

**Creative Documentary Practice:
Internalising the Systems Model of Creativity through
documentary video and online practice**

Susan Kerrigan

BArts (Comm Studies) (UoN), Grad Cert Practice Tertiary Teaching (UoN)

A creative work thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Communication & Media Arts
University of Newcastle,
June 2011

Declarations:

Declaration 1:

I hereby certify that some elements of the creative work *Using Fort Scratchley* which has been submitted as part of this creative PhD thesis were created in collaboration with another researcher, Kathy Freeman, who worked on the video documentary as the editor. Kathy was working at the Honours level from 2005 to 2006 and I was her Honours Supervisor. Kathy was researching the creative role of the editor, her Honours research was titled *Expanding and Contracting the role of the Editor: Investigating the role of the editor in the collaborative and creative procedure of documentary film production* (Freeman, 2007). While Kathy's work dovetailed closely with my own work there was a clear separation of responsibilities and research imperatives, as each of our research topics was focussed on the creative aspects of our different production crew roles.

Declaration 2:

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis contains one journal publication and three peer-reviewed published conference papers authored by myself.

Kerrigan, S. (2010) Creative Practice Research: Interrogating creativity theories through documentary practice *TEXT* October 2010. Retrieved 4 November, 2010, Special Issue Number 8, from <http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue8/content.htm>

Kerrigan, S. (2009) Applying creativity theories to a documentary filmmaker's practice *Aspera 2009 - Beyond the Screen*: Retrieved from <http://www.aspera.org.au/node/40>

Kerrigan, S. (2008) Collaborative and Creative Documentary Production in video and online, Paper presented at *The Fourteenth International Symposium on Electronic Art*, August 2008, Singapore.

Kerrigan, S. (2006) Reflecting on Documentary Video Practice. *Speculations and Innovations: applying practice led research in the Creative Industries*, 1-17. Retrieved from www.speculations2005.qut.edu.au/Spin_embedded.HTM

Declaration 3:

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis contains one published journal article of which I am a joint author. The co-authored paper was written with my principal supervisor Dr Phillip McIntyre, and contains some of the literature reviewed for this exegesis.

Kerrigan, S. & McIntyre, P. (2010) The 'creative treatment of actuality': Rationalising and Reconceptualising the notion of creativity for documentary practice *Journal of Media Practice*, 11(2), 111-130.

Statement of Originality:

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

Acknowledgments:

Firstly, I will thank my family, particularly my husband David Washbourne and our children Alice and Rose. They have been immensely supportive and have endured many absences when my PhD work has taken me away from our relaxation time. Their patience and tolerance has been amazing and I am in debt to them. Now, it is time for me to begin returning the 'love' that has sustained me throughout this project.

Secondly, I am immensely grateful to my principal supervisor Dr Phillip McIntyre, who agreed to supervise this project without much knowledge of either my practitioner skills or my researcher abilities. Phillip brings immense integrity to the role of PhD supervisor. This quality was particularly important at the beginning of my PhD before I was diagnosed with Scotopic sensitivity, when the intention of my written work was difficult to decipher. This form of visual dyslexia is corrected with Irlen lenses, I began wearing mine in 2006, two years into my PhD. Since then Phillip has had the onerous task of pointing out many writing habits which were a consequence of my visual disorder. I will always be indebted to Phillip for his patience and sensitivity with this particular issue, his generosity of spirit and belief in the learning and creative processes make him a fine academic. Also I would like to thank my co-supervisors, Dr Judy Wells and Dr Judith Sandner, both of whom have at different times supported and made significant contributions to the quality of this research.¹

Thirdly, this research would not have been possible without University of Newcastle internal grant funding schemes which enabled me to create new knowledge about creative practice as well as contribute to the community's understanding of local history. I would like to thank the School of Design Communication and IT, and multiple Heads of School, Dr Anne Llewellyn and Dr Brian Regan, who have supported this part-time research over the last seven years. I am also genuinely appreciative of the sustained research support through the Faculty of Science and IT, most notably the recognition of my research higher degree work with the award 'Outstanding Post Graduate (Research) Student Achievement Award in 2008'. Furthermore, the support of the Faculty's Research Committee and the PVC, Prof Bill Hogarth, has enabled me to complete this PhD ahead of time.

