that] sets [an individual] off to get [domain] knowledge and improve [their] practice” (Nickerson 1999, 420). Without strong intrinsic motivation, an individual is unlikely to persist in doing the work required to master a domain. King, McKee and Broyles (1996, 191) found that the personality trait of conscientiousness was positively related to creative accomplishment at low levels of creative ability, even though the characteristics of this factor—low openness and imagination—are considered antithetical to creativity. They concluded this finding reflected the criticality of self-discipline and consistent work to creative achievement (King et al. 1996, 191). That an individual persists with creative work indicates it is of

great personal importance to them; that it is important means there is purpose in it, and it is this purpose that inspires the motivation to take action and do the work (Enko 2014,7). Enhancing purpose and motivation hold particular potency for improving creative capability (Nickerson 1999, 408). Ensuring creative effort is autonomously chosen and aligned with values; setting personal standards and taking enjoyment from the challenge of exceeding one's previous efforts can all enhance creative performance (Nickerson 1999, 415; Enko 2014).

Motivation, purpose, belief and autonomy form the necessary "inner conditions" for creativity (Rogers 1954, 256). By their very nature these psychological elements tend to be resistant to overt attempts at their development, however appropriate external conditions can encourage their emergence. Establishing an environment in which an individual feels psychologically safe is essential to fostering creativity as this helps them to be more open and sensitive to their experience; trust their own judgement and develop a secure internal locus of evaluation; and be more willing to try new things (Rogers 1954, 257). Enko (2014) found that perceived locus of causality and autonomy are related and important determinants of creativity in writers. An internal locus of control is also important as the degree to which a person believes they have control over outcomes will impact their motivation to take creative action (Lather, Jain and Shukla 2014, 50; Weiner, Nierenberg, Goldstein 1976, 53). The extent to which an individual freely chooses to behave creatively; feels that their behaviour can influence outcomes; and evaluates their creative work to their own standards are therefore significant psychological resources for creativity.

Despite the criticality of individual autonomy in determining creative behaviour, creativity is in part an ascription by others (Sternberg 1988, 145). Being recognised as creative requires acknowledgement by a field and in order to achieve this an individual must make some effort to seek it (Sternberg 1988, 145). While intrinsic motivation is undoubtedly necessary to spur creative work, the stamina and effort required to bring something to completion might rely more on external motivation (Enko 2014, 7). According to Shaw (2015, 162) "acceptance by one's peer group is a fundamental need, and hence ...collective validation is generally more significant than personal validation". Gaining recognition, and reward can serve as positive feedback for a creator, enhancing their sense of competence and in turn inspiring further creative effort (Enko, 2014, 8; see also Runco, 2010, 189; Cropley, 2016, 245; Mumford and Gustafson 1988, 37). A creative

individual therefore often works in a tension between internal and external motivation and effectively managing the demands of this tension is an important psychological resource, and a potential area for enhancing creativity.

The case study presented within examined a writer's (the author of this exegesis) reported psychological experience during the production of a creative work. The study used the method of coaching to deeply examine this experience, identify potential barriers to creative development and explore ways of building psychological resources to overcome these. Issues around motivation, locus of evaluation and desire for recognition all clearly presented in this study and were experienced as significant obstacles to creativity by the subject. As the subject of this case study, my personal experience is that the coaching method utilised catalysed important insights into the framework of assumptions and beliefs I hold about myself as a creative individual, the creative process and creative writing; in doing so this experiment has pointed to ways I can enhance and use my psychological resources to develop as a creative writer. I began the experimental coaching sessions feeling I needed to 'grow up', as a person, and a writer. My sense is the learning I have gained will prove transformative: it has enhanced my capacity to grow my creative capabilities and shown me I need to build confidence in my own judgement and put effort into fostering an external network. Exposing and normalising, what I conceive as my 'bad' motivation to write through the coaching process was particularly powerful. Holding my desire for recognition up against theories of creative motivation helped me to see how it has actually served me well, giving me the determination and tenacity to produce written works—whatever its nature, my motivation has made me a writer. This realisation has helped me realign my motivation to more mature ambition for myself as a creative individual—I think I have actually grown myself up some. Of course this is the self-reported experience of one individual subject. I was also the coach-investigator. A role I assumed on the basis of my training and experience in psychological coaching. As such I can be considered to hold a bias to expect productive outcomes from a coaching intervention and to value coaching as a method of human development. While acknowledging that my choice to use a coaching framework to explore and understand the creative act implies such assumptions, this study nonetheless provides an example of how psychological coaching can be an effective approach to developing individual psychological resources for creativity. Therefore it is worthwhile examining how coaching might function to achieve such development.