Finally, I would like to thank my documentary collaborators and research participants for their personal and professional contributions to the project.

¹ Dr Judy Wells retired from academic life during my candidature, and Dr Judith Sandner became my co-supervisor.

Table of Contents

Declarations:	i
Declaration 1:	i
Declaration 2:	i
Declaration 3:	ii
Statement of Originality:	iii
Acknowledgments:	iv
Table of Contents	v
Synopsis	vii
List of Figures	viii
List of Tables	ix
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Theoretical and Historical Context – The Literature	6
2.1 Documentary and Creativity	6
2.2 Documentary as Cultural Production	13
2.3 Documentary Production Process and its Relationship to Collaboration	18
2.4 Documentary Creative Practice at the Individual Level	25
Chapter Three: Fort Scratchley Creative Project Brief	30
Chapter Four: Methodological Approach – Practitioner Based Enquiry	33
Chapter Five: Documentary Practitioner’s Creative System Case Study	42
5.1 - The Domain	42
5.1.1 - Identifying my Internalised Domain Knowledges	43
5.1.2 - Acquiring Domain Knowledges	50
5.1.3 - Acquiring Field Opinions	52
5.2 - The Individual	71
5.2.1 - Self Generating Creative Documentary Practice	73
5.2.2 - Generative Collaborative Documentary Practice	85
5.3 - The Field	108
5.3.1 - Capitalising on Field Opinions for Documentary Practice	109
5.3.2 - Field Feedback on Documentary Practice	121
5.3.3 - Fort Scratchley Field Approval	127
5.3.4 - Consumption of Cross Platform Documentaries	141
Chapter Six: Conclusion	144
Appendix A - April 2004 Video Budget	151
Appendix B - Domain Acquisition for Susan Kerrigan	152
Appendix C - <i>Using Fort Scratchley</i> Credit List	153
Appendix D - Australian War Diary, June 8, 1942	158
Appendix E - War Diary Store Order, June 8, 1942	159
Appendix F- A/V Installation Plan Fort Scratchley	160
Appendix G - Example Documentary Edit Script	161
Appendix H - Flow Chart	164

Appendix I - Musical Composition Brief.....	165
Appendix J - Fort Scratchley Community Preview	166
Appendix K - Website Statistics from 2007-2010	167
Appendix L - McIntyre's (2006) Revision of Csikszentmihalyi's Systems Model of Creativity	171
Bibliography	172

Synopsis

The process of documentary making which is the subject of analysis here was conducted through the low budget video and online productions of *Using Fort Scratchley* and *Fort Scratchley a Living History* (www.fortscratchley.org). The new contribution to knowledge generated through this self-reflective research considers my creative documentary experience against a number of creativity theories, models and processes. This practice-led research took a reflective empirical approach, using the Practitioner Based Enquiry methodology (Murray & Lawrence, 2000). The analytical scope of the research is comprised of practitioner 'data' collected across four production years; including a reflective journal detailing the making of the cross-platform documentaries, the documentary production paperwork and the documentaries themselves. *Using Fort Scratchley*, commissioned by Newcastle City Council, runs 53-minutes in length and employs oral history interviews that capture the military, maritime, coal mining and Awabakal usages of the Fort Scratchley site situated at the mouth of the Hunter River in Newcastle, Australia. The oral history interviews and additional archival material were re-worked, extended and prepared for delivery through an online data-based called *Fort Scratchley a Living History*. The online documentary permits minimal interactivity as the media has been presented through five pre-set tours: Awabakal, Coal Mining, Military, Maritime, and Theatre.