Effectively developing creativity requires support and challenge (Nickerson 1999, 419). A coach begins their work with a coachee by creating an environment in which the coachee feels supported to share their story with its relevant issues, concerns and hopes for the future. The coach listens carefully to this narrative and asks considered questions to build understanding of how the individual makes meaning of their experience to help them clearly determine the change they want to achieve. Engaging in this process of “dyadic discovery” contributes to creating a supportive environment (Roussin 2008, 225). Whilst a coachee freely nominates the change they wish to make, the process of making change is characteristically difficult and they will often resist it. This resistance tends to stem from a psychological fixedness around schema—organised mental frameworks of information and relationships between things, actions and thoughts—through which individuals habitually filter environmental stimuli. Schema can also be considered a type of mental-set, albeit of a more deeply psychological nature, as these play a critical role in how we process—categorise and organise—information and memory, particularly that which arouses an emotive response.¹ Schema “structure expectations about people, situations and events” and, subsequently influence cognitions and behaviour arising in response to these expectations. In other words, the structure of the schema produces a habitual response to new information—for example, stereotypes and confirmation bias—that make it consistent with the schema regardless of any other factors (Steel 2012, online). This tendency to fixity is inherent in human beings, but it can inhibit creativity (Runco 2004, 677). Established habits and rituals of thinking help people manage the world by processing incoming information—so rapidly that it occurs unconsciously—but it also results in an inclination to respond to experience in the same ways—personality traits are consistent patterns of response shown by an individual—preventing the development of new ways of seeing and understanding the world and solving problems. By their very purpose schema can be antithetical to the openness to experience and the production of original ideas essential to creativity. A key facility in creative thinking therefore is the ability to deconstruct, or break, established schema or mental-sets—that are inhibiting this ability—by challenging the “integrity” [of the] deeply held assumptions and beliefs” of which they are comprised (Forbes 2014, 2). Deconstructing redundant schema can be confronting, especially if these are leashed to early developmental experience, which is why the process can elicit resistance, still, this is where coaching ultimately aims to work, using reflection as a key tool in the process (Gash 2017, 27). A coach uses questions to encourage the coachee to reflect on their story from alternative

standpoints and shift perspectives on the situation from the one they habitually adopt, to lead them to become “more critically reflective of their assumptions” and how context shapes their meaning making (Mezirow 2009, 19). The experience of transcending a “current form of understanding [and moving] into a new place” can be transformational because it makes new actions possible from a larger field than previously available (Garvey Berger 2004, 347). By establishing rapport and understanding in the first instance, a coach aims to create an environment that supports the coachee to persist in the challenge of changing their current thinking towards greater psychological openness, adaptability and flexibility. Such capacities are considered key to creativity, and if a coachee is working to develop their creative capacity new action arising from transformation of their mental sets would be decisively directed towards this.