The production of these two Fort Scratchley documentaries provided a research environment that interrogated the effectiveness and appropriateness of a particular confluence model of creativity, the Systems Model of Creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999), a Group Creativity Model (Nijstad & Paulus, 2003) and three staged creative process theories (Bastick, 1982; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Wallas, 1976). In employing these models and theories, which can be seen as complementary, the research investigates the assumption that they could be readily applied to documentary production practice. The analysis of data reveals the layers of complexity within these theories; layers that account for collaborative practices as well as explaining a practitioner's intuition and embodied knowledge. In particular, this exegesis discusses and analyses how these creativity theories can be used to demystify creative documentary practice by deconstructing how I mediated external contexts, knowledges and skills, and drew on internalised and previously embodied knowledge throughout the production processes. In conclusion the exegesis argues that it is necessary to revise the System's Model of Creativity in order to more clearly situate creative practice inside a system.

List of Figures

Figure 1 - Fort Scratchley after restoration, June 2008, Photographer: Roger Hanley, Copyright: Federal Government of Australia	X
Figure 2 - Promotional images for DVD, <i>Using Fort Scratchley – Re-deployed</i> and the website <i>Fort Scratchley a Living History</i>	2
Figure 3 - The Systems Model of Creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999: 315).....	11
Figure 4 - A Generic Model of Group Creativity (Nijstad & Paulus, 2003: 334)	23
Figure 5 - Social Research Process applied to my study	35
Figure 6 - Nested Audiences Model (Sawyer, 2006: 127)	54
Figure 7 - Map of Fort Scratchley's Tunnels circa 1911	56
Figure 8 - Fort Scratchley Summary of Armaments and Construction (Carey, 1979: 13)	57
Figure 9 - <i>Newcastle the Coal Mines of NSW</i> by Robert Marsh Westmacott, National Library Australia, circa 1840.....	58
Figure 10 - 'Narrative Draft 1' worksheet from 'Narrative Structure 13 September 2006' excel file.....	77
Figure 11 - 'Narrative Draft 4b' worksheet from 'Narrative Structure 19 October 2006' excel file ...	80
Figure 12 - 'Narrative Draft 4b' continued from 'Narrative Structure 19 October 2006' excel file	81
Figure 13 - Flow Diagram (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1992: 30)	83
Figure 14 - Generic Model of Group Creativity (Nijstad & Paulus, 2003: 334)	89
Figure 15 - Tunnel Shoot Blocking, 26 October 2006	96
Figure 16 - DVD Cover for 1st version of <i>Using Fort Scratchley</i>	113
Figure 17 - Website design/layout drawn by Website Producer, Shannon Murdoch.....	114
Figure 18 - Timeline Website Brief: 19 March 2007	115
Figure 19 - Two draft webpage designs by Website Designer	116
Figure 20 - Website timeline version 1	116
Figure 21 - Fort Scratchley's Webpage Content Draft	117
Figure 22 - Website file pathways	118
Figure 23 - Cast and Crew Screening of <i>Using Fort Scratchley</i> , 22 April 2007	124
Figure 24 - <i>Newcastle Herald</i> article, 9 August, 2007.....	130
Figure 25 - Google Screen Grab (Kerrigan, Journal: 9 December 2007)	132
Figure 26 - Final Cut Pro Display of Missing Media	136
Figure 27 - <i>Using Fort Scratchley – Re-deployed</i> DVD	138
Figure 28 - Invitation to the premier community screening of <i>Using Fort Scratchley</i>	139
Figure 29 - Newspaper advertisement for re-opening of Fort Scratchley	140
Figure 30 - Promotional Material from Fort Scratchley re-enactment, June 8, 2010	143
Figure 31- Revised Systems Model of Creativity incorporating Creative Practice (by author).....	150

List of Tables

Table 1 - Research Timeline	3
Table 2 - The Living History of Fort Scratchley projected timeline.....	31
Table 3 - Reflective Data Collection Methods.....	40
Table 4 - Equity Research Fellowship Timeline, 10 August 2006.....	71
Table 5 - Video Production Crew for <i>Using Fort Scratchley</i>	87
Table 6 - Example Documentary Split Script	92



Figure 1 - Fort Scratchley after restoration, June 2008, Photographer: Roger Hanley, Copyright: Federal Government of Australia