The concept of ‘coaching creativity’ is a relatively nascent domain and the scholarly literature on the concept is small but emerging (Gash 73, 2017; See: Wilcox, Bridges and Montgomery 2010; Sparrow 2008; Jolanta 2006). It does though offer some validation of the usefulness of coaching to writing performance. A study of seven creative writers who had experience of coaching found it had considerable worth in supporting writer development. The process of being listened to supported the writers to feel less alone and more able to “confront and address specific, individual issues” such as “blocks to progress in writing and ...development of a writing career” (Forbes 2014, 21). While the writers more often chose to discuss personal or creative issues in the coaching sessions they believed their writing benefitted from having addressed such issues (Forbes 2014, 21). Additionally, the self-reflective nature of coaching contributed to the successful maintenance and development of self-identity as a writer (Forbes 2014, 18). The writers were “ambivalent” about the writing experience of the coach, deeming it of value but not necessary, whereas they considered the coach’s coaching skills critical to the success of the process (Forbes 2014, 21). A longitudinal investigation of the role of a faculty writing coach found that coaching empowered faculty members to significantly improve the quality and quantity of their writing by providing an “environment of trust and safety ...welcoming new ideas” and boosting confidence and self-esteem (Baldwin and Chandler 2002, 15). In this case the coach held the requisite domain skills to “teach the complex subtleties of the writing process” (Baldwin and Chandler 2002, 13). Creative writers need “learning that is dynamic, fluid and reflective in a way that stimulates and nurtures creative talents” (Forbes 2014, 15). The “apparent synergy [between the process

of creative writing] and the reflective exploratory approach” of coaching gives it particular potential as a method of support for creative writers (Forbes 2014, 15). The same could be considered to hold true for supporting individuals to develop in any domain of creative practice.

Coaching is distinguished by its future and action orientated focus: coaches support coachees to develop towards valued goals by taking action to achieve these. The case study provides examples of the coach and coachee working to design behavioural experiments stemming from insights surfaced in the sessions. Coaches might also help coachees identify specific skills enhancement, for example enhancing imaginative capacity and building networks, and support them to identify relevant resources and opportunities towards this improvement. Tying together the presented case study and the, albeit ‘microscopic’, literature on coaching for creativity suggests it might represent a useful approach to creativity development, and certainly one that warrants further investigation.

Conclusion

This exegesis has sought to explore creativity through a broad theoretical examination of the phenomenon and a singular personal experience of it. It inarguably demonstrates that creativity in practice is a complex psychological process that is correspondingly complex to define, study and comprehend. It also suggests that the only way to gain a “realistic” understanding of creativity is to consider all relevant aspects of it: the individual, the environment they operate in and the meaning he or she makes of relevant context (Runco 2004, 677). Conceptualising creativity as a “multi-dimensional construct and creative accomplishment [as the] interaction or confluence among [these] dimensions” makes it possible to account for all its aspects (Feldman 1999, 169). The principle that creativity must be examined from an integrated multi-componential perspective is widely espoused in the literature. Therefore, if the nature of creativity is multi-factorial, and these factors variably influence each other, an individual holds a potential multiplicity of psychological resources they can use towards producing original and effective products.

The proposition that creativity emerges from a confluence of varied, and varying, dimensions aligns with a systems conceptualisation of it. According to Hennessey (2017, 343) it is only with the “adoption of a truly integrated systems perspective can researchers hope to ever understand the complexities of the creative process”. A systemic understanding of creativity conceives of the phenomenon as the emergent property of the interaction between multiple factors operating in a dynamic system and does “not privilege either individual creators, texts, consumers or the sociocultural contexts” (McIntyre 2013, 9). In the same vein, Gláveanu (2010, 150) reasons that an understanding of creativity that focuses on the individual “cannot support a more comprehensive and systemic view”. Still, it is the individual creator who represents the clearest instances of creative action—they are the predominant system through which creative elements converge to emerge creative products. Indeed, this study ‘privileges’ the experience of an individual writer— doing so limits its findings, however its particular value is that it offers rich description of a lived experience of writing and the psychological barriers to creative development experienced by a writer. That much of the experience of the subject of this study aligns with the propositions of creativity theory contributes towards validating this knowledge. Its unique methodology builds disciplinary connections by applying psychological theory to building creative capacities in a real case, thereby contributing to creativity research by demonstrating the usefulness

of the application of its theory. The data that has emerged from this study's idiographic approach makes a particular contribution to creative writing research in showing the internal workings of a major writing performance in real time rather than ex post facto. As the writer in question, my lived experience is that systemic externalities can, and do, "condition" and "determine" creative processes (Gláveanu 2010, 150). The environment a creator works in can have a significant impact on their creative productivity and efforts to develop conditions conducive to creativity are important, but creativity can only be supported by external conditions and not made to happen. Inevitably the site of originality is the creator's unique psychology and truly developing creativity capabilities might require an approach tailored to each individual. What any individual needs to change to enhance their creative potential will be different and personality, cognitive, social and cultural issues might all need to be taken into account.

Creativity can bring significant benefits to individuals such as adaptability, self-expression and wellbeing, but creativity also has potential costs as it is so strongly tied to originality, and because "original behaviour is always contrary to norms, all creativity is a kind of [social] deviance" (Runco 2004, 677). This can leave the creative person feeling on the outside of mainstream society. While creative individuals often value, or even pride themselves on being different to the norm, this can, conversely, also leave them with a sense of isolation, or resentment when their original ideas are not understood and accepted. The nature of creative writing—it is not unusual for a writer to take a decade to finish a novel—means that writers can face the additional difficulty of long periods of isolated work. Being creatively talented is often inferred as "an overwhelming positive experience" but Plucker and Levy (2001, 75) point to studies that show this is not necessarily the case and that gifted individuals "must face considerable personal and professional roadblocks emanating from their talent". Gifted individuals are often considered to be "doing just fine" because of their evident talent and are consequently not offered the support they might need to cope with the intra- and interpersonal challenges and sacrifices of achieving their potential. They may also feel they cannot ask for help because of the expectations their recognised talent brings (Plucker and Levy 2001, 75; Lubinski and Benbow 2001, 76). Talented individuals often face depression, isolation, professional jealousy and envy and "any serious discussion of talent development should address strategies that help to mediate the negative consequences of excellence"(Plucker and Levy 2001, 75). Given all of this, it makes sense that a method such as coaching that

is focused on the individual and can accommodate a holistic understanding of the creative process that takes into account their unique social and emotional needs, personality and identity, and the need to negotiate relevant externalities might represent an effective approach to developing creativity (Lubinski and Benbow 2001, 76). The coaching process can illuminate connections between all elements of the creative process and support the productive integration of these by the individual.

This study has taken psychological theories of creativity and applied them through a coaching framework to explore the potentiality of this method towards the development of an individual writer's psychological resources for creativity. As the writer subject of the coaching experiment conducted within this exegetical space, I feel my creative capacities to produce literary work have been significantly enhanced through the process. My claim to such development can only be evidenced at this point by this felt sense of creative growth. The documented coaching sessions clearly show the emergence of greater awareness of personal issues I experience as barriers to creative advancement and fresh insight into ways I might change or manage these towards improving my creative achievement. Only the production of future literary work might provide more concrete demonstration of the effectiveness of the process. The elements used in this investigation—psychological theories of creativity, and data from a journal and coaching—are established knowledge, and methods of inquiry and personal development. It is through their combinational design and application of this methodology that this project also makes a contribution to knowledge. It has validated that what psychological theories of creativity predict should help develop creative capabilities holds true in one real life case, including that exploration of personal issues in a one-to-one framework such as coaching has considerable value in respect to developing creative capacities. Additionally, in exploring a personal experience of creative process this study clearly shows that creativity arises from everyday 'normal' human thinking and feeling and contributes to quelling the idea that creative achievement derives from divine gift or genetic giftedness.

A key goal in undertaking this exploration of experience and knowledge has been to build understanding of how relevant psychological resources for creative writing might be facilitated. In terms of its findings, this project contributes to building knowledge of how writers might be supported to develop their creative capacities. The insights that have emerged from this study, which inform the following guidelines for developing

psychological resources, are situated in the field of creative writing and in this context these guidelines are intended to be applied with creative writers. That there is more similarity than difference between creative writers and other creative practitioners suggests that these guidelines might also be usefully applied to developing creativity in individuals more widely.

Creativity is largely constituted from psychological factors and these elements are therefore a critical resource in creative achievement. This study concludes with the proposition that gaining an in-depth understanding of an individual to determine their unique creative ambitions and corresponding development needs can serve as an effective approach to developing psychological resources for creativity. This investigation has specifically used psychological coaching and psychological theories of creativity as a method to enhance creativity by deeply exploring the psychological aspects of an individual writer's creative experience. The following guidelines for supporting creativity development are drawn from this experiment and the application of these guidelines to their fullest extent would require the person in the supporting role to be educated in a therapeutic modality and have the requisite helping skills (see: Egan 2014). If they also held a thorough understanding of the psychology of creativity their capacity to support the development of creative potential would be enriched. Working to deconstruct established mental-sets or schema and emerge new knowledge of self can be challenging, and potentially destabilising, so the supporter needs to be able to manage that process effectively. Creative development though, does not always require major psychological shifts, and these guidelines can also be more 'lightly' applied by educators or workplace professionals, who find their students or employees need support to think and act more creatively in response to problems. Ultimately, these guidelines aim to make a contribution by suggesting how we might enhance creative development by meeting the unprecedented need creative individuals often have for unconditional support (Gardner 1993, 383).

It is widely considered, although not undisputed, that the greater part of the value of any helping, or therapeutic alliance, such as coaching, is gained from the relationship between the coach and the coachee rather than any particular methodology—presuming as a baseline that the interaction is psychologically safe and appropriately supportive (Crits-Christoph, Gibbons, Hamilton, Ring-Kurtz and Gallop 2011; see also Egan 2014). While a coaching relationship might be useful in facilitating the type of development that

results in the enhancement of individual's creative capabilities, working with a psychologist or a counsellor might be just as effective. Therefore, coaching represents just one helping approach with the potential to be useful in facilitating creative development, and the guidelines for developing creativity presented in this exegesis might be usefully applied by any practitioner seeking to support creative development. Nevertheless, as this thesis demonstrates, theoretically and practically, the similarities between creativity and psychological coaching, along with the future focused action orientation of coaching in general, make it particularly useful for creative development. The creative development guidelines herein could also be used by an individual to self-coach in conjunction with knowledge of the self-coaching process (see: Grant and Greene 2004). While I believe the coaching process offers a particularly valuable approach to developing creativity it is worth considering the particular value the specific content that, additionally and uniquely, informed the coaching sessions undertaken in this thesis might offer.

A key aspect of the experimental work that occurs in the exegetical component of this thesis was the study of the literature on the psychology of creativity, and the subsequent use of theories and information gained in this process as tools in the psychological coaching sessions. While this exegesis references the emerging literature on the potential effectiveness of coaching as a modality for developing creativity, this was a unique methodological process and I can only draw on my experience to comment on its usefulness (see: Gash 2017; Forbes 2009; Jolanta 2006). In my role as coach, I found the learning I gained about the individual, cognitive and social components of creativity facilitated new understanding of the phenomena and informed more relevant psychological approaches to support the coachee to investigate, question their assumptions and biases about their creative motivation and performance and more positively rearticulate their experience. As the coachee, I found the coach's direct pointing to the creative experience of others and theories of creativity, and the application of this understanding to form questions to explore and challenge my psychological framework around my creative experience particularly useful in helping me to formulate a more sympathetic understanding of my motivation, and how I might more positively harness this for my creative development. As I have already noted, whether this process enhances my creative competencies as demonstrated in output will only be demonstrated over time.

Another aspect I found useful as a creative person/writer was the challenge, and supporting evidence in the literature to the prevailing ‘myths’ about creativity, and the fact of it being an extraordinarily demanding process. I know I have fallen prey to the idea that writing ‘should come easily; that if I was truly creative it would just flow,’ when in fact I more often find it grindingly hard work. Gaining an expanded understanding of the creative experience has facilitated a more realistic set of personal expectations about my writing performance. I also gained new ideas for how I might approach my writing from theories and studies in the literature. Learning more about psychological theories of creativity has the potential to be useful to creative writers in developing their creative capacity and these could be explicitly taught to students of creative writing. Knowing about the psychology of creativity gives writers examples and information to draw from that might help them self-manage potentially difficult aspects of the creative process if these arise.

GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESOURCES FOR CREATIVITY

Start with the person in front of you

A key resource of a creator is their uniqueness and what they might need for their development will be distinctive and diverse. These guidelines are not intended to be followed in a linear fashion, the aspects of creative development they are designed to respond to are interrelated and will arise simultaneously and recursively, but building understanding of the individual is an essential first step. The guidelines are intended to point to ways to guide conversations that will help the supporter gain that understanding and the creative individual to clearly identify what their issues and needs might be. These needs will evolve and shift over time as the individual goes through the process of development and a supporter needs to be flexible and able to adapt to emerging issues. There is no singular way to develop creativity and a supporter needs to be informedly creative in their response.

Let the lodestar guide

Purpose and motivation are critical drivers of creativity. You cannot make someone be creative; It is an autonomously arising phenomenon. Nonetheless, the development of clarity of purpose for creative behaviour can be supported. Ensure goals are aligned with purpose to focus motivation and thereby harness self-regulation to achieve these goals. One way to work in this area is to encourage the individual to articulate in detail their

vision of a creative life. From there, help them determine what actions they might need to take to achieve this; set clear goals towards this achievement; and make a plan to implement the required actions. Holding the individual demonstrably accountable—in an appropriately challenging way—for taking the determined actions can contribute to the effectiveness of this process.

Imagining resources

To take action towards change people need to feel they have the capability, or self-efficacy, to succeed in undertaking the required action. An individual might have freely identified an aspect of their behaviour they want to change and be motivated to make that change, but if they are unsure how to actually make that change, and/or lack confidence in their ability to do so, this can undermine their motivation and their effort. A supporter can work to help the individual develop a plan for change and identify resources they have, or might need to access, to enact this plan. One resource that creative individuals have, particularly creative writers, is imagination. Encourage the individual to use this resource by getting them to imagine how a character might respond to the situation. Thinking about how someone else might solve the problem can help open up possibilities outside the boundaries of their own identity. It also builds confidence in their ability to solve problems, and enhances their imaginary skills and self-efficacy around this key creative resource.

Open Pandora's box

The ancient Greeks might have imagined curiosity to be dangerous but modern creativity researchers consider it fundamental to creativity. Being curious supports openness to experience, which in tandem make an individual more willing to explore new things. This helps the individual build up a rich memory store of information, images, experiences, feelings and sensations which they can play around with to bring new things in relationship to one another to emerge original ideas. A supporter might encourage curiosity by suggesting the individual seek out experiences or understanding loosely related to the immediate problem and reflect on the learning the new information brings, and how that might be considered in relation to the problem. This process builds efficacy in being curious and its useful application.

Playing the field

The creative individual faces a unique tension to be original and conform enough to the rules of a domain and field such that their work can be recognised. The individual needs

to take responsibility for managing the demands of the external environment and learn to 'play the field' in order to identify, generate and gain opportunities within it. This might require developing, amplifying or managing particular personality characteristics to enhance 'fit' into a field. A creative individual might understandably balk at this. They might feel they cannot modify their personality traits or are affronted by any suggestion of doing so. This can be a strongly emotive area and it takes a certain level of emotional maturity to make changes that might support gaining external recognition. Sharing the understanding that personality is considered to be constructed, might help orientate the individual towards the possibility of change. Encouraging them to imagine how someone else might negotiate a field can help them design actions to effectively manage their environment. This process might feel risky for the person as it involves exposing self and work to criticism. Acknowledging these risks and the emotions this might arouse and supporting the individual to make a plan for managing these, for example, reconsidering criticism as an opportunity to develop, can help them to build confidence to take on such challenges.

Aligning reality

Despite the need to fit into a domain and field the individual needs to hold their own standards of evaluation for their work. These standards will be tied to their purpose and personal values. Providing a non-judgemental environment for the individual to freely explore their purpose, motivation, values and ambitions can help them to generate autonomous standards. There may be a tension between these personal standards and those of the domain and field. It is often in this tension that a breakthrough in a domain lies, yet such change can be met with resistance by the field. The creator is faced with the choice to persist with driving the change, or integrating more of the existing standards into their work. A supporter can work here to help the individual examine the implications of their choices and take responsibility for these. This might involve helping them examine the situation to determine if they might integrate external standards to bring them in line with their own values and needs. Encouraging this flexibility to change, and gaining experience of making change actually supports the risk taking necessary for creative achievement.

Running the obstacle race

The individualistic nature of creativity means that creative people often work in isolation, perhaps no more so than writers. The way creative work is reflected in society is usually

through images and information about people who have achieved success as a creator. This can leave individuals who have not experienced such success feeling inadequate, and/or anxious, about their talent, their work practices or even their motivation. A supporter who is well-informed about creative process and more typical experiences of a creative career can help to normalise individual experience, reduce anxieties and devise strategies to help them to endure the ‘obstacle race’ of creative recognition and persist with their work.

Enjoying the best of it

The eminent creativity researcher Paul E. Torrance (1988, 68) says “being in love with what you do” is the key enabler of creative achievement. This points to the important role that emotions play in motivating creative action. A supporter can help an individual recognise the emotional underpinnings of their creative drive and to value their feelings as a resource. Many creators will find their labours are not met with commensurate material reward, but there are many other benefits of creativity and a supporter can help the individual to identify the satisfying and helpful outcomes of their creative endeavour and value these, which in turn enhances motivation. Perhaps the most important encouragement to creative development is to help someone enjoy the process and their identity as a creative person.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This exegesis has documented the useful experience of one creative writer in the application of psychological theories of creativity through coaching to support their creative development. That it is a singular case study means its findings can only be tentatively asserted, albeit that idiographic methodology is widely used in creativity research. An emerging literature on coaching for creativity—to which this work contributes—suggests that there is value in this approach. Future research into the use of interpersonal support modalities such as coaching on developing creative capacities in individuals conducted with a more significant subject cohort, over a longer period of time would serve to further explore and extend research on the value of this approach. The idea of developing psychological resources for creativity might also be situated and further explored in research into resilience. Understanding and supporting resilience has gained significant focus as our rapidly changing world has increased demands on people to cope with and adapt to change, that is, to be resilient. Resilience is a product of access

to resources—personal, social, cultural and material. Resilience tends to be understood as an individual responsibility, yet it is as much a function of systemic factors as personal ones. Developing psychological resources for creativity therefore potentially increases a person’s capacity to be resilient—indeed resilience might be considered a particular resource of creative people given the harsh reality of achieving success in creative fields. Using a method, such as the one described and practised in this thesis that deliberately seeks to illuminate systemic influences on developing creative resources might offer further possibilities for understanding how to enhance resilience.

In a wider context, research on coaching for creativity might be extended into non-western cultural environments. The psychological literature on creativity is deeply mired in western paradigms that value original expression by individuals (Chua, Roth and Lemonie 2014). According to Gláveanu (2010, 151) “there are profound cultural differences in the way creativity is understood and manifested across cultures”. What is valued in eastern cultures is more often adherence to cultural tradition than originality and breaking norms, as well as ethics and morality (Leung, Maddux, Galinsky and Chiu 2008). This suggests that factors such as intrinsic motivation, autonomy and locus of control might not be as essential to creative behaviour as western psychology holds them to be. Future research on other cultural perspectives on creativity would contribute to building understanding on how to develop creativity more globally, something that might prove prescient in countries with increasingly culturally diverse populations in ensuring everyone has equal opportunity to develop their creative potential.

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Appendix A



THE COLONIAL KITCHEN

Australia 1788-1901

CHARMAINE O'BRIEN

¹ I have used 'schema' as a descriptor for mental sets or constructed 'schemes' (no capitalisation) of information filing and interpretation. Schema Theory can work with such constructed schema, but this is a complex and specialised area of psychology in of itself, and is outside the scope of this thesis. I understand the process of changing mental sets, or schema, through a psychological coaching approach, which has been informed by many other psychological theories and approaches.